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Donald Davidson

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Preface

The *Philebus* is hard to reconcile with standard interpretations of Plato's philosophy. Instead of attempting to find a reading of the dialogue that would fit it into a conventional picture of the late Plato, I tried in the dissertation to take the *Philebus* at face value, and reassessed Plato's late philosophy in light of the results. The central thesis that emerged was that when Plato had reworked the theory of ideas as a consequence of the explorations and criticisms of the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, and *Politicus*, he realized that the theory could no longer be deployed as the main support of an ethical position, as it had been in the *Republic* and elsewhere. This mandated a new approach to ethics.

What I did not appreciate at the time I wrote was the extent to which the approach to ethics in the *Philebus*, despite the innovative metaphysics, represented a return to the methodology of the earlier dialogues. In the following essay, written some 36 years after the dissertation, I emphasize Plato's reversion to the Socratic elenchus, and connect it with the startling reappearance of Socrates as the leading voice in the *Philebus*.

—Donald Davidson

PLATO'S PHILOSOPHER

Donald Davidson

It is a fine question how the aim and method of the philosophical enterprise is to be related to the beliefs we bring to that enterprise. It is bootless to pretend we can start by somehow setting aside the equipment with which we approach philosophy, for then there would be nothing with which to work. We can, however, ask whether the main point of philosophizing is to examine, clarify, reconcile, criticize, regroup, or even unearth, the convictions or assumptions with which we began, or whether something more is possible: a search which might lead to knowledge or values that were not in sight at the start, and not necessarily implicit in what we then knew.

Each of these enterprises has its obvious difficulties. No one can object to the attack on confusion, conflict, obscurity, and self-deceit in our everyday beliefs; these defects in our views of ourselves and the world exist in profusion, and if some philosophers can with skill or luck do something about reducing them, those philosophers deserve our respect and support.

But it would be disappointing to suppose this is all philosophy can do, for then philosophy would seem to be relegated to the job of removing inconsistencies while entering no claim to achieve truth. Consistency is, of course, necessary if all our beliefs are to be true. But there is not much comfort in mere consistency. Given that it is almost certainly the case that some of our beliefs are false (though we know not which), making our beliefs consistent with one another may as easily reduce as increase our store of knowledge.

On the other hand it is not easy to see how to conduct the search for truths independent of our beliefs. The problem is to recognize such truths when we encounter them, since the only standards we can use are our own. Where the first approach makes no attempt at fixing objective standards, the second can seem to succeed only by illegitimately relabelling some portion of the subjective as objective.

There is an obvious connection between the two pictures of the method and aim of philosophy and two traditional concepts of the nature of truth: one method goes naturally with coherence theories of truth, the other allies itself with correspondence theories. A coherence theory in its boldest and clearest form declares that all

* "Plato's Philosopher" was the S.V. Keeling Memorial Lecture in Greek Philosophy, given at University College, London, March 1985. It was first published in The London Review of Books, Vol. 7, no. 14, 1985, pp. 15-17, and is reprinted here with the kind permission of its editor.

beliefs in a consistent set of beliefs are true; coherence is the only possible test of truth, and so coherence must constitute truth. So stated, a coherence theory of truth can be taken as a defense of a philosophical method which claims only to remove inconsistency; for once inconsistencies have been excised, the coherence theory assures us that what remains will be an unadulterated body of truths.

Correspondence theories, on the other hand, maintain that truth can be explained as a relation between a belief and a reality whose existence and character is for the most part independent of our knowledge and beliefs. Truth of this sort is just what the second approach to philosophy seeks. But unfortunately correspondence theories provide no intelligible answer to the question how we can in general recognize that our beliefs correspond in the required way to reality.

No theme in Plato is more persistent than the emphasis on philosophical method, the search for a systematic way of arriving at important truths, and of insuring that they are truths. Yet I think it is safe to say that Plato not only did not find a wholly satisfactory method, but he did not find a method that satisfied him for long. In the early dialogues, in which Socrates takes charge, the elenctic method dominates, and there is nothing in those dialogues to promote the suspicion that Plato, or Socrates, sees the need to add anything to it. Yet it seems clear that it is a method that at best leads to consistency; if it is supposed to yield truth, the ground of this supposition is not supplied. In the middle and some of the late dialogues Plato suggests a number of ways in which the elenchus might be supplemented or replaced by techniques with loftier aims. But what is striking is that Plato does not settle on any one of these methods as a method guaranteed to achieve objective truth; one by one the new methods are discarded, or downgraded to the status of mere useful devices. Plato often makes it clear that he recognizes the inadequacy of his methods for achieving his aims; and the inadequacy is often painfully apparent to the modern reader.

