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PLATO, *PHILEBUS* 15B: A PROBLEM SOLVED

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1897 Bury described Plato's *Philebus* as 'a gnarled and knotted old oak-tree, abounding in unexpected humps and shoots, which sadly mar its symmetry as compared with the fair cypress-trees and stately pines by whose side it stands in the grove of Academe'.[1] A century of scholarship later, Barker expanded the image of one tree to many, turning the gnarly oak into 'impenetrable jungle':

> Intrepid investigators load their back-packs with the very latest in philological and hermeneutic equipment, together with selected remnants of the scholarly gadgetry of earlier generations, and set off to explore it. Many return babbling in unfathomable tongues. Others emerge waving what purport to be maps of this perplexing terrain, set in mind-warping systems of projection and sprinkled with unfamiliar symbols; but few of their maps seem to agree.[2]

To judge from readers' reactions, one of the gnarliest knots and some of the most impenetrable terrain occur at 15b. After stating the problem and reviewing the alternative solutions, we give our solution. Unlike the alternatives, we do not emend the text, use clairvoyance to see its meaning, or revise Greek grammar. Our reading merely identifies grammatical antecedents of pronouns, lengthens brachylogies in parallel with prior statements in the text, and draws a plausible, though hitherto unrecognized, distinction between monads and henads, a distinction established in the context.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The context is a discussion of unchanging 'henads' (*ἑνάδων*, 15a6)—unities—like Man, Ox, The Beautiful, The Good, about which Socrates describes apparently Three Controversies. The First Controversy is if we really must assume such 'monads' (*μονάδας*, 15b1) exist. The Third concerns the relation of 'this one' (*μίαν ταύτην*, 15b4) to the world of becoming: does it become many or is it wholly apart from itself? Although there is disagreement about the precise meaning of the First and Third, the general point of each has seemed intelligible.

Grammatically, the Second Controversy is easy to translate: 'how *these*—each one always being the same and subject neither to coming-to-be nor ceasing-to-be—nevertheless most steadfastly are *this* one?' (*πῶς αὖ ταύτας, μίαν ἑκάστην οὖσαν ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μήτε γένεσιν μήτε ὄλεθρον προσδεχομένην. ὅμως εἶναι βεβαιότατα μίαν ταύτην*; 15b2–4). The difficulty has been to make it intelligible. Badham first stated the problem of intelligibility in 1855, restating it in the second edition of his commentary as follows: it asks how it is 'conceivable that that which is one and imperishable should be nevertheless unchangeably one:—than which nothing could be more absurd'.[3] The most recent commentary on the *Philebus* shows the lack of progress in solving Badham's problem:

[1] R. G. Bury, *The Philebus of Plato* (Cambridge, 1897), ix.
[2] A. Barker, 'Plato's *Philebus:* the numbering of a unity', *Apeiron* 29 (1996), 143–64, at 143.
[3] C. Badham, *The Philebus of Plato* (London, 1878[2]), 10.

What problem is Plato supposed to see in the fact that each of these monads, which are always the same and never admit coming- nor ceasing-to-be, *nevertheless* are each most certainly *one?* Why should the eternally unchanging unities not 'most steadfastly' (*auf sicherste Weise*) forever be ones? This question appears empty (*müßig*).[4]

III. FAILURE OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Every alternative solution has serious problems. The problems are well known. We need only briefly review them under the general headings of emendation, clairvoyance, and grammatical revision, and show how the most recent attempts each have one of these problems.

Emendation

As Frede remarks, 'there has been no shortage of attempts to make... interpretation more palatable through small emendations that are supposed to give to the Second Controversy an intelligible meaning [*einen Sinn*]'.[5] There is a scholarly consensus that since 'there are no (reported) difficulties in the manuscripts for this passage... it would be nice to do without emendation'.[6]

Clairvoyance

If we do not emend the text, we must attempt to read in the Second Controversy—'how these ones, each always the same, *nonetheless* are this one'—an intelligible controversy, one which Badham would not find 'absurd' nor Frede 'empty'. There has been no shortage of such attempts. Following Dancy, we identify three types of non-emending readings, adding his own reading as a fourth type.

