

NATURE IN
MEDIEVAL THOUGHT

SOME APPROACHES EAST AND WEST

EDITED BY

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3. ARITHMETIC AND THE METAPHYSICS OF UNITY IN THIERRY OF CHARTRES: ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE AND THEOLOGY IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

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I. *Trends in the Understanding of Nature in Twelfth-Century Thought*

With the awakening of philosophical thinking in the second half of the eleventh century, reason departs from the pre-given tracks set down by patristic authorities in order to discover its own themes and epistemological methods.¹ This self-discovery of reason had been prepared since the Carolingian period by its study of the liberal arts of antiquity and had been initiated in the first half of the eleventh century by the reflection of thinking on its rational structures in the mirror of the Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic logic of Boethius. This thinking takes as one of its foremost tasks the job of making the truth given in faith comprehensible in the light of its own reason; yet, it no longer limits itself — as Peter Damian had demanded in vain in an attack against this new development — to the role handmaiden to theology, but seeks to understand the entire realm of the knowable, the “*rerum universitas*.”² Thinking knows itself as called upon to

¹ Cf. W. Kluxen, “Wissenschaftliche Rationalität im 12. Jahrhundert. Aufgang einer Epoche,” in G. Wieland, ed., *Aufbruch — Wandel — Erneuerung. Beiträge zur “Renaissance” des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1995, pp. 89–99; Kl. Riesenhuber, “Der Streit um die *ratio* in der Frühscholastik,” in J. A. Aertsen and A. Speer, eds., *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 26)*, Berlin/New York 1998, pp. 460–467.

² “Est enim uero uniuersitas in deo, est in spiritu creato, . . . ita uidelicet quod deus est omnia, spiritus creatus omnia, . . .”: Thierry of Chartres, *C IV*, 7. Thierry’s texts are being cited according to: N.M. Häring (ed.), *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, Toronto 1971.

The abbreviations of the titles of the works:

- AM Trin.* = Abbreuiatio Monacensis: Commentum super de Trinitate Boethii
C = Commentum super Boethii librum de Trinitate
G = Glosa super Boethii librum de Trinitate
L = Lectiones in Boethii librum de Trinitate
SD = Tractatus de sex dierum operibus

rationally reconstruct the entirety of reality, for its essence is to be the correspondence and image of the creative wisdom of God. The dignity of the human person as a rational being thus comes to the foreground, while reason finds its preferred domains of research, on the one hand, in God, whose Trinitarian structure is disclosed as the ground and principle of all reality and of reason itself, and, on the other hand, in the world of nature, the rational uncovering of which proves reason's autonomy and command over all of reality. Here the new self-understanding of reason shows itself in the renunciation of the theological proof by authority, with which Anselm of Canterbury had already caused a stir,³ and in the free reliance upon all available sources, regardless of their non-Christian Graeco-Roman or Arabic origin.

The discovery of nature⁴ in the twelfth century, then, does not occur in a unilinear manner, for example, as the initial preparation for the modern natural sciences or even only as a precursor to the reception of Aristotelian science of nature at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but occurs in a broad dispersal of approaches and ways of thinking. The point of departure is the doctrine of the creation of the world, along with the biblical account of creation, which, as early as the apologetics of the second century, has been read in organic conjunction with Plato's *Timaeus*.⁵ Anselm of Canterbury already develops a deductive metaphysics of creation out of the question about the ground of being and the ontological opposition of "aliquid" and "nihil," therein emphasizing the essentially constitutive function of God's mind.⁶ However, when Anselm explicitly identifies the concept of "natura" with the general metaphysical concept of

³ "Fecit quocque libellum unum quem *Monologion* appellavit. Solus enim in eo et secum loquitur, et tacita omni auctoritate divinae scripturae quid Deus sit sola ratione quaerit et invenit, et quod vera fides de Deo sentit, invincibili ratione sic nec aliter esse posse probat et astruit": Eadmerus, *Vita sancti Anselmi (De vita et conversatione Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi)* I, 19, 29 (ed. R. Southern, 1972/1979, p. 29). Cf. Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Monologion*, Prologus: "... quatenus auctoritate scripturae penitus nihil in ea persuaderetur, sed quidquid per singulas investigationes finis assereret, id ita esse plano stilo vulgaribus argumentis simplicique disputatione et rationis neccesitas breviter cogeret et veritatis claritas patenter ostenderet."

⁴ Cf. A. Speer, *Die entdeckte Natur. Untersuchungen zu Begründungsversuchen einer "scientia naturalis" im 12. Jahrhundert*, Leiden/New York/Köln 1995.

⁵ Cf. Kl. Riesenhuber, "Das Verständnis von Natur als Schöpfung in Patristik und Mittelalter," in: ders., *Grundströme der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Tokyo 1995, pp. 388-389 (in Japanese).

⁶ Cf. Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Monologion* cc. 3-14.

"*essentia*,"⁷ omitting any reference to empirical knowledge, this demonstrates that nature, as a domain of worldly entities distinguished from man, does not yet attract attention.

Monastic contemplative theology, represented by the school of the Cistercians under the guidance of Bernard of Clairvaux, abstains from objectivizing metaphysics as well as an autonomous philosophy of nature and knows *natura* only as the essence of man, that is, evaluated in a theological anthropology in the soteriological connection of sin and grace: "quod per naturam tibi est impossibile, per gratiam eius non solum possibile, sed et facile fiat."⁸ Human nature is to be "transcended,"⁹ and external nature alone serves to provide vivid examples of the incomprehensible essence of God: "Docemur autem auctoritate Patrum et consuetudine Scripturarum congruentes de rebus notis licere similitudines usurpare."¹⁰ Hugh of St. Victor conceives of nature in the soteriological-sacramental framework of "*opus conditionis*" and "*opus restorationis*," of creation and salvation,¹¹ in a similar manner.

Opposed to this concept of nature, dependent on Augustine and more often than not of a pessimistic taint, Peter Abelard, inspired by the Stoa as seen through the belief in creation, advocates the normativity of metaphysical nature as it is recognized co-naturally by reason: "gentiles qui legem sicut scriptam non habent, naturaliter faciunt, id est naturali lege instructi, hoc est cognitione Dei ac discretionem rationis, quam naturaliter, hoc est ex sua creatione habent, . . . ipsi sibi sunt lex."¹² In accordance with this positive concept of nature, the created world allows for the recognition of God's essence, even his Trinitarian personality: "Totum hic (sc., Paulus) mysterium Trinitatis distinguit, ut non solum unitatem Dei, verum et Trinitatem ex ipsis operibus pendere possent."¹³ Power, wisdom, and the goodness

⁷ "Idem namque naturam hic intelligo quod essentiam": *ibid.*, c. 4.

⁸ Bernardus Claraevallensis, *Sermo in die Pentecostes* 2, 6 (*Opera* V, 169).

⁹ "Numquid non supra naturam beatus iste Andreas apostolus . . . transilierat": *id.*, *De diversis*, sermo 16, 6 (*Opera* VI, 148).

¹⁰ *Id.*, *Sermones super Cantica Cantorum*, sermo 51, 7 (*Opera* II, 88).

¹¹ "Duo enim sunt opera in quibus universa continentur quae facta sunt. Primum est opus conditionis. Secundum est opus restorationis. Opus conditionis est quo factum est, ut essent quae non erant . . . creatio mundi cum omnibus elementis suis": Hugo de Sancto Victore, *De sacramentis fidei* I, prologus 2 (PL 176, 183A-B).

¹² Petrus Abaelardus, *Expositio in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos* I, 2 (PL 178, 814D); cf. *ibid.* I, 1 (PL 178, 805A; 806C).

¹³ *Ibid.* I, 1 (PL 178, 802D-803A).

of God as the marks of the three divine persons radiate out of the order of the world, which Abelard, in agreement with Plato, considers to be the best possible one: "Apparet itaque maxime ex ipsa mundanae fabricae universitate tam mirabiliter facta, tam decenter ornata, quantae potentiae, quantae sapientiae, quantae bonitatis, ejus artifex sit, qui tantum et tale opus de nihilo facere potuit et voluit, et tam solerter et rationabiliter cuncta temperavit, ita ut in singulis nihil plus aut minus quam quam oportuerit actum sit. Unde et Plato ipse, cum de genitura mundi ageret, in tantum divinae potentiae et sapientiae bonitatem extulit, ut astrueret Deum nullatenus potuisse mundum meliorem facere quam fecerit."¹⁴

The breakthrough to a science of nature as a discipline clearly delineated from metaphysics, theology, or ethics, however, is only achieved where concrete phenomena of nature become the object of rational inquiry. Thus Adelard of Bath investigates the causes of observed natural processes and discovers the rationality of the natural order: "rerum causae cum rationae constant."¹⁵ At the same time, the thinkers of the school of Chartres, in commentaries on the *Timaeus* or on the biblical account of creation as well as in individual tracts, elevate nature to a central theme. Above all, William of Conches attempts to compile an encompassing catalogue of all natural phenomena and advances the question of the proximal cause as the method of investigation: "Nos autem dicimus in omnibus rationem esse quaerendam."¹⁶ Once nature is recognized as an independent principle of a regular rational order, it can be personified mythologically and dramatised in its creative role in the circles of the school of Chartres, by Bernardus Silvestris¹⁷ shortly before the middle of the century and by Alanus ab Insulis,¹⁸ among others, in the seventies. Appealing to Cicero and Plato, John of Salisbury finally sees

¹⁴ Ibid. (PL 178, 804); cf. id., *Introductio in theologiam* III, 5 (PL 178, 1094). Cf. Robert de Melun, *Sententie (Summa recensio brevis)* (ed. J. M. Parent, *La Doctrine de la Création dans l'École de Chartres*, Paris/Ottawa 1938, p. 65): "ipsam universitatem que in suo genere id est in genere rerum sensibilium optima est et perfectissima."

