

The Inclusion model of the Incarnation: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract: Thomas Morris and Richard Swinburne have recently defended what they call the 'two-minds' model of the Incarnation. This model, which I refer to as the 'inclusion model' or 'inclusionism', claims that Christ had *two* consciousnesses, a human and a divine consciousness, with the former consciousness *contained within* the latter one. I begin by exploring the motivation for, and structure of, inclusionism. I then develop a variety of objections to it: some philosophical, others theological in nature. Finally, I sketch a variant of inclusionism which I call 'restricted inclusionism' (RI); RI can evade many, but not all, of the objections to standard inclusionism.

Introduction

The Incarnation is back on the philosophical agenda. Thomas Morris (1986, 1987) and Richard Swinburne (1989, 1994) have recently (and independently) defended what I shall call 'the inclusion model' of the Incarnation, according to

which God the Son had two consciousnesses, a human and a divine consciousness, with the former consciousness contained within the latter one. Despite the pivotal role of the Incarnation in Christian theology inclusionism has not yet been the subject of sustained scrutiny.¹ I begin by exploring the motivation for, and structure of, inclusionism. I then develop a number of objections to it: some of these involve general philosophical difficulties with the model, others are theological in nature. Finally, I sketch a variant of inclusionism which I call 'restricted inclusionism' (RI). Although not without its problems, the prospects for RI are much brighter than those for the standard inclusionism that Morris and Swinburne defend.

Morris and Swinburne call their model the 'two-minds' or 'divided minds' model, but I prefer 'inclusion model' moniker. The 'two minds' label underplays two crucial aspects of the model. First, the model claims that Christ had two *consciousnesses*, not just that he had two cognitive, doxastic or volitional systems (although it does include that claim as well). Second, the model claims that one of these consciousnesses was *contained* within the other.

There is first what we can call the eternal mind of God the Son with its distinctively divine consciousness, whatever that might be like, encompassing the full scope of omniscience. And in addition there is a distinctly earthly consciousness that came into existence and grew and developed as the boy Jesus grew and developed. It drew its visual imagery from what the eyes of Jesus saw, and its concepts from the languages he learned. The earthly range of consciousness, and self-consciousness, was thoroughly human, Jewish, and first-century

Palestinian in nature. We can view the two ranges of consciousness (and analogously, the two noetic structures encompassing them) as follows:

The divine mind of God the Son contained, but was not contained by, his earthly mind, or range of consciousness (Morris 1986, 102-3, my emphasis).

Now God could not give up his knowledge, and so his beliefs, but he could, in becoming incarnate in Christ and acquiring a human belief system, through his choice, keep the inclinations to belief resulting therefrom separate from his divine knowledge system. Different actions would be done in the light of different systems...We thus get a picture of a divine consciousness and a human consciousness of God Incarnate, *the former including the latter, but not conversely*...Using the notion of divided mind we can coherently suppose God to become man while remaining God, and yet act and feel much like ourselves (Swinburne 1989, 65f.; my emphasis).

Motivation

Models of the Incarnation are subject to three forms of controls: scriptural, theological, and philosophical. Inclusionists can find motivation for their view in all three sources. As Swinburne points out, '... the general feeling which many readers of the New Testament surely get is that it pictures a Jesus rather more like ourselves than the Christ of the traditional exposition of the Chalcedonian definition' (Swinburne 1989, 64). The inclusion model attempts to

find a way to speak of Jesus as limited in power, knowledge, and subject to temptation – a very human Jesus.

There are a number of theological motivations for inclusionism; I will just mention one. It is very plausible to suppose that one can only know what it's like to have an experience of a certain type by having had a similar sort of experience. If that is right, then God needed to have had human experiences in order to know what it is like to be human. God couldn't know what it is like to suffer and feel abandoned without himself suffering and feeling abandoned. According to the inclusionist Christ did have a consciousness that was just like our own, and thus knows what it is to be human.²

Philosophers might be drawn to the inclusionism model out of dissatisfaction with its main rival, the kenotic account. Kenotic models of the incarnation seem to imply that Christ lost his 'omni' properties; this is often thought to be problematic because such properties have seemed, to some, to be entailed by God's perfection.³ Whatever the merits of this objection to kenoticism, it is at least an objection that the inclusionist need not address, for it is no part of the inclusionist's claim that Christ lost his 'omni' properties.

