

Definitions of Hypostasis(ὑπόστασις) and Prosopon(πρόσωπον)

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Source

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Summary of terms

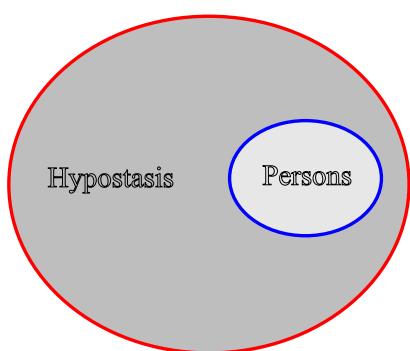
φύσις(nature) can refer to universal or particular. (contronym)

universal nature(οὐσία) that which is common between a set of items.

particular nature(ὑπόστασις) a specific individuation of the universal.

person(πρόσωπον) a rational, self-subsistent hypostasis.

In other words, while all persons are hypostases,
not all hypostases are persons: this is quite
obvious once one understands that hypostasis
stands for 'particular'.



Definitions

φύσις, often translated as “nature”, is a contronym: it can refer to both (a) the universal, i.e. that which is common between a set of items, and (b) the particular, i.e. a specific individuation of the universal. The former, the Fathers term as ousia (essence); the latter, as hypostasis; and φύσις, since it simply means “reality” or “substance” can be taken to mean either.

The distinction between οὐσία and ύπόστασις is the same as that between the common and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal and the particular man. ... We must, therefore, confess the faith by adding the particular to the common. The divinity is common; the fatherhood particular. We combine these and say, 'I believe in God the Father'. ... [Wherefore by this] oneness is preserved in the confession of one Deity, while the individuality of the Persons is preserved in the confession of the peculiar properties understood in each.

— St. Basil of Caesarea, Letter 236

But that the natures, that is, hypostases (φύσεις ἡ γοῦν ύποστάσεις) have remained unconfused, we will know from this: the gold smeared over the wood remained what it was, and the wood was rich in the glory of the gold, but did not cease being wood.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten 11

But now also we will come to what is required, and, we will again say, that 'essence' signifies a generality, and 'hypostasis' a particularity, but 'being' and 'nature' introduce sometimes a general signification, sometimes a partial or particular one. This is stated on account of the varying use that is found in the holy fathers: for you knew both that 'essence' is sometimes employed in the particular signification of 'hypostasis', and occasionally also 'hypostasis' is found employed in place of 'essence'. For this reason we decline to use such a signification as being unscientific.

— St. Severus of Antioch, Letter 5

According to the Philosopher (Metaphysics V), substance is twofold. In one sense it means the quiddity of a thing, signified by its definition, and thus we say that the definition means the substance of a thing; in which sense substance is called by the Greeks {ousia}, what we may call "essence." In another sense substance means a subject or "suppositum," which subsists in the genus of substance. To this, taken in a general sense, can be applied a name expressive of an intention; and thus it is called "suppositum". It is also called by three names signifying a reality - that is, "a thing of nature", "subsistence", and "hypostasis", according to a threefold consideration of the substance thus named. For, as it exists in itself and not in another, it is called "subsistence"; as we say that those things subsist which exist in themselves, and not in another. As it underlies some common nature, it is called "a thing of nature"; as, for instance, this particular man is a human natural thing. As it underlies the accidents, it is called "hypostasis", or "substance."

— Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica 1:29:2A

It is often assumed that a hypostasis is simply a person, and vice-versa: a distinction is often not conceived between both terms. However, the Fathers explicitly distinguished between person and hypostasis: the former is a rational, self-subsistent hypostasis, while the latter - as defined earlier - is simply any individual thing that is a specific characterization of an essence. In other words, while all persons are hypostases, not all hypostases are persons: this is quite obvious once one understands that hypostasis stands for "particular".

If then they describe the Persons as being without hypostasis, the statement is per se absurd; but if they concede that the Persons exist in real hypostasis, as they acknowledge, let them so reckon them that the principle of the homoousios may be preserved in the unity of the

Godhead, and that the doctrine preached may be the recognition of true religion, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the perfect and complete hypostasis of each of the Persons named.