¹⁵ Adelardus de Bath, *Quaestiones naturales* 32 (ed. M. Müller, *BGPhThMA* 31, 2, Münster 1934, p. 37).

¹⁶ Guillelmus de Conches, *Philosophia* I, 45 (ed. Gr. Maurach, Pretoria 1980, p. 39).

¹⁷ Cf. B. Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century. A Study of Bernard Silvester*, Princeton 1972, pp. 63–87.

¹⁸ Cf. W. Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century. The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres*, Princeton 1972, pp. 187–219.

in the concrete order of nature the paradigm for ethical order, namely, the "*diligentissima parens*"¹⁹ and "*optima dux vivendi*,"²⁰ without, however, taking it as an absolute or opposing it to grace: "Non tamen corruptae naturae adversus gratiam magnifico fimbrias, aut phaleras erigo, quasi ipsa aliquid boni habeat quod non acceperit."²¹ Not only the individual but also public life and the state must learn from nature: "ut vita civilis naturam imitetur";²² "Rempubicam ad naturae similitudinem ordinandam, et ordinem de apibus mutuandam."²³

The question of how the essence and existence of nature itself, in the rationally graspable causality of its changes, can be understood from its principles, precedes such poetic or ethico-social philosophical applications of the concept of nature. This question demands a metaphysical system of reality in its totality, its first principle, and its various levels, as well as a system of the ways of knowing corresponding to each one of these, such as was first achieved by John Eriugena in *Periphyseon*. In the school of Chartres, Thierry (Theodericus) of Chartres, who knew of Eriugena's work, dedicates himself to this speculative task. The philosophical significance of his metaphysics of unity and multiplicity, however, goes as far beyond the problematic of the foundation of a scientific knowledge of nature as it includes that problematic.

II. Thierry of Chartres

1. *Life and Work*

Very little is known with any certainty about the life and works of Thierry.²⁴ Born in Brittany, he was probably the younger brother of Bernard of Chartres (died before 1130), who from before 1114 acted as teacher and later as chancellor in Chartres (until 1124). It was

¹⁹ Johannes Saresberiensis, *Policraticus* V, 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, III, 1.

²² *Ibid.*, VI, 21.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Cf. K. M. Fredborg, *The Latin Rhetorical Commentaries by Thierry of Chartres*, Toronto 1988, pp. 1-9; A. Stollenwerk, *Der Genesiskommentar Thierrys von Chartres und die Thierry von Chartres zugeschriebenen Kommentare zu Boethius "De Trinitate"*, Diss. Köln 1971, pp. 3-27; P. Dronke, Thierry of Chartres, in: id. (ed.), *A History of Twelfth-Century Philosophy*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 358-359.

probably Thierry who so courageously defended Peter Abelard in 1121 at the synod of Soissons and who consequently already taught in Chartres at the time. Due to unknown reasons, Thierry taught in Paris from the beginning of the thirties until 1142, but he was already active in Chartres during that time as an arch-deacon and *magister*. When Gilbert, chancellor of the school of the cathedral of Chartres, became bishop of Poitiers in 1142 and consequently left Chartres, Thierry succeeded him in his position. As chancellor he influenced the artistic arrangement of the west face of the cathedral, with its sculptures depicting the liberal arts, since its construction commenced at the beginning of the forties.²⁵ At the beginning of the fifties, he relinquished his position in Chartres to enter a monastery, probably of the Cistercian order, where his life ended shortly after 1156.

Thierry was known as an "orator et rethor et artis amator grammaticae, logicae"²⁶ as well as a Platonist,²⁷ who taught for the first time the entire Aristotelian logic (possibly exclusive of the *Analytica Posteriora*) as well as — probably more in Chartres than in Paris — the subjects of the quadrivium. He earned the highest praises from his students: "virum litteratissimum et philosophantium amantissimum,"²⁸ "dignus Aristotelis successor,"²⁹ "artium studiosissimus inuestigator,"³⁰ "totius Europae philosophorum praecipuus,"³¹ "veris scientiarum titulis Doctori famosissimo,"³² "tibi, quem primam summamque hoc tempore philosophie sedem atque immobiliter fixam varia tempestate fluitantium studiorum anchoram plane quidem, ut novi, et fa-

²⁵ Cf. A. Stollenwerk, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–73; R. Klibansky, *The School of Chartres*, in: M. Clagett, G. Post, R. Reynolds (eds.), *Twelfth-Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society*, Madison 1961, pp. 13–14; A. Katzenellenbogen, *The Representation of the Seven Liberal Arts*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

²⁶ Anselmus de Havelsberg, *Vita Adalberti II*, cited according to A. Stollenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁷ "Quod Plato, quod Socrates clausere sub integumentis, / Hic reserans diseruitque palam": A. Vernet, *Une épitaphe de Thierry de Chartres*, in: *Recueil des travaux offerts à M. Clovis Brunel*, Paris 1955, t. 2, p. 670. Platonem ei concedit: Thierry de Chartres, *Commentarius super Libros De Inventione*, Pars secunda in librum primum, prologus (ed. K. M. Fredborg, *op. cit.*, p. 108).

²⁸ A. Vernet, *op. cit.*, p. 663.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 669.

³⁰ Johannes Saresberiensis, *Metalogicon* I, 5 (ed. C. Webb, Oxford 1929, p. 16).

³¹ N. M. Häring (ed.) *Clarenbaldi epistola ad Dominam* 3, in: N. M. Häring (ed.), *Life and Works of Clarembald of Arras*, Toronto 1965, p. 226 (= *id.*, in: W. Beierwaltes [Ed.] *Platonismus in der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Darmstadt 1969, p. 231; *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge* 22 (1955), p. 183).

³² Dedication of Bernardus Silvestris, *Cosmographia (De mundi universitate, 1148)* (ed. C. S. Barach, J. Wrobel, Innsbruck, 1876, p. 5).

teor . . . quem haut equidem ambigam, Platonis animam celitus iterum mortalibus accomodatam. . . te Latini studii patrem astronomie primitiis donandum iudicarim."³³ This almost overly high esteem shown by contemporary scholars finds its confirmation three centuries later (1449) in the judgement of Nicholas of Cusa: "vir facile omnium, quos legerim, ingenio clarissimus";³⁴ in fact, quite a number of Nicholas of Cusa's statements find their parallel, down to the very terminology, in Thierry's texts.

The incomplete commentary on the biblical account of creation, *Tractatus de sex dierum operibus*,³⁵ stands out among his works due to its philosophical conciseness. The commentaries on Boethius's theological writings,³⁶ especially those on *De Trinitate*, have been transmitted in various versions, without it being possible to distinguish what Thierry himself composed, lecture notes of his students, and the works of his school. Yet in the fundamental substance of their thought and in the formulations, that which is in common by far outweighs all else, so that without a doubt they have their origin in one thinker, even if one has to take into account further assimilation and additions.³⁷ Two commentaries on rhetoric,³⁸ one on Cicero's *De inventione* and another on Pseudo-Cicero's *Ad Herrenium*, have up until now hardly been investigated. In Thierry's enormous collection of texts, *Heptateuchon*, on the seven liberal arts (1,170 double-column pages have been handed down, originally around 1,400 pages), the preface and notes to the roughly fifty texts are by himself. As a foundation of philosophical studies we find here, among others, texts from Donatus, Priscian, Cicero, "Ad Herrenium," Julius Severianus, Martianus Capella, Porphyry, Aristotle, and Boethius for the trivium; Boethius for the quadrivium; Martianus Capella for arithmetic; Boethius for music; Isidore of Sevilla, Columella, Gerbert of Aurillac,

³³ Hermannus de Carinthia, Preface to his translation of Ptolemy's *Planisphaera*, in: C. Burnett (ed.), *Hermann of Carinthia, De essentiis*, Leiden/Köln 1980, p. 349.

³⁴ Nicolaus Cusanus, *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* (ed. R. Klibansky, Leipzig, 1932, p. 24).

³⁵ N. M. Häring (ed.), *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge* 22 (1955), pp. 184-216; id. (ed.), in: W. Beierwaltes (ed.), op. cit., Darmstadt 1969, pp. 232-249; id. (ed.), *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and his School*, pp. 553-575.

³⁶ N. M. Häring, *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*.

³⁷ Cf. P. Dronke, op. cit., p. 364; contra A. Stollenwerk, who assumes different authors for each of these works; cf. A. Stollenwerk, op. cit., pp. 86-88, 101, 123, 132, 149, 151, 154-155.

³⁸ K. M. Fredborg, op. cit.

and Boethius for geometry; Ptolemy for astronomy³⁹ — which is not surprising given Thierry's own academic background. Together with this work Thierry left to the cathedral library three volumes of collected juridical texts and forty-five additional volumes of miscellaneous content.⁴⁰

2. *Thierry's Thought*

In the following an attempt will be made to understand the basic themes of Thierry within a comprehensive explanation of reality from its highest principle. In doing so, it will not be possible to address the minor differences between the various commentaries on Boethius or all the details of his philosophy of nature. A preparatory section will first introduce the epistemological intention of the author by means of an analysis of the structure of the Commentary on Genesis. Thereafter an exposition of the anthropologically founded epistemology and doctrine of the sciences will serve as a preconception of the author's system. In a third section, the doctrine of Being, God, and the Trinity — central for Thierry — will be sketched. In the fourth section follows a deduction of the total structure of entities, which concretizes itself in the constituents of the levels of reality. Finally, a fifth section will pursue the reflections of the author on logical-linguistic possibilities and the limits of his system.