Models of eternity

What, exactly, do Morris and Swinburne mean when they claim that Christ's human consciousness was contained within the divine consciousness? In order to address possible interpretations of this claim we must first examine models of the divine consciousness. According to the traditional, Boethian, model of eternity the divine consciousness has no diachronic structure. Conscious states within the time mind are not temporally separated from each

other.⁴ The everlasting model, on the other hand, holds that the divine consciousness has a diachronic dimension that is infinite in both temporal directions.⁵

I have little to say about how to wed the inclusion model of the Incarnation with the Boethian interpretation of eternity. My reticence here is prompted by two considerations. Firstly, the prospects for such a marriage being a happy one seem dim: how could a consciousness which is restricted to synchronic relations alone contain experiences that stand in synchronic and diachronic relations to each other (as the experiences within Christ's human consciousness do)? Secondly, at least one inclusionist (Swinburne) rejects the Boethian model in favour of the everlasting account of eternity. (To the best of my knowledge Morris doesn't commit himself to any account of God's eternity.)

Proponents of the everlasting model have two ways of taking the claim that Christ's human consciousness was contained within the divine consciousness. On the *concurrence* model of containment there were times at which Christ's two consciousnesses are *both* active: Christ's two streams of consciousness run in parallel, so to speak. According to the *consecutive* model of containment there is no time at which Christ has both humanly conscious and divinely conscious states, rather, Christ's consciousnesses has a serial structure: the divine consciousness is followed by the human consciousness, which is in turn followed by the human conscious. On this model 'Christ's human consciousness' refers to a temporal segment of the divine consciousness in the way that 'my teenage years' refers to a temporal segment of my life.

I take Morris and Swinburne to endorse the concurrence model of containment.⁶ For one thing, it seems to me that this is the most straightforward way to take 'containment'. Second, their interest in pathologies of human consciousness seems to centre on synchronic, rather than diachronic, fragmentation. Swinburne claims that 'using the notion of divided mind we can coherently suppose God to become man while *remaining* God, and yet act and feel much like ourselves' (Swinburne 1989, 65f.; my emphasis), while Morris grants that 'it may be impossible for any merely human being to have more than one mind, or range of consciousness of the sort that we are considering, *at a time*' (1986, 157, my emphasis). Although not conclusive, these comments suggest that Swinburne and Morris hold that Christ's two consciousnesses were concurrent rather than merely consecutive; at any rate, it is this version of inclusion that I will be concerned with.

The unity of consciousness

Is the inclusion model logically coherent? There seems to be something deeply problematic about the claim that a single individual might have two consciousnesses at once, one of which is contained within the other. The challenge for the critic here is to find a conception of the unity of consciousness that is both highly plausible and clearly inconsistent with the inclusion model. I doubt that this goal can be achieved: our grasp of the necessary structure of consciousness is very tenuous. Perhaps the best that the critic can hope to achieve is to identify aspects of our commonsense conception of consciousness that the inclusionist is forced to reject.

The first point to note is that it is the unity of *consciousness* that raises the most serious problems for the inclusion model. Swinburne points to a number of empirical parallels to the inclusionist model, but the force of his discussion is blunted by the fact that it is far from clear that the disorders he refers to - repression and self-deception (Swinburne 1989, 64f.) - involve parallel streams of consciousness. It is one thing to say that a subject might have two doxastic systems, each of which might inform her behaviour on different occasions, but it is quite another thing to claim that a single subject of experience might, at one and the same time, have two streams of consciousness. Pathologies of repression and self-deception support the former claim, but the inclusionist defends the latter one.⁷

Although Morris admits that 'it may be impossible for any merely human being to have more than one mind, or range of consciousness of the sort that we are considering, at a time' (1986, 157), he does suggest that a number of psychopathologies - including Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID, formerly Multiple Personality Disorder), hypnosis, and commissurotomy - might function as partial models of the structure of Christ's consciousness. In order to evaluate this claim, we must first acquaint ourselves with the structure of consciousness.

There are two conceptions, or families of conceptions, of what it is for conscious states or events to be unified into one consciousness. These two conceptions take their cue from different conceptions of consciousness itself.⁸ According to one account of consciousness, a mental state is conscious when the subject has high-level access to the content of the state. More specifically, a state is conscious in this sense when it plays a certain functional role in the subject's cognitive economy; roughly, the subject can draw on its content for

verbal report, rational inference, and the deliberate control of behaviour without being prompted. Call this type of consciousness 'access consciousness'. A second notion of consciousness has come to be called 'phenomenal consciousness'.

States are phenomenally conscious in virtue of having experiential or subjective character. In Nagel's phrase, there is 'something it is like' to have a particular phenomenal state. Arguably it is phenomenal consciousness that lies at the heart of our pre-theoretical notion of consciousness.

We must now bring a third notion into the discussion: co-subjectivity.

Experiences are had by (belong to, are owned by) persons, selves or subjects of experience (for present purposes I use these terms interchangeably). Conscious states are co-subjective when they are had by the same subject at the same time. My current auditory experiences and my current visual experiences are co-subjective in that they are both mine. Although Christ's states of consciousness occur in different consciousnesses, they belong to the same subject, viz., Christ.

