

Abailard's Theory of Universals

J. CHRISTOPHER MALONEY*

I Peter Abailard's *Logica Ingredientibus* [1]¹ occupies an important position in the medieval controversy about universals. Following the tradition transmitted by Boethius, Abailard recognizes that universals are predicable of and common to distinct individuals.² Before he offers his own theory of universality Abailard criticizes several alternative views, including two variants of realism attributable to William of Chempeaux and a version of nominalism proposed by Joscelin.³ Abailard's own theory is a hybrid of nominalism and conceptualism. In the sense of predicability, universality belongs to words alone.⁴ In the sense of commonality, universality falls to concepts. Abailard realizes that an adequate theory of universals must include an explanation of predication revealing, on the one hand, the truth conditions for the attributions of universal words and, on the other hand, why individuals fall under the concepts they do. Accordingly, Abailard like Porphyry⁵ asks, but unlike Porphyry answers, three questions of the semantics and ontology of universals:

- (1) What is the common cause by which the universal word, a predicate, is correctly imposed or predicated?
- (2) What kind of concept of commonality is understood in an intelligent act of predication?
- (3) Is a predicate called common because of the common cause of imposition, the concept understood in predication or both?

Abailard's responses to these questions are notorious and raise as many issues as they resolve. It is my primary purpose to reconstruct Abailard's answers in such a way that his nominalism and conceptualism are intelligible.

*I am grateful to Professor Paul Vincent Spade for discussing Abailard's theory of universals with me and advising me of nuances of the Latin text. An anonymous referee of this *Journal* has also offered me several insightful criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper.

This requires an analysis of what he calls the common cause of the imposition of a predicate as well as his view of abstract concepts. To assess his theory, it is first necessary to survey briefly his objections to William and Joscelyn. We shall find that Abailard's own theory is subject to much the same criticism he levies against his rivals. Indeed, far from the nominalism he hopes to defend, Abailard's theory runs off toward Platonic realism.

2 If we accept Abailard's report, we know that, because of his critique, William repudiated a strong version of realism according to which similar but distinct individuals share a common material essence. These same individuals differ by possessing diverse forms.⁶ Without pause, we shall simply note that Abailard believes that his objections to William's realism show the impossibility of any commonality among distinct individuals. As an alternative explanation of similarity William proposed that attributions of similarity should be understood not as positing the common occurrence of one item in more than one individual but simply as the lack of difference among individuals. The sentence "Socrates and Plato are men" means that Socrates and Plato do not differ in the nature of humanity, and this although they share no common element.⁷ On this view, being similar with respect to some feature amounts to being *indifferently*, not *essentially*, the same with respect to that feature. Unlike being essentially the same, being indifferently the same does not require a commonly shared feature but simply that the individuals do not differ with respect to that feature.

Abailard's complaint against William's alternative proposal is that it fails to explain what is meant by individuals being indifferently the same, not differing with respect to a feature. It is, Abailard notes, plausible to say that Socrates and Plato do not differ with respect to being stones since neither is a stone. Yet, given William's view, it follows that Socrates and Plato are stones if they do not differ with respect to being stones. This absurdity falsifies William's naive view and prompts Abailard to construct an improved and more sophisticated version of this, William's second view.

Abailard reports that some philosophers would have it that universals are not elements of distinct individuals but rather are collections or sets of individuals.⁸ John of Salisbury attributes such a view to Joscelyn, and this presumably is whom Abailard has in mind when criticizing this idea.⁹ If collections of individuals are universals, they must be predicable of the many collected individuals in such a way that what is predicated is wholly present in each individual.¹⁰ But, Abailard notes, a collection of individuals simply is not so predicable of each individual in the collection. That is, the sentence "Socrates is a man" does not mean that Socrates is the collection of men. If "Socrates is a man" means that Socrates is a member or part of the collection of men, then "that has nothing to do with the community of a universal, all of which, Boethius says, must be in each individual."¹¹ Second, Abailard objects that, on Joscelyn's view, every collection of individuals is a universal or species, but that is contrary to fact.¹² For although the collection of men minus Socrates is a collection of individual men, such a collection does not constitute a species or universal. Here, then, Abailard seems to suggest that universals are natural kinds of individuals, and, hence, arbitrary collections of individuals are not universals.