2.1. *The Structure of the Commentary on Genesis*

At the beginning of the introductory paragraph, the *accessus ad auctorem*,⁴¹ Thierry clarifies his method of interpretation: "secundum phisicam et ad litteram ego expositurus, inprimis de intentione auctoris et de libri utilitate pauca premittam. Postea uero ad sensum littere historiam exponendum ueniam ut et allegoricam et moralem lectionem que sanctis doctoribus aperte execute sunt ex toto pretermittam" (*SD* 1). By limiting himself to the historico-factual sense of Holy Scripture, though not rejecting as such a moral or spiritual interpretation, but excluding them for the sake of this commentary, Thierry aims at an interpretation "*secundum phisicam*" and hence an

³⁹ Cf. N. M. Häring, Chartres, Schule von, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Berlin/New York 1981, p. 699.

⁴⁰ Cf. P. Dronke, op. cit., pp. 359–360.

⁴¹ Cf. E. A. Quain, *The Medieval Accessus*, *Traditio* 3 (1945), pp. 215–264.

explanation in the sense of a science and philosophy of nature. The historico-factual sense of the text and the intention of a science and philosophy of nature are indeed brought into close connection, but they are not simply posited as equal to each other. Rather, the interest in the knowledge of nature takes precedence and finds in the literal meaning of the text suitable material. The primary intention thus lies in the knowledge of reality, which, however, adheres to the "facts" that are represented in the account of creation. This knowledge is complemented secondarily by the interpretation of the account of creation "*secundum litteram*."

Consequently, the commentary is divided into a factual part (*SD* 2–17) and an interpretive part (*SD* 18–29), which, however, proceeds only as far as the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis ("*fiat lux*") and which, in terms of content, brings with it once again a lot of material for a science of nature. The priority of the knowledge of reality to the understanding of the text once more shows itself in the main portion of the commentary, beginning with a purely rational ("*rationabiliter*" *SD* 2) line of thought, which "*vel parum scientibus appareret*" (*SD* 2). The result of this is then applied in the following section (*SD* 3) to the textual passage, which is only now introduced.⁴² Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ascribe to Thierry an interest fixed merely upon the knowledge of nature.⁴³ This is because for Thierry not only does the "*intentio*" of the author of the account of creation lie in the purpose "*ostendere rerum creationes et hominum generationem factam esse ab uno solo deo cui soli cultus et reuerentia debetur*" (*SD* 1), but also the "*utilitas*" for the reader lies in the same knowledge, namely, in the "*cognitio dei ex factoris suis cui soli cultus religionis exhibendus est*" (*SD* 1). For Thierry, as for the entire school of Chartres,⁴⁴ the knowledge of nature has as its aim the knowledge of God. It is precisely due to this that Thierry's

⁴² Cf. N. M. Häring, The creation and creator of the world according to Thierry of Chartres and Clarenbaldus of Arras, *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge* 22 (1955), pp. 155–156 (slightly enlarged German translation by the author himself: id., Die Erschaffung der Welt und ihr Schöpfer nach Thierry von Chartres und Clarenbaldus von Arras, in: W. Beierwaltes, op. cit., [pp. 161–267], pp. 187–188.)

⁴³ Contra A. Speer (op. cit., p. 300), who narrows Thierry's intention to that of "a foundation of a *scientia naturalis*" and who situates Thierry's metaphysical deductions "ausnahmslos im Grenzbereich der prinzipientheoretischen Grundlegung einer *scientia naturalis*."

⁴⁴ "Sic per cotidianam dispositionem pervenitur ad divinam sapientiam, per sapientiam ad divinam substantiam." Guillelmus de Conches, *Philosophia* I, 7.

Commentary on Genesis culminates in a speculative doctrine of God (*SD* 30–47) without returning back from this to the knowledge of nature.

The same epistemological intention is clear in the sub-division of the first part that proceeds “*secundum phisicam*” (*SD* 2–17). Basing himself on the first sentence of Genesis, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth,” Thierry here distinguishes the question of the causes (“*creavit*”) of the world, treated in paragraphs 2 and 3, from the question of the temporal succession (“*in principio*”) of the creation of the world, treated in paragraphs 4 through 17. As the content confirms, with this division, a metaphysical part, in which God is recognized as the ground of the world, is separated from the concrete investigations into the foundation of the order of the world by inner-world causes in the work of the six days.

The metaphysical part leads, first, directly to the knowledge of God in the manner of an open pre-projection, in applying the Aristotelian doctrine of the four causes in a Platonic interpretation to the relation between God and world: the active cause of worldly substance (“*mundanae substantiae*,” *SD* 2) is God; the formal cause (in the sense of Platonic exemplarity) is God’s wisdom; the final cause is God’s goodness; and the material cause is the four elements, which themselves have been created out of nothing (*SD* 2). To derive the Trinity of God from the threefold active, formal, and final cause is a peculiarity of the school of Chartres⁴⁵ and was probably taken over from there by Peter Abelard.⁴⁶ Thierry, however, merely indicates this Trinity in an vague manner; nor does he work out its proof in detail, merely asserting God’s Trinity in the next paragraph (*SD* 3) on the basis of the biblical account of creation. It is only in the last part of this commentary that the Trinity of God is proved metaphysically, and then not on the basis of the structure of the created world, but out of unity as the essence of God. So the trinitarian structure of the causes might have been considered by Thierry as an

⁴⁵ “Est igitur Thimeus de naturali justitia tractaturus; ad creationem mundi circa quam maxime apparet se transfert. . . . Est efficiens causa divina essentia, formalis divina sapientia, finalis divina bonitas, materialis quatuor elementa. Que ut melius intelligantur, bimembrem proponit divisionem, in cujus altero membro efficiens, formalis, finalis causa mundi continetur, in altero materialis et effectus.” Guillelmus de Conchis, *In Timeum*, in: J. M. Parent, op. cit., pp. 142–143. Cf. Johannes Saresbiensis, *Policraticus* VII, 5 (ed. C. Webb, p. 108).

⁴⁶ Cf. text to footnote 12.

indicative reference to the Trinity of God, and not as proof thereof, just as in a different passage he merely mentions in passing Augustine's indication of the trinity of *pondus*, *mensura*, and *numerus* as an image of the Trinity in the material domain.⁴⁷

In the Commentary on Genesis, the short section on the four causes and their equivalent in the biblical account of creation is followed by a section, almost five times as long, on the temporal succession of creation. According to this reconstruction of the coming about of the order of the world, God, in the beginning, only created matter, that is to say, the four elements of fire, air, water, and earth. As Thierry attempts to prove in detail, it is out of the natural causality of the four elements alone that the entire world, including all creatures, emerged in six days, without any further intervention of God: "In quorum numero homo ad imaginem et similitudinem dei factus est" (SD 14). There is no talk of a separate creation of the human soul. Insofar as God creates the four elements directly, Thierry can, in spite of the account being given in six days, adhere without difficulty to the notion of *creatio instantanea*, which he also confirms by explaining later developments, such as that of monsters, through natural causalities and "*causae seminales*" (SD 16). In this physicalistic part of the commentary, Thierry uses, without any symbolic, metaphysical, or theological reference, the knowledge of nature that is available to him, thereby showing himself to be interested, to a hitherto unknown extent, in a purely scientific explanation of the world.

The subsequent interpretation of the text of Genesis (SD 18–29) attempts, "*secundum rationem phisicorum*" (SD 18), that is, as "*ratio deprehendit*" (SD 18), to explore ("*probare*", SD 18) the relationship of corporeality, weight, and motion to the unformedness of matter, by reference to the concepts of "*hyle*" and "*chaos*" of the "*antiqui philosophi*" (SD 24); this part further attempts to interpret the "*spiritus domini*" of the account of creation according to Mercurius of the Corpus Hermeticum ("*Trismegistus*" SD 26) or in connection to the world-soul⁴⁸ ("*mundi animam*", SD 27) of the *Timaeus*, which is regarded as

⁴⁷ "Hanc Trinitatem in rebus singulis inuestigat Augustinus in libro *De Trinitate* [VIII 1] et secundum phisicam doctrinam inuenit pondus mensuram et numerum: trinitatem in rebus singulis. Quod euidenter docet Claudianus Mamertus in eo capitulo in quo de numero et pondere et mensura anime et dei agit. Unde huc quia transferre doctrinam potes quomodo hoc sit pretermitto": Thierry de Chartres, *G V*, 17.

⁴⁸ Cf. T. Gregory, *Platonismo medievale. Studi e ricerche*, Roma 1958, pp. 135–150:

identical with the Holy Spirit of the Christians (*SD* 27). In an attempt to maintain the train of thought on a purely philosophical level, the author of *Genesis* is here referred to as "*prudētissimū philosophorū Moyses*" (*SD* 28).⁴⁹

The reference in the account of creation to the speaking of God ("*Et dixit Deus: fiat lux,*" *SD* 29) and its operating through "the spirit of the Lord" Thierry seizes as an opportunity to speak "*de divinitate pauca*" (*SD* 29) in a last part of the work (*SD* 30–47), of approximately the same length as the physicalistic and the interpretive part. Herein he safeguards himself against any possible suspicion with the comment that what is to follow stems from theology: "*Quicquid autem de hac re dicemus ex uera et sancta theologia sumptum esse nemo dubitet*" (*SD* 29). This speculative part on the unity and Trinity of God — the treatise ends abruptly after the deduction of the existence of the Second Person and with the introduction of the deduction of the Third Person — indeed commences with a reflection on the rational contribution of the four liberal arts of the *quadrivium* to the knowledge of God, which may serve theology as a tool: "*Adsint igitur quatuor genera rationum que ducunt hominem ad cognitionem creatoris: scilicet arithmetice probationes et musice et geometricæ et astronomicæ. Quibus instrumentis in hac theologia breuiter utendum est ut et artificium creatoris in rebus appareat et quod proposuimus rationabiliter ostendatur*" (*SD* 30). Every one of the liberal arts of the *quadrivium* thus provides a proof for God, and in what follows Thierry develops the knowledge of God as based on arithmetic. For a better understanding of this speculative undertaking, it is necessary first of all to address Thierry's epistemology, methodology, and doctrine of the sciences.