Armed with these three distinctions, we can now tackle the unity of consciousness.⁹ The following thesis codifies one conception of the unity of consciousness:

Access Unity Thesis: Necessarily, if a subject has a set of access-conscious states at a time, then those states are access unified.

The intuition behind this thesis is straightforward: if any information is access consciousness for a particular subject at a particular time, then all of this information is *conjointly* access conscious for that individual at that time.

The access unity thesis is not going to support the claim that the inclusion model is logically incoherent. For one thing, it is far from clear that it is true: there seem to be bottlenecks in the structure of human information processing

with the result that simultaneous states may be individually access conscious but not conjointly access conscious. For another thing the inclusion model is consistent with the access unity thesis. This is because the divine consciousness has access to the information in both of Christ's minds.

Think, for example, of two computer programs, or informational systems, one containing but not contained by the other. The divine mind had full and direct access to the earthly, human experience resulting from the Incarnation, but the earthly consciousness did not have such full and direct access to the content of the overarching omniscience proper to the Logos, but only such access, on occasion, as the divine mind allowed it to have (Morris 1986, 103).¹⁰

If there is a deep objection to the inclusion model it does not involve the access unity thesis. Perhaps the locus of the worry involves the phenomenal unity of consciousness.

We have a deep intuition that all of a subject's simultaneous experiences are mutually co-conscious, that is, they form a *single* phenomenal state or experience. We don't simply have isolated experiences - seeing a donkey, feeling tired, hearing children singing - but our conscious experiences are bound up with each other. We might say that they are subsumed by a single, global, experience that specifies exactly what it's like to be that subject at that time. We can capture this intuition in the following thesis:

Phenomenal Unity Thesis: Necessarily, if a subject has a set of experiences states at a time, then those experiences are phenomenally unified by being contained within a single experience at that time.

The phenomenal unity thesis is highly plausible, but is the inclusionist forced to deny it? Again, the answer would appear to be no. According to the inclusion model Christ's human stream of consciousness - an experiential perspective on the world much like our own - was a proper part of his divine consciousness. Since *all* of Christ's phenomenally conscious states occur in his divine consciousness, and since there is no reason to doubt that the divine consciousness is phenomenally unified, there is no reason to doubt that all of Christ's (simultaneous) phenomenal states are phenomenally unified.

Is consciousness perspectival?

Inclusionism is consistent with the phenomenal unity thesis *only* because it allows that one consciousness can be a proper part of another; that is, only because it claims that token experiences can be parts of *two* phenomenal perspectives. Is this claim defensible? It is certainly counter-intuitive. Although we can identify certain *types* of experience within our consciousness, but we do not suppose that such states form a distinct consciousness in their own right. One can attend to a particular portion of one's field of consciousness, but such attention doesn't reveal, or create, an autonomous tributary of consciousness within one's overall stream of consciousness.

We can encapsulate the apparent non-perspectival nature of consciousness in the following thesis:

Non-Perspectival Thesis: Necessarily, for any two token experiences *P* and *Q*, *P* and *Q* are either co-conscious or they are not.

It is important to see that the inclusionist is committed to denying the non-perspectival thesis. Take two experiences, *P* and *Q*. *P* occurs in Christ's

human consciousness, while *Q* occurs in his divine consciousness but outside his human consciousness. According to the inclusionist, *P* and *Q* are co-conscious relative to Christ's divine consciousness, yet they - the very same token experiences - fail to be co-conscious relative to his human consciousness. There is something *very* peculiar about this claim. Co-consciousness seems to be a relation that holds between experiences, but the inclusionist regards it as a relation that holds between experiences and particular consciousnesses or phenomenal perspectives. This seems to make consciousness something that one has a perspective *on*, rather than simply one's perspective on the world.

Are there reasons to reject the non-perspectival thesis? Morris seems to think that this thesis, or something very much like it, is undermined by a feature of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). DID involves the possession by a single individual of a number of personalities, or 'alters', as they are known.¹¹ It is often claimed that alters can stand in relations of asymmetrical 'introspective' access to each other. Here is an example of such a case (the initials refer to particular alters).

S.D. watched when R.D. was out. There would be three of us watching her, each with thoughts of her own. S.D. watched R.D.'s mind, M. watched S.D.'s thoughts of R.D., and I watched all three. Sometimes we had a disagreement. Sometimes a jealous thought would flit through S.D.'s mind - she would think for a moment that if R.D. would not come out any more M. might not like her (S.D.) as well as R.D. She never tried to hinder R.D.'s coming out, though, but always to help, and only a slight thought of the kind would flit through her mind. But M. would see

it and get cross with S.D., and so the disturbance inside would make R.D. go in. (Braude 1991, 69).¹³

Morris likens this asymmetric accessing relation between alters to the relation between Christ's two consciousnesses (Morris 1986, 106). In the same way that experiences might be co-conscious for S.D., but not for R.D, so too experiences might be co-conscious for Christ's divine consciousness but not for Christ's human consciousness. This interpretation of inter-alter access is not unique to Morris, but it is highly problematic.¹³ How could two consciousnesses literally share the same particular experiences? There seems to be something necessarily private about experience. One has direct access to an experience only by having it, and particular experiences can only be had by a single consciousness. Happily, we can account for 'introspective' inter-alter access without rejecting the necessary privacy of experience.