— St. Basil of Caesarea, Letter 214

Therefore, while the nature of the Godhead is simple and uncomposed, it would not be divided by our thoughts into the dyad of Father and Son, if not some difference were posited, I mean, not according to substance, but thought to be external [to the substance], through which the Person [πρόσωπον] of each is made to lie in a peculiar [ἴδιαζούση] hypostasis, but is bound into unity of Godhead through natural identity.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Thesaurus

Union of Particulars

He takes unto himself a body, and that of no different kind from ours. For he did not simply will to become embodied, or will merely to appear. For if he willed merely to appear, he was able to effect His divine appearance by some other and higher means as well. But he takes a body of our kind, and not merely so, but from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and in very truth pure from intercourse of men. .. And thus he, the incorruptible Son of God, being conjoined with all by a like nature, naturally clothed all with incorruption, by the promise of the resurrection. For the actual corruption in death has no longer holding-ground against men, by reason of the Word, which by his one body has come to dwell among them.

— St. Athanasius of Alexandria, On the Incarnation of the Word 8-9

And according to this and only this is the difference of natures, that is, of hypostases [φύσεων ἡ γοῦν ὑποστάσεων], to be understood, for divinity and humanity are doubtless not the same in natural quality.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letter 40, To Acacius of Melitene

His body, born of a woman, is his own, not belonging to anyone else. This is how he was born according to the flesh. Without adhering to the fanciful beliefs of the Greeks, we maintain that human bodies are not born from oak or rock but follow the laws established by nature, created by the Creator himself.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, First Tome Against Nestorius

Do you not shudder, you heretic, when you attempt to use his actions to divide him who is unified by hypostasis and indivisible by grace? .. If Christ has not assumed our flesh in hypostasis, how will he give us the gift of the Spirit? We believe Holy Scripture: When God the Word was pleased to become human, he did not turn himself into flesh but rather united human flesh to himself.

— St. Mark the Monk, On Incarnation 17:1-3, 30:1-5

Accordingly the natural union was not of generalities, but of hypostases of which Emmanuel was composed. .. Following these God-inspired words of the holy fathers, and confessing our Lord Jesus Christ to be of two natures, regard the distinct hypostases themselves of which Emmanuel was composed, and the natural junction of these, and do not go up to generalities and essences, of the whole of the Godhead and humanity in general: for it is manifest that the

whole of the Godhead is seen in the Trinity, and humanity in general draws the mind to the whole human race. How therefore is it anything but ridiculous and impious for us to say that the Trinity was united in hypostasis to the race of mankind, when the holy Scriptures say .. that one of the three hypostases who was rationally and hypostatically united to soul-possessing flesh?

— St. Severus of Antioch, Second Letter to Oecumenius

.for if a mind is the spirit and the spirit a mind, as they also believe, but the soul is another along with the mind and along with the spirit, no longer are two hypostases being combined into a man into one hypostasis, no longer is the soul alone enhypostatic and the body enhypostatic, but we find then four: the mind is one hypostasis, the soul another hypostasis, the spirit another hypostasis, the body another hypostasis.

— St. Epiphanius of Salamis, Ancoratus 77

Now, if Christ is a generic nature, it is clear that he will be predicated of many <realities> that differ numerically, so that his concrete existence will be known only abstractly in the many. And thus he will not be known in himself, in his own distinct hypostasis — that is, he will not be known apart from contemplating those accidents belonging to the individuals under him. For such is the definition and logic of every generic nature. Hence a plethora of Christs would arise before us instead of one, and these would in no sense enjoy identity with either God or human beings - all this thanks to Severus's excessive and feral rage against the truth!

— Maximus the Confessor, Letter 13

What is meant by “Hypostatic Union”?

Post-Chalcedon, which declared that “two natures [exist] in one hypostasis”, the term hypostatic union is often taken to simply refer to the conjunction of two natures within the one hypostasis. However, this is an adulteration of what the Fathers originally taught concerning the union: two natures that are two hypostases (particulars) united, and this is the context for the “hypostatic” union.

