

ABELARD: THEOLOGIA CHRISTIANA

Book III (excerpt)

[3.138] Each of the terms ‘same’ and ‘diverse’, taken by itself, seems to be said in five ways, perhaps more. One thing is called the same as another either (i) according to essence or according to number; (ii) the same in distinctive property (*proprietas*); (iii) as the same in definition; (iv) the same in likeness; (v) the same for unchangeable. We say ‘diverse’ contrariwise in as many ways, or perhaps more.

[3.139] We call one thing *essentially the same* as another where there is numerically the same concrete object (*essentia*), namely such that the one and the other are numerically the same concrete object. For example, the sword is numerically the same concrete object as the blade;¹ substance and body as animal or man or even as Socrates; something white numerically the same as something hard. (It’s true that substance is this body or this animal, though not every one.) All these things that are essentially the same are called *numerically the same* for the following reason: since they are each the same concrete object, the number of things cannot be multiplied in them, nor computation derived from the distinctness of things, so that ‘one’ or ‘two’ and so on is said of them. Number exists only in the case of distinct concrete things, that is, in things that are so completely diverse that not only is this one not that one, but neither is the one part of the other, nor any part of the one also part of the other. That is, neither of them is a part in the quantity of the other, nor do they share the same part.

[3.140] Something is called *the same in distinctive property* as another when one partakes in a distinctive property of the other, as for instance something white does of something hard, or something hard does of something white. For something white partakes in hardness, which is the distinctive property of something hard – which is to say that something hard is white – or, conversely, something hard of something white. Now some things are essentially the same and still they are distinguished by their distinctive properties, namely because the distinctive properties remain so completely unmixed that the distinctive property belonging to one isn’t partaken in by the other at all, even if the substance of each were completely the same numerically. For example, in this waxen image, this wax (*i. e.* the matter itself) is numerically the

¹ The Latin terms *ensis* and *muco* are exact synonyms.

same as the materiate,² yet the matter itself and the materiate do not share their distinctive properties in this case. On the one hand, the very matter of the waxen image is not the materiate, *i. e.* the wax itself is not something made out of wax. On the other hand, the materiate itself is not the matter in this case, *i. e.* the waxen image is not the matter of the waxen image, since clearly nothing is in any way a constitutive part of itself or naturally prior to itself. Thus the matter of the waxen image and the materiate out of the wax are unmixed in their distinctive properties, despite being numerically the same concrete object. Indeed, the very matter of the waxen image and the materiate itself, as the wax itself and the waxen image itself [respectively],³ are the same wax, namely this wax. But still, in this case the materiate itself is never the matter, nor is the matter itself the materiate, even though it is this thing that is the materiate. Furthermore, it pertains to the distinctive property belonging to matter to precede the very materiate itself that is made out of it, but it pertains to the distinctive property belonging to the materiate to follow and be posterior [to the matter].

[3.141] Thus the very distinctive property belonging to matter is the priority according to which it has the feature that something materially comes to be out of it. Conversely, the very distinctive property belonging to the materiate is posteriority. The distinctive properties themselves are therefore unmixed by predication, although the items characterized by the distinctive properties, so to speak, are predicated of the same thing mixedly. For it is one thing to predicate the form, another to predicate the *formatum* itself (*i. e.* the very thing subject to the form). Indeed, if I were to say:

The waxen image is prior to the wax

i. e. the waxen image has priority with respect to the wax, then I connect and predicate the form itself, and what is said is false. But if I were to say:

The waxen image is first wax

i. e. the waxen image is some thing that is first wax, then I connect and predicate the *formatum* itself, and the proposition is true because the image is a

² The terms *materiatum* and *formatum* (see §141 below) had a dual use: they refer to either (a) that which comes to be out of the matter or that which comes to be out of the form, respectively, and in this sense each picks out the whole composite; (b) that which is enmattered, *i. e.* the form, or that which is informed, *i. e.* the matter. Since Abelard identifies the materiate of a waxen image as the waxen image itself, *i. e.* the composite, he must be using the first sense. Furthermore, Abelard says that matter has the feature that something materially comes to be out of it – the materiate – which must be the composite.