1. 'How can each of these [monads such as Man, Ox, and so on] be *one,* and also *be* or exist?'[7]
2. 'How can it be that these monads [such as Man, Ox, and so on], each being individually self-identical and eternal, are yet one single [more generic] unity?'[8]
3. 'How can each of these units be *one* when it is to be distinguished from the One?'[9]
4. 'When Socrates says that one of the problems is how each unit can be one, although it is not something that comes-to-be or passes-away, he is merely reminding Protarchus that there is nothing controversial about how something that comes-to-be and passes-away can be one.'[10]

[4] D. Frede, *Philebos* (Göttingen, 1997), 121.

[5] Ibid. 122.

[6] R. M. Dancy, 'The one, the many, and the forms: *Philebus* 15b1–8', *Ancient Philosophy* 4 (1984), 160–93, at 162–3.

[7] Dancy (n. 6), 163, including as examples of this attempt J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy* I (London, 1914), 326, n. 2; A. E. Taylor, *Plato: Philebus and Epinomis* (London, 1956), 107–8; and W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* V (Cambridge, 1978), 207.

[8] Dancy (n. 6), 164, quoting R. D. Archer-Hind, 'Notes on *Philebus* 15A, B', *Journ. Phil.* 27 (1901), 229–31, at 231; including as other examples P. Friedländer, *Plato* III, trans. H. Meyerhoff (Princeton, 1969), 319, 534–6; and R. Hahn, 'On Plato's *Philebus* 15B1–8', *Phronesis* 23 (1978), 158–72, at 166ff.

[9] Dancy (n. 6), 165, paraphrasing G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The new theory of forms', *Monist* 50 (1966), 403–420, at 406–7.

[10] Dancy (n. 6), 166, speaking for himself.

Each of these types of non-emending readings, let us grant, states a controversy that might have been intelligible to Plato. But none has succeeded as an interpretation of the text. In Frede's words:

> It is legitimate to bring references to discussions in other dialogues into play as complements (*zur Ergänzung*), but only in the presence of a clearly drawn allusion (*klar ausmachbare Anspielung*), not by freely reading things into the text (*ein freies Hineinlesen*), which in all honesty requires the skills of a clairvoyant (*hellseherische Künste*). We are unwilling to accept that Plato in this passage is putting forward a list of questions on the existence and status of the Forms that is so poorly formulated that the questions are... taken by themselves, completely unintelligible (*völlig unverständliche*).[11]

Grammatical revision

The text of 15b naturally seems to consist of three correlative clauses, marked by the sequence 'first... again... after this' (*πρῶτον μὲν... εἶτα... μετὰ δὲ τοῦτ'*). But it is grammatically possible instead to take 15b as consisting of only two correlative clauses, putting the words 'after this' within the scope of the second, now lengthy, clause. The unintelligibility of the Second Controversy is then avoided by hyperbaton, that is, by attaching the word 'nevertheless' (*ὅμως*, 15b4) to the following clause, instead of taking it with the one it is in. The result of this merger and hyperbaton is then an intelligible point of controversy: how can the unchanging one be that one and *nevertheless after this* be among the unlimited things that come-to-be? This proposal was made by Badham himself in 1855, followed by for example Cherniss,[12] Ross,[13] and Striker.[14]

The problem with this proposal is that the required case of hyperbaton is unparalleled: 'hyperbaton with a preceding *ὅμως* requires at least a connecting particle, as *ὅμως μέν* or *ὅμως καί*'.[15] Hence this proposal forces us to revise our understanding of Greek grammar. For this reason, Badham, the originator of the proposal in 1855, rejected it in 1878, preferring the dreadful expedient of declaring the text corrupt and emending it. There is, we take it, a consensus that if an intelligible, non-emended, non-clairvoyant reading can be given of the Second Controversy, it will be preferable to a merger of the Second and Third Controversies with its required revision of our understanding of Greek grammar.

IV. FAILURE OF RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

The same problems reviewed in the previous section extend to the most recent interpretations. Löhr,[16] Madigan,[17] and Frede propose hyperbaton. Only Frede

[11] Frede (n. 4), 123.

[12] H. F. Cherniss, 'Some war-time publications concerning Plato', *American Journal of Philology* 68 (1947), 113–46, 225–65, at 230, n. 62.

[13] W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1953), 131, n. 1.

[14] G. Striker, *Peras und Apeiron: Das Problem der Formen in Platons Philebos* (Göttingen, 1970), 14, n. 1.

[15] Frede (n. 4), 122, n. 17, cf. Dancy (n. 6), 163, whom we have followed in our exposition of this proposal and especially the thorough examination of grammatical possibilities in E. E. Benitez, 'Forms in Plato's *Philebus*', dissertation (Austin, 1985; revised edn Assen, 1989), 31–4.

