A Novel Use of the Body-Soul Comparison Emerges in Neochalcedonian Christology

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Comparing the union of Christ's two natures to the body-soul union in a human being was a typical way among patristic authors to conceive the Incarnation. I argue that a novel use of the comparison emerged among Neochalcedonian theologians, esp. Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus Confessor. Their novelty lay in the concurrent refinement of the nature-hypostasis distinction required by Chalcedon. That refinement – particularly the shift from conceiving natures as self-subsistent to subsistent only in hypostases – opened unprecedented ways to make the anthropological comparison. Now there was a new, univocal tertium comparationis between Christ and the human being: in each case it's a hypostasis alone that makes two distinct natures really one. Neochalcedonian novelty supports the broader thesis that post-Chalcedonian Christology had profound impact on philosophy (cf. Johannes Zachhuber). In this case, Neochalcedonian Christology granted far greater insight into the fundamental mystery of the human person.

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Introduction

Athanasius of Alexandria could appeal to the transcendent God's immanence in all things as a way of making the Incarnation winsome to his philosophically-inclined audience.¹ This comparison is apologetically useful. Its use is limited, however, since what makes the Incarnation a mystery seems to be that it is *not* just like other instances of the asymmetrical unity between the intelligible and the material, the transcendent and the immanent, the higher cause and lower effect, the One's diversely generative and unitive presence in the many.² Gregory of Nyssa intimates this crucial difference in his *Catechetical orations*. There he reprises Athanasius's comparison, but qualifies it: "Even if the way [ὁ τρόπος] God is present in us is not the same as it was in [Christ's] case," and so forth.³

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¹ Athanasius, *De inc. verbi dei*, 42.

² Athanasius even denies the usefulness of the body-soul comparison – my principal subject here – at *De inc. verbi dei*, 17.

³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. cat.* 25 (Strawley 95-6), my translation. Later authors make even more absolute qualifications; see: Dionysius, *DN* 2.6 and *Ep* 4, which Maximus Confessor develops in *Amb* 5 (esp. 5.2 and 5.19).

In the christological controversy surrounding Chalcedon it was precisely the “mode of union” involved in the Incarnation which divided factions.⁴ How should one conceive the oneness of the divine and human in Christ? Which are its implications? What perils does it pose for classical conceptions of what’s proper to Creator and creature? After all, as Brian Daley has recently remarked, conceiving the mystery of Christ demanded nothing less than reconceiving “our entire understanding of God, reality, history, and human welfare.”⁵ What must be protected in the delicate act of articulating this mystery? What must we affirm despite understandable worries about, say, divine transcendence? Are there any familiar analogues that might aid our strained understanding here?

Among the earliest and most common analogues across the third to the seventh centuries was the body-soul unity. Eusebius of Emesa (d. 360 CE) first marshalled it christologically.⁶ Some scholars have already studied the use and development of the body-soul comparison in patristic christology.⁷ My theme is not new. Here I intend only a modest contribution: the way this comparison becomes newly univocal in “Neochalcedonian” christology: in, that is, the

⁴ Aloys Grillmeier, Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition. Volume 2. Part 2: The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press 1995 (1989), p. 200-211 (henceforth *CCT* 2/2). Constantinople II explicitly notes the problem: “The notion of ‘union’ [τῆς ἐνώσεως / unitas] can be understood in many different ways” – from Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, London, Sheed & Ward 1990, p. 115. See too Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 7, PG 86, 1297C—all citations come from Brian E. Daley (ed. and trans.), *Leontius of Byzantium: Complete Works*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2017; and B. E. Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2018, p. 162-163.

⁵ B. Daley, *God Visible*, p. 26.

⁶ *CCT* 2/2, p. 34. Though I don’t treat Latin authors here, I should note that they too regarded the divine-human unity and the body-soul unity as mutually illuminating; so Augustine, *Ep* 137.9, *tr. Ioh.* 19.15, etc. And the *Quicumque* (from the fifth century CE) showcases it right in the confession: “Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo, ita deus et homo unus est Christus” – cited at Peter Stockmeier, “Die Entfaltung der Christologie und ihr Einfluß auf die Anthropologie der Spätantike”, in: Joseph Möller et al. (eds.), *Im Gespräch, der Mensch: Ein interdisziplinärer Dialog: Joseph Möller zum 65. Geburtstag*, Düsseldorf, Patmos Verlag 1981, p. 249. Yet I remain less optimistic than Stockmeier (p. 255) that Boethius’s conception of “person” contained the same sort of anthropological insight as the Neochalcedonian “hypostasis” did.

⁷ Esp. Ferdinand R. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell: Ein Beitrag zur Christologie der frühen Kirche bis Chalcedon*, Würzburg, Augustinus-Verlag 1984; P. Stockmeier, “Das anthropologische Modell der Spätantike und die Formel von Chalcedon”, in: *Annuario historiae conciliorum: Internationale Zeitschrift für Konziliengeschichtsforschung* 8 (1976), p. 40-52. I know of only a single (and excellent) study dedicated to the body-soul comparison in Neochalcedonianism: Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “Das anthropologische Modell der hypostatistischen Union: Ein Beitrag zu den philosophischen Voraussetzungen und zur innerchalcedonischen Transformation eines Paradigmas”, in: *Kleronomia* 14 (2/1982), p. 215-312.

thought of those from the sixth and seventh centuries who defended Chalcedon's "definition" of Christ (one person/hypostasis in two natures) by, inter alia, developing its technical concepts in innovative and decidedly Cyrillian ways.⁸ I argue that their christological program, especially their rethinking of "hypostasis" and "nature," enabled Neochalcedonians to make novel use of the body-soul comparison, a use at once univocal and impervious to the weaknesses of miaphysite univocity. Neochalcedonian novelty here also indicates a more fundamental christological transformation of Christian anthropology, namely a dawning awareness of the sheer mystery of human personhood.

My argument has two parts. First, I recount two typical (and contrary) uses of the body-soul comparison, with special reference to their common philosophical roots as illustrated by Nemesius of Emesa. A more univocal use tends to support the "Alexandrian" or single-nature conception of the God-man unity in Christ.⁹ A more analogous use favors the "Antiochene" or two-hypostases understanding of Christ's unity. Second, I sketch the emergence of a new univocal use of the comparison among Neochalcedonians, particularly as perfected in Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus Confessor. I conclude that for these thinkers the mystery of Christ had so reconfigured their view of the human person – indeed of rudimentary metaphysics – that the mystery itself furnishes the grounds for its own univocal comparison to every human being. In other words, for the Neochalcedonians contemplating Christ reconfigures our conception of the human being such that the reconfigured human being now proves univocally comparable to the Christ who initiated the reconfiguration itself.

Two Typical Uses

I begin with Nemesius (fl. c. 390 CE), bishop of Emesa, for two reasons. First, Nemesius's highly eclectic *On the Nature of Man* is a work whose educated audience comprises both Christians and non-Christians.¹⁰ It contains

⁸ Excellent general studies on "Neochalcedonianism": Charles Moeller, "Le Chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VI^e siècle", in: A. Grillmeier, Heinrich Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart: Band I: Der Glaube von Chalkedon*, Würzburg, Echter-Verlag 1951, p. 637-720; Siegfried Helmer, *Der Neuchalkedonismus: Geschichte, Berechtigung, und Bedeutung eines dogmengeschichtlichen Begriffens* (unpublished dissertation: Bonn, 1962); and A. Grillmeier, "Der Neu-Chalkedonismus: Um die Berechtigung eines neuen Kapitels in der Dogmengeschichte", in: *Mit ihm und in ihm: Christologische Forschungen und Perspektiven*, Freiburg, Herder 1975, p. 371-385.

⁹ I employ the Antiochene-Alexandrian typology here as most do in modern scholarship, namely as a heuristic. For a careful discussion that acknowledges shortcomings (Severus was bishop of *Antioch*, of course) and yet justifies the typology, see: B. Daley, *God Visible*, ch.7.

¹⁰ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 38.7-9; citations from R. W. Sharples, Philip J. van der Eijk (trans.), *Nemesius: On the Nature of Man*, Liverpool, England, Liverpool University Press, 2008 (here p. 77); see their "Introduction", p. 5-7.

a remarkable passage in which Nemesius terminates a philosophical discussion of the body-soul union with a comparison to the union of Christ's two natures. Late ancient, predominantly Neoplatonic anthropology meets late fourth-century Christology. Nemesius, then, overtures for the major themes to be played in the two typical uses of the body-soul comparison I consider thereafter. A second reason for beginning with Nemesius is simply that we know Neochalcedonian authors such as Maximus were familiar with Nemesius's work.¹¹ Thus he serves both as an exemplar of a philosophically informed application of the body-soul unity to Christology and as a remote but real influence on subsequent Christian thinkers.

Nemesius asks "how the union of a soul and a soulless body comes about." It is, he confesses, "a puzzling question".¹² He raises and rejects three kinds of union initially classified by Chrysippus the Stoic philosopher.¹³ Not "fusion" (σύγχυσις), since then body and soul would be "changed together and both perish together." Their unity, that's to say, would produce a *tertium quid* that possesses properties improper to the unified elements themselves. Most evident, Nemesius thinks, to the degree the soul as such is essentially immutable while the whole body-soul unity is not. Neither, second, is the body-soul union mere "juxtaposition" (παράθεσις). Here no real unity occurs; the soul wears a body like a garment.¹⁴ Nor, third, is it "mixture" or "blending" (κρᾶσις), since then the union would dilute or diminish each element's properties. Nemesius seeks the sort of union wherein the "parts" retain their own essential integrity and yet are rightly "called one".¹⁵

He finds succor in a distilled Neoplatonic conception of the body-soul unity, which he attributes directly to "Ammonius [Saccas] the teacher of Plotinus."¹⁶ For Nemesius the advantage of this view is that it derives the

¹¹ Nemesius's non-spatial account of the body-soul union might also have influenced Latin Christians such as Claudianus Mamertus and Augustine; see: Jean Pépin, "Une nouvelle source de saint Augustin: le *zêtêma* de Porphyre sur l'union de l'âme et du corps", in: *Revue des études anciennes* 66 (1964), p. 53-107.