³ Alternatively: “The very matter of the waxen image and the materiate itself, just like the very wax and the waxen image itself. . .”

body that is first wax. In this way, too, Socrates does not have everlastingness, *i. e.* he does not last forever, even though as this body he is an everlasting thing.⁴ Now that we have pointed out which things are diverse in distinctive properties, it is contrariwise clear which things are the same by the agreement of distinctive properties.

[3.142] Among these things that are called the same essentially or in a distinctive property, some things are also *the same in definition*, *e. g.* sword and blade, Marcus and Tullius, and any things that have exactly the same definition. Not only is a sword a blade and a blade a sword, but also it is a blade in that it is a sword and conversely, so that they ought to be fixed by exactly the same definition, since the express and proper being of the one is the same as the other. Moreover, Boethius takes ‘same’ in this way when he says that a question about the definition is a question about the same thing, as for instance when it is asked whether the useful is the same as the virtuous; he says (*De top. diff.* 1178C):

Things are the same whose definition is the same, and things are diverse whose definition is diverse.

[3.143] We take ‘definition’ here as what fully expresses the sense and distinctive property belonging to what is defined, and in no way exceeds the meaning of the name or is exceeded by it, *e. g.* if someone defining body were to say that it is corporeal substance, not colored substance. Although the definition ‘colored substance’ is suitable to all and only bodies, just like the former, nevertheless it doesn’t reveal the sense and meaning of the name ‘body’ as the former does, because this name ‘body’ doesn’t determine color (which is an accident to body) as it determines corporeality (which is substantial to body). Nor does the latter definition then illustrate what the distinctive property belonging to body requires, namely *qua* body, as the former does. Therefore, to say that sword and blade are the same in definition is as if to say: the same concrete object is a sword and blade such that insofar as it is a sword, it requires only that it be a blade, and, conversely, that not only is the same concrete object a sword and blade but also being a sword is exactly the same as being a blade. Hence those things are called the same in definition that are so joined together that not only is the one the other, but also insofar as it is the one, it requires only that it be the other, and conversely. And substance and body, or something white and something hard, cannot be called the same in this way, even though they are essentially the same.

⁴ Whereas the organic body may disintegrate, the material elements that make up the organic body never cease to exist; they are simply recombined. Hence Socrates construed only as a body is “an everlasting thing” (*res perpetua*).

Therefore, all things that are the same in definition are essentially the same, but not conversely.

[3.144] It's customary to take the pronoun 'same' relatively only according to the two significations mentioned above, that is, either according to identity of number or according to identity of definition. For there are two senses when we say:

A woman damned the world and the same saved it.⁵

One sense is false, if the relation were to come about regarding numerical identity, namely such that numerically and personally the same woman is understood both to have damned and to have saved the world. The other sense is true, taking 'same' as regards the identity of definition, namely such that it signifies as the name 'woman' simply, repeated so: "A woman damned the world and a woman saved it," which is true according to Eve and Mary [respectively].

[3.145] Any essentially discrete things that are like each other in something are called *the same in likeness*. For example, species are the same in genus, individuals are the same (or 'one') in species, and any given things are called the same by agreement in something, that is, alike. Accordingly, Porphyry says (*Isag.* 12.18-19):

Many men are one by partaking in the species, whereas what is one and common is many with respect to particulars.

[3.146] We even say 'same' for what is unchanged. For example, God is always the same; He is never changed or altered in anything, since the nature of divinity never has anything in itself that it sometimes lacks, or lacks what it has.⁶

⁵ Abelard's rather tortuous explanation is that the sentence is true by 'woman' to refer to Eve, whose actions damned us (with Original Sin), and 'the same' to refer to Mary, who saved us (as the mother of Jesus).