[16] G. Löhr, *Das Problem des Einen und Vielen in Platons* Philebus (Göttingen, 1990).

[17] A. Madigan, '*Philebus* 15b1–8: a suggestion', in William J. Carroll and John J. Furlong, *Greek and Medieval Studies in Honor of Leo Sweeney, S.J.* (New York, 1994).

replies to the objection that hyperbaton requires grammatical innovation. She says that the objection 'is not sound (*stichhaltig*), because here a restrictive particle would have impaired (*beeinträchtigen*) the sense of opposition. If Plato had resolved upon so bold a hyperbaton construction, it is hardly surprising if no parallel construction exists'.[18] Evidently, she is not satisfying the desideratum she herself endorses (quoted above, 'Clairvoyance'), to avoid clairvoyance, in her case by freely reading into the text an unparalleled grammatical construction.

Migliori develops the first type of non-emending reading listed above, taking the text to be asking 'if the Forms are separate and shut-up in their unity (*separate e chiuse nella loro unità*)—not communicating with the others—or if there is a hierarchical interweaving and a sort of structuring (*un intreccio gerarchico e una sorta di strutturazione*) of the Forms themselves'.[19] One advantage Migliori claims for his reading is that it 'avoids the absurdity into which many interpreters fall, who treat the proposition that the Forms are removed from Becoming (*μήτε γένεσιν μήτε ὄλεθρον προσδεχομένην*) as a parenthetical remark', on the grounds that 'a pleonasm within a brachylogy would be an extraordinary finding'.[20] Migliori's own translation of the Second Controversy is as follows: 'How this unity, being always the same and removed from birth and destruction, is able [nonetheless] most steadfastly to be (*possa essere stabilissima*).'[21] Unfortunately, this translation requires its own pleonasm, grammatically even more awkward than the one Migliori disparages, namely the following underlined text:

εἶτα πῶς αὖ ταύτας, μίαν ἑκάστην οὖσαν ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μήτε γένεσιν μήτε ὄλεθρον προσδεχομένην, ὅμως εἶναι βεβαιότατα μίαν ταύτην;

Meinwald tries to improve on Dancy's reading, which suffered from a need for clairvoyance about problems found in other dialogues. She needs to add an 'although' clause to make sense of the 'nevertheless' (*ὅμως*) clause: 'How each of these, *though it is divided into many species or sub-species*, while not admitting generation or destruction, is nevertheless most securely this one.'[22] This free addition of a clause seems as much as Dancy's reading to require clairvoyance on the part of the reader.

Delcomminette also chooses not to emend the text and provides the following translation of the Second Controversy: 'Then again, how [one should suppose that] *these*, each being a unity, always the same, and admitting neither generation nor destruction, are nevertheless most firmly *this one*.'[23] Delcomminette offers a new species of the general Archer-Hind reading (that is, Dancy's version 2 above). Whereas the general Archer-Hind reading takes the plural pronoun 'these' and the singular 'this one' italicized above to refer respectively to many species of one genus, Delcomminette's new species of this reading takes them to refer respectively to 'the parts of the *logos* and to the whole they constitute' (36), so that 'what is at issue is a whole–parts relation' (36). For Delcomminette, the *logos* is the definition of a species, so that the whole–parts relation in question is the problem of 'the constitution of

[18] Frede (n. 4), 122, n. 17.

[19] M. Migliori, *L'uomo fra piacere, intelligenza e Bene: commentario storico-filosofico al 'Filebo' di Platone* (Milan, 1993), 81–2.

[20] Ibid. 82, n. 65. [21] Ibid. 75.

[22] C. C. Meinwald, 'One/many problems: *Philebus 14c1–15c3*', *Phronesis* 41 (1996), 95–103, at 100.

[23] S. Delcomminette, 'The one-and-many problems at *Philebus* 15b', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 22 (2002), 21–42, at 40.

species'—or 'the problem of the unity of the *logos* obtained by division' (35)—rather than 'the problem of the division of a genus into many species' (39).

Delcomminette's reading is implausible for at least two reasons. First, it shares with the other Archer-Hind versions the problem of requiring clairvoyance on the part of Protarchus, since, according to Delcomminette, this 'interpretation of the text can be obtained only when its relation to the method introduced a little later (16c5–17a4) is rightly understood':[24] without clairvoyance, therefore, Socrates' speech at 15b must be unintelligible to Protarchus when he hears it. Second, Delcomminette must take the method of 16c5–17a4 'to *give rise* to' the Three Controversies (29), but the text states, on the contrary, that 'there is no better way' (*οὐ μὴν ἔστι καλλίων ὁδὸς*,16b5) than this method to *avoid* the *aporiai* caused by the three controversies by providing *euporia* (15c2).