There are two senses in which a subject (S1) might be said to have direct access to another subject's (S2) experiences. The first sense involves S1's experiences also occurring in S2's own stream of consciousness. On this model, a particular experience <P> would be phenomenally present to both S1 and S2. Morris seems to understand inter-alter access in this way. But there is a second account of direct access which we might apply to inter-alter access. On this account, S2 might be said to have direct access to S1's mind in virtue of having a representation of S1's experiences: S1 has <P>, but S2 has <S1 has P>. On this account of direct access, there is no one experience that S1 and S2 share. S2 has direct access to S1's mind in that S2 ascribes mental states to S1 without basing this ascription on any other states of consciousness, such as another belief

or a perceptual state. S2's ascription of <P> to S1 is ungrounded; <S1 believes P> is present to S2 in the same, direct way that the rest of S2's mental states are presented to S2.¹⁴ To employ some useful scholastic terminology, we might say that the S1's access to <P> is in *modo recto*, but S2's access to <P> is only in *modo obliquo*. When I think of Clinton thinking of ice-cream, I think of Clinton in *modo recto* and of ice-cream in *modo obliquo*. This model -- call it the oblique model -- of inter-alter access allows us to take such reports seriously without forcing us to reject the non-perspectival-thesis.

Although inter-alter access doesn't force us to reject the non-perspectival thesis, we *might* have to reject it in order to account for the specious present. Consider the experience of hearing three notes - *Do*, *Re*, *Mi* - in rapid succession. One is tempted to say that one's experience of *Do* and *Re* as having just occurred informs one's current experience of *Mi*. Although one experiences these three notes as occurring consecutively rather than simultaneously, one's experience of *Do* and *Re* seems to be co-present with one's experience of *Mi*.

One account of the specious present involves distinguishing experiences from the perspectives from which they are experienced.¹⁵ Thus, *Do* is first experienced under the mode of presentation *present*, then *just past*, then *further past*. In this way the theorist attempts to capture the intuition that it is a single experience that figures in different specious presents, but it figures in them under different temporal modes or perspectives. This account seems to entail that co-consciousness is relativised to a particular specious present. Suppose that these three notes are played so that only two occur in a single specious present. In such a scenario, *Re* is co-conscious with *Do* (and not with *Mi*) relative to one

specious present, while *Re* is co-consciousness with *Mi* (but not with *Do*) relative to another specious present.

At this point the inclusionist can take heart: if co-consciousness can be relativised to a particular temporal perspective, why can't it be relativised to a perspective of some other kind? If a stream of consciousness can contain temporal parts that overlap (the specious present *Do-Re* overlaps with that of *Re-Mi*, both include the single experience *Re*), why can't it contain overlapping parts at a time? This model of the specious present may not be correct, but the fact that it can be entertained suggests that the non-relativity thesis is at least questionable.

The singularity thesis

Perhaps the worry that we have been trying to articulate is nothing more sophisticated than disquiet with the idea that a single subject of experience can have two streams of consciousness at once. Let us revisit this issue. Call the claim that single subject of experience can only have a single stream of consciousness at a time the Singularity Thesis.

Despite its intuitive plausibility the singularity thesis has been challenged in recent years. Patients whose corpus callosum has been severed sometimes behave in ways that suggest that they have two streams of consciousnesses. The central question for present purposes is not whether the empirical evidence actually supports the dual consciousnesses hypothesis, rather, it is whether the presence of two streams of consciousness would commit us to positing two subjects of experience in a single human being. Although some explicitly reject

this inference, it is noteworthy that Swinburne himself seems to accept it.¹⁶ He writes:

... it is a crucial issue whether by the [commissurotomy] operation we have created two persons. Experimenters seek to discover by the responses in speech, writing or other means whether one subject is co-experiencing the different visual, auditory, olfactory, etc., sensations caused through the sense organs or whether there are two subjects which have different sensations (Swinburne 1997, 158).

As an inclusionist, it is far from clear that Swinburne is entitled to the singularity thesis, for he holds that Christ was a single subject with two streams of consciousness.

