

## Original Paper

# Dissolving the Dualism between Λογικά-Άλογα όντα, Rational-Irrational Beings

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### **Abstract**

*Christological perichoresis (Note 1) becomes in my view, the revelation of trinitarian perichoresis for the whole of creation. The problem of dualisms with which feminists try to cope with can be known as a problem between humans and God that results in distorted relationships within our own selves, among humans and between humans, and the rest of creation. I addressed the eco-social problem as a split within our own being of body/mind/soul. The inferiority of women is linked to that of body when compared to soul, and to that of nature as being an object while humans are subjects.*

### **Keywords**

*Λόγος, patristics, Christological perichoresis, rational, irrational*

## **1. Introduction**

The idea of life as Christological perichoresis can be a starting point for all dualistic relationships. It can name an ecological doctrine of creation (Note 2). In and through Christ, the trinity is revealed among us (Note 3). The starting point in salvation economy locates perichoresis in the mystery of the communion of divine and human persons, God and humanity (Note 4); God and creation. Ontology tied to this economy keeps the distinctiveness of persons, rooted in Christ's person. The trinitarian perichoresis is realized in the co-inherence in Christ of the human and divine natures as "relation of all relations".

## **2. Patristic Ideas Related to Christological Perichoresis**

*Λόγος, Word, λόγοι words (Note 5)*

A patristic holistic idea that opens up a cosmic Christological perichoresis uniting creation, incarnation and recreation is met in Maximus' the Confessor theology of Λόγος-λόγοι. Λόγος, who is identified with Christ, as the origin of creation and revelation through whom all "things came into being"; salvifically is

the re-creator of the world. To those who believed in him, he gave the right to become children of God (Note 6). Λόγος is the proof of the reforming reality of God's presence in creation that communicates to the creatures the ability to commune with God and one another. We realize each being as a λόγος existing in communion with the Λόγος, and all λόγοι. Beings are the result of the creative act of God. We cannot survive as self-existent beings, cut off from the Creator and other beings. Any configuration in creation is elicited by the Λόγος who offers the milieu for all communication in the world (Note 7).

Maximus refers to cosmic interrelated beings, as well as to relatedness as a religious experience of union with the divine and the whole world. God brought into being, upholds, and encompasses all that exist, as their cause, origin, end and origin of relatedness, uniting all that differ in nature and leading them to common being. All come into being, receiving their nature according to the relationship and care of the only origin and cause who is God (Note 8). Maximus uttering the truth of God as transcendent yet immanent, as beyond yet everywhere present, filling everything, thought in terms of Λόγος-λόγοι (Note 9). Λόγος has many meanings in Greek, all used for Christ the Λόγος: word, reason, cause, meaning, possibility to communicate and relate. Christ the creator Λόγος has implanted in every being a λόγος that is God's intention, its inner being that makes it itself and draws it toward the creator Λόγος. By virtue of the indwelling λόγοι, each created being is not an object but a λόγος, addressed to the world by Λόγος, as a unifying cosmic presence (Note 10). If the world is the trinity's manifestation of the creative inner principle of Λόγος as "λόγοι", the wisdom revealed in creation confirms empirically, the creative presence of Λόγος in all "λόγοι" (Note 11). We are directed through the λόγοι to the cause, passing over the dispersion of cosmic λόγοι (Note 12). Λόγος binds all into harmony. To experience λόγοι as communion with all beings, we must stop subjugating other beings to our use, converting from our self-centred relations with God and the λόγοι and instead nourish mutual healed relations. Everything interacts with all else at all points, in all conditions, as God's creative, communicative Λόγος, within creation as "λόγος".

The truth of the λόγος depends upon love, not upon a rational objective, conceived by itself. This identifies the λόγοι of things with the loving will of God (Note 13). God created beings as realizations of the will of God's love that unites beings revealing their meaning. The meaning of created beings and the purpose of history are the incarnate Christ, the truth unfolding the will of God's love, leading created beings into communion with God's life, to know both Christ and themselves within this communion-event. Truth removed both from its Platonic immutability and the necessity of Aristotelian constancy is not dispelled platonically neither is it transformed into more inherent in nature (Note 14).