¹² Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 38.12 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 78).

¹³ In Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixt.* 3, 216.14-217.2 = *SVF* 2.473 = LS 48C; see: R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 79 n. 376.

¹⁴ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 39. 13-15 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 80); see: Plato, *Gorg.* 523cd, *Crat.* 403b, *Rep.* 10 620c.

¹⁵ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 39.12 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 80).

¹⁶ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 39.16 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 80). Older scholarship thought Nemesius's solution, and perhaps this entire discussion, straightforwardly derived from Porphyry's lost *Simmikta Zetemata* ("Miscellaneous Investigations"), a work Nemesius explicitly cites at 2, 43. 1-5. John Rist, "Pseudo-Ammonius and the soul/body problem in some Platonic texts of late antiquity", in: *American Journal of Philology* 109 (1988), p. 402-415, argued instead that Nemesius's specification that the body-soul union

sort of union involved from the very nature of the soul as an intelligible substance:

[Ammonius] said that intelligible things had such a nature as to be both unified with things capable of receiving them, as are things which perish together with the one another, and when unified, to remain unconfused and not perish, like things which are juxtaposed.¹⁷

The body-soul union differs from any union between two sensible parts exactly because one of its parts, soul, is incorporeal by nature. Nemesius rejects the first three kinds of union because they restrict what's possible for the body-soul union to what's possible for body-body unions. So he begins with the undeniable phenomenon *that* body and soul are "one" and reasons from there toward the character of this union based on the very nature of the things unified. It's clear, for instance, that the soul is simultaneously one with and distinct from its body: it is co-affected with the body, "for a living thing is affected as a whole," and yet also separable from the body in sleep and particularly in that final sleep, death.¹⁸

This union is at once *relative* and *asymmetrical*. Relative, because a union "by relation" permits the soul to retain its intelligible (and so non-spatial) essence even as it is "co-affected" with a body bound by space-time. "So," writes Nemesius, "when it is said to be in a body, it is not said to be in a body as in a place, but as in a relationship to it and by being present" – just as God himself "is said to be in us."¹⁹ This relative union necessarily forms an asymmetrical union. The soul's non-spatial relation to a spatiotemporal

must be "unconfused" (ἀσυγχύτως) indicates a Christian source rather than Ammonius, or at least a variety of sources. I follow Sorabji's more judicious view that "Nemesius' non-spatial account derives from Plotinus among others", a judgment verified by the fact that Nemesius's illustrations of body-soul unity – light in air and air in light – are Plotinus's own at *En.* I.1. [53] 4 and IV.3 [27] 22; see: Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators: 200-600 AD. A Sourcebook: Volume 1: Psychology (with Ethics and Religion)*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press 2005, p. 204-205. Though it is also true, as Sharples and van der Eijk note (82 n. 392), that Origen employed the same examples, sometimes in christological context; see *Princ.* 2.6.6 and *Cels.* 3.41.

¹⁷ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 39.16-20 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 80).

¹⁸ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 40.10-15 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 81). Though the asymmetrical relation of the soul to its body is an obvious Platonic thesis (see R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 81 n. 388), the line of thought here also parallels that in Origen, *Princ.* 1.5-6.

¹⁹ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 41.15-16 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 83). Nemesius's reference to divine omnipresence here as (at least) analogous to the soul's presence in a body reminds once again of Plotinus's thought; see *En.* VI. 4 [22] and 5 [23], and Porphyry, *Sent.* 31.

body prevents the soul from simply becoming that body. In fact it's not even quite right to say that the soul is "in the body." Rather "the body is in it," since the soul continues to exist "in itself" even as the body depends on the soul as its very life.²⁰

After this anthropological sketch Nemesisius makes a direct comparison to Christology: "This account would fit more clearly and best with the union of God, the Word, with man."²¹ Nemesisius does seem to think these cases illumine one another, but he's mainly concerned to emphasize the Incarnation's novelty.²² Hence an argument *a fortiori*: if the soul's incorporeal nature permits it to enter into relative and asymmetrical union with a body, with which it has "affinity" and is co-affected, then surely the divinely incorporeal Word can unite with human nature while "not in any way Himself altered by this affinity that concerns body and soul, nor does He share in their weakness."²³ The apologetic angle:

But if this account is true of the soul because it is incorporeal, still more is it so in the account of God Who is more uncompounded and truly incorporeal. This directly stops the mouths of those who try to attack the unification of God with man.²⁴

As we'll see, virtually every theologian emphasizes the novelty of the union of Christ's two natures. But their principal task is to articulate positively the content of this novelty, and it's here that ways part. Nemesisius's comparison points up the alternatives. He can express the similarity and dissimilarity of the two cases with respect to incorporeal nature as such: both soul and Word are essentially incorporeal and so can unite with body without suffering change (similarity), but the Word is supremely incorporeal and so can unite to body with still less difficulty, with less threat to the integrity of its own nature (dissimilarity).

Notice though that restricting the comparison to one of natures, as Nemesisius does here, could yield very different outcomes. Stressing the dissimilarity could mean either that the Word's divinity is so unencumbered by typical kinds of union that its consequent union with humanity in Christ

²⁰ Nemesisius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 41.10-14. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 202-206, thinks Nemesisius received this idea of the "two sides of the soul" (its interior, essential existence vs. its exterior, relative existence in the body) from Porphyry. This of course depends how one answers the question of Nemesisius's sources. It is, though, also a fairly obvious Plotinian idea, presented most dramatically at *En.* I.4 [46] 13.

²¹ Nemesisius, *De nat. hom.* 3, 42.9-10 (R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesisius*, p. 84).

²² *Ibidem*, 3, 42.17: "This kind of mixture or unification is more novel."

²³ *Ibidem*, 3, 42.14.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 3, 43.9-10.

renders them *more one* than any other instance of oneness – and the emphasis on novelty here might support this reading; or it might mean that the Word's divinity is that much more transcendent of human nature, so that their union in Christ is *more relative*, more extrinsic, even, than the soul's relative and asymmetrical union with the body – and the remark about not sharing in human weakness could naturally support this reading.²⁵ In that case Nemesius's comparison establishes only a relative (though real) relation between Christ's divine and human natures. Which evokes the first type of body-soul comparison I want now to review.²⁶

Type 1 – “Antiochene” use of the comparison. Like Nemesius the first type conceives the body-soul union as a relative one which preserves the essential integrity of its parts. This type also insists that the comparison remains a mere analogy (at best), and that we must cling to the differences between the two cases lest we fall rapidly into grave error.

So it's not surprising that Nestorius (d. 451 CE), who initially brandishes the body-soul comparison in a “purely formal” manner to illustrate how the union of two essences need not imply their mutation, comes to qualify heavily or even dismiss entirely its use in the course of his quarrel with Cyril.²⁷ Late in life and in exile, Nestorius pens one of the few works we

²⁵ Cyril clearly took Nestorius's “relative union” in just this sense; so Cyril, *Ep ad Acac.* 15, PG 77, 193D = ACO I.1.4, 27.8, and additional citations at: R. W. Sharples, P. J. van der Eijk, *Nemesius*, p. 83, n. 401.

²⁶ Though Plotinus's and Porphyry's influence here is plain, it's worth noting that this whole mode of arguing for the propriety of a real asymmetrical relation between the highest natures (divinities, the One) and the lowest (material objects, finite realities generally), such that their union implies a unilateral permeation of the lower by the higher and thus affords unique access to the higher realities *through* the lower – this is itself an argument that had already been developed *within* Neoplatonic tradition by Iamblichus in his philosophical defense of theurgy against Porphyry. Cp. Iamblichus, *De myst.* I.8, from: Emma C. Clarke et al. (trans.), *Iamblichus: On the Mysteries*, Atlanta, GA, Society of Biblical Literature 2003, p. 30-1): “In fact, the genera of superior entities are not even present in bodies, but rule them from outside”; or *De myst.* I.9 (CDH 40-1), where Iamblichus lays down a general principle of asymmetry that while higher realities (souls, intellects, gods, the One) can permeate lower ones, there could never be “any reciprocal interchange, or total penetration” between them – and this resonates with Nemesius's remark that “the purely incorporeal nature [i.e. soul or divinity] pervades the whole unchecked while nothing pervades it”. *De nat. hom.* 3, 44.12-13.

²⁷ F. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell*, p. 293-303. This purely formal comparison appears in Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 330, and again in the *Liber Heraclidis* (LH hereafter) II.2. For the latter work I use the English translation of the Syriac by Godfrey Rolles Driver, Leonard Hodgson, *Nestorius: The Bazaar of Heracleides*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1925, though I update the English idiom when appropriate. The formal *tertium comparationis* is capital for an earlier thinker in this tradition, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who wishes only to emphasize that in Christ, as in a human being, the integral parts of the whole stay undiminished: “The division of natures persists: the soul is one thing, the flesh, another” – a fragment from his *Adversus Apollinarem* reported by Facundus of Hermiane, *Pro def. Trium Capit.* IX.4, cited

possess of his own hand: *The Bazaar of Heracleides*. There he labors to exonerate and explain his own Christological position, particularly how it opposes Cyril's. What he cannot abide in Cyril is the idea that Christ's two natures form a "hypostatic or natural union" in the way the union of body and soul form one nature, the human.²⁸ Nestorius's stress falls sharply on the fundamental differences between the Christological and anthropological cases.