If any divide the ὑποστάσεις (hypostases) of the one Christ after the union, connecting them by a connection that is merely one of dignity, authority, or power, rather than by a convergence at the level of a natural union, let them be anathema.

— Third Anathema of Ephesus 431 and St. Cyril against Nestorius, PG 77:122

Since [Theodoret] points out that God's form took upon himself the form of a servant, let him go on and explain whether it was just these “forms” that came together by themselves, quite apart from their hypostases. Well, I reckon that even he would shrink from saying that, for it was not mere resemblances and forms, things with no hypostasis, that conjoined together to bring about the saving union [οὐ γαρ ομοιότητες απλώς ανυπόστατοι καὶ μορφαὶ συνέβησαν ἀλλήλαις καθ' ἐνωσιν οἰκονομικήν]; rather, it was a convergence of the very things themselves, of two hypostases [ἀλλα πραγμάτων οι αυτῶν ή γοῦν υποστάσεων γέγονεν σύνοδος]. Then we can really have faith that a genuine incarnation took place.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Defense of the First Anathema Against Theodoret

One or Two Post-Union?

Since divinity and humanity are particulars, and they united, did they exist as such post-union? If so, there would be a duality of natures post-union, as a certain Latin tradition originating from Tertullian and was proclaimed at Chalcedon 451 would explicate. Yet, this is exactly what Ephesus I and most of the Fathers taught against: there exists one hypostasis and one nature post-union. If that is not the case, and the natures (remember, particulars) remained as they are, the logical implication is that there are four particulars in the Trinity post-Incarnation: the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and the human flesh of the Son.

For, if that which is subject to death were one thing, and that which was assumed by the Lord were another, then death would not have ceased performing its own works, nor would the sufferings of the God-bearing flesh have become our gain; He would not have destroyed sin in the flesh; we who had died in Adam would not have been made to live in Christ; that which had fallen asunder would not have been restored; that which was shattered would not have been repaired; that which had been estranged through the deceit of the serpent would not have been again made God's own.

— St. Basil of Caesarea, Letter 261, To the Citizens of Sozopolis

Let everyone be forced to publicly anathematize the dogmas of Nestorius and Theodore: especially those who say two natures after the union, properly each one working. For of those who are in Germanicia I have found some experienced, indeed refusing to say two sons, but indeed not refusing to say two natures. Wherefore if it be granted, that it may be said and taught by them, that each nature worketh by itself, and this indeed is suffered, but that remaineth impassive, there is no other thing than to confess two sons again, and bring in the parts.

— St. Acacius of Melitene, Letter to Cyril of Alexandria

Wherefore, we say that the two natures were united, from which there is the one and only Son and Lord, Jesus Christ, as we accept in our thoughts; but after the union, since the distinction into two is now done away with, we believe that there is one nature of the Son, as one, however, one who became man and was made flesh.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letter 40, To Acacius of Melitene

For if the union is genuine, there are certainly not two in any way (*οὐ δύο που πάντως εἰσίν*), but one and sole from both is how Christ is understood.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Defense of the Twelve Chapters to the Bishops

For the union (of two) does this: (it) combines to each the things of the other. Because of this, then, being God, he became a human being, in order that a human being might also become God, lifted up towards divine glory by this combination, so as to be a single one and itself, both divinely glorified and suffering what is human. And all who admit the union of the divinity and humanity would agree with us on them! For what has been united is no longer named two but one, [if] by concept you divide again and examine each according to itself. Surely then you undo the union: for it is impossible both to preserve the union and to examine each at the same time according to itself, but what was united came to be one indissolubly and no longer becomes two. .. There were not two things or two natures but what was seen was one and the same thing. The righteous bear witness: ask not the mode of God's miracles.