⁶ The remainder of the text in Buytaert is untranslatable nonsense: . . . *efficaciae utilitudinem sicut easdem quae idem ualent*. The parallel passage in the *Theologia summi boni* is identical if the final nonsense phrase be omitted. The text of *Theologia christiana* apparently became garbled in transmission. *LNPS* and *Theologia summi boni* each describe what things are called the same in effect or the same in function, which, in parallel with *Theologia summi boni*, should appear immediately following *Theologia christiana* 3.146. Furthermore, Abelard describes what things are diverse in effect or diverse in function in *Theologia christiana* 3.162, a text that is found largely verbatim in *Theologia summi boni*, there meant to be parallel to the earlier discussion of sameness in effect or function – although there is no earlier discussion of sameness in effect or function in *Theologia christiana*. Therefore, it seems likely that the untranslatable nonsense at the end of §146 here is a very early corruption of a short paragraph meant to describe sameness in effect or function. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that Abelard's non-

[3.147] Thus ‘same’ (or ‘one’) is said in the five ways described above, though often the same thing falls under many of these ways, so that it can be called the same as another as much in this way as in that. We say ‘diverse’ or ‘different’ in as many ways, that is, since things are on the one hand called diverse (*i*) essentially, *i. e.* in number, and on the other hand in (*ii*) a distinctive property; (*iii*) definition; (*iv*) likeness; (*v*) changeability.

[3.148] We call things *essentially diverse* from one another that are at variance with one another in such a way that the one is not the other. For example, Socrates is not Plato, nor is Socrates’s hand Socrates. We also say that any disparate things are essentially diverse, since the concrete object that is the one is clearly not the concrete object that is the other, although it may still be part of the concrete object that is the other, as a hand is part of a man or a wall part of a house. Therefore, just as Socrates is essentially other than Plato, so too is Socrates’s hand other than Socrates, and any given part than its whole. According to this usage, we call one thing ‘simple’ and another ‘composite’, for obviously what is simple isn’t the composite itself, even though it may be part of the composite itself. Therefore, we call all things essentially diverse that are separate (*remota*) from each other, such that the one is not the other.

[3.149] Porphyry himself also explicitly suggests this difference when he establishes that the most generic genus and the most specific species differ in that neither ever becomes the other (*Isag.* 11.7–17). Moreover, some of the things that are essentially diverse are also numerically diverse, and others not.

[3.150] We call things *numerically diverse* that are in fact discrete from one another with respect to the whole quantity of each concrete object, in such away that not only is the one not the other but neither is part of the other, or shares the same part as it. Therefore, all and only these things are numerically different that are discrete with respect to the whole quantity of their concrete object, whether they differ from one another by number alone (such as Socrates and Plato), or in species as well (such as this man and that horse), or even in genus (such as this man and that whiteness), or differ from one another in any given form, whether that form be a common differentia (*i. e.* a separable accident such as sitting), a proper differentia (*i. e.* an inseparable accident such as the curvedness of the nose), or an especially proper differentia (*i. e.* a substantial differentia like rationality). This substantial differentia not only produces the one feature, *i. e.* that they are diverse in some way, but

sense phrase in *Theologia christiana* 3.146 contains close linguistic parallels to the description of sameness in effect or function found in *Theologia summi boni*: *idem secundum effectum vel secundum pretium dicuntur quae idem valent ad efficiendum aliquid, sicut easdem dicimus voces, quae idem valent ad eundem intellectum manifestandum*. Accordingly, I have omitted the remainder of the paragraph.

also the other feature, *i. e.* that they are diverse substantially and in species. These things alone are properly called ‘several’ or ‘many’, in that ‘several’ and ‘many’ properly pertain to number and are taken according to number.

[3.151] Thus some things are essentially diverse that aren’t numerically different – for instance, the house and the wall, or any given integral whole with a proper part of it. Furthermore, even God Himself is said to differ from creatures in each of the modes of diversity described above, namely essentially as well as numerically.