Our conclusion, therefore, which we do not take to be controversial, is that the problem of 15b remains unsolved.

V. OUR SOLUTION

From ethics to metaphysics

Our solution connects 15b with its context. The main topic of the dialogue is ethical: what makes human life good. But the discussion of this topic hinges upon the nature of pleasure, in particular, whether it is able to be multiple and even opposite to itself. Thus the dialogue must take up the metaphysics of pleasure before it can proceed to the prudential value of pleasure in human life. Socrates proposes a metaphysical principle about one and many, a principle that is, in his words, 'amazing' (*θαυμαστόν*, 14c9).

(OM) The many are one and the one is many (*ἓν γὰρ δὴ τὰ πολλὰ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἓν πολλὰ*, 14c8).

The vulgar cases of the principle of one and many

Protarchus asks if the following is an example of the principle OM:

(V1) One and the same Protarchus (*Πρώταρχον ἕνα... τὸν αὐτὸν*) is many Protarchuses (*πολλοὺς εἶναι... τοὺς ἐμέ*) and even opposite Protarchuses (*καὶ ἐναντίους ἀλλήλοις*): tall and short Protarchus, heavy and light Protarchus (*μέγαν καὶ σμικρὸν... καὶ βαρὺν καὶ κοῦφον*), et cetera (14c11–d3).

Socrates says this is only a 'vulgar' version of OM (*τὰ δεδημευμένα τῶν θαυμαστῶν*, 14d4–5), characterizing it as 'puerile, facile, and a serious obstacle to discussion' (*παιδαριώδη καὶ ῥᾴδια καὶ σφόδρα τοῖς λόγοις ἐμπόδια*, 14d7). Socrates gives his own version of this sort of vulgar OM. For any particular thing (such as Protarchus),

(V2) That one [Protarchus] is (*τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο εἶναι*) all these [Protarchus]-limbs and -parts (*πάντα ταῦτα* sc. *τὰ μέλη τε καὶ... μέρη*, 14e1–2).

[24] Ibid. 22.

Socrates says that in each such case the one belongs to the realm of things that come-to-be and cease-to-be (*τὸ ἕν... τῶν γιγνομένων τε καὶ ἀπολλυμένων*, 15a1–2), in contrast with the following cases.

The aristocratic cases of the principle of one and many

The non-vulgar (*μήπω... δεδήμευται*, 14e5–6), that is, aristocratic cases of the principle OM have to do with 'the one man and one ox and the beautiful one and the good one' (*ἕνα ἄνθρωπον... καὶ βοῦν ἕνα καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἓν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἕν*, 15a4–6) that neither come-to-be nor cease-to-be. Socrates refers to 'the great zeal concerning *these* henads and henads such as these' (*περὶ τούτων τῶν ἑνάδων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἡ πολλὴ σπουδή*, 15a5–6). Let us refer to the named antecedents of the words 'these henads' as Man, Ox, The Beautiful, and The Good. As examples of other 'henads such as these' let us keep in mind each of the unities explicitly mentioned as a 'one' immediately before this metaphysical discussion: Pleasure (*ἔστι... ἕν τι*, 12c6–7); and Colour and Shape (*ἐστι πᾶν ἕν*, 12e7).

Plato's *Republic* and *Symposium* give us a sense for the 'great zeal' concerning henads, in particular The Good and The Beautiful. In those two dialogues the zeal has not turned into controversy. There is vulgar ignorance but no aristocratic controversy in those dialogues concerning the existence of such 'henads'—the only people who are unable to recognize their existence are non-philosophers (*Resp.* 475e–476b) and non-initiates (*Symp.* 210b, 211b). Nor does the *Philebus* report any controversy about the mere existence of henads—that is, *without* 'division' taking place. But, Socrates says, '*with* (or *by means of*) division the great zeal turns into controversy' (*πολλὴ σπουδὴ μετὰ διαιρέσεως ἀμφισβήτησις γίγνεται*, 15a6–7). Socrates has just before used the verb *διελὼν*, cognate with *διαιρέσεως*, to describe the action of 'dividing [say, Protarchus] in speech into limbs and parts' (*τὰ μέλη τε καὶ ἅμα μέρη διελὼν τῷ λόγῳ*, 14e1). This was the division which produced V2 above. So *division* is the action that would compel us to admit at V2 that one Protarchus is many Protarchus-limbs and -parts. And likewise it is division that compels us to admit at V1 that one Protarchus is many Protarchuses: there are tall Protarchus and short Protarchus, heavy Protarchus and light Protarchus, and so on. On our interpretation, therefore, it is not the establishment of henads but their attempted division that produces controversy.[25]