— St. Theodotus of Ancyra, First Homily at the Council of Ephesus

The things once contemplated two, the economy made one. So then, no longer say two after the indissoluble union. What grace united, let thought not divide. .. For the nature was not changed, but the unity of the economy performed a wonder. Therefore, after the unity of God with man, the Fathers did not conceive two things, rightly calling Jesus the Word of God, and expressing it according to the word of God, they indicate Jesus as the Word seen, not confusing the natures, but showing the unity. [...] For this union of the impassible Word with the suffering human nature was prepared for this purpose. And this is what is meant by “union,” namely that the properties of the united are brought together into one.

— St. Theodotus of Anycra, Exposition of the Nicene Creed 7-13

But since your excellency is inquiring whether it is proper to speak of two natures in Christ or not, I thought I ought to speak on this matter... Considering, therefore, as I said, the manner of his Incarnation we see that his two natures came together with each other in an indissoluble union, without blending and without change, for his flesh is flesh and not divinity, even though his flesh became the flesh of God, and likewise the Word also is God and not flesh, even though he made the flesh his own according to the dispensation. Therefore, whenever we have these thoughts in no way do we harm the joining into a unity by saying that he was of two natures, but after the union we do not separate the natures from one another, nor do we cut the one and indivisible Son into two sons, but we say that there is one Son, and as the holy Fathers have said, that there is one nature of the Word made flesh.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letter to Succensus

But why does [Paul of Samosata] add that the Wisdom was in Jesus Christ like in a temple unless because [he thinks that] Jesus Christ Contained Wisdom and was not united to it in substance? [Why does Paul add this], unless on account of what is written as a statement of God: “They shall be for me a temple and I shall be for them God,” [namely] because he will be like one in another? Just as a dress girds a human, being other to and not the same as the human nor a part thereof, so too would the Word be girded by Jesus Christ as another outside of the Word and not as one united substantially in such a way that God and body, though being two, become one.

— St. Malchion of Antioch, Fragments of the Synodical Leter of Antioch 268

Your story has steps of every size, for every person. To the lowest step I approach, though I presume. Your begetting is sealed within silence: Whose mouth will presume to rush toward it? Though your nature is one, its interpretations are many. [There are] narratives exalted, intermediate, and lowly... Your exalted narrative is concealed beside your Begetter... For if John, that great one, called out, “I am unworthy of the straps of your sandals, my Lord,” Then, like the sinful woman, I will take refuge in the shadow of your garment, dwelling inside of it.

— St. Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns on Faith 10:3-5

Furthermore, the reason for the statements follows, so that he may have said both because he was both man and God.. And because through these higher things he preached about the nature in which he was, [it is] from each of the two separate categories (discretim ex utroque in quo erat naturae genere), namely of God and of man.

— St. Hilary of Poitiers, Tractatus CXXXVII Psalmum 23

..truly the body itself, the flesh itself, the soul itself, the whole humanity itself. He had quickened, not something other than his actual body but his actual body, and united it with one unity, one Godhead: the fleshly imperishable, the bodily spiritual, the gross ethereal, the mortal immortal and never having seen corruption.

— St. Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion I, On Incarnation 4:1

He comes forth, God with what he has assumed, one from two opposites, flesh and spirit, the one deifying and the other deified. O the new mixture! O the paradoxical blending! He who is comes into being, and the uncreated is created, and the uncontained is contained, through the intervention of the rational soul, which mediates between the divinity and the coarseness of flesh.

— St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 30:8

'We too' they say, 'speak of one Christ and appropriately divide the natures depending on what he did.' .. These people! Rectifying the Lord's ineffable make-up! They divide the things that he himself did not divide. He did not hobble our faith! .. Sometimes they divide him who is indivisible and sometimes they join him together, dressing and undressing the Word like a coat that one puts on and takes off. In doing so they are destroying nothing but their own lives. ..how is it that you divide the union in two without understanding by what sort of power the union is effected?

— St. Mark the Monk, On Incarnation 29:1-2, 4-6, 9-12, 35:6-7

Distinction Post-Union

If there are not two natures post-union, but one composite nature out of the two, can we distinguish between that which is proper to one and that which is proper to the other? Yes: we can conceptually distinguish between the divine and the humane, since the natural properties of both remain unconfused post-union.