3 If, as his criticisms of William and Joscelyn indicate, universality or common predicability is not to be construed either as the commonality of a recurrent element or set membership, then, Abailard asserts, universality belongs to words alone.¹³ What is predicable is simply a word—an adjective, common noun, or verb.¹⁴ Words, predicates, are common and, hence, universals in the sense that one and the same word can be predicated of different individuals.

Here, then, are the two central theses of Abailard's theory of universals. Predicability is attributed to words, not a common element of individuals. Commonality or similarity among different individuals is merely their coincidental signification by a term. Of course, two theses do not a theory make. Each requires elaboration and such is the function of Abailard's answers to his three questions, especially the first two. If predicability belongs to words alone, what, as the first question inquires, are the truth conditions for the application of a predicate to its subject term? What must the world be like in order for it to be true that Socrates is a man? To predicate is, typically, to engage in judgment.¹⁵ What, then, as the second question asks, do we judge or think when using a predicate attributable to many individuals if there is no real common element signified by that predicate? Or, somewhat differently, when I assert, "A man sits in this house," what do I understand by the subject expression "a man" featuring as it does a universal word? Surely, since I might not know who sits in the house, I do not think of that very person. And neither could I be thinking of each man that he or another sits in the house. For my acquaintances do not exhaust the male population.¹⁶ So how do universal words signify, and what distinguishes their mode of signification from that of particular words such as proper names?

Let us turn to Abailard's answer to the first question, his view of the truth conditions for predications of universal words. Distinct individuals, men for example, apparently share no common element. That is to say, there is no thing (*res*) that occurs in the constitution of both Socrates and Plato. Nevertheless, all men, Socrates and Plato particularly, are united or agree in *that they are men*, in *being men*, in *to be men*.¹⁷ *To be man*, *being man*, *that one is man* is not a thing, for all things are distinct individuals, as Abailard takes his arguments against realism to show. Rather, to be man is a state of being of some things. To be man, as Abailard says, is a *status* of an individual man, otherwise called the common cause of the predication of "man".¹⁸ The truth condition for predicating a universal word of a subject term is that the thing named by the subject term be of the status associated with the universal word. Thus, "Socrates is a man" is true if and only if Socrates has the status of being man.

There are several ways we might construe Abailard's remarks on statuses. First, and in the spirit of pure nominalism, we might interpret him as maintaining that the forms of an individual are *elements* of only that individual. Statuses, though the causes of the imposition of universal words, are themselves not in any way elements of the individual things of which the universal words are truly predicable. Although Socrates and Plato agree in the status of being man, the status of being man is not an element of either Socrates or Plato. "Socrates is a man" is thus not exponible as "Being man is an element of Socrates". To make his thesis plausible, Abailard notes that not undergoing

contrariety is common to all individual substances. Nevertheless we are not, he supposes, inclined to treat not undergoing contrariety as an element of any individual substance, for we do not think of it as any thing at all. So too, though being man is common to all individual men, we ought not, he insists, to treat being man as an element of any individual man.¹⁹

If this be Abailard's intent, he has set himself a hard row to hoe. It is difficult to appreciate how, if at all, Abailard could be genuinely explaining the truth conditions for the predication of universal words. Statuses are to serve in explanations of similarity among individuals. The relation between status and individuals accordingly becomes crucial. Of course, if the status is nothing at all, Abailard need not account for its relation to individuals. But it is just this nonexistence of the status which makes its role in the theory of similarity and predication obscure. Abailard's appeal to not undergoing contrariety, as a general feature of substances, in order to explain how statuses can be nothing whatsoever while still showing how statuses are related to similar individuals, is a dodge. For the central question now becomes how not undergoing contrariety is so related to individual substances that they are similar with respect to not undergoing contrariety. Put slightly differently, according to Abailard's own theory, not undergoing contrariety is itself a status of all individual substances.²⁰ Hence, appealing to it to reveal how statuses allow for similarity begs the question of how statuses, if nothing at all, suffice for similarity.

It is not at all evident how not undergoing contrariety, if it is something in which all substances agree, can be nothing whatsoever. After all, perhaps the sheer generality of not undergoing contrariety blinds us to its presence as an element in all substances. Might we not say that surely being self-identical is an element of all substances and so too must be not undergoing contrariety? Moreover, may we reject not undergoing contrariety as an element of all substances only if we accept its dual, being consistent, as a general element of individual substances? If so, then Abailard has not made his case for denying that statuses are elements of individual things simply by modeling them after universal negative features of individual substances.