2.2. *Epistemology and the Doctrine of the Sciences*

The knowledge of the totality of entities as one and whole, or philosophy (cf. *G* II, 23), is delineated, according to the canon of knowledge of the Stoa, as having a practical, a theoretical-ontological, and a logical part: "*Sunt enim tres partes philosophiæ: ethica que est de moribus et actionibus, speculatiua que est de causis rerum et naturis, rationalis que consistit in rationibus et docet ratiocinari quia docet*

id., *Anima mundi. La filosofia di Guglielmo di Conches et la Scuola di Chartres*, Firenze 1955, pp. 123–174.

⁴⁹ "*Moyes peritissimū philosophorū:*" Thierry de Chartres, *L* II, 38; cf. *L* II, 53.

diffinire diuidere colligere" (*L* prologus 3; cf. *C* II, 8). Theoretical philosophy, which is concerned with the essence and ground of entities, is divided according to Boethius's levels of abstraction into the science of nature (*physica*), mathematics, and theology: "Sunt enim tres partes speculatiue: theologia cuius principium est de summo deo, de Trinitate, et inde descendit ad angelicos spiritus et animas et est de incorporeis que sunt extra corpora: et mathematica cuius est principium de numeris et inde descendit ad proporcionem et ad magnitudines et est de incorporeis que sunt circa corpora sicut de linea superficie et de ceteris in hunc modum: et phisica que est de ipsis corporibus et habet principium a quatuor elementis" (*L* prologus 4; cf. *C* II, 8; *G* II, 24).

Since every bit of knowledge as such has a form connected to its content, the three theoretical branches of knowledge are distinguished according to the manner of being of the form they grasp. *Physica* has material things as such, that is, the forms in their connection to matter, as its object; thus, it treats, together with the essence of material things, their possibility and their change or movement, for movement arises neither merely from the form nor from the matter as such, but rather from their connection (*C* II, 11). Mathematics similarly investigates the forms of material things, but it abstracts from their materiality and therefore also from their movement, in order to comprehend the forms and essences as such, as well as their relations (*AM Trin.* II, 18). Theology, finally, abstracts yet once more from all differences, that is, from the limits of the forms, thus arriving at unity as such, as the "first form" ("*prima forma*") or "being itself" ("*ipsum esse*"), namely, God, who, insofar as He is the principle of any form whatsoever, may be called the "form of all forms"⁵⁰ ("*forma formarum*") (*L* II, 43; 48; *G* II, 15).

To the ontological gradation of forms correspond the gradations of the human cognitive ability. "Anima igitur constat ex his uiribus: sensu imaginatione ratione intelligentia atque intelligibilitate" (*G* II, 3). The five senses apprehend material bodies according to colour, noise, smell, taste, and tangibility. The power of imagination apprehends the forms and figures as they are in matter though in the absence of that matter, as in, say, the image of Julius Caesar (*G* II, 5). Reason (*ratio*) abstracts from a number of material things the specific or generic form in which these things partake, but only in such a manner

⁵⁰ Cf. P. Dronke, *op. cit.*, p. 369 n. 40.

that the possibility of change of these things is still included therein, as, for example, in the concept of "man" (*G II*, 6). By contrast, intelligence, or "*disciplina*," views the properties or pure forms in their true proper being ("*ut uere sunt*") though in their mutual difference, as in the concepts of "humanity" and "circle," which no longer include any possibility of change and which, in this purity, can no longer be actualized in matter (cf. *L II*, 20; *G II*, 7). Ultimately, the "*intelligibilitas*," or, according to Thierry's neologism,⁵¹ "*intellectibilitas*" (*AM Trin.* II, 30; *L II*, 31), is the highest power of the soul, transcending all multiplicity and difference towards pure unity ("*unitas*") and simplicity (*simplex simplicitas*) and thus no longer towards the relational but rather towards absolute necessity and simple totality ("*simplex universitas*"), thereby coming to know God (*AM Trin.* II, 27; *G II*, 8; 20). This highest level of knowledge, which is, strictly speaking, proper to God alone, is attained by only a few human beings, (*G II*, 9; *G IV*, 8); yet, they are to strive for it as much as is humanly possible, since it is only here that Being without any relation to matter — and thus the origin of all entities as such — discloses itself (*G II*, 28).

Since sensory cognition, imagination, and reason are aligned in the domain of *physica* (*L II*, 30), three manners or methods for scientific cognition emerge, as Boethius holds. "Igitur in naturalibus ratiōnabiliter, in mathematicis disciplinaliter, in theologis uersari oportet intelligibiliter" (*G II*, 28; cf. *C II*, 15–16; *L II*, 29; 32). The rational method proves by means of grounds; yet, because it starts not with pure form but with sensory cognition, it remains in the domain of the possible, the image ("*imago*"), and opinion ("*opinio*"), without attaining truth (*L II*, 29). The disciplinary method, by contrast, cognizes the forms and essences, as well as their necessary relations in truth, and so it achieves by inference conceptual, distinguishing, and teachable knowledge (ib.); the mathematical arts of the *quadrivium* make use of this method. The theological method aims at simple insight and thus argues from the essence of unity and simple necessity; yet, it can be led to that insight by means of the disciplinary method ("*complicatio*", "*complicatio*") and can make explicit ("*explicatio*": *L II*, 4; *G II*, 12) this insight into Being, once again, with the aid of the disciplinary method. For, just as the pure forms owe their formality to Being itself in virtue of participation, so too the disciplinary method

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 366.

receives its insightfulness from the perhaps as-yet implicit (theological) insight into being or unity itself. Thus theology too proceeds methodologically and neither demands an immediate intuition of Being nor comes to a halt at an undifferentiated view of Being, as Thierry's deduction of the Trinity and the gradations of being demonstrate.⁵²

The levels of cognition and methods are now no longer merely divided among different abilities and separated off from each other. Rather, they complement these methods of argumentation proper to themselves with elements taken over from the other methods.⁵³ This mixing and crossing of the methods of cognition is made possible by the fact that the soul is at work in every act of these capacities. In the inclination to mere sense cognition and imagination, the soul lowers itself, bends itself out of shape and becomes brutalized (*G II*, 9–10). In rational cognition, it gains its balance and proper size and remains human (*ib.*). If, by use of itself, it forces itself upwards to the pure forms or ideas, submitting itself to their truth in the disciplinary mode of cognition, the soul uses itself above itself and suspends the spirit upright in pure insightfulness (“suspendit animum in intelligibilitatem erectum,” *G II*, 10) and, so to speak, becomes God (*G II*, 10). Thus, because the soul “*Ipsa facta est ad naturam rei uniuerse*” (*G II* 12), “*conformat se anima secundum diuersas uires suas omnibus modis uniuersitatis*” (*L II*, 30). Hence the soul narrows itself in its movement down towards the sensible and enlarges itself in its movement upwards towards the spiritual, God above and beyond itself (*G II*, 11).

2.3. *Unity as Origin*

2.3.a. The Unity of God

As already mentioned, Thierry considers it possible to obtain knowledge of God by the method of cognition of any of the four liberal arts of the *quadrivium* (*SD* 30). But he himself performs the proof only via arithmetic (which, however, is also foundational for music, geometry,

⁵² Contra M. Dreyer (*More mathematicorum. Rezeption und Transformation der antiken Gestalten wissenschaftlichen Wissens im 12. Jahrhundert* [BGPhThMA, N. F. 47], Münster 1996, p. 133), who understands “*intellectibilitas*” as “*unmittelbare Gottesschau*”, “*mystische Gottesschau*”.

⁵³ This understanding of method is systematised into a methodology of science in Gilbert of Poitiers, Nikolaus of Amiens and Alanus ab Insulis; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 142–170.

and astronomy); and he only occasionally draws upon similarities from geometry (cf. *SD* 37).

The origin of arithmetic lies in the number one, yet this itself is founded on the insight into unity (“*unitas*”). The only alternative to unity is alterity (“*alteritas*”), which itself, however, can be reduced to unity. “*Omnem alteritatem unitas precedit quoniam unitas precedit binarium qui est principium omnis alteritatis. Alterum enim semper de duobus dicitur. Omnem igitur mutabilitatem precedit unitas siquidem omnis mutabilitas substantiam ex binario sortitur. Nichil enim aptum est mutari siue moueri nisi etiam aptum sit ut prius se habeat uno modo deinde alio. Hanc igitur modorum alteritatem unitas precedit: quare et mutabilitatem*” (*SD* 30). Since, therefore, alterity is the ground of possibility of change, all that is changeable together with alterity is founded on unity. “*Sed mutabilitati omnis creatura subiecta est*” (*SD* 31). According to the principle that “*Unitas enim sola alteritatem precedit*” (*G* V, 19; cf. *G* II, 18), all mundane things, i.e., all changeable entities, are founded in unity as a preceding principle. This preceding unity, however, is prior to all temporality, since temporality implies changeability. “*Sed alteritas ex mutabilitate uel ex ipsa mutabilitas quam tempus intulit*” (*G* V, 19). That, however, which lies before time, is eternal. “*Cum igitur unitas omnem creaturam precedat, eternam esse necesse est. At eternum nichil est aliud quam diuinitas. Unitas igitur ipsa diuinitas*” (*SD* 31). And with that, the divinity as the eternal unity without alterity and changeability has been demonstrated as the ground of possibility and origin of all mundane-temporal and changeable entities arising out of that very being.