In all this we do not speak of two, God alone and a man alone (for they are one), but we consider the nature of each conceptually.

— St. Basil of Caesarea, Against Eunomius IV

This objection is yet another attack on those who say that there is one incarnate nature of the Son. They want to show that the idea is foolish and so they keep on arguing at every turn that two natures endured. They have forgotten, however, that it is only those things that are usually distinguished at more than a merely theoretical level which split apart from one another in differentiated separateness and radical distinction. Let us once more take the example of an ordinary man. We recognise two natures in him; for there is one nature of the soul and another of the body, but we divide them only at a theoretical level, and by subtle speculation, or rather we accept the distinction only in our mental intuitions, and we do not set the natures apart nor do we grant that they have a radical separateness, but we understand them to belong to one man...

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Second Letter to Succensus

Hermias: Should you not therefore distinguish in any way? Cyril: Certainly not. And especially not to speak of two after the union and conceive each of them separately. It is necessary to know, as a result, that the mind contemplates some distinction of natures, for

divinity and humanity are certainly not the same thing, but at the same time to admit, concerning these concepts, the both coming together into union.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Christological Dialogue with Hermias the Priest

For the pure, true, and unblended power of the ineffable incarnation allows us to understand in mind the difference of natures and the difference of substance, of those things which are brought together into unity — I mean, namely, the divinity of the Word and the flesh, son of our race and son of our nature, which he assumed from the holy virgin Mary and united to himself hypostatically, showing also the undivided mystery when he disclosed the one perfected from the confluence of the two and the ineffable composite.

— St. Severus of Antioch, Reply to St. Theodosius of Alexandria's Synodical Letter

Natures as Parts of the Whole

For that which is by substance is like a part of the whole individual, who became our Lord through the combination of God and human being, whereas that which is by participation is not like a part of the one in which it exists.

— St. Malchion of Antioch, Fragments of the Dialogue between Paul and Malchion

It is confessed that in him the created is in union with the uncreated and the uncreated is in a mixing with the created, with one nature being comprised from each part as the Word also contributes a special activity for the whole person along with complete deity. The same thing is true in the case of an ordinary man. He is made of two incomplete parts which complete one nature and are shown by one name.

— St. Julius of Rome, De unione corporis et divinitatis in Christo 5; possibly pseudonymous

Believe, therefore, in accordance with what Scripture says, that he came in the flesh, not that flesh came; that he grew weary in the flesh, not that flesh grew weary; that he suffered in the flesh, not that flesh suffered; that he died in the flesh, not that flesh died; that he was crucified in the flesh, not that flesh was crucified; that he rose in the flesh, not that flesh arose; that he was taken into heaven in the flesh, not that flesh was taken into heaven; that he healed in the flesh, not that flesh healed; that he was seated at the right hand of God in the flesh, not that flesh was seated. And, in general, whenever Holy Scripture speaks about him bodily, you cannot show that it is speaking about the flesh as one part of the whole, but rather united; he made the deeds of the flesh his own.

— St. Mark the Monk, On Incarnation 38

For as a man although compounded out of reasonable soul and body, is one and is not divided into two and this whole is called an animal - rational and mortal - albeit really mortal in one part, rational in the other part: thus too Emmanuel, being One [out] of divinity and humanity, whereof each is perfect in itself, is the same God and man, mortal and immortal, in time and before all ages, palpable and impalpable, visible and invisible.

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Against Diodore I

Operation: Theandric?

Now, since it is confirmed by the Fathers that there is one composite nature and the duality is abolished post-union, does he have (a) one divine-human operation the works/effects of which can

befit either or both of the natures, or (b) two, with the Word working what befits it and the flesh working what befits it, as Leo I of Rome declared?

For, even, to speak summarily, He was not a man, not as ‘not being man’, but as ‘being from men was beyond men’, and was above man, having truly been born man; and for the rest, not having done things divine as God, nor things human as man, but exercising for us a certain new theandric energy of God having become man.