On our interpretation, the vulgar division of the ephemeral man Protarchus is parallel to the aristocratic division of the eternal henad Man. Parallel to V1, a division of the henad Man would produce many Men such as Wise Man and Foolish Man, Temperate Man and Intemperate Man, and so on.[26] Notice that there are examples of just such division in the examples we find earlier in the *Philebus*. Socrates, although he had not yet introduced the words 'henad' and 'division', in fact divided the henad Man into Wise Man and Foolish Man, Temperate Man and Intemperate Man at 12d1–4. Inthe very same passage, he also divided Pleasure into Wise Pleasure and Foolish Pleasure, Temperate Pleasure and Intemperate Pleasure.

[25] Dancy (n. 6) and S. Rickless, 'How Parmenides saved the theory of forms', *Philosophical Review* 107 (1998), 501–54 tell a plausible story of how Plato's own thought might have developed from unproblematic zeal over the existence of henads to a recognition of problems arising from division of them.

[26] The use of *διελὼν* is evidence that division here is not restricted to *speciation*, that is, the division of genera into species. For neither Protarchus nor Man is a genus containing species.

Socrates did this division in order to support his claim:

(S1) 'While pleasure is one thing, it takes all kinds of forms that are in a way even unlike each other' (12c7–8).

And, just as Socrates says, when he makes this division leading to S1, the zeal he and Protarchus share turns into controversy.

The controversy arises when Protarchus denies that intemperate pleasure and temperate pleasure, foolish pleasure and wise pleasure are pleasures unlike or opposite each other. To support his denial, Protarchus makes a metaphysical claim about these pleasures:

(P1) The relation of pleasure to pleasure is *maximum likeness* in comparison to everything else (12e1–2),

since

(P2) It is *identical* with itself (τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ, 12e1–2).

Pointing out that black and white are nonetheless opposite despite being each a color, Socrates exhorts Protarchus not to trust the inference from P2 to P1, since

(S2) The inference from P2 to P1 'makes *all* the most opposite things one' (13a3–4).

And—evidently assuming that we can distinguish (or, as we interpret, *divide*) good pleasures from bad pleasures—Socrates asks Protarchus to tell him:

(S3) Just what is the same in bad pleasures as well as good ones, with respect to which you refer to all pleasures as good? (13b3–5).

But Protarchus denies Socrates' assumption that pleasures can be described as (*divided* into) good pleasures as opposed to bad pleasures (13b6–c2). Although Socrates does not so describe their impasse, we interpret that the zeal with which Protarchus and Socrates began has at this point turned into 'controversy' (the ἀμφισβήτησις of 15a7).

Socrates defuses the controversy by showing that the plurality of pleasures is parallel to a plurality of *knowledges*.[27] That is, just as Socrates asked Protarchus to admit that

(S4) Pleasures are unlike each other (13c3–4),

so also Socrates himself ought to admit that

(S5) All taken together, the knowledges seem to be many, some of them even unlike others (13e9–10).

[27] We follow Dancy in using this unidiomatic plural form of the word 'knowledge' so that the English expression can parallel the Greek.

And Protarchus grants this parallel plurality:

(P3) Pleasures turn out to be many and unlike just as knowledges turn out to be many and different (14a8–9).

Now S4, S5, and P3, although support for the principle OM, do not yet explicitly and amazingly contrast that plurality with unity. The explicit agreement at this point to S4, S5, and P3 concerns only parallel plurality. Socrates therefore exhorts that they 'establish by agreement, *in addition* (ἔτι μᾶλλον), the following statement' (14c1–2)—namely, the soon-to-be-identified principle OM.

We are now able to give our interpretation of some of the aristocratic cases of the principle OM.

(A1) The one henad Man is many Men: Wise Man and Foolish Man, Temperate Man and Intemperate Man, and so on (cf. 12c8–d4).

(A2) The one henad Colour is many Colours: Black Colour and White Colour, and so on (cf. 12e3–6).