The relation in which God, or simple unity, stands to the multitude of created entities reveals itself in the relation of dependency, or the relation of participation of the many in the One, of beings in being. “*Est enim esse ex unitatis participatione. Tandiu enim est quod est quociens unum est et uno modo se habet*” (*G* II, 16).⁵⁴ Participation in unity is thus participation in God’s being. “*Nam sicut aliquid ex luce lucidum est uel ex calore calidum ita singule res esse sum ex diuinitate sortiuntur. . . . Unitas igitur singulis rebus forma essendi est*” (*SD* 31). God is therefore “*uera forma et entitas omnium rerum*” (*L* II, 35) and thus “*unio omnium rerum*” (*L* II,

⁵⁴ Cf. Augustine, *De ordine* II, 18.

35). If every entity is only in being in that God's being is immediately present to it inwardly, as the form of being or formal ground of the proper form ("*forma formarum*"), then "deus totus et essentialiter ubique esse vere perhibetur" (SD 31). This does not at all lead, as Thierry protests, to a pantheistic identification of God with the entities of the world, because God is not — as is, for example, a triangle — a form that from out of itself is dependent on matter as the foundation of its existence (SD 32); rather "presentia diuinitatis singulis creaturis totum et unicum esse consistit ut etiam ipsa materia ex presentia diuinitatis habeat existere: non ipsa diuinitas aut ex ipsa aut in ipsa" (ib.). Matter too is changeable, and so, as Pythagoras and Plato teach, duality ("*binarius*") returns to simple unity, being traced back to God (C II, 28).

From this point of departure, God's essence is, in a gradual deduction, characterized further as "*ipsa entia*" (C II, 17) or "*entia ineffabilis*" (ib.), "*essens*" (L II, 37), "*esse*" (L II, 35), or "*ipsum esse*" (L II, 38), "*perfectio essendi*" (L II, 40), "*actus sine possibilitate*" (C II, 29), "*forma sine materia*" (L II, 41), "*absoluta neccesitas*" (L II, 40; C II, 29), "*ipsa veritas et immutabilitas*" (L II, 38), "*mens divina*" (L II, 43), "*omnipotens*" (SD 36), etc. All of these predicates, however, only develop what was already virtually contained in the basic determination of God as simple unity.

Moreover, since "Constans est deo nichil esse melius" (G I, 10), "Deus igitur est bonitas sufficientia beatitudo. Deus enim quicquid est ex se est atque etiam illud est sic itaque quod deus est ita ipse est id quod nec sibi ipse illud nec aliud contulerit. Unde quia ipse est iustus pius et fortis ipse est fortitudo pietas iusticia" (G I, 19). God is therefore the coming together in one of abstract form and subsisting being or in itself subsisting form. Yet, Thierry strictly refuses, together with Bernard of Clairvaux and against Gilbert of Poitiers,⁵⁵ to say for logical-linguistic reasons, for example, that God would be good "through" goodness, since in doing so God would be founded on something precedent: "Est autem in hoc loco cauendum a ueneno quorundam imperitorum qui dicunt: deus est a deitate deus. Quod omnino hereticum est. A nullo enim deus et nullo participat. Immo esse omnium est" (L II, 56).

⁵⁵ Cf. L. Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century*, Leiden 1982, pp. 158–163; J. Marenbon, Gilbert of Poitiers, in: P. Dronke (ed.), op. cit., pp. 340–343.

2.3.b. The Trinity of God

Thierry now attempts, inspired by Augustine, to justify the Trinity, especially the origin of the Second Person in God from out of God's being as unity: "Mathematicam super hanc rem doctrinam non addit nisi Augustinus dicens unitatem esse in Patre et eiusdem unitatis equalitatem in Filio atque unitatis equalitatisque conexionem et amorem in Spiritu sancto" (*G V*, 17; cf. *L VII*, 5).⁵⁶ First there come forth new, higher numbers through the multiplication of already existing numbers, whereby numbers can be multiplied either with themselves or with other numbers (*SD 37*). Thus all numbers originate in the number one and, as such, in unity: "unitas omnem numerum creat" (*SD 36*). Yet unity, once it is multiplied by itself, again brings forth unity, since one multiplied by one is one: "Ex se autem et ex sua substantia (sc. unitas) nichil aliud generare potest nisi equalitatem" (*SD 38*). Thus, the unity that has been brought about by multiplication is as such different from the multiplying unity, but in its essence and being as unity it is identical therewith: "Unitas enim semel unitas est" (*C II*, 30). Self-identity, through which an entity exists in its being, thus includes unity and similarity: "Gignit ergo unitas equalitatem unitatis ita tamen ut res eadem sit unitas et unitatis equalitas" (*C II*, 30).

This model corresponds to the relation of Father and Son in the Trinity, inasmuch as the Son only comes forth from the Father, different from Him, and yet the same in essence, and at the same time one with Him in the substance of God: "Unitas ergo in eo quod gignit Pater est: in eo quod gignitur Filius est. Unum igitur et idem Pater est et Filius. Nec Pater tamen Filius est nec Filius Pater est quia nec unitas in eo quod gignit genita est nec in eo quod gignitur gignens est" (*C II*, 30). It remains to be considered, however, out of which necessity such a reduplication of unity is to be assumed.

First, it belongs to the essence of any number that it is as such one, that is to say, that it attains its self-identity by a multiplication with unity: "[unitas] per alios numeros multiplicata omnes numeros generat" (*SD 38*). And so, too, unity as such is in its essence only one, but is therein already multiplied with itself, that is, has been applied to itself and is only as such equal to itself: "Unitas enim per se nichil aliud gignere potest nisi eiusdem unitatis equalitatem" (*SD 39*).

⁵⁶ Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* I,5.

Second, following the same line of thought, unity, multiplied with other numbers, produces something that is not equal to itself, that is, to unity. However, dissimilarity, which can thus be found not only among material entities but also in the domain of the necessary forms, presupposes, as negation and privation, similarity as its measure and origin: "Nam cum equalitas inequalitatem precedat necesse est generationem equalitatis precedere" (*SD* 39). Just as equality precedes inequality, so too unity precedes (other) numbers. From this it follows that unity necessarily brings forth, purely through itself, the equality with itself prior to the bringing forth of all (other) numbers: "Cum igitur unitas gignat utrumque [namely, equality and inequality] et per quemlibet numerum multiplicata non possit gignere nisi inequalitatem necesse est ut gignat equalitatem per illud quod naturaliter omnes numeros precedit. At illud est unitas" (*SD* 39).

To understand this notion of equality, Pythagorean-Platonic⁵⁷ in its conception, one must think here, not of two originally separate entities that are being compared externally, the accidental equality of which is being ascertained, but rather of essential equality. Essential equality exists where an entity brings forth its equality out of itself, and this precisely as one equal to itself, that is, as a second Self, so to speak; on the other hand, this equality is in itself essential equality and therefore refers itself back to unity as its prototype and its origin. It is in this sense that Thierry, summarizing the results of his deduction, speaks of "an equality substantial to unity": "Manifestum est ergo ex his quae dicta sunt quod omnem numerum naturaliter precedit equalitas quam unitas ex se et ex sua substantia generat. Nam cum generatio huius equalitatis unitati sit substantialis, unitas autem omnem numerum precedat, generationem quoque equalitatis omnem numerum precedere necesse est" (*SD* 40).

Equality as such, however, means complete correspondence, a no-more and no-less (cf. *C* II, 35), and thus a determined "*forma modus mensura*" (*SD* 43). If, however, unity is the ground of the being of entities, equality, insofar as it is in itself (i.e., as a confronting unity) correspondence and measure, is at the same time "*modus secundum quem ipsa unitas operatur in rebus*" (*SD* 41). Thus, just as unity is

⁵⁷ Cf. N. M. Häring, "The creation and creator of the world according to Thierry of Chartres and Clarenbaldus of Arras," loc. cit., pp. 162-164; E. Jeuneau, "Mathématiques et trinité chez Thierry de Chartres," in: P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 2)*, Berlin 1963, p. 295.

forma essendi and *forma formarum*, so “unitatis equalitas modus quidam est ultra quem citraue nequit aliquid consistere” (SD 42). But because equality itself has its origin and measure in unity, it is the origin and norm of the equality of things, precisely insofar as it is equality as confronting unity, namely, its “*figura et splendor*” (SD 42, cf. C II, 32) or its appearance and representation (*representat*, C II, 33).

However, divine equality, as the essential correspondence to unity and as the normative origin of forms and their actualisation in matter, is a spiritual principle, the “*prima et eterna sapientia*” (SD 42; cf. C II, 31) or “*ipsa mens diuina que est generatiua ydearum*” (L II, 43). As the measure and norm of the form of things or “*formalis causa*” (SD 45) in the Platonic sense, this equality or wisdom is also the place of origin of concepts and of the knowledge of things, since cognition is the execution of equality as such: “Ibi rerum notiones continentur. Semper enim rei notitia in ipsius equalitate continentur. Si autem excesserit uel infra substiterit non est notitia sed falsa imaginatio dicenda” (SD 42). As the measure and origin of cognition, equality is nothing other than truth itself:⁵⁸ “manifestum est eandem equalitatem esse ipsam rei ueritatem” (SD 45). Insofar as equality marks things in their being and essence as their measure and truth, it may ultimately be called the creative word of God: “Nichil enim aliud est esse Uerbum deitatis quam eterna creatoris de omnibus rebus prefinitio” (SD 46).