Swinburne aside, is there any reason to accept the singularity thesis? Although the thesis is very plausible, it is not at all easy to see how it might be defended. As far as I can tell it is not entailed by the notion of a subject of experience, nor is it entailed by the notion of consciousness. Of course, it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to imagine what it would be like to have two streams of consciousness at a time, but it is unclear how much evidential weight one should attach to considerations of imaginability when it comes to assessing claims about the necessary structure of consciousness. Imaginability may be a guide to logical possibility, but it is a guide that must be used cautiously. It may be impossible to imagine what it would be like to have a consciousness in which synchronic co-consciousness isn't transitive, but it is far from clear that such a consciousness is logically impossible (see Dainton 2000, Hurley 1998,

Lockwood 1989). Less controversially, other species have experiences the character of which we find it difficult, at best, to imagine. In the light of these considerations any defence of the singularity thesis that appeals to what is and isn't imaginable will have to be developed with care.

The unity objection

I turn now to a number of specific problems that the inclusion model faces. The first problem is this: in virtue of what do Christ's two consciousnesses belong to the same subject, viz., Christ? Morris and Swinburne give quite different answers to this question. Morris advocates a cognitive-volitional answer:

In the case of Jesus, God incarnate, the full relation between the earthly mind and the divine mind is in important ways different from the totality of the relation which holds between the mind of any merely human being (such as you or me) and the mind of God. The completeness of epistemic access which God enjoys may be no different. But in Jesus' case, the earthly mind is contained in the divine mind in a distinctive way...[Jesus] was not a being endowed with a set of personal cognitive and causal powers distinct from the cognitive and causal powers of God the Son... Thus there came to be two minds, the earthly mind of God Incarnate and his distinctively divine mind, but two minds of one person, *one center of causal and cognitive powers* (Morris 1986, 162, my emphasis).

This is a very odd claim to make coming as it does after a passage in which Morris claims that Christ had *two* noetic/doxastic structures and *two* wills (Morris 1986, 153; cf. Swinburne 1994, 208). How can an entity with *two* wills be a *single* centre of causal power? How can an entity with *two* minds (and two consciousnesses) be a *single* centre of cognitive power? Morris's version of the inclusion model tatters on the edge of outright inconsistency at this point.

Swinburne's account of the unity of Christ doesn't face the obvious and immediate difficulties that Morris's does, but it has difficulties of its own. Swinburne grounds the unity of Christ in the fact that he has (is) a single divine soul (1994, 212). The problem with this move is that, as we have seen, Swinburne grounds the fact that two conscious states are co-conscious in the fact that they are co-subjective. In fact, Swinburne *argues* for substance dualism on the grounds that it, and it alone, can account for the unity of consciousness:

My conclusion - that truths about persons are other than truths about their bodies and parts thereof - is, I suggest, forced upon anyone who reflects seriously on the fact of the *unity of consciousness over time and at a time*. A framework of thought which makes sense of this fact is provided if we think of a person as body plus soul, such that the continuing of the soul alone guarantees the continuing of the person. (Swinburne 1997, 160; my emphasis).

The crucial issue here is that Swinburne holds that only substance dualism can account for the synchronic unity of consciousness, not whether Swinburne's argument for this claim is sound. One can hardly give an account of the unity of

consciousness in terms of souls if, as the inclusion theorist holds, it is possible that a single soul might possess multiple streams of consciousness at a time.¹⁷

Swinburne might respond by saying that because Christ's soul was divine it was uniquely able to support two streams of consciousness at once, but it seems to me that he has good reasons for not taking this route. Firstly, this admission would undercut the empirical parallels for the inclusion model that he attempts to draw. Secondly, and more importantly, Swinburne's argument for substance dualism involves the claim that the experience of fusion between two streams of consciousness cannot be imagined nor can it be coherently described (Swinburne 1994, 24). I take this to mean that Swinburne thinks that it is logically impossible for two streams of consciousness to fuse. And if that's so, then it would seem to be logically impossible for a single subject to *have* two streams of consciousness. (If it is possible for a subject to have two streams of consciousness, why would it be impossible for these two streams to fuse into one?) But clearly Swinburne doesn't think that it *is* logically impossible for a single subject to have two streams of consciousness, for he holds that Christ had two streams of consciousness.

Swinburne's account of the unity of Christ seems to be inconsistent with his own claims about the unity of consciousness. Of course, the fact that neither Morris nor Swinburne provides an adequate account of the unity of Christ does not imply that such an account cannot be developed, but it is difficult to see how one might improve on their suggestions.

The demarcation objection

The demarcation problem is the problem of giving an account of what makes it the case that Christ had *two* streams of consciousness. On what basis are Christ's consciousnesses to be individuated (in the metaphysical rather than the epistemological sense of the term)?¹⁸ A substance dualist might attempt to solve the demarcation problem by ascribing different experiences to different parts of the soul, but Swinburne insists that souls are simple (Swinburne 1994, 23). Swinburne's answer to the demarcation problem, I take it, is to invoke the physical correlate of Christ's mental states: 'Christ's human acts are the public acts done through his human body and the private mental acts correlated with the brain-states of that body' (Swinburne 1994, 203).¹⁹ But looking to the *correlate* of mental states in order to solve the demarcation problem is looking in the wrong place. Given dualism, how could differences between the correlate of mental states *P* and *Q* account for the fact that *P* belongs to one consciousness and *Q* belongs to another? Difference between the correlates of *P* and *Q* might be *correlated* with whatever it is that makes it the case that *P* occurs in one stream of consciousness while *Q* occurs in another, but surely such differences cannot themselves account for the distinction between two streams of consciousness.