(A3) The one henad Shape is many Shapes: Round Shape and Straight Shape, and so on (12e6–13a3, cf. *Meno* 74d–e).

In addition, and of primary relevance to the *Philebus* as a whole, of course, are the henads Pleasure and Knowledge and their divisions.

The First Controversy

After Socrates' claim that the zeal about henads turns, with their division, into controversy, Protarchus asks, 'How?' (πῶς, 15a8). If we lengthen this brachylogy, the meaning is, plainly, 'How, with a division, does the zeal become controversy?'

In reply to Protarchus' 'How?' Socrates says, 'First, whether one ought to suppose that there are any such *monads* truly existing' (πρῶτον μὲν εἴ τινας δεῖ τοιαύτας εἶναι μονάδας ὑπολαμβάνειν ἀληθῶς οὔσας, 15b1–2). Every interpreter, to our knowledge, takes the word 'monads' to refer to the *henads* Man, Ox, Pleasure, Knowledge, and so on. For the following reasons, this is less plausible, in our view, than distinguishing henads from monads much as *genera* are distinct from *species*. First, in parallel passages, Socrates has already expressed this sort of distinction, in terms of ἕν τι and μορφὰς παντοίας at S1 above, and in terms of γένος and μέρη at A2. Second, there is no reason for Plato to have coined a new word, 'henad', if he intended to use it interchangeably with the established word 'monad'.[28] Third, as Frede notes,[29] the word 'henad' connotes the *unity* of a one, while the word 'monad' connotes a one's *separation* (*Alleinigkeit*) from other ones—hence, as we take the meaning, *the result of a division*. Fourth, on the co-referential interpretation there is no connection between this First Controversy and the actual issues under discussion in the rest of the *Philebus*;

[28] The word 'henad' first appears in extant Greek at 15a6 (though it is found in *testimonia* of Pythagoras, Zeno, and Xenocrates)—the only occurrence in Plato, in contrast with the word 'monad', which is found not only elsewhere in Plato but also in, for example, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

[29] Frede (n. 4), 119, n. 12.

for the existence of the *henads* Pleasure, Knowledge, and so on is never disputed by Protarchus or Philebus (on the uncontroversial nature of mere existence, see above 'The aristocratic cases of the principle of one and many'). Therefore, in view of the explicit mention in Socrates' preceding speech, as well as the implied mention in Protarchus' 'How?' of the accompaniment or use of division (μετὰ διαιρέσεως, 15a7), it is more plausible to take the word 'monads' to refer to the *result* of division, not to the henads being divided.

Lengthening the brachylogies of the text, then, we get the following statement of the First Controversy in answer to Protarchus' 'How?'

(C1) First, (with a division [for example, of the henad Man into Intemperate Man and Temperate Man] the zeal becomes the controversy) whether one ought to suppose that there are any *such monads* (as, for example, Intemperate Man and Temperate Man) truly existing.

Notice that our interpretation connects the First Controversy with antecedent passages in the *Philebus.* As shown above in the contrast of S1 with P1 and P2, a controversy arose between Socrates and Protarchus over the existence not of the *henad* Pleasure but of the *monads* such as Intemperate Pleasure and Temperate Pleasure. In terms of monads and henads, we can describe Protarchus' reaction there to Socrates with the statement:

(P4) Socrates' division of the one henad pleasure (at 12c8–d4) fails to establish the existence of separate and individual monads such as Wise Pleasure and Foolish Pleasure.

And Socrates understands Protarchus to claim P4, describing Protarchus as claiming that 'there is *no* difference between one pleasure and the next' (οὐδ' ἄρα ἡδονὴν ἡδονῆς διάφορον, 13c7), that is—as we can now say—there do not exist, in addition to the henad Pleasure, also individual and distinct monads such as Wise Pleasure and Foolish Pleasure.

We believe that our interpretation of the word 'monad' is superior to the standard, indeed universal, interpretation on the grounds already mentioned. But the biggest advantage of our interpretation is that it makes possible, for the first time, a problem-free interpretation of the vexed Second Controversy.