— St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Letter 4, To Gaius

Neither was God, who bore and put on humanity, without a share to the principally human passions, nor was humanity, in which he was and through which he did the principally divine works, without a share in these. He was constructed principally as a human being in the womb, and in a secondary sense was God in the womb, existing substantially together with the humanity.

— St. Malchion of Antioch, Fragments of the Synodical Letter of Antioch 268

Or perhaps the latter were easier for Christ to bear, while the first was harder? I think that he who deigned to have one will to undertake all these things also had one and the same strength to endure all these things.

— Statement of Amendment by Leporius, signed by St. Augustine

He taught us to believe in him as the Son of God and exhorted us to proclaim him as the Son of Man. As man he spoke and performed all those actions that are characteristic of God, and then as God spoke and performed all those actions that are characteristic of man, but in such a way that even in this twofold manner of speaking he never spoke without indicating that he was man as well as God. But, while he always reveals the one God the Father and asserts that He possesses the nature of the one God because He was truly born, He is subject to the Father in his dignity as Son and in his condition as man, since every birth must be referred to its author and all flesh must recognize its weakness when compared to God.

— St. Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity 9:5

Then further, it is plain to the fair enquirer that our Lord says many things to men, in the character of man; as for instance, give me to drink (John 4:7) is a saying of our Lord, expressive of His bodily necessity; and yet the asker was not soulless flesh, but divinity using flesh endued with soul.

— St. Basil of Caesarea, Letter 236

Moreover, we confess that in everything which the humanity did, the deity was not separated from it, not even for a small moment of time. And we confess that when our Savior came from heaven and descended into the womb of the blessed Virgin, he joined divinity to humanity through a union, and after the divinity was united with the humanity, after that union in no matter of operation were the two separated, for the two are inseparable.

— St. Julius I of Rome, Fragment 189

The one solution of this logical impasse is the recognition of the true meaning of this mystery: that fear in the face of suffering is a property of human weakness. As the Lord himself says, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” But to endure the suffering that comes from God’s dispensation is a property of the divine counsel and the divine power.

Since in Christ the human intention (*βούλημα*) is one thing and the divine another, he who speaks first does so as a human, saying what is appropriate to the weakness of human nature, as one who has made our sufferings his own; he then adds further words because, for the sake of the salvation of humankind, he wishes that sublime will that is worthy of God to be fulfilled, rather than his human will. When he says, “not my will,” by his words he is referring to his human nature. But when he adds, “your will,” he indicates the unity of his own divinity with that of the Father. Because of their common nature, there is no difference between their respective wills. ... The Lord made his own the lowliness of human fear, both in his words and in his suffering. Thus he showed that he had truly taken on our human characteristics; he confirmed his human nature by sharing in our sufferings.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, Refutation of the Views of Apollinarius

That is why, when he raises the dead, the Savior is found to act not by a word alone or by God-befitting commands, but he rushes to employ his holy flesh in particular as a kind of coworker as well, thus showing that it has the power to give life since it has now become one with him. His body, after all, really belonged to him and not to another. So when he raised the synagogue leader’s daughter by saying, “Child, arise,” he took her by the hand, as it is written. By giving life as God through his all-powerful command and by giving life through the touch of his holy flesh, he displays one joint activity through both (*μίαν τε καὶ συγγενῆ δι’ ἀμφοῖν ἐπιδείκνυσι τὴν ἐνέργειαν*).

— St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John 4:2

And how did the Babylonian flame become dew for the three youths? Indeed, it was flame and became dew, and both these things are revealed by the operation. For, on the one hand, the three youths, being cooled by this, taught that it was dew; on the other, the Babylonians who were burnt by this disclosed that it was also flame.

— St. Theodotus of Ancyra, First Homily 7

Conclusion

The patristic paradigm is consistent: the Eternal Word united to himself a human body, a particular flesh, so that the result is one composite hypostasis and nature out of both. To propose two particular natures in Christ post-union damages not merely our christology, but also our Triadology and soteriology (e.g. how many particulars in Trinity).

