

Nevertheless: The Philosophical Significance of the Questions Posed at *Philebus* 15b

Amber Carpenter, The University of York

Dieser Aufsatz argumentiert dafür, dass von den in *Philebos* 15b gestellten Fragen die zweite (*Philebos* 5b2–4) ein echtes philosophisches Problem aufwirft, und zwar eines, von dem Platon zurecht meint, dass es sich durch die Annahme von Unveränderlichkeit verschlimmert: Wenn etwas nicht der Veränderung unterliegt, dann ist es philosophisch und praktisch schwieriger, eine Vielheit als eine Einheit anzusehen und die Vielheit in der Einheit zu bestimmen. Gerade an dieses Problem heranzugehen, ist von zentraler Bedeutung, wenn die Debatte über die Rolle von Lust und Vernunft für ein gutes Leben vorankommen soll. Der Aufsatz benutzt die deutlichen Parallelen zum *Sophistes*, um zu zeigen, dass es sich hier um ein philosophisches Problem handelt, das Platon haben *sollte*, und dass es für ihn ganz natürlich ist, es in der Terminologie der Unveränderlichkeit auszudrücken.

At *Philebus* 15b1–8, Socrates poses programmatic questions about unities that are “not taken from the things that come to be or perish” (15a1–2). The translation is contested, the meaning unsettled; and the literature – for eight lines of text – is vast.¹ A plausible translation of the contentious lines, unemended,² might run as follows:

- Q1: Firstly, whether one should assume that there are any such unities (μονάδας) truly existing;
- Q2: Next, how [should one suppose] these [monads], each being one always the same, and admitting neither becoming nor perishing, nevertheless (ὁμῶς) to be most securely this one;
- Q3: And again, following this, is each to be posited in the coming-to-be and indefinite things either as dispersed and having become many, or as a whole separate from itself – which would seem most impossible of all, one and the same coming to be at the same time in one and many.

I set this out as three questions because this is how the text itself, as it stands, seems to indicate it should be read.³ This is not at all uncontroversial, however. Indeed, the central source of difficulty has been trying to discover what sense the

¹ Already Archer-Hind cites several discussions of the matter, and refers to rather more (Archer-Hind 1901, 229–31). R. Hahn offers a more recent survey of the matter (Hahn 1978, 158–72). S. Delcomminette has an extensive bibliography (Delcomminette 2002, 21–42). G. Löhr (1990, 69–89) helpfully reviews the then state of the discussion according to the various positions taken.

² Like many, I take it that the most preferable reading would find philosophically interesting questions, which Plato could have been expected to find relevant, without emendation to the text.

³ The sequence ‘πρῶτον’ (15b1), ‘εἶτα’ (15b2), ‘μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο’ (15b4–5) suggests a series of three questions. See discussion of translation below.

second question could possibly make – and therefore, whether we ought to take it as a separate question at all, or rather as a preface to Q3.

Can we make sense of these three distinct questions, as articulated? Or are we forced to restructure our translation fundamentally, or even to emend the text, in order to get good philosophical sense (and perhaps one question fewer) out of them? In what follows, I shall try to show that these questions – particularly Q2 as separate from Q3, since that is what is most often doubted – raise deep and difficult philosophical issues, and issues which arise naturally out of basic features of Plato's epistemological and metaphysical thought.

I. The First Question

The first question need not concern us long. It asks whether unchanging unities – such as 'man', 'ox', 'beautiful', and 'good' (15a4–5) – exist. The *Philebus*, however, offers no arguments demonstrating the existence of eternal unities such as 'beauty'. At the same time, their contested existence is supposedly relevant to the matter at hand – ultimately to settling the question of whether pleasure or knowledge has more of a claim to be the good in human life. We might, therefore, favour taking this first line as grammatically a question, but a question functioning rather as a hypothetical starting point.⁴ The sense would then be, "Shall we posit such unities at all? Providing we do, what about these further matters that then arise?" Such an interpretation has the advantage of having Socrates do now what he will go on to say one must do at the beginning of any inquiry, namely "to search, always assuming in each case that there is some unity – for we will indeed find it there" (16d1–2). That is, one thing the Divine Method (of *Philebus* 16c ff.) tells us is that making some such hypothesis – that there are non-sensible unities – is not only legitimate, but necessary to any inquiry. Further, since several unities result from the division of a unity, we would find that this initial hypothesis becomes, at a further level of analysis, a question in its own right – are the resulting unities genuine unities?⁵ This possibility, and settling whether this first line is a proper question or a starting hypothesis, will concern me least in what follows.⁶ For it is the remaining seven lines which have been the cause of scholarly controversy, and within which I shall argue Plato is raising fundamental philosophical problems.

⁴ Mary Margaret McCabe suggests this in *Plato's Individuals* (McCabe 1994, 243n41).

⁵ For this reading of the first line of our passage, see Muniz and Rudebusch 2004.

⁶ In light of the close connection with the *Sophist* that I will suggest, we might well think Plato takes any necessary discussion about why there must be unchanging complex unities to be addressed there, particularly in the arguments against the materialist 'Giants' (*Sophist* 246d–247e), which themselves echo arguments against the extreme Heracliteans of *Theaetetus* 181a–183b (compare also *Cratylus* 439c–440c).

II. The Second Question

The second question in the translation proposed above has posed the most persistent difficulties in interpretation. For it is not clear what the force of the question should be. It seems to ask (paraphrasing now, in order to bring out the oddness): “How is each of these most securely that one, *in spite of* the fact that they are unchanging and eternal?” Whatever ‘these’ and ‘that’ refer to, the implication seems to be that being unchanging generates unity and identity problems. ‘Identity’ because these are that; ‘unity’ because these (pl.) are that one. The supposed source of the problem is emphasized by the Greek ὅμως, ‘nevertheless’ – how can things that do not change *nevertheless* be one and the same. The peculiarity here is that unchangingness should not throw unity into question – on the contrary, usually it was unity and identity of sensible particulars that was problematic because sensible particulars change. Unchangingness should, if anything, support unity and identity, not threaten them.

This difficulty has seemed so great that some commentators have run together this second question with the third.⁷ This is not grammatically impossible; but it runs against the grain of the text, which seems clearly to mark three distinct concerns (“πρῶτον ... εἶτα...μετὰ δὲ τοῦτ’”, 15b1, 2, 5–6). The αὖ (‘in turn’, ‘again’) following μετὰ δὲ τοῦτ’ (“and after that ...”) accentuates the intention to contrast this last concern with the preceding one. The alternative is to set aside these textual markers, and forge one question out of the remainder of the sentence, after Q1. The resulting question would run now from 15b2–8, and it would take the ‘nevertheless’ to be relating rather to the γιγνομένους αὖ καὶ ἀπείρους (“things coming-to-be and indefinite”) of 15b5. The whole seven lines would thus ask one familiar question: How do unchanging things nevertheless exist in coming-to-be things? – and it would ask this new-old question in seven contorted lines. For the long-winded and laboured prose is now half-redundant – lines 15b4–8 supplemented by lines 15b2–4 still only give us the third question (15b4–8). And while it is not impossible for the ὅμως to be displaced in the way this two-question reading requires, it is much the less usual construction.⁸ On the whole, the two-question reading thus has mainly to recommend it that it avoids the supposed incomprehensibility of the question apparently posed in Q2.⁹

⁷ See, for example, Gosling, who admits that this gives a “clumsy sentence”, and that the main point against the three-question reading is “to see what the second question is” (Gosling 1975, 145); consider also Frede, “Die Schwierigkeit mit dieser [three-question] Interpretation betrifft den Inhalt der zweiten Frage: Welches Problem sollte Platon darin sehen ...?” (Frede 1997, 121). Frede is sensitive to the philosophical, or contextual difficulties of both the three- and the two-question reading, but ultimately comes down on the side of the latter (Frede 1997, 119–125); compare the concise and circumspect treatment in the ‘Introduction’ to the English translation (Frede 1993, xxii). Löhr is another that comes down on the side of two questions, with a list of those who read likewise and his differences from their positions (Löhr 1990, 86–91).

⁸ Frede concedes this, but prefers this reading all the same, in order to preserve, as she sees it, the sense of the passage (1997, 121–2).

⁹ Fuller discussion of this interpretative option, and reasons against it, can be found in Delcomminette (2002, 26–28); see also Hahn (1978, esp. 159–63).

But is Q2 as it stands so incomprehensible? Can we find no legitimate and relevant philosophical concern in the worry over how these abstract (that is, non-sensible and intelligible) unities, *although* unchanging, are “*nevertheless* most securely this one”? Finding sense in the question would require that we come to see how change – coming-to-be and passing-away – so far from threatening unity and identity might actually be expected rather to reinforce them, so that absence of change constitutes more of a threat. This demand may seem a difficult one to meet – perhaps, in the Platonic context even an impossible one. For it is Plato who insists so much on the deficiency of the sensible world, liable as it is to coming-to-be and passing-away.

Yet the following considerations might encourage us to reconsider this presumption, and eventually see in Q2 a genuine question, one that Plato rightly takes literally, and seriously:

First, the problem here posed, whatever it is getting at, is in part one of identification – How is it these are most certainly that? But whatever problems change posed Plato philosophically, it was not primarily (if at all) a source of identity-confusions. It is only extreme Heracliteans who actually have difficulties identifying their objects because of change; changing and conflicting properties were otherwise never supposed to be a problem for picking out Socrates as Socrates (*Phaedo* 102b–103a), or a finger as a finger (*Republic* VII.523c–524b), to take two key passages where Forms are necessary on account of the changingness of sensibles. That is, change, as difference over time, did not challenge our confidence in what things were. It did not even raise practical perplexity about *whether* the finger was fat, or Socrates tall. The problem was rather to understand *how* this latter could be so. The difficulties changing sensible things were liable to were rather presented as problems of unity: How can one and the same thing be both F and not-F?