According to Maximus, if humans are created in the image of God the Λόγος, this is manifest in that they are λογικοί-rational. If humans are λογικοί, they can discern the λόγοι of creation that is the depth of meaning in creation. Because of their sin, humans fail to find meaning. The Λόγος Incarnated renews humanity as a bond of the cosmos from within (Note 15). The renewed ones can discern the λόγοι of creation and see the cosmos as God intended it to be. Maximus unfolds the role played by humanity both reflecting the cosmos in itself and fulfilling this role by interpreting the cosmos.

A Christian scientist can realize that his/her work may help to free nature from its subjection under destructive technology. The truth of Christ liberates humans from our desire to dominate nature, aware that the communion with divine life (Note 16) extends to the entire cosmos. Yet in my view, Platonic dualistic ideas are traced in Maximus' work when he views humans as λογικοί-rational beings, while the rest of the λόγοι and creation as λόγος are for him irrational. According to Maximus, humans' high calling is as "priests of creation", referring the creation back to the creator and representing the whole creation (Note 17), while setting loose "the dumb tongue of creation". We thank God in doxology on behalf of all creatures. In Gregory's of Nyssa work, such Platonic ideas can be traced when according to him, while two natures-the divine incorporeal and the irrational of brutes-are separated from each other as extremes. In the compound human nature, we may see a part of each of the natures: of the divine, the rational and intelligent element; of the irrational, our bodily form and structure (Note 18). Cyril of Alexandria relates humans with the animals when he says that humans are intelligent animals filling somehow the gap that the concepts of λογικός άνθρωπος-rational human being and άλογη κτίση-irrational creation produce (Note 19). Feminists critique this model of humans as creation's priests because it reinforces patriarchy and anthropocentrism. This is the same androcentric-social domination of the priesthood from which women in most of the churches are excluded and out of which comes environmental degradation (Note 20). If the relations of the λόγοι that Creator Λόγος implanted in every being spring and end in God the Λόγος, then the incarnation of the Λόγος becomes non-anthropocentric, but also a cosmological, ecological event. For the fathers, incarnated Λόγος in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Note 21) becomes a λόγος-a creature to recreate all λόγοι-the entire creation. Ecology shows the interplay of interrelationships as a feature of cosmogenesis. Λόγος represents the cosmic mystery, as a web of relational life. Only in the Christological context does perichoresis strive for dialogue in all directions and times, capturing the relations between the divine persons and the entire creation through incarnate Christ (Note 22). Applying perichoresis to Christology, the interchange of the spoken word and the idea it expresses is revealed (Note 23). To God's re-creation, an Christological perichoretic dimension is added: Λόγος re-creates λόγοι (Note 24). "Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation... all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Note 25).

Of this inclusive passage, the ecological promise has not been explored in depth. The phenomena that followed the death of Jesus and a widening of the meaning of λόγοι as not only human, challenge theological exegeses that see the cosmos as irrational nature only of human consciousness (Note 26). Ecofeminists see domination as a core phenomenon at the ideological/material root of the woman/nature nexus rooted in Plato's ideology and based on the control of reason over nature (Note 27). The theoretical work opens up the values hidden in worldviews. We need to question them; to know patriarchy, domination, nature's oppression and their interconnections is to open up the possibility of dismantling them by denunciation (Note 28).

By the second century, Christianity was struggling against Gnosticism to regain the view of nature as God's good creation. Irenaeus was combating Gnostic anti cosmism (Note 29). In cases, Christianity, influenced by Neoplatonism, imbibed the platonic eschatology of the escape of the soul from the body and its return to a world outside earth (Note 30). Christian theology is somehow responsible for overriding the economies of our countries' model starting with the industrial revolution, through colonialism, and now touched by globalization. This has to do with cultural values, worldviews, and faith understandings. Still limited is our accusation against materialism and consumption that cause ecological problems. Theological thinking on the eco-crisis has been done from the view of human supremacy among the species. Talking about responsibility rather than domination, our approach is still anthropocentric.