The Second Controversy

After stating the First Controversy, Socrates continues by stating the Second: 'How *these*—each one always being the same and subject neither to coming-to-be nor ceasing-to-be—nevertheless most steadfastly are *this* one' (15b2–4). We make sense of this question, not by emending a text with no reported difficulties, not by assuming that the author intended his readers to have clairvoyance to see a reference to problems mentioned in other dialogues, not by positing a grammatically unparalleled form of hyperbaton and merging this question with the Third Controversy, but by correctly identifying the grammatical antecedents of the plural pronoun 'these' (ταύτας) and the contrasting singular expression 'this one' (μίαν ταύτην), producing an intelligible question complementary to the First (and Third) Controversies and directly connected both to the immediate context of the

metaphysical discussion and to the larger context of the discussion of the henads Pleasure and Knowledge and their alleged division into monads.

No one doubts that the grammatical antecedent of the pronoun 'these' (ταύτας) is 'such monads' (τοιαύτας μονάδας). According to our reading of the First Controversy, the expression 'such monads' refers not to the henads Man, Pleasure, and so on, but to the monads Intemperate and Temperate Man; Intemperate and Temperate Pleasure, and so on. The contrasting singular expression 'this one' (μίαν ταύτην) naturally refers, therefore, to *this one henad*, for example Man or Pleasure. Supplied with these antecedents, *and nothing else*, the Second Controversy therefore intelligibly asks:

(C2) How *these monads* (for example, Intemperate and Temperate Man)—each one always being the same and subject neither to coming-to-be nor ceasing-to-be (for example, the monad Intemperate Man is always Intemperate Man and never becomes Temperate Man nor ceases to be Intemperate Man)—nevertheless most steadfastly are *this one henad* (for example, Man).

Whereas our statement of the First Controversy, C1, precisely expresses Protarchus' scepticism about the very existence of such unlike and separated monads as Intemperate Pleasure and Temperate Pleasure, by contrast our statement of the Second Controversy, C2, expresses precisely what is 'amazing' (θαυμαστόν) 'concerning one and many' (περὶ τὸ ἓν καὶ πολλά, 14d5, cf. 14c8–9), should we grant the existence of such monads in addition to the henad.

The apposite remark in C2 about these monads, that they are always the same and subject neither to coming-to-be nor ceasing-to-be, makes clear that the Second Controversy has to do with the aristocratic version of the principle OM, expressed in cases A1, A2, and A3 above, rather than the vulgar version, expressed in cases V1 and V2 above. This apposite remark makes clear, moreover, why Socrates thinks that the amazement provided by A1, A2, and A3 is worthy of the aristocrat, unlike that of V1 and V2. It is no wonder if an unstable *becomer* like Protarchus is and is not (cf. *Resp.* 478d)—there is, after all, no possible knowledge, properly speaking, of any such objects of perception (*Resp.* 478a–b, 510a–b). But how indeed can a monad, *for ever selfsame and unchanging*—hence a proper object of knowledge[30]—none the less be a henad and be it in that very same unchanging, 'most stable' (βεβαιότατα) way? As is often noticed, this question is related to the problem, expressed in similar terms, of *Parmenides* 129c–d.[31] But we do not need to look to other dialogues to find this problem: it is present in the prior context of the *Philebus*, as shown above at S1, A1, A2, and A3.

Finally, our interpretation of the Second Controversy is confirmed by the parallels between the Greek text we translate as C2 and the immediately prior Greek of V1 and V2.

[30] If one adopts our reading that monads such as Wise Pleasure or Intemperate Man are proper objects of knowledge for Plato, there are implications for interpretation of in particular the Third Controversy and in general Plato's theory of knowledge. This is not the place to explore those implications. Although J. C. B. Gosling, *Philebus* (Oxford, 1975), mistranslates 15b, his remarks on p. 150 about the general significance of 15b seem to be in sympathy with our interpretation. On Plato's theory of knowledge, see n. 25 above.

[31] If one accepts our reading of 15b, the precise relation between that passage and *Parmenides* 129 will depend, of course, upon one's reading of the *Parmenides*.

(V1) *ὅταν τις ἐμὲ φῇ Πρώταρχον γεγονότα φύσει πολλοὺς εἶναι πάλιν τοὺς ἐμὲ καὶ ἐναντίους ἀλλήλοις, μέγαν καὶ σμικρὸν τιθέμενος καὶ βαρὺν καὶ κοῦφον τὸν αὐτὸν* (14c11–d3).

(V2) *ὅταν τις ἑκάστου τὰ μέλη τε καὶ ἅμα μέρη διελὼν τῷ λόγῳ, πάντα ταῦτα τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο εἶναι διομολογησάμενος* (14d8–e2).