Objections

A comprehensive collection/playlist; exposition of the Orthodox miaphysite Christology, refutations and answering common objections of Chalcedonians:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLu_TsnaM3hVCTQ8U3NYbp-mIRBHL4ONlr&si=6vpMTKauifcEZPq

Obj. 1: If Christ is both uncreated and created, and he is a single nature, how can a single nature be both uncreated and created?

This is raised by Leontius, Maximus, and John of Damascus, and posits a very simple rhetorical question: If Christ is both created and uncreated, he needs to possess two natures, and not one, since a single nature (or activity or will) cannot be created and uncreated at the same time. There are a couple of things to note here. One, the physis of Christ is composite: of both divinity and humanity. Thus, his physis is not simply one but composite, and can therefore be both created and uncreated.

Two, if the Chalcedonians do not approve of this point, then it is good to point out that even in Chalcedonian christology, the single hypostasis of the Incarnate Word is both created and uncreated, since it is both divine and human. Going by the logic that two natural properties (created and uncreated) implies two natures, then two hypostatic properties (begotten of the Father and begotten of a virgin) implies two hypostases. We believe that there is one composite nature, out of an uncreated and a created nature, with the properties belonging to both remaining unconfused.

Where then we confess the one out of two, Lord and Son and Christ, and one incarnate nature of the Word himself, we understand the difference as it were in the natural characteristics of the natures from which Christ is. But, if we speak of two natures after the union, which necessarily exist in singleness and separately, as if divided into a duality, but united by a conjunction of brotherhood (if we ought to call such a thing unity), the notion of difference reaches to the extent of division, and does not stop at natural characteristics.

— St. Severus of Antioch, Letter 10, To Eleusinius

Obj. 2: Miaphysitism leads to a divided Trinity, since it posits that Christ has a divine-human nature distinct from the divine nature of the Father and the Spirit.

The Word is homoousios with the Father and the Spirit according to the common formula of the essence ($\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma\tau\circ\eta\circ\varsigma\circ\omega\circ\sigma\circ\alpha\circ\varsigma$), as Basil (Ep. 214:4) and Cyril (Thes. 144:16) state. Since he partakes of two essences, his individual substance, i.e. nature, is one and composite. How does this introduce a division within the Trinity, unless one misunderstands the fact that nature ($\varphi\circ\upsilon\circ\sigma\circ\iota\circ\varsigma$) can signify either the essence or the individual substance, i.e. the hypostasis? The divine ousia of the Word is the same as that of the Father: his hypostasis is not. Let's turn this around. A hypostasis is a single individual substance. To say that an essence which a hypostasis partakes of is not part of its nature, i.e. individual substance, is to say that what it partook of (humanity) is now alien to it. For clarification, what is meant by individual substance is not Philoponus' particular nature (which led him to quasi-Tritheism), but similar to that which is found even in the writings of the Chalcedonian John of Damascus:

And so we speak of perfect individual substances to avoid giving any idea of composition in the divine nature. For composition is the cause of disintegration. And again, we say that the three Persons are in one another, so as not to introduce a whole swarm of gods.¹⁷ By the three Persons we understand that God is uncompounded and without confusion; by the consubstantiality of the Persons and their existence in one another and by the indivisibility of the identity of will, operation, virtue, power, and, so to speak, motion we understand that God is one. For God and His Word and His Spirit are really one God.

Obj. 3: The Composite Model implies change in the Logos.

When parts are said to be ordered to the whole, this is said in two ways: in that parts bear a relation to the whole, and the parts are further perfected in the whole. We deny either in the case of the Incarnation for the Divinity, for as the objection would point out, the Divinity cannot suffer change and gain a real relation nor can Pure Act be further perfected in act. So how then is the Logos said to be a part to the whole? We first inquire into the definition and type of composition.

Composition can be divided into metaphysical and physical composition, where the latter is between principles of physical causality and the former formal causality. The Logos is not a differentia to a genus of humanity, hence the former is excluded. The latter, physical composition, is defined as follows:

(Physical) Composition: the union of really distinct realities [as extremes] with a common telos [final cause] to produce an ordered unity.