Some of Abailard's remarks suggest that he may be differentiating two kinds of entities, parallel to two grammatical categories. On the one hand, proper names and pronouns refer to individuals, i.e., things or *res*. Presumably and in accordance with Abailard's nominalism, the forms of an individual substance are themselves individuals; forms are individualized and not in any way elements common to distinct individual substances. On the other hand, infinitives, gerunds, and nominalized sentences refer not to individual substances or their individualized forms but rather to entities of a different sort, statuses of individual substances. Abailard's reference to things or *res* amounts to talk of individual substances or their individualized forms. There may, then, be entities other than individual substances and individualized forms, even given Abailard's critique of William's realism, so long as these novel entities are not real universals, elements common to distinct individual substances.

With this interpretation in mind, we can begin to appreciate Abailard's insistence that the status of being man "is not the same as man nor any thing".²¹ The status of being man is not the individualized form man occurring as an element in an individual man such as Socrates. Nor is it any individual

man, i.e., thing. How then should we think of a status? Abailard suggests treating statuses as privations, saying that "Socrates and Plato are alike in being man as horse and ass are alike in not being man" ([5], p. 179). Just as privations are not real elements in things, neither are statuses. Nevertheless, just as privations may serve explanatory roles, so too may statuses serve to explain the imposition of universal words.

If this were Abailard's last word on statuses, then his theory would be subject to the same objection he levied against William's second theory of similarity. If Socrates and Plato agree in being man, and are therefore both men, though there is no thing in which they agree, what prevents their being stones? For they would agree in being stone as much as they agree in being man, there being no thing in which they coincide in either case. Besides, a privation is understood in terms of something which is not a privation. It is reasonable to say that darkness is the privation of light only if one already has a well-founded concept of light. Analogously, to say that the status of being man is akin to a privation, one must first say of what it is a privation. And this Abailard does not say.

Still searching for a plausible interpretation of Abailard's theory of statuses, we find him asserting that "We can also call the status of man those things themselves, established in the nature of man, the common likeness of which he who imposed the word conceived" ([5], p. 180). There seem to be two ways to construe this remark, but both hinder Abailard's project. Abailard may be conflating the status of being man with those individual substances, i.e., individual men taken collectively, established in the nature of man. Interpreted this way Abailard's view immediately reduces to Joscelyn's with which Abailard will have no truck. According to Abailard, there are not and ought not to be universals, predicates expressing natural kinds, corresponding to every set of individual substances. Thus, there cannot be statuses for all such sets since statuses are the causes of the imposition of universal words or predicates. So if there were a status for, say, the set of men minus Socrates, there ought to be a corresponding universal word expressing a natural kind. But this ought not to be. Hence, "those things themselves established in the nature of man" cannot be all individual men taken collectively.

Neither could "those things themselves" constituting the status of being man be selected individualized forms taken collectively, occurring as elements in all individual men. The reason now is familiar from Abailard's critique of Joscelyn. Every set of individualized forms could lay equal claim to constituting a status. Thus and again, statuses and their corresponding predicates would be as conventional as sets and thereby violate the restriction to natural kinds.

Abailard appears caught in a dilemma. He must give content to his theory of statuses in order to avoid his critique of William. But he cannot treat statuses as real, common things in individuals since he has repudiated realism as first envisioned by William. Neither can he reduce statuses to sets without falling prey to his own refutation of Joscelyn. This suggests that Abailard's best hope lies in a new interpretation of the notion of a status, an interpretation I shall try to construct. We shall see, however, that the forthcoming interpretation, one suggested by Abailard's own answer to his second question, finally leads to Platonic realism and remains encumbered with the problem of preserving natural kinds.