Contemporary theology emphasizes divine presence in creation and stresses the unity of humanity and the cosmos. Agreed upon statements and official pronouncements are often prone to more anthropocentric language: Humanity is superior to the rest of creation, which exists for humanity's sake but not vice versa (Note 31). According to Elizabeth Theokritoff, this kind of anthropocentrism is not the same as "only humans count" for according to our physical being, we are part of an ecosystem. Theokritoff claims that from the "web of life" we are a strand "picked out" as a creature set apart, endowed with the image of God (Note 32). In my view, her claim is a dualistic discrimination against the other dimensions of our being. Our whole being is a member of an ecosystem, not just our physical being. Though Theokritoff considers interrelatedness as a feature of all the creatures, she insists on the Platonic dualism of rationality as superior to physicality. If humanity has a mediating role between God and creation and if the actualization of God's image in creation (Rom 1.20) depends on humanity, then creation has a mediating role between God and humanity and the actualization of God's image in humanity depends on creation (Note 33).

By breaking open this conceptual cage, feminist theology provided critical grounding for ecotheology. Listening to God's word and reading scripture from an ecotheological view reveals new insights (Note 34). Every being is valuable before God, as God created it; the whole "web of life" forms a unity where each being has a place. Ecofeminist theologians analyze and criticize past models suggesting new metaphors to express the relation of God to the cosmos (Note 35). We are trapped in our own cultures exalting comparison, competition, and antagonism. Maybe the most destructive form of dualism in relation to our perception of nature was a result of mechanism, where the earth was seen as a machine, God as its designer, and humans as created to run the machine for their use (Note 36). The problem of dualisms must be seen as one of distorted relations between humanity and God and between humanity and the rest of creation.

Ecofeminist theologies use gender and ecology as modifiers for a holistic theological understanding of reality (Note 37). We need Christian worldviews to open up our knowing to the infinite dimensions of reality and conversion to new earthy-cosmic relations. The healing power flowing from the incarnation is given a cosmic dimension illuminating all, from the trinitarian mysteries, through the cosmic glories, to

the soul's depths (Note 38). Challenging the dualism: λογικοί-rational for humans and άλογη-irrational for creation and non-humans, we must hear the λόγοι of creation, widening their meaning to include the wide range of meanings of λόγος in the Greek language. Λόγος incarnated spoke to creation as λόγος and to its beings as λόγοι; they responded as beings of an organic, alive cosmos.

We are called to regain the silenced λόγοι of the earth community; as human λόγοι we are called to come into a mutual, not one-sided dialogue with non-human beings as λόγοι. United in Christ we can surpass all dualisms as all that exist, human or non-human λόγοι are manifestations of the creative inner principle of Λόγος. If God created the cosmos through God's Λόγος, this does not reflect the eternal forms where beings participate, as in Plato's world. The λόγοι express the divine will. The dynamism in Maximus' conception of God's relationship to the cosmos through the λόγοι is lacking in Plato's world (Note 39). Yet we cannot trace in Maximus' view the idea of dominion or anthropocentrism as utilitarianism or exploitation. The world of the λόγοι is alive. By analogy, we affirm panentheistically the perichoresis of the divine and the created as reciprocity of God and the world. Even in panentheism Christological perichoresis proceeds from the divinity (Note 40). In the trinity, opening itself towards the world and in Λόγος becoming a creature (Note 41), we meet the power of the incarnation as divine Christological perichoresis towards creation. The idea that prior to Christ's advent in the flesh, the Λόγος is present to be known by the entire creation reveals Incarnation as cosmic contextualization (Note 42). In the Word made flesh, we see Λόγος the creator entering the "web of life" he created, as a creature to save the entire web from corruption and death and unite all λόγοι (Note 43) in Him (Note 44). Everything is sacred (Note 45), since the Λόγος created it as being from non-being, as latent-non spoken into a spoken λόγος. We live in an open system as all beings are interrelated between them, depending on the creator, origin and source of all life.