Plato and Aristotle are often held to be paradigms of the contrasting methods. Aristotle insisted, at least in moral philosophy, that views that are widely shared and strongly held within our own community must be taken seriously and treated as generally true. But Plato, we are told,

Throughout the middle dialogues...repeatedly argues against the philosophical adequacy of any method that consists in setting down and adjusting our opinions and sayings. It is Plato who most explicitly opposes phainomena, and the cognitive states concerned with them, to truth and genuine understanding. It is also Plato who argues that the paradeigmata that we require for understanding of the most important philosophical and

scientific subjects are not to be found in the world of human belief and perception at all.

This is, indeed, the standard view, and when, as in this passage, it is restricted to the middle dialogues, it is roughly correct. Even with this restriction, though, it needs to be taken with a grain of salt. Nussbaum gives, as a striking example of the opposition of methods in Plato and Aristotle, their views on akrasia, or weakness of the will. Socrates, as we know, paradoxically maintained that akrasia was impossible; he argued that if an agent knows what is good, he cannot fail to act in accord with that knowledge. Aristotle, on the other hand, held that the common view must be right: despite Socrates' arguments, there are cases of akrasia.

How clear is the contrast here between Plato (really Socrates) and Aristotle? In the early dialogues we meet with the most emphatic cases of conclusions that plainly contradict common conviction; yet nothing is said to show that the elenctic method is capable of more than revealing inconsistencies. In the middle dialogues there are the strong representations just mentioned that philosophy can arrive at truths not dreamed of by ordinary men, and not to be tested by experience; yet in these same dialogues much less is made of the paradoxical character of the doctrines that emerge. In particular, the Socratic denial of the possibility of akrasia is explicitly dropped. To make our own small paradox; you might say in the early dialogues dogmatic claims are based on a method that cannot support them; in the middle dialogues rather tamer results flow from methods which are advertised as leading to absolute and objective truth.

I think that in the end Plato lost faith in the ability of these methods to produce certified eternal truths that owed nothing to the serious goals and convictions of most people, but came to have a renewed confidence in the elenchus, supplemented and refined in various ways, to arrive at truth by way of consistency; in other words, he returned to something like the Socratic method and its approach to the philosophic enterprise. It is not hard to think of reasons why, in the middle dialogues, Plato decided the elenchus was not enough to prove the sort of theses he wished to establish; nor is it hard to imagine why he became dissatisfied with the alternatives. We can guess why Plato may have become discouraged in his quest for a foolproof, supermundane method, since he himself produced criticisms that must have left him as skeptical as they do us.

It would be foolish to try to demonstrate the historical truth of the idea that at the end of his career Plato returned to something like the Socratic faith in the power of the elenchus; Plato's writings were successfully designed to leave us in doubt

¹ "Saving Aristotle's Appearances" by Martha Nussbaum: Language and Logos. ed. by M. Schofield and M. Nussbaum (Cambridge, 1982), p. 270.

about what he believed. I will be more than pleased if my speculations cannot be made to seem wrong.

The line of thought I am pursuing was inspired by a brilliant and provocative paper by Gregory Vlastos called "The Socratic Elenchus" Viewed logically, the elenchus is simply a method for demonstrating that a set of propositions is inconsistent. In practice, the elenctic method is employed by Socrates, or some other interrogator, to show that an interlocutor has said things which cannot all be true (since they are inconsistent). If this were the whole story, the function of the elenchus would be no more than to reveal inconsistencies; such a revelation should, of course, be interesting to anyone tempted to believe all the propositions in the inconsistent set.

There is no obvious reason why a philosopher--or anyone else--should be concerned with inconsistent sets of propositions only when they happen to be believed; after all, one can prove a proposition true, and hence worthy of belief, by showing its negation inconsistent. This is no help in establishing substantive, or moral, truths as opposed to logical truths. Nevertheless, it is often helpful, when trying to decide where the truth lies, to appreciate the inconsistency of a set of propositions to which one is not yet committed.

It is therefore surprising, and instructive, that in the Socratic dialogues, Socrates usually insists that the interlocutor be seriously committed to the propositions being tested. It is one of the merits of Vlastos' article that he notices this striking feature of Socrates' method, and appreciates how important it is. Vlastos quotes from the dialogues: "By the god of friendship, Callicles! Don't think that you can play games with me and answer whatever comes into your head, contrary to your real opinion." (Gorgias 500b); "My good man, don't answer contrary to your real opinion, so we may get somewhere" (Republic I. 346a); and when Protagoras says in answer to a question of Socrates, "But what does it matter? Let it be so for us, if you wish," Socrates angrily replies, "I won't have this. For it isn't this 'if you wish' and 'if you think so' that I want to be refuted, but you and me. I say 'you and me' for I think that the thesis is best refuted if you take the 'if' out of it." (Protagoras 331c)

This last quotation brings out another feature of the elenchus, and helps answer the question why Socrates is so concerned that the people he questions should express their real opinions. Socrates is interested in refutation. The typical elenchus begins by Socrates asking a question, to which the interlocutor gives an answer. Socrates then elicits some further views from the interlocutor (not infrequently by putting them forward himself, and getting the interlocutor to agree), and proceeds to demonstrate that these further views entail the falsity of the original answer. Unless the person being questioned accepts

¹ Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy (Clarendon Press, 1983).

the propositions which refute his original answer, he will have no reason to give up his opening proposal; no particular thesis will have been refuted.