That the problem Plato sees here is not one that can be solved simply by pointing out that the opposing properties occur at different times is made clear by the way that multiplicity at a time is presented as similarly problematic, or perhaps as the very same problem. After all, Socrates is both tall and short, the finger is both large and small, at the very same time – precisely without undergoing any change.¹⁰ This is often referred to as the problem (if it is one) of the ‘compresence of opposites’. But this is not what Plato called it. Plato raises this question by discussing the changing world, the sensibles that come to be and pass away, and which therefore point to some stable unchanging entities if we are to make sense of how we are able, as we are, to understand sensibles at all. Because of this association by Plato of complexity with change, Terence Irwin

¹⁰ Alexander Nehamas articulates the root of the problem clearly, as concerned with difference *without* change; for instance, “Individual objects were beautiful only in relation to other objects and they were also, without undergoing any change in themselves, ugly in relation to still other objects ... If a particular is beautiful, it will also be ugly in another context: that *very same* particular will be ugly, without undergoing any change” (Nehamas 1975, 108; compare remarks, 116). His interpretation does not, however, examine the prevalence of the *language of change* in Plato’s dissatisfaction with the sensible world.

has aptly called this phenomenon ‘aspect-change’ or ‘a-change’.¹¹ The point is, the problematic nature of the sensible world for Plato lies not simply in the fact that it changes, but in some underlying problem of coherence indicated equally by change over time and multiplicity at a time.

The idea, then, is that the unsatisfactoriness of the sensible world was for Plato all along a matter of its complexity and relations, of contradictions this seemed to give rise to. This problematic manifoldness might be indicated by reference to the liability to change; but change itself is not the source of the difficulty.¹² If this is right, and physical change as such was not the source of the difficulty, then it should pose no insurmountable perplexity if the same trouble – whatever it was – were to arise, or at least were able to arise, even among unchanging entities.

Next, Plato rarely denies that intelligible entities lack any complexity whatsoever. Indeed, at times Forms are freely ascribed certain properties, as for example at *Symposium* 211e1, where “the Beautiful itself” is “absolute” (εἰλικρινές), “pure” (καθαρόν), “unmixed” (ἄμεικτον) and uniform (μονοειδές, at e4).¹³ All the same, the very choice of descriptive adjectives (e.g., uniform, pure) indicates a tendency to deny to Forms the complexity that was problematic in sensible particulars. Forms should be comparatively simple, and devoid of anything other than what they are, of anything that qualifies this essence, if they are to lack the problems of intelligibility they were meant to solve.¹⁴

In the *Sophist*, however, Plato comes to insist explicitly that intelligible entities must have different aspects, ordinary relational and evaluative properties just like sensibles have. Forms are not and could not be absolute simples. In this discussion, as I will bring out below, we see Plato drawing together the challenges posed by ‘change’ and the abstract version of the phenomenon as it applies to unchanging entities.

I have tried to articulate these observations without presuming any particular interpretation of the Theory of Forms, indeed without presuming very much in the way of a theory at all.¹⁵ We recognize a persistent concern throughout Plato with questions of unity and multiplicity, a concern sometimes expressed in terms of ‘change’, although the so-called change often seems to have less to do with difference over time, and more to do with difference in relations or aspects at a time.

Plato’s concern in the *Philebus*, I shall argue, is with conceptual complexity. The problem is primarily that of explaining unity in aspectual complexity, although in

¹¹ “The relevant kind of flux both in Plato and in Aristotle,” writes Terence Irwin, “is a-change” (Irwin 1977, 12). Although essentially, or at least equally, a matter of compresence of opposites, Irwin calls it aspect-change in order to highlight that Plato and Aristotle discuss the phenomenon in terms of ‘change’ (see especially 4–7).

¹² This becomes evident when we contrast Plato’s interest in the change of the sensible world with Aristotle’s direct treatment of change as such as interesting and important in its own right.

¹³ That is, most usually Forms are ascribed those that Santas called ‘formal’ properties (Santas 1984).

¹⁴ See McCabe 1994, esp. chapters 2–4, for development and defence of such a view.

¹⁵ Dorothea Frede sometimes writes as if these were the only two choices: read into the *Philebus* the Theory of Forms, as Anscombe does (Anscombe 1966); or else dispense with supposing questions of multiplicity and unity are introduced here regarding unchanging things (Frede 1997, 123).

non-material complex unities – good, man, music – multiple species of a genus, members of a kind, parts of a whole will pose similar difficulties as multiple aspects of a single subject.¹⁶ I shall try to show that Plato is grappling with a quite general philosophical problem: that of preserving differentiability in unity. Literal, physical change revealed the conceptual problems posed by multiplicity, but these conceptual problems were never restricted to cases of change. Indeed, the fact that a sensible particular *changes* could well mistakenly be taken as the *solution* to the perplexity, if we have missed the conceptual problem underlying it. This should have been our first clue that unchangingness might after all exacerbate things.

The surrounding context of the *Philebus* passage in question alludes specifically and clearly to two other Platonic discussions of unity-in-multiplicity – *Parmenides* 129 ff. and *Sophist* 251 ff. In what follows, I will pursue primarily the connection with the *Sophist*, which I think is most illuminating for seeing in Q2 a question worth asking.¹⁷ In particular, the *Sophist* passage draws together ‘change’ and aspectual complexity of unchanging entities in a way that suggests two plausible variants of what the problem of Q2 is, and so it should help us see why Plato chooses at *Philebus* 15b to emphasise the unchangingness of abstract wholes. In brief, we shall find that multiplicity, whether temporal or conceptual, is necessary for explanation and intelligibility (for ‘thought and language’), and yet differentiated unity cannot be self-explanatory. This, I shall argue, is a problem that does – just as Q2 suggests – become especially acute in non-material unities, where we do not have the same physical and sensible resources for asserting and ascertaining unity.

¹⁶ Löhr presents a diametrically opposed interpretation: “Die Gefährdung der Identität der Form mit sich selbst geht also nicht von dem aus, was man in der modernen Logik die *Intension* eines Begriffes nennt, sondern von dem, was man, wenn man die platonischen Formen den Prädikaten der modernen Logik gleichsetzt, die *Extension* eines Begriffes nennen könnte.” (Löhr 1990, 68–69; see also 82: “... scheint es mir ... klar zu sein, daß Platon in den genannten Abschnitten nicht das Problem behandelt, inwiefern Formen aufgrund der Eigenschaften, die ihnen als Formen zukommen, zugleich sie selbst und Vieles sind ...”). I find it difficult, however, to discern his reasons for foreclosing the possibility that aspectual complexity is at issue in the *Philebus*, is relevant to the dialogue’s concerns, and is addressed by the ‘divine method’ introduced in response to the questions here posed.

¹⁷ Since interpretations of this passage that rely on inter-textual allusions have been accused of requiring ‘clairvoyance’ (coined by Gosling 1975, 146), it is important to see that Plato intends the reader to pick up on the allusion. There must, Frede rightly insists, be a clear allusion, and not simply reading other dialogues into the *Philebus* (1997, 123). See also for the ‘clairvoyance’ charge Muniz and Rudebusch (2004, esp. 395–6, and 402). But we must take care over who cannot be expected to be clairvoyant. The characters of the *Philebus*, particularly Protarchus, need not have as much understanding of the questions as they take themselves to have (if indeed they do anything other than allow the point to pass unobstructed waiting for further clarification); an inter-textual allusion, then, need not suppose *their* clairvoyance, since it is not necessary to suppose that they have understood the point in full.

III. One and Many Puzzles

The puzzles of *Philebus* 15b are set up by Socrates calling our attention to a principle underlying what has just been agreed with Protarchus, and asking us to focus on the principle itself:

Let us give even stronger support to this principle by an agreement ... It is this principle that has turned up here, which somehow has an amazing nature. For that the many are one and the one many are amazing statements, and can easily be disputed, whichever side of the two one may want to defend. (*Philebus* 14c1–2, 7–10)

Attention is given to this same ‘amazing principle’ in the *Sophist* and in the *Parmenides*, and it is illuminating to consider these three passages together.¹⁸

- A. The *Sophist* enjoins, “Let us give an account of how we call the very same thing, whatever it may be, by several names.” (*Sophist* 251a5–6); and reminds us that we should not be one of those who “grab hold of the handy idea that it’s impossible for that which is many to be one and for that which is one to be many.” (*Sophist* 251b3–4)¹⁹
- B. The same principle – that the one is many, and the many one – is formulated in the *Parmenides*, where Socrates would be amazed “if someone should demonstrate the thing itself, what one is, to be many, or, conversely, the many to be one” (*Parmenides* 129b8). This becomes the general question of whether “forms, themselves by themselves ... can mix together and separate” (*Parmenides* 129d6–e4).

In each case, the concern is with unity and multiplicity – or with complexity.²⁰ In both the *Sophist* and *Philebus*, pluralised unity is a cause for amazement (*Sophist* 251c5, *Philebus* 14c8 and 14c9) – in the *Parmenides*, Socrates shares in the amazement (θαυμάσομαι, θαυμάζειν, θαυμαστόν, at 129c1, 3, and 4; and θαυμαστῶς, *Parmenides* 129e3).

The *Philebus* offers two illustrations of this principle, both rejected because they deal with sensible particulars. Real troubles arise first when non-sensible, or intelligible unities are considered. The structure of these pseudo-examples is interesting, and interestingly different.