[3.152] We also take things as ‘diverse’ in this way when we deny that in one triple (*ternario*) there are diverse pairs (*binarios*). Although the third unit produces one pair with each one of the other two units, and the one pair is not the other pair, nevertheless we deny that the pairs are called ‘[numerically] diverse’, since they are not discrete with respect to the whole capacity or containment of each concrete object, since they share the same unit. But even when we say that someone owns only a house, *i. e.* a house and nothing else diverse from the house, we understand ‘diverse’ numerically rather than essentially. For he who owns a house also has a wall, which is not a house, in his possession. But although a wall is essentially diverse from the house in which it is, it is not numerically diverse, since clearly it is included in the very quantity of the house.

[3.153] It should be noted that anything essentially the same as another is numerically the same as it, and conversely. Nevertheless it is not the case that anything essentially diverse from something is numerically diverse from it, as we established above. Any given part is essentially diverse from its whole, but not numerically diverse from it – and perhaps not numerically the same, either, unless conceivably someone were to say ‘numerically the same’ negatively, *i. e.* ‘not numerically diverse’. Indeed, if a part were called numerically diverse from its whole, surely Socrates would be allowed to be predicated of things differing numerically, since clearly Socrates is this whole composed out of a hand and the remainder of his body, and also the very remainder of the body other than the hand should thence be called Socrates, *i. e.* what is given life by this soul. (We have had to deal with this in the case of the category of Substance at greater length elsewhere.)⁷

[3.154] Things are *diverse in definition* that cannot be fixed by the same definition of the meaning. That is, they don’t require each other mutually although each is the same thing (*res*), as is body and substance, or something white

⁷ Buytaert’s reference to *LI* 2 155 here is clearly incorrect. In *LI* 1 104.36–105.38, Abelard discusses identity of Socrates through material changes, such as losing a hand or foot; he concludes that the principle of identity over time in this case is the possession of the same soul, regardless of physical augmentation or diminution.

and something hard. For it is not body in that it is substance, or is something hard in that it is something white, since the one can be without the other and does not require it of itself. Indeed, Boethius teaches us this difference when, although he says (*De top. diff.* 1174C):

The proposition, conclusion, and question are the same he nevertheless says that they differ, since clearly there can be a proposition even if there were no question or conclusion, and a question if there were no conclusion, since the one does not require the other and each should be fixed by proper definitions. Boethius also says that ‘rational’ and ‘two-footed’ differ in this way, although he says (*De diuis.* 881D):

They are not distinguished from one another by any opposition. Porphyry, too, didn’t pass over this sort of difference, namely according to definition, when he says that “if the terms,” *i. e.* the definitions, “differ, the things themselves are also different” (*Isag.* 30.9).

[3.155] Things that can be disjoined in some way by affirmation and negation certainly differ from one another. For example, if we are able to show that one thing is an animal and the other isn’t an animal, it is clear that they differ. Accordingly, it must also be granted that all things diverse in their definitions, even if they were joined together through predication – like animal and human, or something white and something hard – somehow differ from one another, since they are also separated from each other by some affirmation and negation. There can be an animal such that it is not human, but there cannot be a human that isn’t an animal: an animal requires only this, that it be animated and sensible, whereas a human not merely this but furthermore that it be rational and mortal. In the same way, phoenix and this phoenix, and this body and this animal – or this man, or this white body – can be shown to be diverse, even though they are part of exactly the same concrete object.

[3.156] What Porphyry says also seems relevant to this diversity, namely that some differentiae are divisive of genera and others constitutive of species (*Isag.* 17.11–12). For although divisive and constitutive differentiae are exactly the same, nevertheless they are constitutive for the reason that they constitute the species and they are divisive for the reason that they divide (*i. e.* diversify) the species from one another. Hence there is one definition or distinctive property of the constitutive and another of the divisive – just as when we say ‘infinite’ we take it according to time in one definition, according to measure in another, according to multiplicity in another, and so on.⁸

⁸ The description of ‘infinite’ is taken from Boethius, *De diuis.* 888D–889E (Buytaert omits the reference).