Consider three such differences. First and most basic is that a natural union – one whose product is a whole with distinct properties, irreducible to the nature of its parts – is *necessary*, involuntary, automatic. A man's soul does not freely will to be so conjoined with his body that this soul suffers bodily inflictions in and with that body. Nor does the body on its own (or "in its [bare] hypostasis," as Nestorius phrases it) share in perception or sensation, which Nestorius thinks proper to the soul's powers.²⁹ Rather "by the natural union of diverse natures they suffer passively and participate in these mutual sufferings by the necessity of the union."³⁰ But this necessity of natural union plainly contradicts the scriptural doctrine of the Word's Incarnation, which must be, Nestorius presses, an utterly voluntary act on God's part.³¹ True, the union of a human being's soul and body also occurs because of God's creative will and power; indeed what makes this union natural and necessary is precisely that it is the immediate issue of divine will.³² But God the Word's own union with humanity manifestly differs from the body-soul union because the will that effects the Incarnation is his own.

A second difference is that the product of a natural union is a complete and natural whole. From the perspective of this whole the parts are incomplete. Nestorius thinks it disastrous to conceive the union of Christ's two natures in this way. This would imply that, as in the case of a body and soul achieving one (human) nature only together, Christ's divinity and humanity have no real existence apart from their union with one another.

and translated in: Richard Alfred Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1963, p. 151-152. Norris also remarks that Theodore's philosophical anthropology seems more Neoplatonic (though less clearly than in Nemesius), which, if true, further confirms Nestorius's own development in confrontation with Cyril (see below, n.29).

²⁸ Nestorius, *LH* II.1; R. Driver, L. Hodgson, *Nestorius*, p. 161-165.

²⁹ This and other features – especially the idea that one's soul and body never exist apart from one another – supports the observation by F. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell*, p. 297, p. 301, that Nestorius's philosophical anthropology in this work rings more "Aristotelian-Stoic" (with some Philonic resonance) rather than Neoplatonic. We don't meet, for instance, Nemesius's "two faces of the soul," which he shares with thinkers such as Plotinus.

³⁰ Nestorius, *LH* II.1; R. Driver, L. Hodgson, *Nestorius*, p. 162.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 164-167, where he lays particular stress on Paul's remarks in *Php* 2.7-11.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 162; see: F. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell*, p. 298-299.

Think of it this way. My body and my soul have no real (hypostatic) existence except as parts of a natural whole. If they exist *because* they are the natural parts of a whole, they cannot exist outside of that natural whole. Cyril's "hypostatic or natural union" whose product is "one nature of the Word of God incarnate"³³ entails that Christ's two natures cannot exist outside of their union in him. Now God himself, "who can create everything," will simply "be the nature of the union."³⁴ He will need the union, if you like, to be completed as God.

Hence the third and final difference: the body-soul union produces a concrete and natural whole, a hypostasis, which is composed out of and in the reciprocal exchange of the properties of each part. A soul doesn't suffer in itself, perhaps. But as part of the whole whose other integral part is passible (body), the concrete soul does thus suffer. Humanity itself is a passible nature; it can and does suffer, and does so as a concrete whole. So if God is the very nature of the union of Christ's two parts, as Nestorius understands Cyril to teach, then divinity *qua* part of the natural whole (Christ) becomes really, hypostatically, passible – just as a real soul in a body-soul union shows itself naturally passible in that union. "For if the Son," writes Nestorius,

who is impassible, had come into the necessity of a passible nature in order that he might sensibly suffer, it would prove that his own *ousia* was not impassible, but [was] a passible nature, whence he had been constituted in the *hypostatic* union and wherein he suffered.³⁵

The great peril of representing Incarnation after the model of the body-soul union is that it makes divinity passible. Worse, from Nestorius's vantage, an overly univocal understanding of the comparison – which makes Christ's two natures necessarily, perfectly, and reciprocally one nature – "abolishes" the very difference between Creator and creature.³⁶ Nestorius finally accuses Cyril's christology of Arianism.³⁷

³³ Cyril, *Ep* 45.6 *ad Succensum* I (n.55).

³⁴ Nestorius, *LH* II.1; R. Driver, L. Hodgson, *Nestorius*, p. 162.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 164 (their emphasis).

³⁶ F. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell*, p. 299: for Nestorius "der strikten Anwendung der Analogie der Unterschied zwischen Schöpfer und Geschöpf aufgehoben würde." I doubt he means "aufheben" in a Hegelian sense.

³⁷ Nestorius, *LH* II.1; R. Driver, L. Hodgson, *Nestorius*, p. 179-180. Here Nestorius formulates the charge by combining the three differences between the two cases I just traced: "But the voluntary [activity] is neither passible nor changeable; it suffers not involuntarily in its natural *ousia* the sufferings of the soul and of the body. Those which are naturally united suffer indeed in *ousia* with one another, transmitting their own sufferings naturally and not voluntarily.... If you say these things thus, you have incited them all and have become heathens in saying that which he [Arius] has said who said these things with irreverent audacity; they have anathematized him."

Theodoret of Cyrus (d. 458/66 CE), perhaps the most cogent defender of this tradition, evinces a disposition similar to Nestorius's when it comes to the body-soul comparison, but with a certain twist. He too initially uses the comparison to make the purely formal point that two essentially different realities can be one.³⁸ In a passage devoted to the "mode of union" (τῆς ἐνώσεως τὸν τρόπον) meant to denounce Apollinarius's "mixture" (κρᾶσις or σύγχυσις) theory as "impious," Theodoret uses the body-soul union as an analogy or "image" (εἰκόν) for the union of Christ's two natures:

For we do not say that the soul is mixed into the body, but rather that it is united to or conjoined with [the body], that it indwells and acts [in the body]. Nor does anyone call the soul 'mortal' or the body 'immortal'...rather we distinguish each of these and recognize one living being composed out of these [two]. Indeed we give distinct names to each nature, the soul and the body, and still another name to the living being composed out of both: for we call this one 'human'. Therefore, having grasped these things as the image of the economy, let us rid ourselves of that blasphemy and take leave of this 'mixture', and instead continue to employ the terms 'union', 'conjunction', and 'community'. Accordingly we teach the division of natures and the union of person.³⁹

If Nestorius discounted the body-soul comparison to the extent it entails the reciprocal exchange of properties of each integral part in the consequent whole, Theodoret here doubles down on the comparison to prove just the contrary: even in the case of the human being, the parts stay "divided" enough for us to recognize and assign different names to each. In this sense Theodoret edges nearer to Nemesius. Both attend carefully to the undeniable difference of the two natures in each case, right there at the heart of

³⁸ Theodoret, *Exp.* 11; see: Marie-Odile Boulnois, "La comparaison de l'union de l'âme et du corps dans la christologie de Diodore de Tarse et dans l'*Expositio rectae fidei* de Théodoret de Cyr", in: *Annuaire EPHE-SR* 120 (2013), p. 123-131.

³⁹ Theodoret, *De incarn. dom.* 32 (PG 75, 1473A-B), my translation: "Οὐ γὰρ τῷ σώματι τὴν ψυχὴν κεκρᾶσθαι, ἀλλ' ἡνώσθαι, καὶ συνῆφθαι, καὶ οἰκεῖν, καὶ ἐνεργεῖν φαμεν. Καὶ οὔτε τὴν ψυχὴν θνητὴν, οὔτε τὸ σῶμα εἴποι τις ἂν ἀθάνατον...ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν ἑκατέραν [φύσιν] διαιροῦμεν, ἐν δὲ ζῶνι γνωρίζομεν τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνων συγκείμενον· καὶ ἑκατέραν μὲν φύσιν διηρημένοις ὀνόμασιν ὀνομάζομεν, τὴν μὲν ψυχὴν, τὸ δὲ σῶμα, τὸ δὲ ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων συννεσθηκὸς ζῶν ἐτέρῳ καλοῦμεν ὀνόματι· ἄνθρωπον γὰρ προσαγορεύομεν. Ταῦτα τοίνυν καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας τὴν εἰκόνα λαβόντες, τῆς βλασφημίας ἀπαλλαγώμεν ἐκείνης, καὶ τὴν κρᾶσιν καταλιπόντες, τῷ τῆς ἐνώσεως καὶ συναφείας καὶ κοινωνίας ὀνόματι χρώμενοι διατελέσωμεν· φύσεων μὲν διάκρισιν, προσώπου δὲ ἑνώσειν δογματίζοντες." As Boulnois observes, this work survives in one manuscript because it bears "le nom paradoxal de Cyrille d'Alexandrie" (223); on what follows, see: M.-O. Boulnois, "La comparaison de l'union de l'âme et du corps dans la christologie de Théodoret de Cyr: le *De incarnatione* et la *Réfutation des XII anathématismes*", in: *Annuaire EPHE-SR* 121 (2013), p. 223-231.

unity. Not that Theodoret fails to stress the analogy's limits. In another place he faults Cyril's "natural union" for rendering the Incarnation involuntary and necessary, quite like Nestorius did.⁴⁰

And yet Theodoret ultimately marshals an argument *a fortiori* in the manner of Nemesius, though now with a rather different aim. "If with respect to man, who is one," Theodoret proceeds, "we divide the natures and call the mortal 'body' and the immortal 'soul', and yet both together are 'human', it's reasonable *a fortiori* (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) to recognize the natural properties of the God who assumed and the man who was assumed."⁴¹ Same focus on natures, same concern to preserve natural difference, same sort of argument – but all now toward a different end. Nemesius's *a fortiori* carried the apologetic aim of convincing non-Christians of the possibility that divinity might be one with humanity. Theodoret's means instead to show Christian opponents how much more divinity and humanity must remain distinctly two. Theodoret admits the comparison as an analogy whose dissimilarity lies precisely in the difference of the natures compared. If soul remains discernibly soul in the body-soul union, still more must divinity remain distinctly what it is in Christ.