Example 1: By one-being-many, “do you mean”, Protarchus asks, when “someone says that I, Protarchus, having become one by nature, am in turn many ‘me’s, even opposites of one another, tall and short, heavy and light, and endless other such things?” (*Philebus* 14c11–d3)

Example 2: Or troubles might arise “when someone who first distinguishes a person’s limbs and parts asks your agreement that all these parts are identical with that unity, but then exposes you to ridicule because of the monstrosities

¹⁸ Anscombe’s discussion (1996, 406–9) also draws together these three passages.

¹⁹ Translations from the *Sophist* are taken from Nicolas White 1993.

²⁰ What Harte calls ‘structure’ (Harte 2002)

you have to admit, that the one is many and indefinitely many, and again that the many are only one thing” (*Philebus* 14d8–e4).

The second example illustrates complex unity as ‘parts and wholes’, and closely follows the *Parmenides*:

But if someone should demonstrate that I am one thing and many, what’s astonishing about that? He will say, when he wants to show that I’m many, that my right side is different from my left and my front from my back, and likewise with my upper and lower parts – since I take it I do partake of multitude. But when he wants to show that I’m one, he will say I’m one person among the seven of us, because I also partake of oneness. (*Parmenides* 129c1–5)

The first *Philebus* example, by contrast, illustrates what I would call ‘aspectual complexity’ – that is, the complexity of a single thing having multiple characteristics, rather than multiple parts – and it closely follows the example from the *Sophist*:

Surely we’re speaking of a man even when we name him several things, that is, when we apply colors to him and shapes, sizes, defects, and virtues. In these cases and a million others we say that he’s not only a man but also is good and indefinitely many things. And similarly on the same account we take a thing to be one, and at the same time we speak of it as many by using many names for it. (*Sophist* 251a8–b4)

Both the *Philebus* and the *Sophist* take the example of a particular man, made many in the same sort of way, according to his many attributes, rather than according to his parts or limbs.²¹ And it is this sort of perplexity that will help us to understand Q2.²²

This allusion to the *Sophist* is emphasized by the generous ridicule both texts heap upon those who abuse this one-many phenomenon to no good end. Compare *Philebus* 15d8–16a3:

Whoever among the young first gets a taste of it is as pleased as if he had found a treasure of wisdom. He is quite beside himself with pleasure and revels in moving every statement, now turning it to one side and rolling it all up into one, then again unrolling it and dividing it up. He thereby involves first and foremost himself in confusion, but then also whatever others happen to be nearby, be they younger or older or of the same age, sparing neither his father nor his mother nor anyone else who might listen to him. He would almost try it on other creatures, not only on

²¹ This parallel with the *Sophist* indicates that, contra Meinwald, Protarchus’ failed example is no less significant than Socrates’ (Meinwald 1996, 99); this in turn means that ‘divisions’ by species and sub-species have in this context no special priority over ‘divisions’ by parts, aspects or characteristics (again, contra Meinwald 1996, 100–101) – although in truth, I’m not sure I see either pseudo-example as an obvious model for genus-species divisions.

²² Löhr details the features by which the *Sophist* puzzle closely parallels Protarchus’ puzzle in the *Philebus* (Löhr 1990, 27–28). He does not think however that this, or the surrounding *Sophist* context, will help us to understand the questions posed in the *Philebus* (explicitly at Löhr 1990, 81), and prefers to focus on the *Parmenides* parallel (Löhr 1990, 37 ff., esp. 40–42), in spite of the fact that here too he sees the *Philebus* as posing a different question (Löhr 1990, 66–69). It seems to me this is because he has decided strangely in advance what the *Philebus* can and cannot be asking – in particular, that it cannot be interested in intensional complexity, and that it is accordingly *only* interested in distributive multiplicity generated by the participation of particulars in forms (Löhr 1990, 68–69, and 72, 79, 91).

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human beings, since he would certainly not spare any foreigner if only he could find an interpreter somewhere.

with the *Sophist*, 251b6–c6, where the fact that “we take a thing to be one, and at the same time we speak of it as many” (*Sophist* 251b3–4) amounts to

a feast for young people and for old late-learners. They can grab hold of the handy idea that it’s impossible for that which is many to be one and for that which is one to be many. They evidently enjoy forbidding us to say that a man is good, and only letting us say that that which is good is good, or that the man is a man. You’ve often met people, I suppose, who are carried away by things like that. Sometimes they’re elderly people who are amazed at this kind of thing, because their understanding is so poor and they think they’ve discovered something prodigiously wise.²³

The *Philebus* and *Sophist* further share a diagnosis of this one-and-many phenomenon, exploited by fools, as an inevitable feature endemic to discourse and thought. While the Eleatic Visitor’s aim is to explain how a single thing is *spoken* of in many ways, the *Philebus* claims that “it is through discourse (ὕπὸ λόγων) that the same thing flits around, becoming one and many in all sorts of ways” (*Philebus* 15d4–5). The *Sophist* is considerably exercised to show how language implicates us in metaphysics,²⁴ particularly emphasizing how language requires multiplicity.²⁵ The *Philebus* claims, but does not explain, that multiplicity in unity “will never come to an end, nor has it just begun, but it seems to me that this is an ‘immortal and ageless’ condition of language itself (τῶν λόγων ἀτῶν) for us” (*Philebus* 15d6–8).²⁶

The distinctiveness of aspectual complexity shared in the *Sophist* and the *Philebus* illustrations can be further brought out by observing one last similarity relating to their interest in aspects of individuals. Twice in the *Sophist* passage, the ‘aspect’

²³ D. Frede points out this connection, as well as the similarity to the description of precocious youths of *Republic* VII.539b, who are exposed too early to dialectic. (Frede 1993, 7n2). McCabe sees echoes also of *Phd.* 90 and *Tht.* 152, as well as the *Sophist* passage (McCabe 1994, 243n39). D. J. Casper goes into the most detail in exploring the possible relation between the two passages, although he arrives at rather different conclusions (Casper 1977, 20–26), in part because he reads the *Philebus* as repeating the *Parmenides*, and the *Sophist* as marking an advance on both of these.

²⁴ And conversely, some metaphysical views are refuted by the sheer fact of language, *Sophist* 252c.

²⁵ See the refutation of Parmenides, *Sophist* 243e–245c, especially 244d. In spite of the common recognition that language exposes difficulties, I see the link between the *Philebus* and *Sophist* to be primarily a metaphysical one. This approach to the puzzles of the *Sophist*, however, contrasts sharply with at least one prominent strand of interpretation, which sees both the problems and the solutions of that dialogue as fundamentally linguistic. See, e.g. Lesley Brown (2008, 461), where this linguistic preference is explicitly articulated.

²⁶ This passing, but obviously important claim becomes richer and relevant if we see standing in the background the many passages in the *Sophist* – 251 ff., the previous discussions it refers to, and the discussion it leads to – in which the multiplicity of language and reality are related. I do not pretend to have a view about exactly what Plato thinks this relation is, in the *Sophist*. Is it, for example, the truth of statements or is it their meaning that the interweaving of forms underwrites? (For the former, Heinaman 1982; for the latter, Ackrill 1997.) Likewise, whether the refutations of Parmenides (*Soph.* 243–245), the pre-Socratics (242d–243–244b, esp. 243e), and the Friends of the Forms (252a–c), on grounds that their metaphysics make their own views unstateable in various ways, actually work is less important to me than the fact that Plato argues in these many ways that language requires metaphysical multiplicity.

of particular concern is 'good'. We apply several names to the same thing when, for example, we say a man is good (*Sophist* 251b); and the late-learners "evidently enjoy forbidding us to say that a man is good" (*Sophist* 251c1). As the illustration from the *Philebus* shows, any characteristic could have been used to make the point, and the *Sophist* passage alludes to these in a general way. Choosing to focus on whether we can call a man 'good', however, rather than whether we might call him 'tall', brings out the fact that the real danger in denying 'many names' of single items is that nothing could then be considered good. This is incidental to the overt themes of the *Sophist*; but it is the primary concern in the *Philebus*.²⁷ In fact, whether or not 'pleasure' can be called 'good' was what forced the question of complex unity in the first place:

Because you call these unlike things, we will say, by a different name. For you say that all pleasant things are good. Now, no one contends that pleasant things are not pleasant. But while most of them are bad but some good, as we hold, you nevertheless call them all good. (*Philebus* 13a7–b2)

Which things, lives (e.g., *Philebus* 20c–22c), and persons (e.g., *Philebus* 55b–c) can be called good is the central focus of the *Philebus*, and drives the concern with how to speak carefully of any one thing having another as an attribute.

In the *Parmenides*, the youthful Socrates is not worried by the complexity in sensibles; it is rather such similar complexity in intelligible entities that worries him very much. He would be utterly amazed if it were possible at all. But the Eleatic Visitor in the *Sophist* will show that this multiplicity in intelligible unities that is indeed possible, even necessary – and this is especially obvious when we consider that even purely intelligible entities can clearly have attributes, even if they cannot so obviously have parts. Hence, the Eleatic Visitor in the *Sophist* does not dismiss as childish the example invoking a sensible particular – the structure of it, drawing on aspects rather than parts, is importantly instructive. The multiplicity that the *Parmenides* doubts, the *Sophist* insists upon; the multiplicity the *Sophist* endorses, however, raises in turn, as we will see, the complications of *Philebus* 15b.