### 3. Epilogue

The study of the cosmos in the context of the science-religion dialogue uncovers the cosmic features that manifest the creator Λόγος and means the praising of the creator. We discuss patristic ideas related to Christological perichoresis as Λόγος-λόγοι that show the interrelatedness of God and creation which could widen its meaning even further in our era. The effects of the hypostatic union in Christ between creator and creation extend through the cosmos (Note 46). God created all that exist, making them tunable between them and with God as relation of origin (Note 47). The self-emptying of God in Christ questions all constructions about the Trinity, as time-space bound (Note 48). An eco-theological view of creation brings hope for humans as co-members of the cosmos.

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## Notes

Note 1. The noun περιχώρησις names the dynamic process of making room for another around oneself, or to extend one's self round about. August Deneffe linked perichoresis to the stoic concept of mixture that means a complete mutual interpenetration of two substances that preserves the identity and property of each intact. In the Stoic vocabulary the verb χωρεῖν includes “go”, “extend”, “contain”; it was often used to show this kind of mixing. Perichoresis was contextualized from an ancient Greek cosmological, mechanistic context into the Christian, Christological trinitarian contexts. The concept of perichoresis was attempting to express the mutual indwelling or co-inherence in Christ, of the incarnate Λόγος of both human and divine natures. Later, the fathers described the triune relationship of Father, Son and Spirit as perichoresis. This concept expressed how the unity and distinction are combined in the persons of the trinity, in the natures of Christ, as well as in creation as reunited with God.

Note 2. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1997), pp. 15-17.

Note 3. Col. 1.17.

Note 4. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), pp. 270-277 gives as paradigm McFague's theology. McFague seeks mutuality between God and the creature with the model of Friend-Friend, Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 157-180.

Note 5. This article draws from my doctoral dissertation: I. Sahinidou, *What Hope for the Suffering Ecosystems of our Planet? The Contextualization of Christological Perichoresis for the Contemporary Ecocrisis* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2014).

Note 6. Niels Henrik Gregersen, “Three varieties of Panentheism”, Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Ed.) *In whom we Live and Move and Have Our Being* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), pp. 25-26.

Note 7. Gregersen, “Three varieties of Panentheism”, p. 26.

- Note 8. Σωτηρόπουλου, *Η Μυσταγωγία του Αγίου Μάξιμου του Ομολογητού*, 1993, σελ. 151-152.
- Note 9. For an introduction to Maximus the Confessor see Louth, Andrew: *Maximus the Confessor The Early Church Fathers* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- Note 10. Kallistos Ware Bishop of Diokleia, “God Immanent yet Transcendent: The Divine energies according to Saint Gregory Palamas” Clayton and Peacocke (Eds.), *In Whom We live an move and have our Being* (Michigan: Wim. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 2004, p. 160.
- Note 11. Keselopoulos quotes from Gregory of Nyssa: Anestis Keselopoulos, *Man and the Environment* (New York: St Vladinir’s Seminary Press, 2001), translation from Greek by Elizabeth Theokritoff, pp. 103-110.
- Note 12. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 113-115.
- Note 13. Quaest. Ad Thal. 60.
- Note 14. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 96-98.
- Note 15. Andrew Louth, “The Cosmic Vision of Saint Maximos the Confessor”, Clayton and Peacocke (Eds.), *In Whom We live an move and have our Being*, p. 189. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, p. 68.
- Note 16. II Peter 1:4.
- Note 17. Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (USA: Orbis Books, 2000), pp. 238-242.
- Note 18. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Making of Man*, PG 44.177-185.
- Note 19. Cyril of Alexandria, *Genesis Glaphyra*, PG 69.20.
- Note 20. Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics*, p. 238.
- Note 21. Col 2. 9.
- Note 22. Boff discusses the idea of trinitarian perichoresis as striving for dialogue in all directions, at all times capturing the relationship amid the divinity and the entire creation. I have argued that this can be offered only by the Christological perichoresis. Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Boff, Leonardo: *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), pp. 24-25.
- Note 23. Μάξιμος ο Ομολογητής *Maximi Disputatio cum Pyrrho* PG τ.91, 187 σελ.337.
- Note 24. Nestorians wanted to hold the natures apart by placing the two natures alongside each other, in the one Person of Jesus of Nazareth, Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1983), pp. 144-150.
- Note 25. Colossians 1: 15-17.
- Note 26. Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994), p. 4f.
- Note 27. Val Plumwood, “Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics”, *Ethics and the Environment*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 119-152.
- Note 28. Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, p. 61.
- Note 29. Ειρηναίος, “Έλεγχος και Ανατροπή της Ψευδωνύμου Γνώσεως” σε *Βιβλιοθήκη Ελλήνων Πατέρων και Εκκλησιαστικών Συγγραφέων Μέρος Α΄ 5*, Έκδοσις της Αποστολικής Διακονίας της



Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος, Αθήναι, 1955, σελ. 93-139. For a discussion on Irenaeus Bishops of Lyon on his work: *Against heresies* see in: Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep*, pp. 49-56.

Note 30. Summers Montague, Ed. 1928. *Malleus Maleficaru* (London: J. Rodker). Cited in: Radford Ruether, “Ecofeminism Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature”, pp. 13-20.

Note 31. See proclamations of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew “Πατριαρχικά μηνύματα Οικολογικά Κείμενα-Διακηρύξεις, patriarchal messages, Ecological texts, Declarations” in Κωνσταντίνος Β. Ζορμπάς, *Εκκλησία και Περιβάλλον*. The model of humanity as “priests of creation” is also met in: “Sacrament/Priest” in Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (New York: Orbis, 1996), pp. 238-242. Also in Metropolitan John (Zisioulas) of Pergamon, “Creation Theology: an Orthodox Perspective” in Vischer (ed.), *Listening to Creation Groaning*, pp. 90-104.

Note 32. Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Living in God’s Creation, Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009), pp. 259-262.

Note 33. Philip Sherrard, *Christianity Lineaments of a Sacred Tradition* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), pp. 242-244.

Note 34. David G. Hallman, “Beyond North/South Dialogue”, in David G. Hallman (Ed.) *Ecotheology Voices from South and North* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books WCC publications, 1994), pp. 5, 6.

Note 35. Sallie McFague, “An Earthy Theological Agenda” in Carol J. Adams (Ed.), *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993), pp. 84-98.

Note 36. Norman C. Habel, The Earth Bible Team “Guiding Ecojustice Principles” in Norman C. Habel (Ed.), *Readings from the Perspective of Earth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 41.

Note 37. Sallie McFague, *The Body of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), pp. 1-2.

Note 38. Louth, “The Cosmic Vision of Saint Maximos the Confessor”, Clayton and Peacocke (Eds.), *In whom we Live and Move and Have Our Being*, pp. 194-196.

Note 39. Ibid, p. 189.

Note 40. Mary the mother of Jesus is what humanity offered to Christology: if there is a movement from the side of humanity for the Incarnation of Christ and the meeting point between humanity and God that was done by and in the form of a woman. Yet Mary is a creature and her gift to Christology becomes derivative. She offers herself as a λόγος to Λόγος her creator. In my view, her offer could be known as a *kenotic* human respond to God’s calling.

Note 41. Ιωάννου Δαμασκηνού, *Έκδοσις Ακριβής της Ορθοδόξου Πίστεως*, Δ’ 18, *Κείμενο-Μετάφραση—Σχόλια* Νίκου Ματσούκα (Θεσσαλονίκη: Έκδοσις Π. Πουρνάρα, 1989), σελ.402,4,6.

Note 42. Sherrard, *Christianity Lineaments of a Sacred Tradition*, pp. 56-62.

Note 43. Chris Clarke, *Living in Connection, Theory and practice of the new World-view* (UK: Creation Spirituality Books, 2002), pp. 105, 177.

Note 44. Ephesians: 1.7-12, Colossians: 1.20.

Note 45. Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. 29.

Note 46. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, Cited in Verna Harrison “Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers”, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 35(1991), pp. 53-65.

Note 47. Σωτηρόπουλος, *Η Μυσταγωγία του Αγίου Μαξίμου του Ομολογητού*, σελ. 150.

Note 48. Mary C. Grey, *Sacred Longings: Ecofeminist Theology and Globalization* (London: SCM Press, 2003), p. 76.