In fact, the demarcation problem is actually worse than it first appears. According to the inclusionist the conscious states within the divine consciousness *are* co-conscious with mental states that are correlated with Christ's brain-states, so co-consciousness between *P* and *Q* *is* compatible with a difference in the nature of the correlates of *P* and *Q*. Swinburne's solution to the demarcation problem seems to be unsatisfactory.

Considerations of content might be thought to help here. Perhaps there is something about the *content* of Christ's humanly conscious states that sets them apart from those of his conscious states that are (merely) part of his divine consciousness. But what could this difference be? It is hard to see how this suggestion gets off the ground. Conscious states don't seem to belong to particular consciousnesses on account of their content. Different consciousness can contain consistent states, while a single consciousness can simultaneously contain inconsistent states (see Bayne 2000). And again, if Christ's consciousnesses *are* individuated in terms of their contents then it must be possible for two states to both possess the degree of integration necessary for co-consciousness in the divine consciousness, and yet lack the degree of integration needed for co-consciousness in the human consciousness. It is not clear how the inclusionist can solve the demarcation problem.²⁰

The essential indexical(s)

Neither Swinburne nor Morris provides an account of Christ's self-consciousness, or 'I' thoughts, and it is not clear how this lacunae might be filled. For the sake of clarity I leave aside questions concerning the sense of Christ's 'I' thoughts, and focus merely on their reference.²¹ One would assume that Christ's 'I' thoughts had the same referent irrespective of the consciousnesses in which they were tokened. After all, if 'I' thoughts are first-person thoughts, then 'I' thoughts that occur within the same person must have the same referent. Surely it was possible for Christ to think of himself (as himself) in either of his consciousnesses, and if he wasn't able to do this by means of I-thoughts, how was he able to do it? The need to give a uniform

account of Christ's I-thoughts is reinforced by the following consideration. Since all of the I-thoughts tokened within Christ's human consciousness are also tokened within Christ's divine consciousness, then, assuming that a single particular thought can only have a unique referent, we are forced to give a uniform account of Christ's 'I' thoughts.

But there are also reasons to give different accounts of Christ's 'I' thoughts depending on the consciousnesses in which they were tokened. Consider a situation in which the thought <What was I just thinking about?>, is tokened in Christ's human consciousness. Surely the answer to this question should refer only to those thoughts that had just been tokened in *that* consciousness. Or suppose that Jesus, lost in the market, thinks to himself <I don't know where I am>. If this use of 'I' refers to Christ then the claim is false, for Christ, being omniscient, does know where he is. This doesn't seem to be the right result: surely Jesus *didn't* know where he was. Giving a uniform account of all of Christ's 'I' thoughts seems to prevent us from allowing Christ's human consciousness and self-consciousness as truly human in character. The problem isn't just that of seeing how 'I' thoughts tokened within two minds can have the same referent – although that is a problem – rather, the problem is seeing how all of Christ's 'I' thoughts can have the same referent given the vastly different nature of his two minds.

Divine infallibility?

My final objection to inclusionism is an obvious one: the model does not seem to be consistent with the claim that God is infallible. The argument is straightforward:

(1) Jesus had false beliefs.

(2) All of Christ's beliefs are properly attributable to God.

Therefore,

(3) God had false beliefs.

(1) is highly plausible; it is also suggested by the claim that Christ had an 'earthly range of consciousness, and self-consciousness, which was thoroughly human, Jewish, and first-century Palestinian in nature' (Morris 1986, 103; Swinburne 1989, 54; Swinburne 1994, 207 n.17). One would expect a thoroughly human consciousness to contain false beliefs. (1) is also implied by the claim – accepted by both Swinburne and Morris – that Jesus was tempted to sin. It is plausible to suppose that in order for Christ to be tempted to sin he had to believe that it was possible for him to sin (see Morris 1986, 148).²² But according to the inclusion model, this belief was false, for God cannot sin. So Jesus had at least one false belief.