IV. Change in the Sophist

The point of drawing out these several parallels to the *Sophist* is to show that there is a definite allusion here – that Plato could reasonably expect the reader to be put in mind of this *Sophist* passage and its concerns. One need not be clairvoyant.²⁸

Even so, how does this help us with our original puzzle? Can the *Sophist* help us to understand why unified plurality is problematic on account of lack of change?

²⁷ And as Muniz and Rudebusch point out, this division of man according to moral character has arisen already in the *Philebus*: 12d1–4 invites us to consider the pleasures of 'the temperate man' as opposed to those of 'the debauched man' (Muniz and Rudebusch 2004, 399).

²⁸ For my purposes, it is not even necessary that Plato wrote the *Sophist* before the *Philebus*, provided he was careful enough. One could perhaps think of the *Sophist* as 'clarifying' or 'expanding on' the *Philebus* passage.

I think it can, and it does so because the surrounding text of the *Sophist* shows Plato associating ‘change’ with plurality, and arguing this in turn is a precondition on any intelligibility.

We should look more closely at how ‘change’ figures in the *Sophist* passage alluded to by the *Philebus*. Consider the discussion with the Friends of the Forms which immediately leads into our passage at *Sophist* 251. It concludes with the bald assertion that the philosopher – the one who values knowledge, reason (φρόνησις), and intelligence most (*Sophist* 249c7) – “has to be like a child begging for ‘both’, and say that which is – everything – comprises both the unchanging and that which changes” (*Sophist* 249d3–4). Why must that which changes be included in ‘that which is’? One tempting and easy answer is clearly off the table: Plato has not come late in life to recognize that he must not deny reality to sensibles, after all; and so he has not concluded that change must exist simply in order that we can claim that sensibles actually exist. Of course we must not deny all reality to sensible particulars; but the Friends of the Forms did not do this. They allowed that changing sensible things ‘become’. And the discussion of the *Sophist* never challenges their view that this grants sensibles whatever ‘real’ status they are accordingly due.

On the contrary, it is the implication that purely intelligible reality is changeless which the Eleatic Visitor challenges. Any intelligible object, he argues, acquires a new property each time it is known by a mind. “When being is known by knowledge, according to this account, then insofar as it’s known it’s changed by having something done to it” (*Sophist* 248e2–4). Intelligence is the agent which effects a change in the object it comes to know. Naturally, it does not change what the object is; nevertheless, the Visitor insists it is the object known which has changed.²⁹ And it is because these intelligible realities – forms, the most truly existing entities, according to their Friends – change that ‘change’ must be included in ‘being’.³⁰

²⁹ Contra Brown (1998, 192ff.), I take it the Visitor means exactly what he says when he claims that the thing known “has something done to it”, and that Plato endorses the claim – as Moravcsik (1962, 39–40), for example, argues. Like Vlastos, I doubt we must conclude from this that forms are *changed*, in any significant sense; but unlike Vlastos, I think we need some explanation of what ‘change’ is doing in this passage at all, in particular because the concession won from the Friends of the Forms will be that *change* is, not that ‘being affected’ is. (Vlastos 1981, 309–317)

³⁰ In fact, the Visitor seems to argue for the necessary existence of change on two grounds; in addition to arguing that objects are changed by becoming known, the Visitor insists that “*that which wholly is ... has intelligence*”, and that intelligence itself implies life, soul, and therefore change (*Sophist* 249a). Since he seems to be discussing here a necessary property of intelligence as such, and not a feature or your intelligence or mine, the claim is curious. We might first ask why intelligence must be alive, and therefore changing (on which see Carpenter 2008); and we might then wonder whether the ‘change’ which intelligence manifests in being alive is perhaps as metaphorical as the ‘change’ which objects known undergo in becoming known. It is not learning, but thinking which the Visitor says involves change; so we are to imagine intellect as dynamic, as indeed the description of knowledge at *Sophist* 253c–e suggests. The more timeless we conceive this intelligence to be, the more metaphorical any turning of its attention to one object or another, and likewise the more metaphorical the notion of ‘change’ as it moves from one thought to another. Moravcsik takes this emphasis on the active nature of mind to support his claim that the Friends of the Forms are indeed forced to accept that being

The nature of the change which has secured this conclusion is worth attending to. The object has acquired a property, in virtue of the agency – or nature – of some other object (a mind). In this case, any living mind must change in order to be knowing an object;³¹ and this change causes a change, of a different sort, in the object of knowledge. Whatever we make of the changes required for thinking, the second sort of change (in the object thought) barely counts as change at all. Nothing about the object of knowledge, has been altered,³² except perhaps that something is true of it now that was not true before: it is known.³³

Bringing this back to the *Philebus*, we see that at the very least, Q2 could be an epistemological-metaphysical question: *how are these unchanging units supposed to come-to-be known by us, if they are unchanging?* This is a question we know Plato worried about, and it is a problem caused by the unchangingness. On this interpretation, the second question would be raising a problem similar to the Separation Paradox from the *Parmenides* (134a–e). The *Parmenides* pins responsibility for the fact that we cannot know unchanging reality on the idea that ‘it is not in relation to us, but in relation to the in-themselves things’; so god might still know the forms. The *Philebus* would now be going a step further, pointing out that it is the very unchangingness of that reality that is responsible for its unknowability – by any mind, divine or otherwise. One virtue of such an epistemological reading is that Socrates in the *Philebus* immediately goes on to offer a method of inquiry that should enable us to avoid the complications raised at 15b. Proper method would be a suitable solution to epistemological difficulties.³⁴ And we would thus have formulated Q2 as a question that the *Philebus* is concerned to address.

So this is one possible way of reading Q2 as having relevant philosophical force. The fit, however, is not exact. For one thing, the proposed ‘epistemological’ reading actually introduces a metaphysical difficulty: how can unchanging things come-to-be-known, where that is a matter of changing, acquiring a new property? But the epistemology-methodology introduced to address the problems of *Philebus* 15b cannot address *this* metaphysical worry, even if it could answer some metaphysical concerns. For another thing, the epistemological weight of this interpretation seems to fall in the wrong place as well. The proposed second question of the *Philebus* asks *how* such unchanging entities could *nevertheless* be most securely ‘this one’; it does not ask how we are *to come to know* most securely that ‘these’ are ‘this one’ – or how they can become known at all.

known is passive, and a matter of being affected, and so (in that minimal sense) changed (Moravcsik 1962, 39).

³¹ Since the Visitor says nothing of *learning*, but speaks rather of knowing, understanding and intelligence, we take it that mind changes in *thinking about* any object – for even thinking some one object completely involves going through its several relations (*Sophist* 253c–e). See previous note.

³² “At no point is it asserted that Forms undergo a change of their own nature if and when they are known,” writes Moravcsik (1962, 40).

³³ Compare Owen 1986, 43: “on such an account it is a sufficient condition of change that something should become true of the subject at some time that was not true before”.

³⁴ Or as Delcomminette has it in his recent interpretation, the other way round: the various stages of the method each generate one-many puzzles that must be avoided (Delcomminette 2002, esp. 29–31, 40–41); against which see incisive criticism from Muniz and Rudebusch (2004, 398).

Should we then give up the hope that reflection on the *Sophist* can help us much, after all? I think that further consideration of the situation as described in the *Sophist* will suggest a more refined and more general metaphysical issue underlying this. To foreshadow: Change is linked to attribution, to taking on properties. Now, as the *Sophist* tells us, intelligibility requires a plurality of characteristics, the taking on of properties or the blending of forms with one another. But utterly unchanging things cannot take on properties, or blend; they cannot *become* anything at all, in any way. For absolutely simple unities, this would not be a problem. But it is precisely complex unities with which we have to do here. How, if they are each unchanging, can they become qualified by each other? This is a problem, again, which unchangingness exacerbates; and unlike the initial suggestion, it is the sort of problem the *Philebus* is suited to address. Indeed, it is a problem for which the sort of epistemological solution offered in the *Philebus* may be the only one available.

V. 'Change' and Formal Predication in the Sophist

At *Sophist* 248d ff., the objects known are not changed, in themselves, when they come to be known. Nevertheless, they 'are changed' in that they have an additional property – even though this new property in no way affects the nature of the object known. The 'change' consists in the mere fact that the object known, insofar as it is known, is "having something done to it" (*Sophist* 248e3–4). The admission of this 'change' into the ranks of the *really* real opens the one-and-many passage, where we found the parallel with the *Philebus* highlighted above. And it opens the way for the distinction, so central to the *Sophist*, between being and having a property – or better, between 'what something is in virtue of itself' and 'what something is in virtue of its relation to something else',³⁵ described as the 'mixing' (253b) and 'communion' (254b–c) of forms or kinds.

But what is it about 'change' that this in particular is necessary for conceptualizing the inter-predication (the 'mixing' or 'communion') of Forms? For the purpose of discussing 'inter-predication' – that is, the fact e.g. Sameness is different from everything else – it seems that Same, Different, One and Many would have sufficed to make the point. But change is not merely included among the greatest kinds; the Visitor from Elea calls our attention to this by singling out 'change' to model the being-partaking distinction. The bald insistence that both change and rest must exist, I suggest, appears first in order to set up the more subtle and significant distinction between what constitutes an object as what it is, and mere predication of other, related properties. It does so because it was this second distinction that was necessary all along to address those puzzles most evidently and dramatically arising in changing sensibles.