4 What do we understand when we use a predicate? What does a predicate signify? Understanding, like sensing, is a mental action of the soul directed upon a form. But unlike sensing, understanding “does not need a corporeal instrument, so it is not necessary that it have a subject body to which it may be referred, but it is satisfied with the likeness of things which the mind constructs for itself, into which it directs the action of its intelligence . . . but the form to which it is directed is a certain imaginary and fictive thing, which the mind constructs for itself . . . It remains, therefore, that just as the quality is fictive, a fictive substance is subject to it” ([5], pp. 180-181). And when intelligently employing a universal noun as opposed to a particular name, the understanding fabricates a “confused image of many things, common to all and proper to none. . . . For thus, to show the nature of all lions, one picture can be made representing what is proper to no one of them”²² Indeed, universals, predicates, signify these common concepts of the understanding. Quoting Priscian with approval, Abailard says that Priscian holds that “. . . universals themselves are as proper nouns to these conceptions, which, although they are of confused signification with respect to the essences named, direct the mind of the auditor to that common conception immediately. . . .”²³

Universals, as predicates, immediately signify concepts which are themselves fictive things, created by the mind, and subject to fictive substances. These concepts are confused likenesses of or common to all individuals of which the universal word is truly predicable. As images of individuals, common concepts represent or signify individuals just as a painting can represent different individuals. Abailard’s notion of universality apparently involves these elements: (i) predicates, which are themselves universals, (ii) concepts, which themselves signify various individuals while themselves being signified by universal predicates, and (iii) statuses of individuals which, although not things, account for the truth conditions of predications of universal predicates.

Now a crucial issue looms large. How does the understanding fabricate its concepts so that all and only the things of the status associated with a predicate fall under the concept signified by that predicate? Less specifically, what is the relation between concept and status? One is a fictive thing, the other no thing.

Abailard’s theory of abstraction (see [5], pp. 183-186) is his partial reply to our question. For Abailard, abstraction is simply the mental process enabling the understanding to think of some, while ignoring other, forms of an individual.²⁴ Presumably, when the understanding abstracts some individualized form, F^b , from the individual b , it takes as its immediate object not F^b itself but a fictive thing, an image or concept of F^b . Let us call this abstracted image $*F^b$. Of course, the understanding subjects $*F^b$ to a fictive substance, $*b$.²⁵ Now the concept $*F^b$ applies only to b ; b is the only object that can fall under $*F^b$ since F^b , out of which $*F^b$ is constructed, is a form unique to b , for F^b is an individualized form of b . Alternatively, we might say that b is the only individual to fall under $*F^b$ because $*b$ is the only correct fictive substance of $*F^b$, and $*b$ is the only fictive substance constructed from b . $*F^b$ is a concept only of F^b and therefore only b falls under $*F^b$, just as a photograph of Leo can be used to represent that one lion. So it is not simply abstraction that produces a common and confused concept signified by a universal predicate. How, then, is such a concept produced? Abailard’s remarks are suggestive but

not definitive. Regarding the production of a common concept, he says:

For when I hear [the words] *man* or *whiteness* or *white* I do not recall from the meaning of the noun all the natures or properties which are in the subject things, but from *man* I have only the conception although confused, not discrete, of animal and rational mortal, but not of the later accidents as well. ([5], p. 185)

What shall we make of this? Plainly, what we need is an explanation of how the understanding fabricates a confused concept of rational and mortal animal in such a way that it applies to all and only men, insofar as they are men. Perhaps Abailard intends something like this: A conceptual agent abstracts and conjoins²⁶ the concepts of animality, A , rationality, R , and mortality, M , from some men, b, c, \dots , with whom he is acquainted. Such a concept would be

$$(1) \quad ((*A^b, *R^b, *M^b), (*A^c, *R^c, *M^c), \dots).$$

As such, this concept is at best a concept of the individuals b, c , and from whatever other individuals the conceptual agent abstracted it. What must occur for the concept to become confused and common to all men? The answer is suggested by the recurrent elements in (1). $*A^b$ is the concept of the individualized form A^b , and $*A^c$ is the concept of the individualized form A^c . $*A^b$ applies only to b ; $*A^c$ only to c . However, if on Abailard's behalf we allow for another level of abstraction, it is easy to see how we can generate a concept of animality applying both to b and c and every other animal as well. We need merely abstract $*A^x$ from A^b or A^c . ' x ' is a variable for proper names and $*A^x$ is the concept of animality common to all individuals having individualized forms of the kind A^x . Hence, $*A^x$ applies to all and only animals. The story is analogous for $*R^x$ and $*M^x$. Apparently, then, the common, confused concept signified by "man" is

$$(2) \quad (*A^x, *R^x, *M^x).$$

This concept is common to men in the sense that all and only men fall under it. It is also a confused concept in the sense that it is produced by abstracting the individualizing aspects of various concepts. Of course, as a concept (2) is a fictive thing.