(C2) *ὅταν δέ τις ἕνα ἄνθρωπον ἐπιχειρῇ τίθεσθαι καὶ βοῦν ἕνα καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἕν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἕν, περὶ τούτων τῶν ἑνάδων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἡ πολλὴ σπουδὴ μετὰ διαιρέσεως ἀμφισβήτησις γίγνεται... τῶς... ταύτας, μίαν ἑκάστην οὖσαν ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μήτε γένεσιν μήτε ὄλεθρον προσδεχομένην, ὅμως εἶναι βεβαιότατα μίαν ταύτην* (15a4–b4).

Each passage begins with the words *ὅταν τις* and contains the infinitive *εἶναι* linking a singular pronoun— *τὸν αὐτὸν*, *τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο*, *μίαν ταύτην*—with a plural form of the same gender—*πολλοὺς*, *πάντα ταῦτα*, *ταύτας*, respectively. In each passage, the antecedent of the singular pronoun is a henad (whether vulgarly ephemeral or aristocratically eternal): [*τὸν ἕνα*] *Πρώταρχον*, *ἑκάστου* (sc. *ἑνὸς τῶν γιγνομένων τε καὶ ἀπολλυμένων*), *ἕνα ἄνθρωπον*, and so on, respectively. And in each passage the plural form refers to monads resulting from division of the respective henad: *μέγαν καὶ σμικρὸν καὶ βαρὺν καὶ κοῦφον* (sc. *Πρώταρχον*), *τὰ μέλη τε καὶ μέρη* (sc. *ἑκάστου*), [*τὰ*] *μετὰ διαιρέσεως περὶ τούτων τῶν ἑνάδων* (namely, *τὸν ἀκολασταίνοντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὸν σωφρονοῦντα καὶ τὸν ἀνοηταίνοντα καὶ τὸν φρονοῦντα*, and so on, cf. 12d1–4), respectively. The symmetry is strikingly beautiful.

VI. CONCLUSION: DRAMATIC PREFIGURATION IN THE *PHILEBUS*

Our interpretation depends upon and lends support to the hypothesis that the textual juxtaposition of the ethical discussion of pleasure and the metaphysical discussion of the amazing principle OM is not haphazard but artfully constructed. As we read the text, Plato signals this connection by dramatically prefiguring in his dramatic opening (11a–12b) the metaphysics to follow (12b–17a).

- The dialogue begins in 'controversy' (*ἀμφισβητεῖν* 11a1, *ἀμφισβήτημά* 11b6) between hedonist and non-hedonist theses, echoed in the controversy arising from Socrates' attempt to divide pleasure into many distinct pleasures, an attempt Protarchus denied. Protarchus was more than willing to investigate the issue with Socrates: he agreed with Socrates that he was willing to try 'any way whatever' (*τρόπῳ παντί... πῃ*) of reaching the truth (11c9–d1). Thus, although Protarchus is not explicitly described as having great zeal for the investigation, we are warranted so to interpret him. And as Socrates will say, 'when divisions are made, the great zeal (*πολλὴ σπουδὴ*) turns into controversy (*ἀμφισβήτησις*)' (15a6–7).
- In the dramatic context, Philebus 'hands over' (*διδόμενον*, 11c5; *παραδούς*, 12a9) to Protarchus a hedonist thesis in opposition to Socrates' thesis, that reason is better than pleasure for all lives capable of it. In the metaphysical discussion, Socrates describes how 'ancient men handed over (*παρέδοσαν*) to us a thesis about one and many, limit and unlimited' (16c7–8, also 16e2).
- In the dramatic context, Philebus ritually washes his hands of the discussion and 'withdraws' from it (*ἀπείρηκεν*, 11c8), an action described here by a word that

suggests his having 'undefined' or 'unlimited' himself.[32] With Philebus out of leadership of the discussion, Socrates proposes to Protarchus to reach the truth via delimiting (*περανθῆναι*, 11c9–10); Protarchus and Socrates agree that one must attempt to delimit the issue (*περαίνειν*, *πειρατέον*, 12b6–7). The metaphysical method passed down as a gift from the gods is precisely a method of delimiting (16c10–e2).

We believe that the charitable assumption that the *Philebus* is a carefully integrated though convoluted artistic unity, rather than a haphazard pastiche, will prove to be a rewarding research hypothesis for the study of this dialogue. The humps and shoots, gnarls and knots of Bury's oak-tree may not after all mar the beauty of its symmetry.[33]

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[32] This word play requires a false word division: *ἀ-πείρηκεν* for *ἀπ-είρηκεν*.

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