Forms, as we saw, are changed when affected by the agency of something else – for example, when a mind knows or thinks a form, that form is thereby

³⁵ This formulation of the hotly contested distinction that makes a difference in the *Sophist* is offered by Michael Frede (1992, 400–402).

changed. Consider then the case where that agency is eternal and unwavering. The structure of the phenomenon remains the same, but now there is no difference over time, no temporal multiplicity, or ‘change’ as that is ordinarily understood. To ‘change’ is to ‘become x’ in virtue of something else rather than ‘to be x’ in virtue of oneself.³⁶ Thus the transition from admitting change into true reality, to distinguishing ‘in-itself’ from ‘in-virtue-of-another’ is not accidental. By starting the discussion in terms of ‘change’, Plato connects the concerns here with those raised regarding ‘coming-to-be things’ (*gignomena*) elsewhere; just as they depended upon Forms in order to explain how they came to have certain of their properties, so various Forms depend on each other for coming to have some of their properties. Consider, for example, the familiar locution that “It is by the Beautiful that beautiful things become [γίγνεται] beautiful” (*Phaedo* 100e2–3) or “things that get a share of likeness come to be [γίγνεσθαι] like ... things that get a share of unlikeness, unlike, and things that get a share of both [come to be] both” (*Parmenides* 129a8–10). In both cases, ‘becoming’ is used not to emphasise a temporal aspect, but to insist upon an asymmetrical, dependent aspect.³⁷ To have a property, without being that property, is ‘to become’ x. The *Sophist* recognizes that the phenomena associated with ‘change’, and described as ‘becoming’ in previous discussions occur in unchanging things as well, inasmuch as they also take on properties. And so the difficulty originally cast in terms of a contrast between change and unchangingness is recast as a distinction between two different senses, or ways of ‘being’. The *Sophist* translates from the one idiom into the other, thus drawing the link between change and complexity, or between temporal and atemporal differentiation.³⁸

³⁶ Moravcsik argues that “in the argument directed against monism ... Plato uses the expressions ‘to affect’ and ‘to be affected’ (ποιεῖν and παθεῖν) in a very wide sense such that if x is predicated of y, x is said to be affecting y”, and we should understand similarly the *dunamis* proposal wrested from the materialists and to which we are trying to get the Friends of the Forms to assent (Moravcsik 1962, 37). If this is right, then the ‘change’ to which the Friends are pressed to assent need be no more than the capacity to be affected, where this means taking on predicates. While Moravcsik supposes these predicates must be acquired in time (Moravcsik 1962, 40), I think the connection to the subsequent discussion, as well as the current context supports a transition to ever more abstract notions of change – from material, to being affected, to having a property in virtue of the agency of another, giving rise to the compresence of opposites. So while Owen, taking a similar view of ‘affect and be affected’, supposes this *Sophist* passage shows Plato recognizes that eternal objects figure in tensed sentences, I take it that Plato is moving towards a timeless conception of ‘change’ as a place-holder for the ‘in virtue of another’ relation. (Owen 1986, 43–44)

³⁷ See Alan Code (1988) and Michael Frede (1988) for discussion of Plato’s metaphysical use of *genesis*, or ‘becoming’.

³⁸ In arguing that objects of knowledge affect, but are not affected, Brown recalls *Phaedo* 100d5 which “famously claimed that nothing else makes (*poiei*) a thing beautiful but the presence in it of the beautiful” (Brown 1998, 199). But she does not follow this through to the observation that the *Sophist* will directly after this discussion be concerned with the Beautiful making other *forms*, not sensibles, beautiful. This speaks rather in favour of the ‘formal’ reading of ‘change’ in this passage; for if sensible things in the *Phaedo* were rightly considered ‘affected’ or ‘changed’ by the Beautiful (or presence of Beauty), then inter-predicating forms will be no less affected or changed by each other – in spite of their unchangingness.

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Such a connection between relational properties and change comes as no surprise if we suppose that the so-called ‘change’ that Plato was really worried about all along was aspect-change, or when we observe the close link between the inadequacy of changing things and compresence of opposites, which does not require literal difference over time. Aspect-change in this sense is the tendency objects have to vary their properties according to which other objects they are being related to. That Socrates could be short (compared with Simmias) and, without losing this property or growing, become tall (compared to Cebes), was the phenomenon of changing sensibles that demanded explanation in the *Phaedo* (100c–103a). In earlier dialogues, Plato has particularly associated this phenomenon with sensibles, and their liability to change. But the mathematical nature of the puzzles that first introduce Socrates’ dissatisfaction with natural science at *Phaedo* 96e–97c, for example, makes it clear that the problem expressed in ‘coming-to-be’ language is about explaining the compresence of opposites. In the *Sophist*, Plato explicitly acknowledges that forms are liable to precisely this phenomenon³⁹ – aspect-change, or compresence of opposites, of the very same sort that was problematic for particulars.⁴⁰

Thus the general puzzle of one and many, which we have looked at already, arises; and its specific manifestations in *being*, *change*, and *rest*, are resolved by pointing out that something can have a property (partake of x) without *being* that property. Because of this, the same thing can have opposing predicates, without being internally conflicted.

We have to agree without any qualms that *change* is *the same* and not *the same*.
When we say that it’s *the same* and not *the same*, we aren’t speaking the same way.
When we say it’s *the same*, that’s because it shares in *the same* in relation to itself.
But when we say it’s not *the same*, that’s because of its association with *the different*.
(*Sophist* 256a10–b3)

Distinguishing between having a property and being a thing (or between *being-x* and *being-qualified-x’ly*) helps resolve many paradoxes in the *Sophist*. But it also forces on us Q2 in the *Philebus*. For once we have insisted that intelligible objects have properties that are non-identical to that intelligible object, and once we then relate that object in different ways to different objects, what has become of the unity forms were supposed to have?⁴¹ The challenge presented by Socrates’ height in the *Phaedo*, and the finger’s length in *Republic VII*, was to understand how *the*

³⁹ I say ‘explicitly’ in order not to presume that Plato denied the fact before, although it may seem at times that he does; and I intend ‘forms’ to be taken in no more robust a sense than is required by the *Sophist*, in which the need for purely intelligible entities is re-affirmed (*Sophist* 249b5–6). Thus I hope to leave open the question of whether Plato is revising or reaffirming views specific expressed in, e.g. the *Republic*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*.

⁴⁰ M. J. Cresswell notes the possibility, with the *Sophist* in view: “Now the formal structure of this problem does not require that the x be a particular. Exactly the same problem would arise if we want to claim that a given Form is, say, ungenerated, indestructible, perfect, etc.” (Cresswell 1972, 149–150).

⁴¹ Note that this will be a problem even when the properties are *not* opposites of what the Form itself is supposed to be, just as with sensibles the properties need not be opposite of what the sensible thing is in order to cause perplexity about unity and identity. (Contrast Löhr 1990, 78–80, who seems to rely on assimilating opposing properties to any aspectual complexity for his argument to go through.)

same thing could have opposing properties, or even just many properties, and still remain the very same thing. If the solution there was to point to intelligible objects free from such fragmentedness, then the equal 'fragmentedness' of forms is going to present, or appear to present a two-fold problem: (1) what becomes of our original solution?; and (2) how do we solve the same problem at the new level? We cannot appeal to the same solution – or so at least it might appear. If 'the same solution' means positing some further, still more intelligible – because uncomplicated – realm, this will not do. Besides regress worries, there are all the arguments in the *Sophist* to the effect that absolute simples are absolutely unintelligible. But if 'the same solution' means appealing to participation in the forms, this is in fact the solution introduced in the *Sophist*. The fact that intelligibles have properties or aspects within themselves (and not just insofar as they are genera of distinct species) is explained by their relations to other intelligibles (that is, by partaking in other forms). But the *Sophist* only introduces multiplicity, or complexity; what the *Sophist* does not tell us is how – once we acknowledge the complexity of forms – we put Humpty Dumpty back together again. That is, how are we to conceive of these newly complicated abstract things *as unities*?⁴² And can their respective identities as discrete unities be so easily taken for granted?

The problem, remember, is not a purely theoretical one – it is a practical one, as well. People *dispute* with one another over whether these abstract unities have been correctly delineated, whether harmony *does* belong properly to music, and rhythm as well; if so, then *which* relations constitute harmony, *which* measures are rhythmic? Likewise, is 'good' a property of pleasure as such, or of some but not other pleasures? If not of all, then in virtue of what aspect of some pleasures are they rightly counted 'good' (13b–c)? Is the judgement which sometimes attends a pleasure an integral part of that pleasure, or do we have to do here with two distinct things (*Philebus* 36c–40c)? Anxious concern with these sorts of divisions gives rise to real controversy, because how we answer such questions *matters* for how we think about life, and how we live it.

"It is these problems of the one and many, not those others, Protarchus, that cause all sorts of difficulties if they are not properly settled" (*Philebus* 15c1–2). This problem has the shape of the old puzzles of the compresence of opposites, but in a sharpened form. For, with ordinary sensible objects – 'Socrates', the finger, and so on – we are never tempted to question *that* they are single objects; the difficulty is a matter of understanding *how* this is possible, and to be understood. The fact of the unity is manifest, its identity is uncontested. "It is apparent that each of them is equally a finger, and it makes no difference in this regard whether the finger is seen to be in the middle or at either end, whether it is dark or pale, thick or thin, or anything else of that sort, for in all these cases, an ordinary soul isn't compelled to ask the understanding what a finger is."⁴³ If we are talking

⁴² A further question – larger than could be dealt with here – would be whether unity, if achieved or granted, could do the work of 'uniformity' and simplicity that was originally the feature that made them superior to complex (so non-self-explanatory) sensible things.