We can now realize what Abailard may have, perhaps should have, meant by the status of an individual. As a nominalist, Abailard repudiated William's realism and held that no form of any individual is an element in more than one individual. Each individual, say b , is itself composed of (matter and) various individualized forms F^b, G^b, \dots . These forms are, for Abailard, things, real elements of real individuals. While F^b is itself an element of b , it does not follow either that F^x is an element of b or even that F^x is itself an individual thing. In fact, F^x is no thing since it is not individualized through an internal occurrence of b , as is F^b . And this suggests what a status is. As a man, Socrates has the individualized forms A^s, R^s, M^s . These are real things in Socrates. But Socrates is also of the status of being man, and this status simply consists of the sequence of elements of selected elements of Socrates, i.e.,

$$(3) \quad (A^x, R^x, M^x).$$

As another man, Plato has the forms A^p , R^p , and M^p . And so he too agrees with Socrates in the status of being man despite the fact that (3), the status of being man, is itself neither an individual thing nor an element of Plato, Socrates, or any man.

Finally, we can tether common concepts to their associated statuses. An individual falls under a common concept if and only if it has the associated status. Given the theory of the generation of abstract common concepts and the nature of statuses, we have it that where $*F^x$ is any common concept of individuals having individualized forms of the kind F , then F^x is the status of being F . Consequently, and as Abailard intends, y falls under $*F^x$ if and only if y is of the status F^x . Importantly, then, even individuals unknown to a conceptual agent can fall under a common concept, and an agent can form a common concept upon acquaintance with but a few individuals of a status.

The preceding analysis of status and common concepts entails that a status and its associated common concept are coextensive. They are therefore formally interdefinable, though they play obviously different roles in Abailard's semantic and cognitive theories respectively.²⁷ Given that Abailard assigns statuses but not common concepts central position in his semantic theory, we should not interpret his claim that statuses are not things as his endorsement of their elimination, through definition, in favor of common concepts.²⁸ Additionally, so far as I can determine, Abailard makes no remarks indicating that he would accept this doctrine, nor does he argue for the primacy, in any relevant sense, of common concepts over statuses.

5 If we interpret Abailard's theory of statuses and common concepts as I have suggested, Abailard evidently avoids realism of the kind William first advocated. However, Abailard's theory does entail a version of Platonic realism. For statuses, though not things, i.e., individual things, must somehow exist since individualized forms exist. That is only to say that for each individualized form, e.g., F^b , there corresponds a status, F^x , as well as an individual, b , of that status. Just as an individualized form exists only if the individual of which it is a form exists, so too an individualized form exists only if its associated status exists. But only the individualized forms of an individual are elements of that individual. The status associated with form is no more an element of the individual than is the common concept which is abstracted from the form. Thus, in the sense that various individuals can participate in the status F^x , F^x is common to, though not an element of, different individuals. Moreover, F^x is not itself a concept, a fictive thing. And such are some of the characteristics of Platonic forms.

Abailard's view remains open to the central charge that he brought against Joscelyn. To each individualized form there correspond both a status and common concept. There is nothing in Abailard's theory to prevent the introduction of a predicate for each such common concept. Such predicates are Abailardian universals. Consequently, we can generate more universals, species, than genuine natural kinds. Indeed, it is easy to arrange it so that to each individual there corresponds a unique species, and hence a putative natural kind. It is hard, then, to see how Abailard's theory of universals fares any better than Joscelyn's or William's, if Abailard's objections to his rival command assent.