Although inclined to endorse (1), Morris rejects (2):

... most theologians who take seriously the real humanity of Jesus, however orthodox they might be, will want to allow at least the possibility that the full-belief set of the earthly mind of Jesus, at some if not all times during the earthly sojourn, did not even constitute a proper subset of the belief-set ingredient in the omniscient mind. That is to say, they will want to allow the possibility of the earthly mind of Jesus containing some false beliefs, beliefs, for example concerning the shape of the earth, or the nature of the relative movement of the sun and earth, among other things. But any false belief will be a belief that, in virtue of

its omniscience, the divine mind did not contain. From the earthly mind of Jesus containing the belief that the sun moves around the earth, it thus would not follow that this is something believed by God the Son in his properly divine mind. The divine mind would have perfect access to the contents of the human mind and thus would know this belief to be contained in the human mind. It just would not thereby have this belief as one of its beliefs. (Morris 1986, 159f.)²³

This response is untenable. The inclusion model claims that God the Son, a single person, acquired human form and a human consciousness. It follows from this that the *entire* contents of this human consciousness can be ascribed to God the Son. Even *if*, as the inclusionist claims, only *some* of the contents of Christ's human consciousness are contained within his divine consciousness, those contents that are restricted to the human consciousness are still *Christ's*. Describing Christ's human consciousnesses as 'human' is potentially misleading: its *contents* have a human character, but it is no less divine than the divine consciousness in that its *possessor* is divine. Swinburne and Morris are committed to (2) in virtue of the fact that they endorse the patristic doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, the doctrine that the human and divine attributes are predicable of the same individual. Restricting Christ's false beliefs to his human consciousness won't allow one to reject (3) if Christ's human consciousness belongs to Christ. Consciousnesses don't believe things, people do.

Furthermore, it is very doubtful whether the inclusionist should claim that only some of the contents of Christ's human consciousness are contained within

the divine consciousness. Firstly, on what basis are certain of Christ's humanly conscious states selected for inclusion within the divine consciousness? Is Christ's suffering on the cross also excluded from the divine consciousness? If not, why not? Secondly, and more importantly, what is the ontological basis for the claim that only some of Christ's conscious states belong to Christ? Orthodoxy doesn't claim that Jesus was God the Son only on certain occasions, or in certain respects. Nor does it claim that God is infallible only in the divine mind. Its claim is simply that God does not have any false beliefs.

Restricted inclusionism

I now want to sketch an amended version of inclusionism, which I will call 'restricted inclusionism' (RI).²⁴ RI holds that at any one point in time Christ had only a single stream of consciousness. RI endorses what I called the *consecutive* model of containment: Christ's 'two consciousness' were consecutive rather than concurrent. While on earth, Christ's consciousness had, for the most part, a human character. His sensations, perceptions, and propositional attitudes, were, in many ways, much like our own. Perhaps he had occasional access to the divine contents of consciousness. This would *not* involve one mind accessing a different mind, far less one consciousness accessing a different consciousness, it would merely involve having the sorts of conscious experiences and states that are typical of God. Perhaps Christ remained omniscient (and omnipotent) while incarnate, but if so, most of his knowledge was not consciously accessible to him. It was, if you like, dormant. It may have guided his actions in certain ways, but only to a limited degree.

In denying that Christ had, at any one point in time, two streams of consciousness, RI evades many of the objections that plague standard inclusionism (SI). This is not to say that it is problem-free. Although RI does not have obvious problems giving an account of Christ's *synchronic* unity (as SI does), it seems to have difficulty giving an account of Christ's *diachronic* identity. In virtue of what is the pre-incarnate Christ numerically identical with the post-incarnate Christ? There are a number of options here; which option one finds most attractive will depend to a large extent on one's account of personal identity. Those who are attracted to non-reductive (or 'simple') accounts might claim that Christ's diachronic identity is fixed by the identity of his soul or 'thisness' (Swinburne 1994). Things are less straightforward for those attracted to reductive or psychological accounts of diachronic identity, but even here there are promising lines of inquiry. The proponent of RI might point to two forms of continuity between the pre-incarnate and incarnate minds of Christ. Firstly, there is continuity in the *contents* of the two minds although almost all of that content is conscious (and accessible to consciousness) only in the pre-incarnate and post-incarnate mind. Secondly, there may well be continuity in Christ's stream of consciousness as he became incarnate. In defending a kenotic model of the incarnation, Forrest has recently suggested that the reduction of the divine consciousness to a human one might be made up of an infinity of stages (Forrest 2000, 136). The proponent of the restricted inclusionism might want to explore Forrest's suggestion.

A second problem for RI is that of making good on the claim that Christ was omniscient while on earth. Believing that *P* doesn't entail that one always consciously entertains *P*, but, arguably, it does entail that one will act in

appropriate ways (usually verbally) in certain contexts. But, presumably, Christ failed to possess the behavioural criteria for the possession of many beliefs. In response to the question 'What was Bob Marley's middle name?' Christ would have said 'I don't know'. It seems, therefore, that there are some (indeed: many) propositions that Christ did not know. Is RI forced to endorse the kenotic claim that Christ was not omniscient while incarnate? Perhaps not. One response to the objection is to accept a weaker set of conditions on belief-possession, conditions that Christ might have met even while his consciousness was restricted.