Nestorius and Theodoret represent slightly divergent tendencies within what is still discernibly one type of christological body-soul comparison. Perhaps Theodoret indulges the comparison because he presumes a more Neoplatonic anthropology that safeguards the soul's natural transcendence of the body with which it enjoys relative union (as with Nemesius). And maybe Nestorius comes to dismiss the comparison because he presumes a more Aristotelian-Stoic anthropology – indeed the anthropology his opponents, such as Apollinarius and Cyril, seemed to assume.

These are but variations on common themes. Whether the comparison promises strictly analogous or purely negative utility, the "Antiochene" approach bears identifiable marks that stretch long beyond its heyday, as the examples of Leontius of Jerusalem's (d. post-636 CE) Nestorian opponent⁴² and Babai the Great (d. 628 CE) clearly show. These late Nestorians begin, as "Antiochenes" typically do, by setting forth "universal predications" (καθολικαὶ καταφάσεις) or natural principles that govern what's metaphysically possible in the case of Christ.⁴³ So, for instance, since the "law of com-

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

⁴¹ Theodoret as reported in Cyril, *Apol. contra Theodoretum* 3 (ACO I.1.6), my translation; cited and discussed at M. O. Boulnois, "La comparaison", p. 228-229.

⁴² Dirk Krausmüller, "Leontius of Jerusalem, A Theologian of the Seventh Century", in *Journal of Theological Studies* 52.2 (2001), p. 637-657.

⁴³ In Leontius of Jerusalem, *CNI* 10 (PG 86, 1437D-1440C); see the fascinating article by D. Krausmüller, "Conflicting Anthropologies in the Christological Discourse at the End of the Late Antiquity: The Case of Leontius of Jerusalem's Nestorian Adversary", in: *Journal of*

pound beings” dictates that every part is either better or worse than the whole; and since (we’ll see) the Miaphysite and the Neochalcedonian wish to conceive the Incarnation as a “synthesis” or “composite” directly comparable to the body-soul union – then Christ’s divine nature *qua* part is either better or worse than the whole Christ. If the divine part is better, its synthesis with humanity would imply a change of divinity from self-sufficient to dependent. If it is worse, this would imply that divinity becomes perfect in the synthetic whole.⁴⁴ Either way the comparison misleads us into compromising God’s aseity.⁴⁵ All this should sound familiar. We must, the “Antiochene” way insists, severely qualify the analogy, just to the extent that the body-soul union tempts us to conceive Christ’s two natures as in any sense mutually dependent, co-completing, or complimentary parts in a new whole (a *tertium quid*),. Or just drop it altogether.

Type 2 – “Alexandrian” use of the comparison. Many know that thinkers in this tradition adopt a rather different approach to Christology. The “Alexandrians,” in sharp contrast to the “Antiochenes,” fix first and last on the single, living subject that is the person of Jesus.⁴⁶ So when they turn to the body-soul comparison they invariably locate the similarity between it and Christ in the way each case is *one* being. Which is to say, as Grillmeier did, that they tend to discern “univocity and not an analogy” in the anthropological comparison.⁴⁷

Theological Studies 56 (2/2005), p. 415-449. As many know, it’s typical of the “Antiochene” method to first establish unwavering laws of nature and *then* proceed to conceiving Christ’s special case; see the classic example of Theodoret of Cyrus’s *Eranistes*, on “the immutable” (dial. 1), “the unmixed” (dial. 2), and “the impassible” (dial. 3).

⁴⁴ See: Leontius of Jerusalem, *CN* I.50-1; D. Krausmüller, “Conflicting Anthropologies”, p. 423.

⁴⁵ See: Babai the Great, *Liber de unione* 3, 9, cited by D. Krausmüller, “Conflicting Anthropologies”, p. 429.

⁴⁶ So, e.g., R. A. Norris, “Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria”, in: *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (2/1987), p. 341-367, esp. the main thesis at 267: “what governs Cyril’s thinking is essentially a pattern of christological predication and not a physical model... If the soul-body analogy is referred to not to establish the manner of the ‘composition’ of the God-man, but rather to intimate that as the soul is the single principle of life in the human animal so the Logos is the one ‘subject’ in Christ, then this metaphor can subserve the aim of Cyril’s exposition... physical models are not explanations at all, but merely pointers to the truth intimated in the sound form of christological words: that to speak of Jesus Christ is to speak of one subject in two distinct ways”. This seems right to me. I would propose that perhaps one way strict miaphysites and Neochalcedonians differ – since they both appear to take over Cyril’s basic methodological intuition here – is that the former remain comprehensively faithful to Cyril while the latter furnish new conceptual material (esp. the nature-hypostasis distinction) to extend Cyril’s insight into new conceptual precision.

⁴⁷ A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 35 and p. 158-159 (for Cyril and Severus), p. 506 (for Apollinarius); see: Apollinarius, *Kata meros pistis*, in: Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und*

Apparently this is just the way Apollinarius understood it. The body-soul comparison is no mere comparison; it reveals the exact way a God-human “synthesis” happens.⁴⁸ For him two things cannot really be one if they bear “complete” principles in themselves. Whatever union these complete natures enjoy, they would always remain really distinct.⁴⁹ What’s needed then is to conceive Christ’s humanity and divinity as in some sense “imperfect” with respect to the whole Christ, just as the body-soul synthesis makes either “imperfect” with respect to the whole human being. The consequent “mixture” of divinity and humanity in Christ is not itself entirely alien to either. They already anticipate each other in their very principles, as it were. Again this is rather like the body-soul synthesis. And again this is just what the “Antiochenes” resist.⁵⁰

For his part, Cyril avoids talk of “mixture” or “incomplete” principles and prefers to speak of the oneness of Christ’s ineffable “synthesis.”⁵¹ But he definitely retains something of the univocal understanding of the comparison. He does so for a reason that recalls Apollinarius: the single subject of divinity and humanity, Jesus Christ, possesses his own natures. They contain nothing “alien” to the whole Christ.⁵² “Ownership” for Cyril is less about the completion of natural principles in a synthetic whole and more about the way Christ makes each of his natures belong to himself without remainder. The Word possesses divinity and humanity as his very own. It’s therefore

Seine Schule I. Texte und Untersuchungen, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1904, p. 178-179.

⁴⁸ P. Stockmeier, “Das anthropologische Modell”, p. 47: “der Laodikener [i.e. Apollinarius] grundsätzlich eine Christologie nach anthropologischem Vorbild entwarf”.

⁴⁹ Apollinarius in *Antir. contra Apollinarem* 39 (Dräseke 388). For Apollinarius’s general christology, see the still useful account by Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*. Translated by Boris Jakim, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans 2008 (1933), p. 2-19; and R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, p. 79-122.

⁵⁰ Apollinarius, *De unione* 5; translation in R.A. Norris, *The Christological Controversy*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press 1980, p. 104: “The same thing [i.e. ‘commingling’] happens in the case of ordinary man, made up as he is of two incomplete parts which together fill out one nature and are signified by one name; for at the same time the whole is called ‘flesh’ without the soul’s being thereby stripped away, and the whole is styled ‘soul’ without the soul’s being thereby stripped away (if, indeed, it is something else alongside the soul).”

⁵¹ See: Cyril, *Ep 46.7 ad Succensum II* (citations from *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Letters 1-50*, trans. John I. McEnerney, Fathers of the Church, vol. 76, Washington, D. C., Catholic University of America Press 1987, p. 201). Severus of Antioch will follow suit; see: *Hom 14* (PO 38, p. 410) and *Hom 38* (PO 8, p. 216-217), cited and discussed at A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 133; see also: J. Lebon, “La christologie du monophysisme syrien,” in: A. Grillmeier, H. Bacht (eds.) *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, p. 443-444.

⁵² Cyril, *Comm. in Iohannem* X.2 (Pusey, p. 543); see: F. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell*, p. 348f.

wrong to conclude that because we can abstract these natures *as if* they were separate from each other, they must actually *be* separate from each other. Just as we say “that the body of each individual belongs to his person, so one must also think about Christ.”⁵³

Cyril makes the point more forcefully and fully across his two epistles to bishop Succensus. Again what’s univocal in the anthropological and christological cases is the way distinct natures form one being who possesses them as his or her own: “For [Christ’s] flesh was his own, just as by all means each one of us has his own body.”⁵⁴ Precisely here he uses, for the first time in his letters, the (in)famous formula he inherited from Apollinarius (though he thought it Athanasius’s): “there is one *physis* of the Word [of God] made flesh.”⁵⁵ He follows right after with the body-soul comparison:

And, if it seems best, let us accept as an example the composition in our own selves by which we are men. For we are composed of soul and body and we see two natures, the one being the nature of the body and the other the nature of the soul, but there is one from both in unity, a man. And because man is composed of two natures, this does not make two men be one, but one and the same man through the composition, as I said, of soul and body.⁵⁶

Cyril thinks both cases involve a mysterious union and that Christ’s case manifests a still greater mystery.⁵⁷ That one of Christ’s natures is divinity itself (rather than just a created soul) does not vitiate the ineffable oneness of the duality presented to our gaze. Quite the contrary: it only intensifies the mystery of the positive fact of concrete union or synthesis. In the case of the body-soul synthesis we divide the natures “merely in thought” (ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις) and “conceive the difference in subtle speculations or the presentations of thought to the mind,” yet we “do not posit the natures one apart from the other,” nor do we “impute to them virtual existence through the division, but we conceive of them as the natures of one man, so that the two no longer are two, but through them both the one living being is produced.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Cyril, *Apol. c. Orient.* 96 (ACO I.5, p. 137; cited in: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 37).

⁵⁴ Cyril, *Ep* 45.4 *ad Succensum* 1 (PG 77, 233A); McEnerney, *St. Cyril*, p. 192.