NOTES

1. I have generally relied upon Richard McKeon's translation reprinted in [5], pp. 169-188. The translation originally appeared in [7], vol. 1, pp. 218-258. For an extensive study of Abailard's theory of universals, see [9]. For a review of [9], see [8].
2. "In *On Interpretation* Aristotle defines the universal as *that which is formed naturally apt to be predicated of many . . .* For it seems that no thing, nor any collection of things, is predicated of many things taken one by one, which [predication] is characteristic of the universal." ([5], p. 172.) ". . . the universal is common, Boethius says, in such a way that the same universal is at the same time entirely in the different things of which it constitutes the substance materially . . ." ([5], p. 173.)
3. See [6]; also [9], p. 97, fn. 10. Salisbury identifies Joscelin as the Bishop of Soissons (d. 1151). Étienne Gilson ([4], p. 628, note 97) tentatively attributes *De generibus et speciebus* (in [2]) to Joscelin. See [2], pp. 524-525, for Joscelin's view on collections.
4. "Now, however, that reasons have been given why things can not be called universals, taken either singly or collectively, because they are not predicated of many, *it remains to ascribe universality of this sort to words alone.*" ([5], p. 177.) Tweedale ([9], p. 135) maintains that Abailard distinguishes utterances (*voces*) and expressions (*sermones* or *vocabula*) and attributes universality to expressions (pp. 140 ff.). This distinction can be ignored here.
5. "But now let us inquire carefully into these things which we have touched upon briefly, namely, *what that common cause by which the universal word is imposed is, and what the conception of the understanding of the common likeness of things is, and whether the word is called common because of a common cause in which the things agree or because of a common conception or because of both at once.*" ([5], p. 179.)
6. "Certain philosophers, indeed, take the universal thing thus; in things different from each other in form they set up a substance essentially the same; this is the material essence of the individuals in which it is, and it is one in itself and diverse only through the forms of its inferiors." ([5], p. 172.)
7. "Therefore others are of another opinion concerning universality, and approaching the truth more closely they say that individual things are not only different from each other in forms, but are discrete personally in their essences, nor is that which is in one in any way to be found in another whether it be matter or form . . . things which are discrete are one and the same not *essentially* but *indifferently*, as they say individual men, who are discrete in themselves, are the same in man, that is, they do not differ in the nature of humanity, and the same things which they call individual according to discreteness, they call universal according to *indifference* and the agreement of similitude." ([5], pp. 174-175.)
8. "For some hold that the universal thing is only in a collection of many. They in no manner call Socrates and Plato species in themselves, but they say that all men collected together are that species which is man, and all animals taken together that genus which is animal, and thus with the others." ([5], p. 175.) See also [3].
9. [5], p. 169.
10. "Now, however, let us first invalidate the opinion which was set down above concerning collection, and let us inquire how the whole collection of men together, which is called one species, has to be predicated of many that it may be universal, although the whole collection is not predicated of each. But if it be conceded that the whole is predicated

of different things by parts, in that, namely, its individual parts are accommodated to themselves, that has nothing to do with the community of the universal, all of which, as Boethius says, must be in each individual . . ." ([5], pp. 175-176.)

11. See Note 10.
12. "Even more, it would be proper that any group of many men taken together be called universal, and the definition of the universal or even of the species would be adapted to them in the same way, so that the whole collection of men would then include many species." ([5], p. 176.)
13. See Note 4.
14. Predication is, for Abailard, a relation between a predicate and (typically) a proper name. "A *universal* word, however, is one which is apt by its invention to be predicated singly of many, as this noun *man* which is conjoinable with the particular names of men according to the nature of the subject things on which it is imposed *To be predicated* is to be conjoinable to something truly by the declarative function of a substantive verb in the present [tense], as *man* can be joined truly to different things by a substantive verb That he says, *of many*, however, brings together names according to the diversity of things named." ([5], p. 177.)
15. ". . . the conjoining involved in *construction* to which *grammarians* direct their attention is one thing, the conjoining of *predication* which *dialecticians* consider another: for as far as the power of construction is concerned *man* and *stone* are properly conjoinable by *is*, and any nominative cases, as *animal* and *man*, in respect to making manifest a meaning but not in respect to showing the status of a thing. The conjoining involved in *construction* consequently is good whenever it reveals a perfect sentence, whether it be so or not. But the conjoining involved in *predication*, which we take up here, pertains to the nature of things and to demonstrating the truth of their status." ([5], p. 178.)
16. "But in the common name which is *man*, not Socrates himself nor any other man nor the entire collection of men is reasonably understood from the import of the word, nor is Socrates himself, as certain thinkers hold, specified by that word, even in so far as he is man. For even if Socrates alone be sitting in this house, and if because of him alone this proposition is true: *A man sits in this house* nevertheless in no wise is the subject transferred by the name of man to Socrates . . ." ([5], p. 179.)
17. "And first we should consider the *common cause*. Individual men, discrete from each other in that they differ in respect to properties no less in essences [in their own essences no less than in their forms] . . . are united nevertheless in that they are men. I do not say that they are united in man, since no thing is man except a discrete thing, but in being man. But *to be man* is not the same as man nor any thing, if we should consider it very carefully, as *not to be in the subject* is not any thing, nor is it any thing *not to undergo contrariety* or *not to undergo more and less* . . ." ([5], p. 179.)
18. ". . . we say, in fact [namely] that this and that agree in the status of man, that is, in that they are men. But we understand nothing other than that they are men, although we appeal to no essence. We call it the status itself of man to be man, which is not a thing and which we also called the common cause of imposition of the word on individuals, according as they themselves agree with each other." ([5], p. 180.)
19. The referee drew this parallel to my attention to suggest a way of interpreting Abailard's thesis that a status is no thing.