The origin of the Third Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, is already included in the origin of equality itself in unity, that is, of the Son in the Father. For, if, as demonstrated, equality is in itself equality with respect to unity, and unity allows equality to originate out of itself, then “unitatem equalitas diligit et equalitatem unitas. Amor igitur quidam est et conexio equalitatis ad unitatem et unitatis ad essendi equalitatem” (C II, 37). Consequently, there exists a mutual assignment of unity and equality to each other, which may be termed love or strife (*appetit*, L VII, 7). The unity of this mutual assignment to one another, or love, in which the poles of unity and equality are united in their remaining difference, is the third moment, namely, the “*conexio amborum*” (L VII, 7), the relation between the two: “Istud amborum relatiuum est ad proprietates has quas dixi equalitatem et unitatem” (L VII, 7). Here the relation of equality to unity is noth-

⁵⁸ Cf. M.-D. Chenu, “Une définition pythagoricienne de la vérité au Moyen-Âge,” *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge* 28 (1961), pp. 7–13.

ing other than the echo and response in turn of the relation of unity to equality: "ab unitate uersus sui equalitatem . . . nexus et amor quidam extitit qui ad eandem reciprocatur ab equalitate unitatis" (G V, 20). There shows itself the mutual ontological "proportionality" — "*conexio* (sc. *facit*) *proportionalitatem*" (L VII, 7) — included in identity as mutual personal affection, without which neither of the two moments could exist: "Unitas enim ualde ornat essendi equalitatem. Aliter enim non esset si se contempneret. Similiter unitatis equalitas ualde amplectitur unitatem quasi entitatem. Periret enim si diuisionem incurreret" (G V, 20).

Thus the Second and Third Persons in God are not merely additional to the First Person, but rather are together with it, of equal rank and, in their sequence of origin, the three moments through which God maintains Himself in His unity and His being; "sese ex se ipso in hanc conexionem continens quia amor et nexus" (G V, 21). A doctrine of God here develops out of itself into a doctrine of the Trinity, but without presupposing the Trinity. At the same time, a Christology is sketched out in its inception, which succeeds in conceiving of Christ — with remarkable nearness to biblical statements — both in his correspondence and adherence to the Father and as the principle of creation and the normative appearance of God in the world. It can also be mentioned that it does not seem to be significant to Thierry that the three moments are designated in the masculine: "Designantur uero in masculino genere he persone cum possent designari his nominibus mater filia atque donatio ut res quas innuunt scilicet omnipotentia sapientia benignitas" (G V, 22). Finally, an echo of this divine Trinity is found in the domain of *physica* in the division of created being into "pondus mensuram et numerum: trinitatem in rebus singularis" (G V, 17) as well as in the domain of ethics: "Ethica autem consideratio fidem spem caritatem pro trinitate attendit" (G V, 17). Since mathematics is also divided in threes in the trinity developed above of *unitas*, *equalitas*, and *conexio*, and theology has Trinity as its theme as it is, all domains of philosophy are marked in a trinitarian fashion, and thus trinity has been revealed as the foundational structure of being, because God is the archetype image of all beings.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ On the influence of Thierry's doctrine of creation and doctrine of God on his student Clarembald of Arras (died around 1187 ?) see N. M. Häring, "The creation and creator of the world according to Thierry of Chartres and Clarenbaldus

3. *The Modalities of the Universality of all Things*

The object of philosophical cognition is not primarily a particular being, including the highest, but the totality of reality in all its modes of being, or modalities: "Hanc igitur uniuersitatem in his diuersis modis considerat philosophia" (*G* II, 23). If the above reflections on the being of God are situated within the framework of the question of the totality or the universality ("*uniuersitas*") of beings, then one has to see in them a discussion of the original modality of the universality of being itself, and not merely a discussion of the most perfect being nor of the principle of all being: "Deus nempe est omnia ita tamen quod nullum singulorum. Si enim aliquod singulorum esset iam non esset rerum uniuersitas. Quam rerum uniuersitatem eum esse Iohannes testatur dicens 'quod factum est in ipso uita erat'" (*G* II, 13; cf. *C* IV, 8; cf. John 1, 3). The modes in which the totality of beings or the "universality of things" can exist must now be determined in their connectedness.

Thierry distinguishes five of these modes: "quinque modis rerum consideratur uniuersitas. Est enim rerum uniuersitas in deo, est in spiritu creato, est in numeris, est in materia, est etiam rerum uniuersitas in actu ita uidelicet quod deus est omnia, spiritus creatus omnia,

of Arras," pp. 137–145, 169–181; id., *Life and Works of Clarembald of Arras*, pp. 4, 20–21, 23–38. Clarembald's "Tractatus super librum Genesis" can be found in the first mentioned work pp. 200–216, and in the second mentioned work pp. 226–249. In the first volume of his chronicle of the world "*Chronicon*" (49 volumes, from 634 until 1204) the Cistercian Helinandus of Froidmont (around 1160; after 1229) uses almost the entire text of Thierry's tractatus on creation, including the doctrine of the Trinity, and also bases himself in a Christmas sermon "*Sermo II in Natali Domini*" (PL 212, 489D–490D) on Thierry's speculations on the Trinity; cf. N. M. Häring, *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, p. 52; A. Stollenwerk, op. cit. p. 219. Equally Master Eckhart, in his Latin sermon on Augustine (Meister Eckhart, *Die lateinischen Werke* V, Stuttgart/Berlin 1936, pp. 87–99) makes use of Clarembald of Arras; cf. N. M. Häring, *Life and Works of Clarembald of Arras*, p. 46. Vincent of Beauvais in his encyclopaedia takes over Thierry's doctrine of creation and doctrine of God from Helinand of Froidmont, however, under the name of Hugh (of St. Victor); cf. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale* II, 26–28; IV, 42; XV, 1; XV, 17 (ed. Douai 1624, 95–97; 259; 1093; 1103); cf. N. M. Häring, *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, p. 51, n. 33. Nicholas of Cusa is directly acquainted with the school of Chartres, and especially with Thierry, as well as through Master Eckhart; cf. H. Wackerzapp, *Der Einfluß Meister Eckharts auf die ersten philosophischen Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues (1440–1450)*, (BGThMA 39,3), Münster 1962, passim (cf. in the register of names: Clarenbaldus of Arras, Thierry de Chartres); A. Stollenwerk, op. cit., pp. 210, 215, 216, 219; P. Duhem, "Thierry de Chartres et Nicolas de Cues," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 3 (1909), pp. 525–530.

natura quoque omnia, materia iterum omnia, actualia quoque nemo dubitat esse omnia" (C IV, 7). So, leaving aside the cognitive representation of the whole in the finite human spirit, we see that, among the four remaining modes, the three modes "*natura*," "*materia*," and "*actualia*" are to be understood, from their origin in God, as the first mode of existence of the universality of all things. God is now "*uniuersitas quam in quandam simplicitatem in se complicauit absoluta necessitas*" (G II, 20). Thus, on the basis of the absolute necessity rooted in the unity of God, God is act without any contamination of mere possibility or indeterminacy: "*Ipsa (sc. forma que deus est) enim est perfectio actus*" (G II, 36). Every mode of being different from God is, therefore, different from pure act, and thus includes possibility: "*Cum igitur sunt hec duo, actus scilicet et possibilitas, sciendum quod sunt duo rerum principia licet unum sit causa alterius et possit esse sine alio: scilicet actus i.e. immutabilitas sine possibilitate i.e. sine mutabilitate. Sunt principia rerum quia nulla res potest esse sine his*" (L II, 40). First of all, possibility is to be constituted as such, hence, as pure possibility. Possibility, however, is to be traced back to being as act, and thus it originates from pure act: "*Actus uero est immutabilitas et perfectio essendi que a philosophis uocatur absoluta necessitas. Sed ab immutabilitate descendit mutabilitas. Quare ab actu descendit possibilitas. Actus enim immutabilitas. Possibilitas uero mutabilitas: scilicet talis aptitudo et potestas transeundi de uno statu ad alium, etiam de non esse ad esse*" (L II, 40). Pure possibility, then, encompasses all entities different from God. The real principle of pure possibility, however, is grounded in the act as such, insofar as the act can ground what is different from it, that is, everything that is possible. Pure act, as a capacity to bring forth what is different, creatively constitutes for itself the possibility of all entities as the condition of possibility of its bringing-forth: "*Hec uero est possibilitas sola que omnia in se complicat. Est enim possibilitate uniuersitas absoluta. Ea enim que complicata sunt in simplicitate diuine mentis possibile fuit duci ad actum et possibilia sunt*" (G II, 17). The principle of this all-encompassing, thus absolute, possibility is the "*materia*," insofar as it is not yet determined by any form: "*Quare ipsa (scil. possibilitas absoluta) est materia primordialis quam alii ylem alii siluam alii cahos alii infernum quidam aptitudinem atque carentiam dixerunt*" (G II, 18). Thus, matter is, so to speak, the mirror and resonance of the actuality of God in His omnipotence in the extra-divine domain. This is so because, although

matter makes possible all entities different from the pure act of God, it does not stand opposite to God, dualistically or without relation, but it comes forth out of God Himself, which must have been Plato's meaning too (cf. *C II*, 28): "materia ad esse suum requirit simplicitatem. Simplicitas enim est immutabilitas. (25) Sed ab immutabilitate descendit mutabilitas. Materia uero est mutabilis. . . . Ipsa enim a deo descendit et deus eam creauit i.e. eius causa et principium est" (*L II*, 24–25).