⁵⁵ Cyril, *Ep* 45.6 *ad Succensum* 1, (McEnerney, *St. Cyril*, p.193); for the misattribution of *Kata meros pistis* to Athanasius rather than to Apollinarius, see: Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, Westminster, MD, Newman Press 1960, p. 140.

⁵⁶ Cyril, *Ep* 45.7 *ad Succensum* 1, (McEnerney, *St. Cyril*, p. 193).

⁵⁷ A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 36.

⁵⁸ Cyril, *Ep* 46.12 *ad Succensum* 2 (PG 77, 245A-B; McEnerney, *St. Cyril*, p. 203): “Ἄλλ’ ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις, καὶ ὡς ἐν ἰσχυαῖς θεωρίαις, ἤτοι νοῦ φαντασίαις τὴν διαφορὰν δεξάμενοι, οὐκ ἀνὰ μέρος τίθεμεν τὰς φύσεις· οὔτε μὴν διαμπαῖς διὰ τῆς τομῆς ἐφίεμεν

So Cyril too can mount an argument *a fortiori*, this time to shore up the ineffable oneness of divinity and humanity in Christ.⁵⁹ The concrete unity is for him the first fact we encounter, the first phenomenon, indeed the very condition for the possibility of any further division *in mente* – just as it is in the case of any body-soul synthesis, i.e. any real human person. No wonder he openly confronts a fundamental fear animating the “Antiochene” approach: when they worry over attributing human weakness and suffering to God, “they speak with undue precision [Περίεργότατα τοῖνυν φασί]...as if they separate [his passible humanity] from the Word and set it apart by itself, so that they mean two and not one.”⁶⁰

Severus of Antioch (*d.* 538 CE) was indisputably the most formidable opponent of Chalcedon and avid appropriator of Cyril’s christology. His miaphysite understanding of the anthropological comparison hews fairly closely to Cyril’s.⁶¹ Severus wants to stress three features of both cases, since both are instances “hypostatic” and “natural” unions. In each case we discern [1] the union of two or more realities, [2] the impossibility of separation after their union, and [3] the preservation of their own natural “property” or “quality” in their indestructible unity – no crass “mingling” here. For Severus this is what it means for body and soul or divinity and humanity to be “in a single nature and a single hypostasis.”⁶²

Severus also reprises Cyril’s *a fortiori* argument by comparison. “We know,” he says in one homily, “that the soul is united to the body by nature” and yet we know not “how.” If we cannot fathom even this natural union of two naturally different realities, why would we expect to grasp the mystery of the divine-human unity in Christ? “If one wants to say ‘how’, this surpasses every word and every thought.”⁶³ Fortunately he does muster a word or two. He specifies in one place, for example, that just as soul and body remain

τὴν δύναμιν αὐταῖς, ἀλλ’ ἐνὸς εἶναι νοοῦμεν· ὥστε τὰς δύο, μηκέτι μὲν εἶναι δύο, δι’ ἀμφοῖν δὲ τὸ ἐν ἀποτελεῖσθαι ζῶον.”

⁵⁹ Cyril, *Apol. pro trium anath.* (ACO I.1.5.18, p. 25-28); so M. O. Boulnois, “La comparai-son”, p. 230: “Selon Théodore, si déjà dans le cas de l’homme, malgré l’unité, on distingue les propriétés alors que les natures de l’âme et du corps sont contemporaines, à plus forte raison doit-on les distinguer dans le cas du Christ. Selon Cyrille, si déjà dans le cas de l’homme, malgré des réalités dissemblables, il y a unité et qu’on ne le coupe pas en deux hommes, à plus forte raison dans le Christ.”

⁶⁰ Cyril, *Ep* 46.13 *ad Succensum* 2, (PG 77, 245B; McEnerney, *St. Cyril*, p. 204); see too of course the famous 12th anathema appended to *Ep* 3 *ad Nestorium*, to which Cyril here alludes.

⁶¹ J. Lebon, “La christologie”, p. 447-450.

⁶² Severus, *Philal.* 42 (CSCO 134.V.213; cited at: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 35).

⁶³ Severus, *Hom.* 58 (PO 8, 219; cited at: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 134); see: *Hom.* 44 (PO 36, p. 96-98).

“whole” and undiminished in their respective peculiar properties and *yet* are also considered “parts” with respect to “the totality of the living being,” in just the same way divinity and humanity in Christ form “a single hypostasis” without collapsing into fusion or mixture.⁶⁴

Had Severus only this to say about the comparison, he would have said little more than Theodoret. But he sharpens Cyril’s single-subject scope when he insists that, given the natural and hypostatic union of two otherwise distinct natures, the composite “whole” receives the entirety of every possible predicate and property and quality as its own, singular, concrete “activity.” “For we say that a man like us is a living being, rational, mortal, capable of reason and knowledge, and because there is one nature and hypostasis from two, the whole living being is said to be mortal, and the whole is called rational.” Of course there’s no “confusion,” he continues, “but the division has been removed, because those things which were different in natural quality do not exist independently, but complete one hypostasis from two.”⁶⁵ The point here is that just as an actual human being possesses discernible, natural “qualities” that might be abstracted and assigned either to body or soul, every concrete activity (ἐνέργεια) is one reality because it is always the act of a single agent and a single, composite, whole nature. And we “see the same in the case of Emmanuel,” Severus concludes, for “just as no-one divides the Word from the flesh, so also it is impossible to divide or separate [Christ’s] activities.”⁶⁶

Soon Severus’s drift toward a univocal comparison with the body-soul synthesis meets challenges from within his own miaphysite camp. If Christ’s two natural properties issue in a single natural activity at the level of the whole (composite) *in just the same way* as the properties of body and soul form a single body-soul activity at the level of the whole human being, then why not concede that, like the human being, this single activity is itself the inexorable expression of a (new) divine-human “nature” or “essence” in Christ? Doesn’t the single activity of body and soul manifest a single composite “nature” called “human,” which, as many have already admitted, resists reduction to either of its integral parts? This is just what the “Antiochene” tradition had long feared – that undue confidence in the body-soul comparison might tempt us to conceive of Christ as a *tertium quid*, neither

⁶⁴ Severus, *Hom.* 70 (PO 12, 38-40; cited at: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 144).

⁶⁵ Idem, *Ep 1 ad Sergium*; citations from Iain R. Torrance (trans.), *Christology After Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite*, Norwich, Canterbury Press 1988, here p. 149.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 153. Monenergism and monothelitism are later permutations of this miaphysite point, namely that in both the anthropological and christological cases there is one *actuality* or *activity* that corresponds to the individual subject. On their similar use of the body-soul comparison, see: K. H. Uthemann, “Das anthropologische Modell”, p. 271-283.

simply God nor simply man nor simply both, and thereby render him unlike either. And it's just this consequence that one of Severus's correspondences, Sergius the Grammarian, wished to propose.⁶⁷

It should be evident by now that in post-Chalcedon christological debate the body-soul comparison comes to exemplify the decisive question at hand: how exactly are these two infinitely different natures really *one*?⁶⁸ The "Antiochene" line, when it admits the comparison at all, treats it as (at best) an analogy which illustrates that even in the case of two created natures that form a single "living being," the duality of natures – body and soul – still remains crystal clear. The "Alexandrian" line tends rather to locate the *tertium comparationis* in the fact that even the duality of human nature only ever appears to us as a synthetic whole, as a concrete body-soul unity composed naturally from two natures which are always really one. Push the univocity too far and you end with an emergent whole that achieves a new "nature" or "essence" – call this "Christ" – just as human nature, considered concretely or abstractly, effects a whole irreducible to either body or soul. It seems obvious, then, that if the body-soul comparison should retain any christological value from a Neochalcedonian vantage, which seeks to avoid either the existential divisiveness of analogy or the essential collapse of univocity, it must discover a novel use to do it.

The novelty will emerge thus: where both types of comparison stress either the similarity or dissimilarity of the natures involved in each case (whether of parts or of the whole), the Neochalcedonian distinction between

⁶⁷ A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 158-159, rightly saw that both Sergius's and Julian of Halicarnassus's proposals were basically different iterations of the same logic: Julian, for instance, draws the conclusion that if Christ's case is really like the human case (where the whole human being receives all the properties of soul and body at every moment of its actual existence), then all the properties of divinity ought to be applied directly to the whole Christ from the moment of the divine-human union. One of those properties is incorruptibility, of course, and so Christ's human body must have been incorruptible from conception; see: Julian, in Severus, *Philal.* (CSCO, p. 319; A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 90). Sergius similarly drew the logical consequences of the "Alexandrian" tendency to conceive the body-soul comparison *univocally*, and so proposed that Christ's oneness must therefore lie in a new species or "essence" (*ousia*) ineffably formed from divinity and humanity. The genius of this proposal is that it avoids the Apollinarian problem of conceiving Christ's parts as "incomplete" with respect to the whole "nature," since Sergius's new "essence" creates the incompleteness of the parts, so to speak, in the very act of completing this unprecedented whole called "Christ". See: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 119. Neochalcedonians, of course, do not accept Severus's moderate miaphysitist use of the body-soul comparison, still less Sergius's. But the idea that the "event" of Christ effected something new, something that in some sense goes "beyond" mere humanity *and* divinity – this idea does find resonance in at least certain Neochalcedonian christologies; see: Maximus, *Amb* 37.8 (PG 91, 1296C-D).

⁶⁸ P. Stockmeier, "Das anthropologische Modell", p. 52.

nature and hypostasis invites new modes of comparison. We'll see, for instance, that in near total opposition to prior comparisons Neochalcedonians discern the greatest dissimilarity between the natures themselves (i.e. between the human soul and divinity).⁶⁹ *Near* total opposition, I say, because this involves no mere negation of the typical types. The natural dissimilarity between the body-soul union and Christ's unity matters far less alongside the Neochalcedonians' simultaneous claim that hypostatic union/identity is not just similar in both cases, but indeed univocal.