Swinburne's suggestion that Christ's mind might be divided, in the way in which the self-deceived mind is divided, is relevant at this point. A person suffering from self-deception might, in some sense, believe *P* at time *t* even though they sincerely deny that they believe *P* at *t*. What might make it the case, then, that Christ was omniscient even while his conscious access to his beliefs was restricted? Perhaps the best we can do here is say that his mind continued to contain the information in question. Christ's resumption of *conscious* omniscience involved him regaining access to what was, temporarily, inaccessible to consciousness.

Conclusion

Perhaps none of the objections presented against standard inclusionism amount to outright refutations of the model – given the deep obscurity of the concepts involved it is difficult to see how one might *prove* that the model is false – but they do, I think, pose serious challenges for the model. Restricted inclusionism escapes some of these objections, although it too seems to entail

that the Son of God had false beliefs. But this may well be a consequence that any orthodox model of the Incarnation must live with.²⁵

Notes

1. Discussion of the model can be found in Evans (1996), Feenstra (1997), Hick (1993), Peterson et al (1998), and Taliaferro (1998).
2. Ironically, Morris cannot endorse this motivation for the inclusion model, for he holds that one can have direct access to a mental state without having (owning) it. According to Morris, God has direct access to our minds (this is entailed by omniscience), yet it does not follow from this that our mental states are also God's (Morris 1986, 158f.). *Pace* Morris, it seems to me that the accessing relation alone is sufficient for ownership.
3. See Morris (1986) for discussion of this point.
4. For defence of the 'timelessness' view see Helm (1988) and Leftow (1991). On the Stump and Kretzmann (1981) version of the Boethian account of eternity, all of the contents of the divine consciousness occur within a single specious present. As I understand it, the Stump-Kretzmann view attempts to find a place for temporal flow within the divine mind without introducing diachronic distance between conscious states.
5. See Swinburne (1993) and (1994).
6. It seems to me that the commentators mentioned in n.1 concur.
7. See Zemach (1986) for discussion of the fact that Freud did not think that repression involves a split in consciousness.
8. See Block (1997) and Chalmers (1996).

9. Much of what follows draws on Bayne and Chalmers (forthcoming). See also Dainton (2000).
10. We sometimes speak of information that is not currently consciousness, but which *could* be conscious, as being accessible to consciousness. But Morris seems to be using 'access' in a manner that is suggestive of access consciousness, i.e., in such a way that one only has direct access to information that is actually in consciousness. In this sense, the divine mind presumably has full and direct access to everything that is in it, whereas we only have full and direct access to a small portion of the information in our minds.
11. For discussion of DID see Braude (1991), Flanagan (1994), and Radden (1996).
12. This report comes from Morton Prince's Doris Fischer case. The comments were made by one of the alters, and the initials refer to Doris Fischer's alters.
13. Broad (1925) and Greenwood (1993) seem to endorse this account of inter-alter access as well.
14. How *might* an alter tell whether a pain that it is experiencing, or a proposition that it is entertaining, is its own or someone else's? Presumably the answer to this question involves sub-personal mechanisms that operate prior to consciousness. Compare this issue to the problem of how we know whether someone is really smiling or is only pretending to smile. We might know which it is, but fail to know *how* we know.
15. For a variety of perspectives on the specious present see Dainton (2000), Gallagher (1998), and Lockwood (1989).

16. Much of the commissurotomy literature has assumed that two streams of consciousness entails two subjects of experience. Moor (1981), Greenwood (1993) and van Inwagen (1990) are among the few who reject this assumption.
17. Swinburne faces the same problems that plague Locke's account of personal identity. Although Locke claimed that consciousness is affixed to souls, this fact did very little work for him given that he defined personal identity in terms of the unity of consciousness and could provide no reasons to show that souls and consciousnesses come one:one.
18. A popular answer to this question is to claim that consciousness are individuated in terms of their subjects (see Hasker 1995, 544 and Chisholm 1981, 81), but of course the inclusionist cannot endorse this response.
19. It is not clear to me what Morris's solution to the demarcation problem is.
20. Perhaps the best prospects for a solution to this problem lie with functionalism.
21. I assume that 'I' is a referring expression.
22. Rather than just not believe that one is incapable of sinning.
23. Perhaps Swinburne has the same idea in mind when he writes: '[Christ's] divine knowledge-system will inevitably include the knowledge that his human system contains the beliefs that it does; and it will include those among the latter which are *true*' (1989, 65; my emphasis).
24. This model was suggested to me by George Graham.
25. I would like to express my gratitude to George Graham, Andrew Howie, Paul Studtmann, and an anonymous referee for their most helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. My discussion of the unity of consciousness

draws on work that has been developed in conjunction with David Chalmers,
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