[3.157] For our part, we customarily say ‘the same status’ or ‘diverse statuses’ in place of ‘the same in definition’ or ‘diverse in definition’. We say this status is that one only if this thing is exactly the same in definition as that one, or this status is not that one only if this thing isn’t exactly the same as that one in its express being, *i. e.* completely the same in definition.

[3.158] I think that which things are *diverse in a distinctive property* has been carefully discussed above, since it was established contrariwise which things are the same in a distinctive property.

[3.159] Likewise, from what has been set forth about which things are the same in likeness, *i. e.* alike, it is left clear contrariwise which things are diverse in likeness, *i. e.* unlike in something.

[3.160] It is also clear that *diverse by changeability* is said by the contrary of the earlier remarks: whatever is changed in something, *i. e.* diversified from that which it was before – for instance, if Socrates were first to stand and then to sit.

[3.161] These remarks are meant to point out how many ways ‘same’ and ‘diverse’, said by themselves, are taken due to their proper sense. However, they also frequently take on or lose other significations from what they are combined with. Indeed, when we call places diverse, we say ‘diverse’ according to containment, not according to number or according to essence. Otherwise, the wine that is in the grape and in the house would be in diverse places, although no body is allowed to be in diverse places. Therefore, since the name ‘place’ is suitable from containment or capacity, when ‘diverse’ is added to it the diversity of containment is designated, as if one were to call places that don’t have the feature of containing and including the same thing ‘diverse’. So too when we say that the Holy Spirit is many or seven spirits (*Isaiah* 11:2), for ‘spirit’ is customarily said from the operation of His goodness and the distribution of His grace; we reduce this whole multiplicity and diversity of the Spirit to His effects. What Truth says (*John* 14:16):

I give to you another Comforter

is also taken according to this, *i. e.* for producing another effect in you.

[3.162] But when we say that one craftsman is a painter, another a carpenter, another *etc.*, since the name ‘craftsman’ is suitable from operation or from function, we say the one and the other according to effect or function, not according to persons, even though perhaps sometimes the same person has each function. But when your Aristotle says that words, like letters, are not the same for all men but diverse for diverse men (*De int.* 1 16^a6–7), he said this according to the function of signifying that belongs to words and letters, not according to the very speaking of the utterances. For although the speaking of utterances is natural to all people, the function of signifying

is not grasped among all, but only among those who are not ignorant of their imposition. When Aristotle says later that the utterance is single and affirmations many (*De int.* 8 18^a13–14), or when Priscian said that “many names coincide in a single utterance” (*Inst. gramm.* 17.43), ‘many’ or ‘diverse’ are taken according to the very function of signifying, that is, for constituting diverse understandings, on the basis of which they are called affirmations or names. He calls the utterance ‘single’ on the basis of the form of its utterance and sound, not on the basis of its function, since clearly the name ‘utterance’ is given on the basis of the quality that is the sound, not on the basis of its function of signifying.

[3.163] Therefore, ‘same’ and ‘diverse’ often change their significations from combination with subjects in this way, just as other words frequently do – for instance, if I were to say ‘good harpist’ and ‘good man’, ‘simple utterance’ and ‘simple sentence’, or ‘true definition’ and ‘true expression’.

[3.164] I think I have carefully distinguished, so far as it pertains to the matter at hand, how many ways ‘same’ or ‘diverse’ is taken, so that later we may easily discuss in what the diversity of Persons in God consists, the substance of which is exactly the same – the same, I say, essentially and numerically, just as the substance of sword and blade, or this man and this animal, is the same. However, the Persons (*i. e.* the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit) are diverse from one another in a way analogous to things diverse in definition or in distinctive property, namely in that although God the Father is exactly the same concrete object that is God the Son or God the Holy Spirit, nevertheless one feature is proper to God the Father, namely in that he is the Father, another to the Son, and another to the Holy Spirit.