Thus, without matter there is no being possible that is different from God: "Ponamus enim per ipthesim materiam non esse — quod tamen fieri non potest — ad unam, ut uerum fateor, formam omnes rerum omnium forme relabentur. Nec erit nisi una et simplex forma: diuina silicet que una uera forma est" (*C II*, 44; cf. *L II*, 24; 41; 42). God's being alone precedes matter and is independent of it: "Potest igitur simplicitas eterna que deus est esse sine materia" (*L II*, 25; cf. 24). The pure forms or ideas, that is, the objects of the mathematical mode of thought, are also in themselves without matter; yet they have been conceived in the mind of God in view of their actualization in matter, and hence presuppose it, without actually being constituted by matter: "Concipit enim (sc. mens diuina) et tenet eas (sc. ydeas) intra se et ab ipsa ueniunt in possibilitatem sic quod habent esse ex ipsa prima forma et materia i.e. possibilitate i.e. habent per eas esse. Nam sine materia non possunt esse nec a deo fieri nisi circa materiam" (*L II*, 43).

Hence, all things outside of God come forth from the two "*quasi ex aduerso posita*" (*C II*, 28) principles of God's actuality and the possibility of matter: "Unde dicimus et uerum est quod actus et possibilitas rerum omnium sunt principia quorum tamen alterum ab altero descendit, scilicet possibilitas ab actu, quia mutabilitas ab immutabilitate" (*L II*, 41). This intermediate domain consists of two levels, namely, the forms, or ideas, in themselves and the real, material things: "Inter hec autem quasi inter extrema sunt forme rerum at actualia" (*C II*, 28; cf. *L II*, 11).

God first conceives the totality of essences by unfolding his simplicity into the many modes of possible participation therein (cf. *L II*, 6): "Hec igitur uniuersitas quam in quandam simplicitatem in se complicaui absoluta necessitas explicatur in formarum atque in imaginum ueritates quas ideas dicimus" (*G II*, 20). A structure of relations of intelligible necessities constitutes itself in this domain "*in quodam*

ordine" (L II, 10; cf. G II, 20): "Quam alii legem naturalem alii naturam alii mundi animam alii iusticiam naturalem alii ymarmenem nuncupauerunt. At uero alii eam dixere fatum alii parchas alii intelligentiam dei" (G II, 21; cf. L II, 10). This essential necessity determines the causal interconnection of actual things: "Hec uero determinata dicitur necessitas uel necessitas complexionis eo quod cum aliquam eius materiam incurrimus causarum reliquarum seriatam conexionem uitare non possumus" (G II, 21). Thus, determined necessity is nothing other than the actualization of the necessary relations of essences in matter, and so the mode in which the multiplicity of things constitutes their totality or universality: "[forma que deus est] Possibilitatem enim determinat et ad actum ducit in causarum quandam seriem concipiendo ydeas et in actualia hec: coneciendo ipsas materie" (G II, 36; cf. G II, 20). Thus, the causal series is, when seen from its terminus (which is the world of physical entities), an "unfolding" (*explicatio*); when seen, however, from its origin, which is also its goal (the absolute simplicity), it is an "involution" (*complicatio*) of the structures of essences (cf. L II, 14): "Complicatio enim semper preceedit explicationem sicut unitas pluralitatem" (L II, 6).

Between the ideal, determined necessity of the ideas and the absolute possibility of pure matter there lies the totality of real things, which have been freely created by God. In fact, though all multiplicity originates from unity, the actualisation of multiplicity only occurs in the domain of the possible, and not that of the necessary: "Quoniam autem unitas omnem numerum creat . . . necesse est unitatem non habere finem sue potentie. . . . Sed creatio numerorum rerum est creatio" (SD 36). In line with Plato's view, physical things are materialized ideas, constituted in virtue of the combination of actuality and possibility. Since in them the "absolute possibility" of matter is actualised in determined forms and is narrowed down by them, this domain of *physica* is called "*possibilitas determinata*" (cf. L II, 9). Further, since the forms, in their purity, cannot be actualised in matter (cf. L II, 20), their intelligible truth is changed to sensual images: "Que forme et idee huius necessitatis inmateriate . . . in sui imaginem ueritate sua pretermissa transeunt terminantes fluxum materie. Estque eadem rerum uniuersitas possibilitas determinata utpote redacta ad optimos actus ex cetu intelligentie atque materie. Appellant uero rerum uniuersitatem in hoc mundo qui est possibilitas diffinita alii actualia alii entia atque sensibilia" (G II, 22). Whereas *physica* views

things in their actual facticity, the mathematical mode of thought abstracts from the world of actual things the forms of essences and the necessary relations of essences to their pure truth.

Being as a whole, or the universality of things, therefore consists, according to Thierry's summary of his system, essentially of four modalities, the ontological connection of which has now been deduced: "Cum autem rerum uniuersitas, ut dictum est, subiecta sit theologie, mathematice et phisice secundum diuersas considerationes est tamen uniuersitas rerum quatuor modis: et una et eadem uniuersitas est in absoluta necessitate, est in necessitate complexionis, est in absoluta possibilitate, est in determinata possibilitate. Et hi sunt quatuor modi existendi uniuersitatis omnium rerum" (*L II*, 9). Abstractly speaking, the structural principles of these levels lie in the relation of necessity and possibility, whereas their real principles are found in form (or act) and matter, and ultimately in unity and multiplicity: "Et ea quidem uniuersitas est in necessitate absoluta in simplicitate et unione quadam omnium rerum que deus est. Est etiam in necessitate complexionis in quodam ordine et progressionem: inmutabiliter tamen. Est in possibilitate absoluta: in possibilitate tamen sine actu omni. Est etiam in determinata possibilitate: possibiliter et actu" (*L II*, 9). These levels are in no way equivalent to each other, yet in each and every one of them the same universality of beings — albeit in different modalities — is present: "una et eadem uniuersitas et in actu et in simplicitate et in diffinita possibilitate et in absoluta possibilitate. Sed aliter et aliter" (*L II*, 20). These four modes of being correspond to the structure of the three modes of knowledge of theoretical philosophy because the knowledge of matter, or absolute possibility, is assigned to the realm of the knowledge of material factual beings (since an insight into facticity constitutively includes insight into possibility). The modalities of knowledge therefore lie in the insight into identity, into relational necessity, and into facticity together with possibility: "Considerat enim theologia necessitatem que unitas est et simplicitas. Mathematica considerat necessitatem complexionis que est explicatio simplicitatis. Mathematica enim formas rerum in ueritate sua considerat. Phisica uero considerat determinatam possibilitatem et absolutam" (*L II*, 11; cf. 18). Insofar as these ontologically specified methods of philosophical knowledge correspond to the modes of human knowledge, the soul is the place where the totality of entities in its four modes is present, as had been sketched at the beginning: "Sic anima conformat se quatuor modis uniuersitatis secundum

diuersas uires et comprehensiones quia est anima composita ex quatuor modis uniuersitatis: scilicet ex uiribus comprehendendi illos quatuor modos sicut ex Platone habetur" (*L II*, 31).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ In spite of its unseemly appearance Thierry's doctrine of modalities addresses fundamental philosophical problems and thus deserves to be considered in comparison with projects of related problematics, for example in Kant, and in German Idealism. As is well known Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* cites in the table of categories (A 70–83, B 95–116) possibility, existence and necessity, according to the distinction of judgements as problematic, assertive and apodictic, as foundational modes of knowledge or as categories of modality. In an insight that has its parallel in Fichte's system, Thierry first shows that out of pure unity or act — the only thing that exists and is comprehensible in and out of itself — only the dimension of indeterminate possibility and unlimited multiplicity, namely matter as the principle of derived reality and sensual intuition, originates, and can come to be different from unity. It is within the thus opened fundamental tension between actuality and possibility, unity and indeterminate multiplicity that the totality of determined necessity, or the forms, can come to constitute itself. However, since they stand in an essential relation to matter as the dimension of possible actualization, the space for contingent reality, namely facticity as possibility, thus the space for the free creation of the real ("actualia"), is opened in this secondary tension between determined forms and indeterminate matter. However, since facticity as such encompasses indeterminate possibility as its own condition, and possibility is, once again, the possibility of the real as such, both belong to the same dimension that Thierry calls "phisca", in spite of their ontological and epistemological difference. Opposed to the possible and the factual now stands the domain of the necessary, that is differentiated into relational necessity and absolute necessity. Relational necessity, without which no rational cognition is possible, attains its being as necessity out of absolute or simple necessity. Because necessity as such can only be founded in indivisible identity, and can only be intuited in this way, and, further, relational necessity includes multiplicity, any necessity is to be traced back to simple unity. Thierry, however, does not remain satisfied with this reduction of relationality to identity, rather he points at the positive starting-point for the origin of relational necessity within simple unity or absolute necessity. As identity, simple unity includes equality, and thus relation; this relation, however, as absolute necessity in being identical with unity itself is the prototype and foundation which makes relational necessity originally possible. Herewith, two modalities have been identified in the domain of necessity in their difference and succession of deduction. Because, in contradistinction, Kant does not recognize an ontological or absolute necessity, nor consequently an intellectual intuition, he is not able to demonstrate relational necessity in its being as necessity, but only understands it in the table of categories in its inevitable relation to the subject, namely as a condition of possibility of finite knowledge. Since, however, finite knowledge itself is not investigated once more as to its foundation, the ontological modality of this transcendental necessity remains unclarified, the transcendental inevitability therefore factual. In contrast, Thierry perceives the belonging together of transcendental and ontological inquiry. The ontological modalities that are intuited in themselves have their transcendental correspondence in the levels of intuition that are constitutive for finite human cognition: To the domain of facticity, including that of pure possibility, corresponds rational cognition related to sensible intuition and imagination (*rationaliter; Physica*); to the domain of relational necessity corresponds the pure discursive cognition of reason yet related transcendental-ontologically to pure possibility or matter (*disciplinaliter; mathematica*); to the