Neochalcedonian Novelty

At first blush it might seem that defending Chalcedonian christology against miaphysitism would require abandoning or at least heavily qualifying the body-soul comparison. We've already seen the force it carried for thinkers of the second type. There a univocal understanding tends to preclude all talk of two actual natures in the whole Christ. And the council of Chalcedon does not even expressly summon the body-soul comparison to elucidate its christological definition. It does endorse certain of Cyril's texts as accounts of Chalcedon's "hypostatic union," and here one meets the straightforward comparison, we saw.⁷⁰ But then Emperor Justinian and Constantinople II, who fortify and dogmatize Chalcedon in Neochalcedonian form, seem resolved to avoid this favorite comparison of Cyril even as they defend his singular importance for understanding Chalcedon rightly.⁷¹

And yet Neochalcedonian thinkers did employ the comparison, which subsequently underwent a subtle but significant transformation. Some, of

⁶⁹ Leontius of Jerusalem proves an interesting exception to this trend insofar as he conceives the human soul in an "Origenist" fashion, that is, as already qualitatively divine, differing only in degree from Christ's divinity; on this see: D. Krausmüller, "Human Souls as Consubstantial Sons of God: The Heterodox Anthropology of Leontius of Jerusalem", in: *JLARC* 4 (2010), p. 43-67.

⁷⁰ See: P. Stockmeier, "Das anthropologische Modell," p. 50-51, who also observes that Leo's Tome, which Chalcedon commends along with Cyril's letters, does not use the body-soul comparison at all. But it does appear in Pope Leo's *Ep* 35 (ACO II.4.7): "Cur autem inconveniens aut impossibile videatur ut verbum et caro atque anima unus Jesus Christus et unus dei hominisque sit filius, si caro et anima, quae dissimilium naturarum sunt, unam faciunt etiam sine verbi incarnatione personam? Cum multo facilius sit ut hanc unitatem sui atque hominis deitatis praestet potestas quam ut eam [i.e. unitatem] in substantiis suis optineat solius humanitatis infirmitas." Significant here is that, as P. Stockmeier again remarks, "Das tertium comparationis liegt danach nicht in den Teilen, sondern in dem einen Träger, eben in der Person", p. 51. And so, in both Cyril and Leo we find a fairly clear (even if less precise) anticipation of what I call the Neochalcedonian novelty.

⁷¹ A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 450 notices that Justinian's edict and the seventh canon of Constantinople II omit the body-soul analogy in favor of "synthesis" and in opposition to any idea of "mixture" or "confusion".

course, could use the body-soul union to establish the purely formal point we've seen nearly every side agreed upon: the human being evinces a unity that preserves the essential duality of its parts, and Christ does too.⁷² Neochalcedonians could also readily confess with Cyril that, really, the mysterious union of Christ's two natures is incomparable to any other type of union and "outstrips all human understanding."⁷³ But all the while they were busy refining the basic metaphysical and conceptual concepts at play, especially the fundamental distinction between "hypostasis" and "nature/essence" that Chalcedon obliged.⁷⁴

It's well-known that this distinction was already roughly present in late antique philosophical contexts – particularly in the domain of "logic"⁷⁵ – and was received with special vigor in Cappadocian trinitarian theology. Neochalcedonians saw that when Chalcedon calibrated Christ's unity to "hypostasis" and duality to "nature" or "essence," this reprised something like the famous distinction present, for example, in Basil's *Ep* 214:

Essence has the same relationship to hypostasis that the universal has to the particular. For each participates being through the common principle of essence, and are this or that particular being by the characteristics that cling to it.⁷⁶

Essence names the abstract, universal "what" of an individual whose particular traits mark off its hypostasis, its "this one" or its "who." The "particular" was the obvious acceptance of hypostasis, one all conceded. But, for reasons I defer here, it became clear that this conception was true but insufficient for post-Chalcedon christological demands.⁷⁷ Chalcedon's distinction of hypostasis from nature/essence and its association of the former with Christ's "one" and the latter with his "two" forced a question: if Christ's "particularity" is his two natures' sole mode of union, what exactly is it?

⁷² John Grammaticus, *Apol.* 4.2 (CCG 1, I.2, p. 53); John Maxentius, *Resp. c. Aceph.* VI.11 (CCL p. 85A); see: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 57 and p. 331.

⁷³ John Grammaticus, *Apol.* 4.2 (CCG 1, I.2, p. 54).

⁷⁴ I still think the best survey of what follows, though (unduly) critical, is C. Moeller, "Le Chalcedonisme", p. 696-717.

⁷⁵ Christophe Erismann, "L'Individualité expliquée par les accidents: Remarques sur la destinée 'chrétienne' de Porphyre", in: C. Erismann, Alexandrine Schniewind (eds.), *Compléments de substance. Études sur les propriétés accidentelles offerts à Alain de Libera*, Paris, Vrin 2008, p. 51-66.

⁷⁶ Basil, *Ep* 214 *ad Terentium Comitem* (PG 32, 789A-B) – cited, for instance, by Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* (florilegium), Test. 1; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 180-181, his translation modified.

⁷⁷ See: Johannes Zachhuber, "Christology after Chalcedon and the Transformation of the Philosophical Tradition", in: Mikonja Knezevic (ed.), *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, Alhambra, Sebastian Press 2015, p. 98-106.

Or is that already a misleading statement of the question? Misleading, I say, because Neochalcedonians were clear that a hypostasis is not a “what” at all, since the “what” of something names its essence or nature – the very thing Chalcedonian christology stipulates it not be. In *sensu strictu* a hypostasis is not even the particularity or unique instance *of* a nature. It is not simply the more determinate pole of the universal-particular dialectic (both of which remain natural in quality).⁷⁸ Nor is it the dangling logical remainder at the roots of Porphyry’s Tree.⁷⁹ If hypostasis in Chalcedonian christology must differ in principle from essence/nature and yet be their concrete unity, it must then bear this further feature: “hypostasis,” unlike essence or nature, “does not simply or even primarily signify that which is complete, but that which *exists for itself*, and secondly that which is complete.” Indeed “the nature signifies what *never exists for itself*, but most properly that which is [formally] complete.” For Neochalcedonians (here Leontius of Byzantium) this unique self-subsistence fills out the true “principle of hypostasis” (τὸν τῆς ὑποστάσεως λόγον).⁸⁰

We have here a fairly dramatic philosophical development. If natures no longer subsist in themselves but always occur in hypostases that [1] differ from natures in metaphysical principle and [2] are everywhere the basic metaphysical and existential reality, then we are rather far from either the Platonic realism behind Nemesius’s (or the “Antiochene”) conception of the “mode of union” in Christ or the Stoic-Aristotelianism animating the “Alexandrian” conception of the same. Hypostasis does not reduce to nature or essence – so not Platonism. And hypostasis is itself not even a “first” essence comprised by a “bundle of properties” – so not Aristotelianism or Porphyrian logic either. The mystery of personhood or hypostasis is that, as Chalcedon seems to imply, it is at once the most fundamental positivity – the concrete oneness of Christ’s natures – and yet possesses no formal or essential content in its own principle. The person is, to borrow an expression from Maximus, the “who” that “typifies” the natural activity of that person’s “what.”⁸¹ It’s the mysterious, indefinable, but nevertheless recognizable existential style that only a direct experience of the person can provide and grasp.

⁷⁸ K.H. Uthemann, “Das anthropologische Modell”, p. 232-235.

⁷⁹ Maximus, *Opusc* 16 (PG 91, 204A) and *Ep* 12 (PG 91, 277-279), agrees with Cyril that the person of Christ *as such* cannot be rightly considered an “individual”: his hypostasis, Christ *himself*, does not refer “back to a species or genus” and is not “circumscribed by these according to essence.” Instead he himself makes his essential parts “identical to a supreme degree”; so too Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 5 (PG 86, 1292A-B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 152-155).

⁸⁰ Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 8 (PG 86, 1945A; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 308-309).

⁸¹ Maximus, *Opusc* 10 (PG 91, 136D).

Neochalcedonian novelty in such architectonic metaphysical matters creates a novel use of the body-soul comparison. Through the hypostasis/nature distinction, peculiar as it is, these thinkers identify a new term of comparison in their refined sense of “hypostasis.” The Neochalcedonian (but anonymous) work called *De sectiis*, for instance, faults miaphysite univocity for locating the “similarity” of the cases in the natural whole of the body-soul union rather than where the true similarity lies, namely “in the unity of human nature and *hypostasis*.”⁸² “For Christ’s two [natures],” the author insists, “have the same basic [relationship] with regard to the *hypostasis* as the [human being’s] one nature has to a human being’s *hypostasis*.”⁸³

This also characterizes Leontius of Byzantium’s approach to the body-soul comparison, to which he makes “comprehensive recourse” for the Chalcedonian cause.⁸⁴ If a hypostasis is positively distinct though really inseparable from its nature(s), then we no longer need to think that a just because a hypostatic whole corresponds to a natural whole, the former must *always* imply the latter. That, Leontius argues, discloses the common error of both Nestorians and miaphysites. Nestorians in particular like to emphasize the anthropological paradigm’s “dissimilarity” to Christ. They agree with miaphysites that body and soul are “imperfect parts” with respect to the whole nature, “human,” only to warn against the absurdity that divinity cannot appear imperfect with respect to any higher or more synthetic nature. So the cases are not really comparable.⁸⁵ Leontius ripostes that even in the human case we can easily conceive its “parts” as wholes in themselves. But his better and more striking point is that even Christ’s two, whole, perfect, complete-in-themselves natures are still “imperfect” with respect to the reality of Christ, for Christ comprises neither “naked God or purely man.”⁸⁶ Naturally, the Word is only those two natures. Existentially, though, he’s not reducible to one or the other or to both. In fact per the Neochalcedonian specification that the hypostasis alone “exists in itself” (τὸν τοῦ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν εἶναι), we learn that while “a hypostasis is also a nature,” a “nature is not also a hypostasis.” Natures are “enhypostatic,” they exist concretely only in a hypostasis that subsists in itself.⁸⁷ Therefore Christ’s natures are in a sense “imperfect” with respect to the whole Christ, and yet this entails no

⁸² A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 500.