⁴³ *Republic* VII.523c11–d4, trans. Grube. Compare *Phaedrus* 263a: "When someone utters the word 'iron' or 'silver', don't we all think of the same thing?" In the *Symposium*, even actual material change

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about 'Protarchus', as Protarchus does in his own example of 'one and many', at least we do not really dispute that there is some one object there, different from (at least some of) his properties, and to which these properties belong. This is one reason why the sophisms are "childish and trivial" (*Philebus* 14d7), and "not worthy of scrutiny" (*Philebus* 15a4) – no earnest person is troubled by them, because no earnest person feels he has been given any genuine reason to *doubt* the fact of Protarchus' unity, even if he cannot explain why.

Dealing with sensible objects, we have decent rough and ready ways of determining that many parts and various aspects constitute some one thing, even if we don't know *how*. Here is one handy and familiar criterion: do these different things move together? Whichever parts locomote *en masse* through whatever changes in other properties there may be, these are the items constituting the unity to which properties belong. This may not be an adequate metaphysical criterion, but it is a perfectly functional practical one.

But even such a practical criterion for establishing inter-subjective agreement in pragmatic contexts is unavailable regarding non-material entities. If the complex unit we want to identify does not locomote and it cannot be pointed to, then the question, "What makes all these properties and parts belong to, or constitute, this particular unit?" becomes more acute. It becomes a matter of genuine uncertainty and doubt, even for serious-minded people, whether some complex of properties, parts and kinds constitutes some one thing. Is 'proportion' a proper part of beauty, or not? Can truth or falsity belong properly to pleasure? "When someone tries to posit 'man' as one, 'ox' as one, 'beauty' as one, 'good' as one, zealous concern with divisions of these unities and the like gives rise to controversy" (*Philebus* 15a8–9). The methods for determining which aspects properly belong to some intelligible object, when it is disputed, are not at all clear. If I say change belongs properly to beauty, and if you say otherwise, how do we settle our dispute? We cannot point to 'the beautiful itself' and track it over time and through circumstance to determine the matter, partly because identifying the things in question is precisely what is in dispute. This stands in marked contrast to disputes regarding sensibles; and it explains why Q2 is, as noted earlier, a question of identification and identity, as well as of unity. How, if these unities do not change, are they *most securely*, *most certainly* (βεβαίότατα, 15b4), this very one?

Consider now the metaphysical underpinnings of this essentially epistemological expression of the problem. An instance, or token, of 'tallness' or 'arm' has a specific history in time. This specific history of how it comes to be, where it arises, does not compromise its identity – it constitutes it, as *this* arm, as *this* relation of tallness. But 'arm' (what it is to be an arm) and 'tall' have, and can have, no such history.⁴⁴ They are unchangingly just what they are. How then can

does not threaten our ability to re-identify the same person over time: "Even while each living thing is said to be alive and to be the same – as a person is said to be the same from childhood till he turns into an old man – even then he never consists of the same things" (*Symposium* 207d7–9).

⁴⁴ Meinwald also contrasts physical with non-sensible complex unities in this respect, and notes in passing a possible connection with the discussion of 'being affected' in *Sophist* 248c ff., but without pursuing it (Meinwald 1996, 101).

they simultaneously partake of opposite properties (both ‘long’ and ‘short’ might qualify arm), or even multiple properties? What makes a genuine unity out of unchanging aspects which themselves are something other than this unity they are forming? How do these many aspects constitute a genuine unity, without their distinctive identities being compromised?

As we saw in the *Sophist*, this relation of ‘having a property’ can be conceived as a kind of ‘change’. Insisting on “a-change” – that is, aspectual complexity – for non-material entities⁴⁵ makes their very immateriality a source of difficulty about how “these are most securely that one”. But if we do not allow relative aspects to intelligibles, then they become grossly unintelligible. This is not just for the immediate reason given to the Friends of the Forms in particular – that ‘to-become-known’ is to acquire a new property. It is more importantly for the reason given to Parmenides in the *Sophist*: language and thought become impossible if we suppose that the objects of language and thought are utterly simple.⁴⁶ For to speak and to think is to say ‘this’ of ‘that’ – at the most minimal, to say that ‘this is’. But that already attributes several properties, and in different ways, to some one thing; it asserts ‘there is something, it is some one thing, it is distinct from everything else; it thus has properties distinct from it, yet part of it/belonging to it’ – in this case, difference, for example, and unity. And this requires plurality, or complexity, in our intelligible objects, for meaningful speech can only be true if this reflects actual complexity in the object so described. This is why Socrates, in the *Philebus*, says that it is through discourse that the problem of ‘one and many’ – or complex unity – becomes absolutely unavoidable.

The allusion to the *Sophist* reminds us that everything in order to be intelligible as a thing must be liable to ‘change’, in some sense, or having properties in virtue of another. It is this requirement that is threatened by unchangingness. Q2 might, then, be put in two ways: “How are these ones, though unchanging, nevertheless most securely that one?” asks (1) “Given that all these aspects, attributes, properties, are in themselves totally distinct (in their natures non-identical) from one another, and that this will never change (for they are incapable of change), how are they at the same time (in a different way) constitutive of some distinct unit?”⁴⁷. This is not the question of how each property qualifies several different

⁴⁵ for entities μή τῶν γιγνομένων τε καὶ ἀπολλυμένων

⁴⁶ *Sophist* 244b–245e, esp. 245a8–b9. Compare 252b8–d1, where the same point is made against anyone, monist or pluralist, “who won’t allow anything to be called by a name that it gets by association with something else”. The reference must be to the ‘youths and late-learners’ of *Sophist* 251. It is possible Cratylus is such a person, with his view that names carry all information to be had on what something is (*Cratylus* 435d–e), and are necessarily correct, or else nonsense (*Cratylus* 429b–438e); but he is not very much in the picture in this passage.

⁴⁷ Apart from the, to my mind mistaken, emphasis on species, this understanding of the problem is similar to that offered by Meinwald (1996, 100); Delcomminette’s arguments against seeing the matter in genus-species terms are ample (Delcomminette 2002, 32–35), but his alternative concern with ‘parts of a definition’ (35–38) reflects his own epistemological bias. Cresswell raises as a possible problem that forms have many characteristics, but without explaining why being unchanging is especially relevant (Cresswell 1972, 150); moreover, as Casper points out, he wrongly supposes Plato was not worried about it (Casper 1977, 20). Casper himself supposes that although the problem is raised here in the *Philebus*, it is not addressed until the *Sophist*. On his view ‘being unchanging’ is mentioned merely

things – that does not come until Q3. The question here is how things remaining eternally distinct from one another can nevertheless come together to form a genuine unity. We might also ask the same question from a different angle, asked, so to speak from the perspective of the multiply qualified complex unit (2): “How are all these many distinct properties unified, constituting just this one?”⁴⁸

This reading has three interpretative advantages. First, these two formulations are converse expressions of the same problematic; they are aptly and concisely expressed together in the question, ‘How are these most securely that, although they do not come into being?’ The whole discussion is governed by the ‘amazing principle’ which itself is two-fold – ‘the one is many, and the many one’; and so it is fitting that we should turn up troubles which likewise can be expressed either in terms of unity or in terms of multiplicity. Second, it is a problem that being unchanging might be thought to exacerbate – because we have no pragmatic means of settling disputes about which aspects belong to which unchanging entities; and because being unchanging suggests not being affected by, or becoming qualified by relations to other things. Third, this problem is one that (i) arises from the ‘amazing statement’; (ii) is addressed by the Divine Method introduced to address it; and (iii) characterizes generally a genuine problem that arises with respect to pleasure and knowledge.⁴⁹ For if we are to compare our two candidates for the good life, we need to be able to distinguish and identify them. This is not just a matter of whether they come in kinds, but more essentially how they are constituted, or what they are. And this, in turn, means knowing what belongs to them properly, what their distinctive context and conditions are, what they carry with them necessarily – that is, what they are in virtue of themselves, in virtue of others, what qualifications they admit (or do not admit), what relations they stand in. The kinds there are of each – and, more, the principle(s) for distinguishing kinds in each case – are only a part of this larger project. It is this kind of study of pleasure that we in fact get, at *Philebus* 31b–55b; and this sort of study of Socrates’ candidate that is embedded in the metaphysics and cosmology of *Philebus* 23c–31a, the ranking of knowledges at *Philebus* 55c–59d, and in the methodological discussion addressing the three questions, at *Philebus* 16c–18c.

as an example of the sort of characteristic that forms have (Casper 1977, 21). The understanding of the question offered here comes closest to that offered by Muniz and Rudebusch, who argue that an evident distinction between *henads* and *monads* sets up the structural asymmetry. They do not, however, explain convincingly why Plato sees unchangingness as intensifying the problem (Muniz and Rudebusch 2004, 402–403) – and this is what was perplexing in the first place.

⁴⁸ Compare Anscombe’s recommendation that we “turn our attention to the forms that do the participating (as opposed to the form that is participated in)”; she also focuses on ‘unity’ as being particularly at issue, although perhaps in a different way (Anscombe 1966, 407).

⁴⁹ Of course, one might challenge whether (ii) is actually a desideratum: Delcomminette argues that we should give up altogether on such coherence: “dialectic” he writes, of the Divine Method introduced at 16c, “is what gives rise to the serious one-and-many problems rather than a tool meant to deal with them [so that] we should no longer look for a solution to these problems in Socrates’ description of this method, or, in fact in the *Philebus* itself” (Delcomminette 2002, 42). On his view, all puzzles of *Philebus* 15b are addressed outside the *Philebus*. This approach, however, is ill-fitting with Socrates’ claiming to offer “some ways and means to remove this kind of disturbance from our discussion in a peaceful way, and to show us a better solution to the problem” (16a9–b3).