20. A status is that in which individuals agree. Abailard cites Aristotle with approval saying, ". . . nor is it anything *not to undergo contrariety* or *not to undergo more and less*; in these nevertheless Aristotle says all substances agree." ([5], p. 179.)
21. See Note 17.
22. "Whence when I hear *man* a certain figure arises in my mind which is so related to individual men that it is common to all and proper to none." ([5], p. 181.)
23. [5], p. 182, and "For what else is it to conceive forms by nouns than to signify by nouns? But certainly since we make forms diverse from understandings, there arises now besides thing and understanding a third thing which is the signification of nouns." ([5], p. 183.) Cf. [9], pp. 174-185.
24. "For example, the substance of this man is at once body and animal and man and invested in infinite forms; when I turn my attention to this in the material essence of the substance, after having circumscribed all forms, I have a concept by the process of abstraction. Again, when I consider only corporeity in it, which I join to substance, that concept likewise (although it is by conjunction with respect to the first, which considered only the nature of substance) is formed also by abstraction with respect to other forms than corporeity, none of which I consider, such an animation, sensuality, rationality, whiteness." ([5], p. 183).
25. See [5], p. 179, and "The understanding . . . is satisfied with the likeness of things which the mind constructs for itself, into which it directs the action of its intelligence. Wherefore if the tower should be destroyed and removed . . . the understanding remains in the likeness of the thing preserved in the mind." ([5], p. 180.)
26. To conjoin concepts is to predicate them of the same fictive substance or think of them as forms of the same individual. "In relation to abstraction it must be known that matter and form always subsist mixed together, but the reason of the mind has this power, that it may now consider matter by itself; it may now turn its attention to form alone; it may now conceive both intermingled. The two first processes, of course, are by abstraction; they abstract something from things conjoined that they may consider its very nature. But the third process is by conjunction." ([5], p. 183.)
27. "Let us, then, set forth what we promised above to define, namely, whether the community of universal words is considered to be because of a common cause of imposition or because of a common conception or both. There is nothing to prevent that it be because of both, but the common cause which is taken in accordance with the nature of things seems to have the greater force." ([5], p. 183.)
28. The referee called to my attention the issue of eliminating statuses through definition.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abailard, P., "Logica ingredientibus," in *Beitrage zur Geshichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, vol. 21 (1933), pp. 1-32.
- [2] Consin, V., *Ouvrages inedits d'Abélard*, Imprimerie Royale, Paris, 1936.
- [3] Freddoso, A. J., "Abailard on collective realism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 75 (1978), pp. 527-538.
- [4] Gilson, E., *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Random House, New York, 1955.

- [5] Hyman, A., and J. J. Walsh, ed., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Hachett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1973.
- [6] John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, Book II, Chapter 17, translated by D. D. McGarry, reprinted in [5], pp. 167-169.
- [7] McKeon, R., *Selections from Medieval Philosophers*, Scribner's, New York, 1929.
- [8] Spade, P. V., "Martin M. Tweedale, *Abailard on Universals*," *Nous*, vol. 14, (1980), pp. 479-483.
- [9] Tweedale, M., *Abailard on Universals*, North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1976.

Department of Philosophy
Oakland University
Rochester, Minnesota 48063