⁸³ *De sectiis*, VII (PG 86, 1248B); see: A. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, p. 499.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 203.

⁸⁵ Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 2 (PG 86, 1281A-B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 136-7).

⁸⁶ Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 2 (PG 86, 1281C; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 138-139, modified): “ὡς Θεὸς γυμνὸς ἢ ἄνθρωπος ψιλὸς.”

⁸⁷ Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 1 (PG 86, 1277D-1280A; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 132-135).

natural deficiency precisely because the whole Christ is no nature or “species” at all.⁸⁸

Leontius presses further. He does not confine his insight to Christ alone. Rather his christological refinements eventually redound upon an entire metaphysics, a whole conception of the “principle of nature” (ὁ λόγος τῆς φύσεως) as distinct from the “mode of union” (ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἐνώσεως) in all cases, certainly the anthropological one. The immediate effect of this distinction is to forfend any insinuation that the unity of God and humanity in Christ describes a “natural” process of composition. The very heart of the Incarnation, of divine kenosis, is that the union of infinitely different natures wrought in Christ lies *beyond* any natural principle of synthesis (i.e. just as the whole Christ is no mere species). But not just in the case of Christ:

I am so far from saying that God the Word is united to our [manhood] by the law of nature, that I am not even prepared to say that the union of the human soul with its own body is experienced naturally, apart from the divine power. And why do I speak of the soul of man? Since I would not say that even the mixing and blending of the elements happens simply this way, purely by nature, but these things are brought to order and harmony by the divine Word, which is stronger than nature.⁸⁹

It’s the “mode of union,” the hypostatic reality, the very “principle of the economy” of the Word⁹⁰ and *not* what is conceivable by nature that “contains the great mystery of religion.”⁹¹

If we were restricted merely to what can or cannot be true of natures, we would indeed have to choose between a divisive (type 1) or a destructive (type 2) understanding of Christ’s case and our own. The hypostasis-nature distinction provides another way. Unlike abstract natures, we can predicate different and even “contradictory predicates together in the same subject,” precisely because the hypostatic whole does not necessarily imply a natural

⁸⁸ Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 6 (PG 86, 1296A-B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 158-159).

⁸⁹ Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 8 (PG 86, 1940B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 300-301): “Ἐγὼ γὰρ τοσοῦτον δέω εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ ὄρω τῆς φύσεως τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον ἔχειν τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔνωσιν, ὥστε οὐδὲ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτῆς σῶμα συνάφειαν φυσικῶς πάσχειν ἄνευ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως λέγειν ἀνέξομαι· καὶ τί λέγω τῆς ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς; Ὅποτε οὐδὲ τὴν τῶν στοιχείων μίξιν καὶ κράσιν ἀπλῶς οὕτως καὶ μόνῃ τῇ φύσει γίνεσθαι εἴπομ’ ἂν, λόγῳ δὲ μᾶλλον θείῳ καὶ τῆς φύσεως φρεῖττονι εἰς τάξιν ταῦτα καὶ ἀρμονίαν ἀγεσθαι.”

⁹⁰ Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 8 (PG 86, 1237A; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 296-297): “ἄλλος μὲν ὅρος φύσεως, ἄλλος δὲ λόγος οἰκονομίας.”

⁹¹ Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 8 (PG 86, 1940B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 300-301): “Ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἐνώσεως, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὁ λόγος τῆς φύσεως, «τὸ μέγα τῆς εὐσεβείας περιέχει μυστήριον» [1 Tim 3.16]...”

whole (and absolute contraries are essential predicates).⁹² And so even in the case of the body-soul union Leontius sees that *something more* is required for that union's actual existence. The hypostatic whole, which alone "exists in itself," is that *more*. As he says in the block quotation above, a human hypostasis reveals (perhaps most clearly) supernatural "divine power" exactly because the hypostasis not only makes that person's body and soul to be, but *to be one*.⁹³ This then encapsulates Leontius's fundamental insight into the body-soul comparison: natural perfection does not suffice for existential perfection (and, conversely, a nature's imperfection with respect to existential perfection is not therefore a natural imperfection at all). Leontius learned this from contemplating and defending Chalcedonian christology. Now he contemplates the same truth in the case of human beings. Because the new insight applies to both cases in just the same way, the insight itself affords a new (univocal) point of comparison. All this confirms Grumel's observation: "Le moine de Byzance a, pour ainsi dire, créé la métaphysique de l'Incarnation."⁹⁴

Now, I think Maximus received and enhanced this same newly univocal approach, but many commentators have considered him far more restrained than Leontius. Grumel first handed down this judgment, which several others have since taken up.⁹⁵ It's a judgment that focuses almost entirely on Maximus's distinction between natural and hypostatic syntheses. Maximus differs from Leontius, the argument runs, by conceiving the union of Christ's two natures as a pure, hypostatic synthesis in contrast to the body-soul synthesis, which is both hypostatic and natural.⁹⁶

⁹² Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 8 (PG 86, 1944B; B. Daley, *Leontius*, p. 306-307): "Ἡ μὲν γὰρ μία ὑπόστασις καὶ τὸ ἐν πρόσωπον δύνανται ὁμοῦ καὶ ἐν ταῦτῳ τὰ ἐναντία καὶ τὰ ἀντικείμενα κατηγορήματα δέχεσθαι· ἡ δὲ μία φύσις, ὡς εἴρηται, τὰ ἐναντία πεφυκῖα, οὐκ ἐτι καὶ τὰ ἀντικείμενα ἑαυτῇ πέφυκεν· ἐκσταίη γὰρ ἂν πάντως ἑαυτῆς, πρὶν ἢ τοῦτο παθεῖν." Even accidental predication depends on essential predicates, since we define an "accident" precisely *by contrast* to essences: an accident is what is not essential to a thing's substantial identity.

⁹³ K. H. Uthemann, "Das anthropologische Modell", p. 242-243, and esp. p. 247: "In ihrer Synthese [i.e. of body and soul] gewinnen sie am Sein, in der Hypostase werden sie nicht nur geeint, sondern finden ihren 'logischen Ort' als Einzelseiendes, von dem das Eidos ausgesagt wird."

⁹⁴ Venace Grumel, "L'union hypostatique et la comparaison de l'âme et du corps chez Léonce de Byzance et saint Maxime le Confesseur", in: *Echos d'Orient* 25 (1926), p. 394.

⁹⁵ V. Grumel, "L'union hypostatique", p. 401-404; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. B. E. Daley, San Francisco, Ignatius Press 2003 (1961), p. 242-246; Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. II Ed., Chicago, Open Court 1995, p. 101-104; Sebastian Mateiescu, "«Union without Confusion»: Nemesis of Emesa and Maximus the Confessor on the Christological Implications of the Relationship between Soul and Body", in: *Analogia* 2 (1/2017), p. 125-138.

⁹⁶ So L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 102.

There is some initial plausibility to this view. Doesn't Maximus oppose Severus's "one composite nature" of Christ? He does, these commentators note, and for three reasons that should feel familiar to us from Nestorius's dismissal of the body-soul comparison.⁹⁷ Again, a natural synthesis implies a necessary or involuntary process but Christ's kenosis is utterly free. Second, in a natural synthesis the parts come to be in simultaneous relation to one another but Christ's two generations (from the Father and from Mary) are not mutually constitutive in that way. And then, finally, the product of a natural synthesis depends on its parts in order to achieve the natural whole it is, but surely the hypostasis of the Son does not need his natures in order to be the Son he is (at least not his humanity). Christ's becoming does not complete a new species or perfect the nature of the universe through a process of becoming; still less is he perfected in that way.⁹⁸ The Incarnation "excludes any kind of natural synthesis" since "taking on a human nature is not a natural way of completing the divine nature."⁹⁹

That much is true, but not the whole truth. When Maximus denies that the Incarnation is a natural synthesis, he means it is not a natural process.¹⁰⁰ For him a natural synthetic process happens in (at least) two ways. First, in cases when a synthesis arises from two previously existing hypostases such that the consequent "whole" destroys or alters the elements combined.¹⁰¹ Second, we can certainly imagine a natural synthesis *in abstraction*. Yet an abstract synthesis is not a real synthesis. In fact Maximus understands the body-soul relation in an anti-Origenist manner that expressly excludes any idea of a preexistent or self-subsistent abstract "nature" called "human" as such.¹⁰² That's why Maximus can make this amazing claim: "Nor is 'man' a

⁹⁷ See mainly Maximus, *Ep* 13.

⁹⁸ Maximus, *Ep* 13 (PG 91, 517B).

⁹⁹ H. U. von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁰ So K.H. Uthemann, "Das anthropologische Modell", p. 303, is quite correct to say that Maximus's negations here – the Christ-synthesis is *not* a natural necessity, *not* a simple completion, etc.–yield a higher positive view of the mystery: "die Momente dieser naturhaften Synthese sind nur Negativbestimmungen der absolut freien Synthese in Christus; in ihr gelten diese Momente nicht. Insofern kann das Paradigma zur Deutung der christologischen Synthese verwandt werden; in der Negation liegt die Möglichkeit der Bestimmung, wenn auch über den Weg der maior dissimilitudo, die bei Maximus in seiner Redeweise von der paradoxalen Einigung gemeint ist, und zwar im Unterschied zum radikalen Paradoxon, welches jedes Verstehen aufhebt und vernichtet".

¹⁰¹ Maximus, *Amb* 42.9 (PG 91, 1321D-1324C); citations of *Amb Thom.* and *Amb. Io.* are from Maximus Nicholas Constanas (ed. and trans.), *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press 2014 – here vol. 2, p. 136-139.