VI. Frege and his numbers

If this account is right, then the problem raised in Q2 is not a peculiarly Platonic problem; it will arise for any account which posits complex, unchanging objects of thought. ‘Internal’ or conceptual complexity, differentiation, seems required for thought; yet this complexity threatens the unity of the object.

Consider a more modern expression of the problem, from Frege’s *Grundlagen*, where it is raised specifically regarding numbers:

If we try to produce number by putting together different distinct objects, the result is an agglomeration in which the objects contained remain still in possession of precisely those properties which serve to distinguish them from one another; and that is not number. But if we try to do it in the other way, by putting together identicals, the result runs perpetually together into one and we never reach a plurality. (*Grundlagen* § 39)

For ‘number’ read ‘a unity’ (monad), and we have Plato’s worry in its most general form.⁵⁰ Frege describes the problem succinctly at § 41 as that of “uniting distinguishability with identity”;⁵¹ and like our passage from the *Philebus*, Frege first entertains proposed solutions to solve the problem by recourse to space and time – only to conclude that any such solution will not do because, among other reasons, the very same problem besets non-spatio-temporal entities (*Grundlagen* § 40). The example that he quotes from Jevons in this paragraph is telling:

Three coins are three coins, whether we count them successively or regard them all simultaneously. In many cases neither time nor space is the ground of difference, but pure quality alone enters. We can discriminate, for instance, the weight, inertia, and hardness of gold as three qualities, though none of these is before or after the other, either in space or time. *Every means of discrimination may be a source of plurality.*⁵²

As this example shows, although Frege’s interest is particularly with numbers – with the unity of qualitatively identical units – he recognizes that any sort of complex unity can create the same conceptual difficulty: *every means of discrimination may be a source of plurality*. It need not be the particular unity that numbers assert of the numbered, for the point of the example tells as much against a single coin as against three. Each element must preserve its “distinguishing marks” (*Grundlagen* § 40, p. 53; or “special nature”, “etwas Besonderes”, in § 41), both independently of and considered within the context of the whole of which it is an element. But it must do this without falling foul of the first horn of the dilemma, the whole being nothing but an agglomeration.

⁵⁰ Plato speaks in terms of unities that have plurality – so, complex unities – and says that when internal distinctions remain undifferentiated, we create a ‘one’ too quickly from the many (*Philebus* 17a, 18a). Or conversely, to borrow language from Q2, an agglomeration of ‘these’ is *not* ‘this’ (where ‘this’ is some complex whole – man, beauty, pleasure, good). Agglomeration leaves us with the many, and so will not get us a distinct *this*, as opposed to ‘these ones’ of which it is composed.

⁵¹ Regarding numbers in particular: “the attempt to unite distinguishability with identity among the things numbered” (§ 42). But his way of handling the problem recognizes a more general problem about complex unity, not special to numbers.

⁵² Frege quoting Jevons, *The Principles of Science*. 157 (or 176 of the 1874 edition). Emphasis mine.

Thus when Frege considers and rejects Jevons' proposed solution, it is on grounds of 'wholeness' quite generally. To stick with the same example, for 'hardness' to be a proper part of some whole ('gold'), we must consider 'hardness' abstracted from whatever properties make 'hardness' an entity in its own right; disregarding that is, that 'to be hard' is not 'to be gold' (to put it Platonically). On the other hand, we must at the same time preserve whatever it was that made 'hardness' – rather than, say, 'tallness' – the appropriate element, with respect to 'gold'. "Either we can abstract from the distinguishing properties of things before uniting them into a whole: or we can first form a whole and then abstract from distinguishing properties." (*Grundlagen* §44). Neither option, says Frege, will do. Difference must be preserved in identity – "we must ascribe to units two contradictory qualities: identity and distinguishability" (*Grundlagen* §45). The difficulty Plato poses in the *Philebus*' Q2 is how we are to get any unity out of that.⁵³

VII. Internal complexity, and extensional complexity: the third question

I have argued that Q2 is to be seen as a question arising from the 'internal complexity' of intelligible, non-sensible things. If 'symmetry', 'goodness', 'unity' and 'sameness' are all true of 'beauty', and true in different ways, and yet 'beauty' is not identical with any of these, what is it that makes all these many properties some one thing? How can beauty become all these things while remaining unchangingly itself, and not simply dissolving into a series of unrelated properties – each of which must equally remain itself within this association?

If this interpretation of Q2 is correct, it invites an interpretation of Q3 that is equally relevant to the *Philebus*, and equally addressed by the Divine Method. I offered two converse formulations of the sort of trouble described by Q2; in a different way Q2 and Q3 similarly reflect complementary troubles arising from the same situation – viz., the complex unity of unchanging ideas. This is as it should be, since it is still the same 'amazing principle' that generates these questions.

Q2 asks about the internal divisions of, for example, Beauty. Many different things are true of Beauty, and in many ways, apart from the fact that it is Beauty. It is, for example, well-proportioned. This is its internal complexity. But consider this same fact from the perspective, so to speak, of 'proportion'. Proportion is true of many things: health, regular solids, and beauty all partake of 'proportion'. So is 'proportion', then, "dispersed and multiplied or [is it] entirely separated from itself, which would seem most impossible of all?" (*Philebus* 15b6–7).⁵⁴ The

⁵³ My thanks to Jonardon Ganeri for suggesting the reference, and to Peter Clark for helpful discussion of the issues raised.

⁵⁴ This complementarity is particularly emphasized if we join McCabe in taking Q1 not as a question, but as the condition setting up Q2. "This reading has the advantage of offering counterpoised puzzles (μὲν ... δὲ) with the same grammatical structure of open conditionals: If we suppose there to be monads, how can they be just one? If we suppose them to be parcelled out, how can they be one and

same question could be posed of beauty itself: Since there are several beautiful things – nature, good souls, each of the forms are all beautiful – beauty itself, like any other predicate, will be as subject to extensional multiplicity as it is to internal multiplicity. And it is not clear what we should say in such cases. We cannot insist simply on the unity and univocity of ‘beauty’, for that would be tantamount to denying the very fact that has raised the question – quite different things are rightly considered beautiful, in various ways and for various reasons. Like Protarchus insisting upon just the univocity of pleasure (*Philebus* 12d–13c), one could only say of each different kind, *that* it was beautiful, and no more; the nature of the variety would be washed away. Avoiding this, however, raises the problem of Q3: what sort of difference could be permitted between beauty as such and its varieties, which does not threaten to do away altogether with the coherence of the concept?

Such a reading of Q3 can be articulated entirely without reference to sensible particulars. Yet the third question does specifically ask about unchanging units “in things coming-to-be and indefinite” (ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις αὐ καὶ ἀπείροις, 15b5).⁵⁵ Even if *genesis* does have a metaphysical aspect to it in Plato, what could τὰ γιγνόμενα refer to except concrete, sensible particulars? And yet, it would be strange for Plato to raise a question now that pertained exclusively to sensible particulars. Socrates has just said, only a few lines earlier, that we are interested in cases “when the one is not taken from things that come to be or perish” (*Philebus* 15a1–2); and this was explicitly contrasted with concerns about perishables, dismissed as “not worthy of scrutiny”. Has Socrates just dismissed as silly one-many issues regarding sensibles only to reintroduce them immediately as one of the most serious puzzles?

Not quite; for it depends on what the problem here is supposed to be. It is naturally read as a question about how sensible particulars can participate in Forms, without the Forms being diminished, thus re-posing the paradoxes of the *Parmenides* (especially *Parmenides* 131a–e).⁵⁶ It is telling, however, that in this

the same as themselves?” (McCabe 1994, 244n41). Alternatively, see the interesting suggestion from Muniz and Rudebusch that Q1 asks more specifically whether *sub-kinds* of kinds exist – ‘*henads*’ on their reading are the resultants of division in ‘*monads*’, about which there is never any question or controversy, whether they exist. (Muniz and Rudebusch 2004, 401–2).

⁵⁵ This does not conclusively indicate that sensible particulars are intended, and I have some sympathy for the view presented, by e.g. Moravcsik, that ‘*apeiron*’ “does not refer to particulars, but to (highly specific) universals” (Moravcsik 1979, 82). But this will not quite explain the γιγνόμενα in “ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις αὐ καὶ ἀπείροις”. It may be, as Hahn suggests, that the whole point of the question is to throw into doubt just how clear a distinction can be made here, and “to show how the field constituted by γιγνόμενα is a kind of ὄν” (Hahn 1978, 169; he cites in support *Politicus* 283d and 283e; *Philebus* 26d, 27b. Cf. Moravcsik 1962). I have argued elsewhere that γένεσις in the *Philebus* generally emphasizes dependency, rather than change, which favours the view that γιγνόμενα need not refer primarily to sensible particulars.

⁵⁶ Löhr is a good example of someone who thinks that ‘the’ problem *must be* about participation of sensibles in forms, though he is by no means alone in this. While he does sometimes allow that divisions into sub-kinds may come into it (Löhr 1990, 82), yet he maintains that ‘für Platon das Problem des Einen und Vielen, d.h. das Problem der Beziehung der vielen Einzeldinge zu der einen Form ...’ (91, emphasis mine; compare ‘den wirklichen Grund für die Gefährdung der Einheit von

passage, none of the usual terms indicating ‘participation’ appears.⁵⁷ Indeed, the *Philebus* shows as little interest in ‘solving’ the riddle of participation of sensibles in particulars as ever.⁵⁸

But then, even the familiar question of the participation of sensibles in Forms might be regarded as more of a problem *for the forms* than for the sensibles.⁵⁹ However it happens, it is Forms (supposedly paradigmatic unities) that are distributed among distinct things, and this seems incompatible with their being one. Now that Forms are acknowledged to be complex and inter-related, this problem becomes only more prevalent and more acute. The use of τὰ γιγνόμενα should not blind us to the fact that the very same problem arises even if *sensible* particulars do not come into it at all. Especially if we recall the way that ‘becoming’ marks out ‘dependency’,⁶⁰ we can readily allow that γιγνόμενα may refer to sensible particulars, but not exclusively so – it picks out what forms and sensibles now have in common. Socrates draws on language familiar from discussion of sensibles in a context which has explicitly excluded sensibles in order to indicate that this here is the same problem – in this respect, there is no principled difference between sensibles and sub-kinds belonging to an abstract unity (cf. Löhr 1990, 97).