4. *The Limits of Knowledge and Language*

In Thierry's daring construction of the totality of reality, the mathematical mode of thought is assigned a central role as mediator between *physica* and theology.⁶¹ Accordingly, the entire system, up until the doctrine of God and the Trinity, is imbued with the spirit of the highest speculative rationality. When, after arriving at the doctrine of God, Thierry once more reflects "*rationabiliter*" (*AM Trin.* IV, 29) on the linguistic conditions of thought, he emphasizes the limits of human cognition, without, however, detracting from what has been developed up to that point.⁶²

Cognition occurs in language, although concept ("*notio*") and thought ("*intellectus*") are distinguished from the word ("*vocabulum*"). The word itself, however, contributes to cognition, because it is only in the word that the form constitutes itself as a self-enclosed whole and one, that is, as being. Meaning ("*significatio*") includes the reference of the word to the thing, their coupling (*AM Trin.* IV, 20) or unification (*AM Trin.* IV, 21): "*significatio conplectitur et intellectum et uocabulum — non enim appellamus rem tantum uel uocabulum tantum significationem*" (*L* IV, 3; *AM Trin.* IV, 19). What is here meant by "word" is prior to the differentiation of the various native languages and situated on the foundational level of transcendental-ontological grammatical structures (cf. *AM Trin.* IV, 41).⁶³ Thierry finds the original form of this unity of word and thing given in the account of creation: "*Hanc autem unionem notat Moyses peritissimus philosophorum in Genesi ubi dicit appellauitque lucem diem et tenebras noctem et congregationem aquarum maria*" (*L* II, 53; cf. Gen. 1, 5).

It is in the word of creation, then, that things come to their subsistence and existence as beings: "*ens enim est quod unaquaque res dicitur*" (*L* II, 53). Thus, the word is essential for the concretion of the form in being: "*Forma enim non potest esse sine nomine. Sed*

domain of absolute necessity corresponds the simple intellectual insight (*intelligibiliter, theologia*), to which the intellectual intuition of Kant's followers in German idealism comes close. Herein Thierry at the same time emphasizes together with the fundamental possibility of this intellectual intuition its characteristic as a limit-possibility of man, as well as its inexhaustibility in content, that only allows analogous pronouncements.

⁶¹ Cf. E. Jeauneau, op. cit., p. 294.

⁶² Cf. P. Dronke, op. cit., pp. 361, 365.

⁶³ Cf. M.-D. Chenu, "Un cas de platonisme grammaticale au XII^e siècle," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 51 (1967), pp. 666–668.

ex quo res formam habet, et nomen habet. Aliter enim esse non potest esse. Nomina quippe essentiant res. Idcirco enim est homo quia appellatur homo. Idcirco est animal quia appellatur animal" (*L II*, 52). Thus "being" (*esse*) as such is in essence an ontological-theological linguistic event, for it is constituted by the word that assigns it to things. Any attempt to subjectivize the function of language, however, fails, since the word is grounded in the divine spirit: "rebus uocabula unita sunt in mente diuina. Unde et diuina sapientia Uerbum dicitur" (*L II*, 53). The human naming of things only follows this original word of God that constitutes things in their being, in an intentional reconstitution of their entities, which alone makes possible their intelligibility: "Uocabula namque unita sunt in mente diuina ab eterno ante etiam impositionem ab hominibus factam. Postea homo inposuit ea rebus quibus unita erant in mente diuina" (*L II*, 53).

Words emerge in human cognition only through the spontaneous movement of reason in its cognizing contact with things: "Hec autem uocabula . . . secundum motum rationis sunt imposita" (*G IV*, 7). Since reason acts in all human beings in the same way, all of the insights and words springing from it, such as Aristotle's table of categories, are common to humanity: "Ratio enim cum sit uis anime que naturaliter est status omnium animorum se exercet in comprehendendo. Sed in exercendo mouetur. Eius autem motus sunt intellectus quos concipit mens de re. Isti ergo motus communes sunt omnibus hominibus. Communes igitur sunt intellectus. Sed hos uocabula significant ut testatur Aristotiles in *Periermenias*" (*G VI*, 7). Its universal intersubjective understandability, therefore, belongs to language essentially, and it is safeguarded by its origin in the rational acts of cognition.

From this linguistic condition of human understanding there emerges a limit with respect to pronouncements about God, for which Thierry appeals to Hermes Trismegistos and Dionysios Areopagites, as well as to the church fathers Hilarius, Victorinus, and Augustine (Cf. *G IV*, 9–14; *AM Trin.* IV, 28): "Ipse (sc. deus) enim non est ens quia ens, ut dictum est, accepta essendi forma est. Quod habet ex uocabulo. Nomen enim quasi formam et quasi materiam tribuit ei quod significat quia quasi substans et quasi subsistens significat illud. Essentiat enim rem" (*G IV*, 14; cf. *AM Trin.* IV, 27). That is, insofar as speaking and thinking refer in their proper manner to the individual substance and its determinations, God withdraws from its grasp: "Ipse enim non est ens sed est entitas omnium rerum. Sed

omnis intellectus de ente habetur et omne uocabulum ens significat scilicet substantiam uel accidens. Unde cum deus non sit ens non est aliquid de entibus nec intellectu comprehendi nec uocabulo significari potest" (*AM Trin.* IV, 27). If, that is, an entity is signified by a noun, and nouns as such express a composition of form and its bearer, this structure of language corresponds to the essence of the material being, insofar as this participates in a form: "Ens enim est quod accepta forma essendi subsistit, scilicet quod forma participat. Sed deus nullo participat quoniam ex se est quicquid est. Unde non est ens sed ipsa entitas a quo fluunt omnia entia" (*AM Trin.* IV, 34). Hence God is not an entity that reason could meet via direct intention in order to encompass and determine it with its universal functions of cognition: "Deus autem non est res que comprehensibilis sit equaliter ab omnibus. Quare motibus rationis non subiacet. Quare nec aliquo uocabulo significatur" (*G IV*, 8). Just as no numbers can be applied to the persons in God (cf. *L II*, 59; *C II*, 14), so too His essence is unpronounceable: "nec deus nomen habere potest" (*G IV*, 10; cf. *AM Trin.* IV, 11). Furthermore, God cannot be made the object of predication, as if there existed determinations prior to him that could be assigned to him or determinations that could be added externally: "Nec igitur deus subicitur nec predicatur. Ad hec autem est quod omni modo diuersum nichil de se predicari uel a se remoueri posset cum sit omnia" (*G IV*, 12; cf. *AM Trin.* IV, 12; 29).

In any talk about God, the invalidity of every manner of predication and the inadequacy of any predicated content must be co-understood: "Sed tot nomina deo scilicet necessitati absolute indita sunt eo quod deus significari non potest nec intelligi ut saltem tot inculcatione nominum comprehenso quid ipse non sit potius quam quid sit eum ignorando sicut Trimegister comprobatur sciremus" (*G II*, 31). This not-knowing, however, does not end in the void of senselessness, since all talk of God that is conscious of its not-knowing nonetheless "gives" knowledge "a hint" (*innuere*: *AM Trin.* IV, 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 40; etc.): "per similitudinem quandam seu affinitatem aliquam ab eo quod significat in dei nuncupatione transfertur atque intellectum de re subiecta per significationem de re subiecta constituit innuens per subintellectum quid deus non sit" (*G IV*, 15).

It is through the knowledge of human not-knowing, therefore, that "per similitudinem uel priuationem innuitur quid sit deus i.e. substantia supra omnem substantiam" (*AM Trin.* IV, 13). In this manner of cognition and pronouncement, there appears a similarity of

knowledge and language with regard to first matter: "Aliquo modo dico i.e. per similitudinem uel per priuationem sicut materia primordialis melius innuitur siue intellegitur per priuationem quam alio modo que nec uocabulo significari nec intellectu comprehendi potest sicut nec deus" (*AM Trin.* IV, 27). Knowledge gained through the denial of cognizable content does not, however, simply coincide with not-knowing but is able to lead on to an understanding beyond concepts: "Deus quoque per priuationem potius intelligitur quam alio modo" (*AM Trin.* IV, 27). Yet Thierry also deems positive pronouncements about God possible, if concepts are used on the basis of a relation of similitude in a broader sense. Such an analogy is to be assumed, since it is merely the epistemological reverse of the ontological relation of participation of the actual entity in God as the *forma formarum*: "Per similitudinem et quandoque (sc. deus) potest intelligi et innui: scilicet uocabulis translatiue positis" (*AM Trin.* IV, 27). For example, Thierry discusses which categories can refer to God in a metaphorical sense (*AM Trin.* IV, 24–26), and from the aforementioned principles he develops, down to the smallest detail, an extensive grammar of theological language and its referential functions (cf. *AM Trin.* IV–VII).