¹⁰² Cf. Maximus, *Amb* 42.9 (cited in previous note), where he applies the "principle of reciprocal relation" to the concrete body-soul union such their real relation in/as an "indi-

single nature [composed] of soul and body.”¹⁰³ Of course he knows “humanity” is an intelligible, single nature when abstractly considered. But here he’s just rehearsing Leontius’s point that “Christ” is not the name of a species or form. He even appears to extend this insight to every body-soul union: these need something more than natural completion or essential relation – they need an actual hypostasis in order to be and to achieve a real synthesis.

Maximus’s modern commentators have mistaken his refusal to conceive the Incarnation as a natural *process* for a judgment about the *product* that the whole Christ is. And these must differ indeed, for Maximus can say of that process that “we do not know God the Word as identical to his own flesh by nature [κατὰ τὴν φύσιν],” but of that product that “we have known God the Word as identical to his own flesh by hypostasis [κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν].”¹⁰⁴ The *way* Christ is the product, that is, the hypostatic whole of its essentially distinct parts, is just the way we are concrete wholes: “Being [concretely] one in hypostasis applies both to Christ and to our being human.”¹⁰⁵ When we contemplate the human person by Neochalcedonian lights we peer directly into the mysterious mode of Christ’s own union:

And if a certain human being is naturally achieved by a simultaneous conjunction of soul and body for the becoming-to-be of a form [i.e. the human], this occurs on the one hand by the principle of the natural commonality of his own parts, which preserves his consubstantiality with other human beings; and on the other, by the principle of the singularity of these same parts, which ensures his hypostatic difference from other human beings.... Because of the latter [i.e. hypostatic] principle, he differs from other human beings even as he keeps his own personal, indivisible, monadic oneness utterly undifferentiated. And because of the former [i.e. natural] principle, he is naturally united with other human beings even as he preserves the unconfused distinction of his own

vidual subsistence” (*hypostasis*) does not allow for the formation of further hypostases at all. The “moment of conception,” which is when this natural *and* hypostatic relation occurs, is what “contributes to the completion of a single human being” (42.10). Therefore the “natural whole” *qua* form (i.e. as *an* instance of “human nature”) never appears in concrete existence except as a hypostasis (this is the doctrine of enhypostatization, notice), and this *natural* relation is so dependent on the hypostatic particularity that made it real that even upon death the separated soul remains “the soul of a particular human being” (τοῦ τινος ἀνθρώπου ψυχῇ); for this see: *Amb* 7.42 (PG 91, 1101B; M. N. Constanas, *On Difficulties*, vol. 1, p. 138-139).

¹⁰³ Maximus, *Ep* 12 (PG 91, 488B): “Ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ τὸν ἄνθρωπον μίαν φύσιν τὴν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος.”

¹⁰⁴ Maximus, *Ep* 12 (PG 91, 493B-C).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem* (PG 91, 488A): “Ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑποστάσει, ἐπὶ τε Χριστοῦ, καὶ τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀνθρώπου.”

parts' essential otherness. *Henceforth it is clear to us – without any dark riddles!* – in what consists the principle concerning the embodiment, that is, concerning the Incarnation of God the Word, he who is of the one and holy and consubstantial and venerable Trinity.¹⁰⁶

The human hypostatic whole relates to its parts, body and soul, by the exact same principle that the whole Christ relates to his, divinity and humanity. Maximus denies that the mystery of Christ's unity comes by a natural process not primarily to make him an exception to the rule, but rather to make him the universal rule of all syntheses, ours included: "For it is he who is the limit, the law, the principle of every composed nature"¹⁰⁷ – rather like Leontius, I think.

Conclusion

Peter Stockmeier rightly remarked that "die Entfaltung der Christologie Hand in Hand mit der Entwicklung der Anthropologie ging... die mühevoll Diskussion um das Verständnis der Menschwerdung des Logos auch die Einsicht in das Wesen des Menschen schärfte," and that the Chalcedonian definition both exemplified and carried this trend forward.¹⁰⁸ My admittedly selective survey aimed to explain why Neochalcedonians had christological motives for sharpening their insight into the distinction between human nature and human persons. Their novel use of the body-soul comparison showed how.

There lurked always an obvious tension in the "Alexandrian" (type 2) use. On the one hand it emphasizes the natural fittingness or belongingness

¹⁰⁶ Idem, *Ep* 15 (PG 91, 553A-C), my translation and emphasis: "Εἰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἅμα πρὸς εἶδους γένεσιν ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος σύνοδον, ὁ τις ἀποτελεῖσθαι πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος· τῷ μὲν λόγῳ τῆς τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν φυσικῆς κοινότητος, πρὸς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους σώζων τὸ ὁμοούσιον· τῷ δὲ λόγῳ τῆς τῶν αὐτῶν ιδιότητος, πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους φυλάττων ἀνθρώπους τὸ ἑτεροῦπόστατον... ὃ διακρίνεται λόγῳ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς οἰκείας προσωπικῆς ἀδιάρετου μονάδος φυλάττων παντελῶς ἀδιάφορον· καὶ ὃ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐνοῦσθαι λόγῳ πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος, τὴν διαφορὰν τῆς τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν οὐσιώδους ἑτερότητας σώζων ἀσύγχυτον· σαφῆς ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῖν, καὶ μηδὲν ἔχων γριφῶδες ὁ περὶ τῆς σαρκώσεως, ἥγουν ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ ἐνὸς τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου καὶ προσκυνητῆς Τριάδος θεοῦ Λόγου καθέστηκε λόγος."

¹⁰⁷ Maximus, *Ep* 13 (PG 91, 517B): "Οὗτος γὰρ πάσης συνθέτου φύσεως ὅρος τε καὶ λόγος καὶ νόμος, καθὼς ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας δύναμις..."

¹⁰⁸ P. Stockmeier, "Die Entfaltung der Christologie", p. 255. Johannes Zachhuber has recently undertaken to expand this insight into metaphysics proper, arguing that christology profoundly influenced late ancient Greek philosophy just as much as the reverse. Though Zachhuber typically does not treat Maximus's role in all this, I consider my narrower thesis here in basic harmony with his wider one.

of body and soul, and thus their mutual sympathy upon union. On the other hand it stipulates that body and soul are created by God to achieve their synthesis. The tension arises because in Christ, of course, divinity is precisely *not* created, and so it's certainly not created to complete or to be completed by humanity. Cyril's univocity simultaneously seeks concrete fittingness and inadvertently concedes that this cannot be a natural fittingness – for if one of Christ's parts is uncreated, then it can never be made part of a whole outside itself (i.e. “being made” or “not being made” is already a feature of nature). No matter how univocally this type tried to understand the body-soul comparison, it always contained a self-destructive element. It was the natural fittingness of the body-soul synthesis that attracted them. And yet it was this same aspect that they already forfeited in the very idea of Christ's divine, uncreated nature – as “Antiochenes” loved to point out.

When Neochalcedonians developed the non-essential positivity of hypostasis, it allowed them to champion Cyril's univocity and resolve this tension. Now they see that *not even created things – including the body-soul synthesis – are really united because of natural fittingness*. In these cases too it is the hypostasis's distinct, existential positivity that makes them concretely one. In this way the very objection “Antiochenes” constantly raised became the proof of the Neochalcedonian conception of and insight into the hypostasis-nature distinction. Hence Maximus could repeat Nestorius's criticisms of Cyril against Severus's miaphysitism even as he wielded the body-soul comparison more univocally than Cyril ever did. A novel *a fortiori* argument emerges: of course the union of Christ's natures involved no natural process in order to be really one – not even the union of body and soul are *ever* really one simply because they are naturally one!

Neochalcedonian novelty here depends on a christological transfiguration of anthropology, indeed of metaphysics proper. Only after Chalcedon foregrounds the hypostasis-nature distinction did Neochalcedonians discover a new univocal point of comparison between Christ's two natures and ours. Whether we contemplate the concrete identity of two relatively different essences (body-soul) or that of two absolutely different essences (human-divine), the concrete identity itself must occur in and as a singular hypostasis. Just as my body and my soul would not be related or be at all unless they were I and I was they, exactly so Christ's divinity and humanity would not be related or be at all unless they were he and he was they.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Here I allude to Maximus's (for some) controversial claim that not only Christ's humanity but his divinity too is “enhypostatic” (*Ep* 15, PG 91, 557D; *Opusc* 13.7, PG 91, 148) the earlier and anonymous Neochalcedonian text, *De sectis*, also makes this claim (VII.2, PG

In this very precise sense to glimpse the mystery of Christ's person means glimpsing the mystery of every human person – and the reverse.

86, 1241B). – I think this claim is only problematic if we take “enhypostatic” to imply some kind of serial process, as if divinity itself initially enjoyed a sort of “proto-ideal” existence and was “later” hypostasized in the Son (and Father and Spirit). But of course that’s not Maximus’s point here. Indeed that doesn’t even exactly apply to his humanity, since being human inherently includes one’s space-time relations (*diastema*) – e.g. that the Son of God was born in the first century CE, had a certain blood type, lived for a certain amount of years, lived his life within a certain circumference on planet Earth, etc. If being human means being related to time in a distinctive way, then the precise metaphysical status of Christ’s humanity “before” it “was” enhypostasized in the historical Incarnation is obviously a rather vexing question: its “prior” existence cannot be “prior” in the way that, say, the temporal moment prior to his human conception was prior. Becoming temporal (as a human being) is itself not like becoming older in time. This is partly why, I think, John Behr doubts that the very idea of a “pre-incarnate Logos” is appropriate to most (if not all) Greek patristic thought; see: John Behr, *John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel: A Prologue to Theology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2019, p. 19-29.