Extensional multiplicity re-introduces a familiar problem to do with transient things, but in a more intractable guise. The problem raised at Q3 is, I suggest, primarily (though not exclusively) one of extensional multiplicity *at the conceptual level* – or *as it relates to intelligible units*. This domain of the phenomenon is most relevant to the contest between pleasure and knowledge, and it is addressed by the Divine Method. For it is a problem that dissolves when one sees that abstract, complex wholes are to be grasped through their multiple manifestations, not in spite of them.

That it is relevant is shown already in Protarchus’ ineptness in the face of this fact about pleasure, an ineptness which will, Socrates says, “make us look quite childish, and our discussion would be shipwrecked and lost (*Philebus*13d5–6). Protarchus admits pleasures arise variously, but can say nothing more than that these pleasures are all pleasant. This ineptness in handling extensional multiplicity

Formen ... in den Blick zu nehmen, nämlich das scheinbare Eingehen der Formen in die Vielheit der werdenden und vergehenden Einzeldinge’, 85; see also 89).

⁵⁷ Striker points this out in her discussion of this passage (Striker 1970, 14). From this alone, one cannot conclude that considerations of sensible particulars is excluded (so Löhr 1990, 91); all the same, it may well be indicative of where the emphasis and interest lies for Plato – and where it does not.

⁵⁸ The only candidate solution the *Philebus* might be said to offer to the question of participation of sensibles in forms is the injunction in the Divine Method that after the appropriate distinctions are made, we might let the rest go into the indefinite (16e1–2). This is no *solution* at all; if anything it is the injunction simply not to puzzle further over it.

⁵⁹ It all depends on what we think ‘the’ problem is. Striker also argues that the problem, here at least, is not with ‘how’ participation happens or what exactly it is, but rather with what becomes of forms given such ‘participation’ by individuals (Striker 1970, 14–15): “Platon versucht also nicht mehr, eine Relation zwischen Formen und wahrnehmbaren Gegenständen zu definieren, sondern vielmehr, die Formen als seine Art von Gegenständen zu beschreiben, bei denen sich die Beziehung zu Einzeldingen von selbst ergibt.”

⁶⁰ See discussion 14–15, and notes 37 and 57, above.

within the *kind* pleasure (*not* its instances) is what prompted Socrates to introduce the ‘amazing statement’ for discussion. That the Divine Method offers advice for handling the awkwardness created by extensional multiplicity I can gesture at briefly by offering an example. If many different things are rightly described as ‘pleasant’, say, or as ‘sound’, then the Divine Method advises us that it is not therefore appropriate to merely recognize this fact, or worse to infer that these different things are disconnected, with respect to pleasure or sound. “The boundless multitude ... leaves you in boundless ignorance” (*Philebus* 17e3–4). We must instead find what similarities there are between different kinds, identify how they differ from one another, and how they are related (*Philebus* 17c11–d2); doing this successfully amounts to understanding different sorts of pleasure, or sound, say, *as related* to one another, and to pleasure or sound as such, without denying their differences.

We need not on this reading assume that sensibles are positively excluded from consideration. For note how the question will be essentially the same for Plato: extensional complexity is extensional complexity, whether this is manifested in constant properties had by changing sensible things, or whether by the constant properties of unchanging intelligible entities.⁶¹ ‘Sameness’, the *Sophist* recognized (254d–256a), arises as frequently and distinctly as there are distinct forms; and it arises, for the same reason, in any entity whatsoever – whether fleeting or enduring, “everything has a share of that” (*Sophist* 256a7–8). It is true that Plato does not then distinguish here between the membership relation and the genus-species relation,⁶² but this should not be regarded as an oversight or equivocation.⁶³ Rather Plato recognizes a structurally significant similarity in the relations that ideas have to one another, and the way that these ideas inform sensible complex unities. The complex unity of sensible particulars demanded an explanation which, it turned out, complex abstract unities will also require (Q2); and the problem of ‘participation’, whatever that was, is not a special feature of relating sensible and intelligible reality. It is a conceptual problem about multiplicity and unity (Q3).

⁶¹ This is why the question looks like a familiar one – it *is* a familiar one. The structural contrast between Q3 and Q2 is thus similar to the difference Anscombe sees between Plato’s one-many concerns in the *Republic* (extensional multiplicity), and his concerns in the *Sophist*, which are more like those of the *Philebus*’ Q2. As she puts it (Anscombe 1966, 406), “The contrast is this: in the *Republic* the intercommunion of forms is being looked at only from the point of view of the form that is participated in by others, so as to appear many. In the *Sophist* the interest is rather in forms as participating in others.”

⁶² “Während Sokrates in 15a7 von der διαίρεσις, also der Einteilung in Arten, spricht, geht er in 15b5 zu den “unendlich vielen Dingen, die werden”, über, ohne auf einen Unterschied hinzuweisen. Dies deutet darauf hin, daß Platon hier nur eine statt zwei Fragen sah, also zwischen den Beziehungen eines genus zu seinen species und zu den ihm untergeordneten Einzeldingen nicht unterschied.” (Striker 1970, 12.) On this question it is interesting to consider the different kinds of one-many concerns Anscombe discerns in the *Sophist* at 253d; according to her division, genus-species and kind-individual exhibit in some respect the same distinct sort of one-many relation, as opposed to others on offer (Anscombe 1966, 419).

⁶³ As I believe Heinaman regards this and other absent distinctions (Heinaman 1982, 185–187.)

VIII. Conclusion

The primary advantages of this reading are that it presents in Q2 a real philosophical difficulty. It is a difficulty that Plato should have in light of his late metaphysics. And it presents this question as it is relevant to the *Philebus*: to the question that Socrates and Protarchus have to settle; to the Divine Method that is supposed to direct how such questions are settled; and also to what Socrates actually does in investigating the nature of pleasure.

Another advantage is that it gives us a reading of Q3 which does the same.⁶⁴ The problem with Q3, thought to be a less acute problem than the ‘nevertheless’ of Q2, is that it seems to be raising the old problem of participation of sensibles in forms, and this has nothing to do with the concerns of the *Philebus*.⁶⁵ In fact, Plato *never* offers an answer to the question of how sensible particulars relate to Forms. The *Phaedo* is quite blasé about specifying exactly what this is supposed to be (*Phaedo* 100d). Although the *Parmenides* raises trouble about participation (*Parmenides* 133b–135a), these troubles are there shown to be at least as relevant to Forms alone as to Forms-and-particulars – if there is a real problem here, whatever it is, it is not specific to sensibles. The problem is not the mechanics of participation – ‘What exactly *is* participation? How is such a thing possible?’ The pressing problem that ‘participation’ brings with it is really the converse of Q2: Q2 worried about internal complexity, and how many can be one; Q3 asks about extensional complexity, and so how one can be many. And this is a problem that will exist at the conceptual level just as Q2. If ‘health’ is some one thing (among many others) belonging to man, ‘man’ is just one of the many things to which ‘health’ belongs. ‘Health’ then is dispersed and distributed through many ‘forms’; likewise with ‘measure’, for example.

This point becomes acute in the ethical context of the *Philebus*. For there is no doubt that animals besides ourselves enjoy pleasure, and pursue it. To say that pleasure is something that all animals, including ourselves, share is not an empty claim, and there is some point to registering the similarity. Yet “even if all the cattle and horses and the rest of the animals gave testimony by following pleasure” (*Philebus* 67b1–2), this would count as no evidence in favour of pleasure’s goodness for our, human lives. For whatever similarities there might be, the differences between animal pleasures and human pleasure matter more to its worth – this ‘same’ thing, pleasure, can have a rather different nature and value when taking its place within different sorts of whole.

That is to say, though, that these differences come to light by considering pleasure as one aspect of a manifold, complex and unified lived experience. And this is a Q2-type concern, with internal complexity of a whole. The significant

⁶⁴ Meinwald’s way of saving the sense of the second question accepts that the third, like the first, is not relevant to the *Philebus* (Meinwald 1996, 102).

⁶⁵ In general, those who insist that the focus is on the participation of sensible particulars in Forms, and accordingly assimilate everything after Q1 to this question, usually have difficulty explaining how this problem, or any solution to it, might be relevant to the broader ethical concerns of the dialogue (e.g. Löhr 1990, 98–99).

ways in which pleasures can vary in kind emerges from the fact that pleasure is, within any animal soul, just one among many specific modes of experience, or capacities. Which pleasures arise and what value they have depends upon the overall psycho-physical context in which pleasures arise; pleasures are distinctively human in virtue of their arising in distinctively *human* beings. Extensional multiplicity and complex unity must thus be treated together, just as the Divine Method, introduced to address the one-many problems of 15b, recommends.⁶⁶

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⁶⁶ I would like to thank the anonymous readers for helpful comments; I also thank my colleagues at St. Andrews, especially Joachim Auferheide, Sarah Broadie, James Harris and Basil O'Neil, for comments and discussion of earlier drafts of this paper and issues raised in it.

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