The Form [Goodness; telos] ... approaches and composes that which is to come into being from many parts into a single ordered whole; it brings it into a completed unity and makes it one by agreement of its parts.

— Plotinus, I.6.2.18–21

Goodness, or the final cause, organizes the really distinct realities to produce a new unity. Hence the maxim “every part is less than the whole and ordered to it.” This reason this holds is precisely because Goodness is that which brings into union, or finally causes, the parts. This final causation (the good/end) always has a corresponding efficient causation (some actual bringing-about), and this efficient causation (a transient act) is the ground of the relations of ‘parthood’ to the whole.

But look at the implicit assumption that guides this law of composition: that Goodness is always external to the reality, and thus the parts are further extended in act by their union. Because creatures are mixed act and have potency, the goodness of creature is always external to it, and is the guiding principle for any further perfection of act to it. Thus, the law of composition holds unconditionally for creatures precisely because the final cause of every creaturely reality is external to it, and organizes its union with any other creaturely reality such that its final perfection is found in the whole it composes. For this reason the soul is imperfect without the body, the individual man without society and so on and so forth. In created things, parts are incomplete; an outside good organizes them; an agent does the uniting; the parts gain real ties to each other and are made more complete in the whole.

It is also for this reason God is wholly simple and without parts: He has no final cause or goodness external to Himself, for He is Goodness Himself, and thus cannot be extended in act or part. Now, every created good is a participation of the uncreated Goodness, or, every creaturely final cause is a likeness of the uncreated Divinity.

Participation: one shares in the likeness with something else by that thing’s causality.

Thus, the mode of the union of the Divinity and humanity is the created likeness of the uncreated Word Himself, and adds no further perfection to Him but is a new work of the same One. When He unites to Himself His manhood in the Incarnation, the Logos is not further perfected by the union, nor does He gain a final cause external to Himself, but the change lies entirely on the part of His assumed manhood. The Word is still called a part not identical to the whole because the definition of physical composition is satisfied: for two really distinct realities, the Word and flesh, are united by a common goodness to produce a novel ordered unity of the Word incarnate; however, unlike creaturely composites, the goodness which unites the Word and flesh is not external to both parts, but is the very likeness of the Word Himself, the uncreated Goodness and is eminently included in Himself. Thus, the flesh is ordered to the Word, but there is no such ordering in the Word, for it is out of the superabundance of the Word that the union was wrought.

The Divine Word is therefore not extended in act, nor part, nor goodness, and since there is no corresponding addition to the Word finally, He does not gain a real relation of parthood as an accident, which is repugnant to Pure Act. To simply summarize the work done here: the flesh cleaves

by necessity to the Word by His Goodness, and the Word condescends by love to the flesh out of the superabundance of that very same Goodness.

Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become, one with God.

— St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book III, Chapter 18

... in order that by uniting His own power with our mortal body, and by mixing the incorruptible with the corruptible, and the strong with the weak, He might save perishing man ... the thread is the grace which by the love of Christ binds and unites the two in one.

— St. Hippolytus of Rome, On Christ and Antichrist

And look to the Theologian who says:

For He whom you now treat with contempt was once above you. He who is now human was once uncompounded. What He was, He continued to be; what He was not, He took to Himself. In the beginning He was uncaused – for what causes God? But afterwards He was born for a cause – and that cause was, that you might be saved, you who insult Him and despise His divinity because He took upon Him your coarseness and, having united himself with flesh by means of the soul, became human, the earthly God. Our humanity was mingled with and made one with God – the higher nature having prevailed – in order that I too might be made God as truly as He is made human.

— St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 29.19

The ‘cause’ the Theologian invokes is not merely the createdness of the flesh, but as he says “and that cause was, that you might be saved”, or the final cause and goodness of the salvation of men. This goodness, the salvation of man, is not a goodness that the Word lacked [eminently] before He was incarnate, lest one blasphemously say the Word became more loving by His salvation of man, but out of the fullness of His Goodness He was born for your sake, or out of the fullness of His infinite Love He was born for the salvation of man.