As Vlastos points out, all that Socrates has shown is that the interlocutor's beliefs are inconsistent, so at least one of those beliefs must be false. But there is nothing about the elenctic method to indicate which belief or beliefs should be abandoned. In the event, it always turns out to be the original proposal. For pedagogic and dramatic reasons, this is clearly the right strategy. But it is a strategy that will lead to true conclusions only if one is careful to start with a false belief, and then to draw upon additional, but true, beliefs to disprove the starting claim. How can Socrates know in advance of using his method what is true and what false? Is the method after all just a device for persuasion?

What is clear is that Socrates trusts that the elenctic method does lead to moral truths: the negations, in general, of beliefs held by interlocutors at the start of a discussion. Where p is the original claim, Socrates repeatedly sums up the result of an elenctic argument by saying that the negation of p "has become evident to us," or the interlocutor now "sees" or "knows" that not-p. In the Gorgias, Socrates says that his thesis (the negation of the interlocutor's p) has been "proved true" (Gorgias 479e). (Here not-p is: to suffer injustice is better than to commit it.) Presently he puts it even more strongly: "These things having become evident in the foregoing arguments, I would say, crude though it may seem to say it, that they have been clamped down and bound by arguments of iron and adamant..." (Gorgias 508e-509a).

According to Vlastos, whose argument I have been following closely up to this point (as well as using his translations), the last two quotations differ substantially in strength from the earlier claims; proving something is more than simply making it evident. Vlastos thinks the claim that the elenchus can "prove" truths is not Socratic; he believes Socrates did assume that the elenchus leads to truth, but it was an assumption on which he did not consciously reflect, and which he therefore felt no need to defend. Vlastos continues,

Throughout the dialogues which precede the Gorgias Plato depicts Socrates arguing for his views in much the same way as other philosophers have done before or since when trying to bring others around to their own view: he picks premisses which he considers so eminently reasonable in themselves and so well-entrenched in his interlocutor's system of belief, that when he faces them with the fact that these premisses entail the negation of their thesis he feels no serious risk that they will renege on the premisses to save their

For references see Vlastos's "Afterthoughts on the Socratic Elenchus," pp. 71-2.

thesis...This being the case, the "problem of the elenchus" never bothers Socrates in those earlier dialogues.

Plato, however (to continue Vlastos' theory), did come to wonder what ensured the choice of true premisses; and well he might have, given how often what seemed common knowledge to almost everyone else was found to be false according to Socrates. Although the words are put in Socrates' mouth, it is Plato who, according to Vlastos, realizes what must be assumed if the elenchus is to produce truths: the assumption is that, in moral matters, everyone has true beliefs which he cannot abandon and which entail the negations of his false beliefs. It follows from this assumption that all the beliefs in a consistent set of beliefs are true, so a method like the elenchus which weeds out inconsistencies will in the end leave nothing standing but truths. Therefore Socrates did not need to know in advance which beliefs were true, nor did he have to worry that upon discovering an inconsistency, the inconsistency might be removed by inadvertently throwing out the true. For the retained falsity would itself be found inconsistent with further beliefs.

I shall not consider the textual evidence in the Gorgias for this doctrine, since it is clear on the one hand that something very like this assumption is necessary if the elenchus is to be defended as a way of reaching truths, whether or not Plato or Socrates realized it; and on the other hand, it is equally obvious that there is absolutely no argument in the Gorgias or any of the earlier dialogues to support the assumption. Vlastos believes that Plato realized this, and that it is for this reason that in the next three dialogues, written just after the Gorgias, the Euthydemus, Lysis, and Hippias Major, the elenchus makes no appearance. In these dialogues there is philosophical argument, but Socrates carries on essentially by himself, acting both as proposer and as critic.

In the Meno Plato finds a new way of defending the elenchus: the doctrine of recollection. According to this theory everyone is born knowing everything, but the vicissitudes of life have caused him to forget what he knows, and to come to believe falsehoods. Once again, it is clear that a method that claims no more than that it can remove what is inconsistent with what is known is adequate to achieve truth. Vlastos describes the theory of recollection as a "lavish present" by Plato to Socrates. "By the time this has happened," Vlastos concludes, "the moralist of the earlier dialogues has become the metaphysician of the middle ones. The metamorphosis of Plato's teacher into Plato's mouthpiece is complete."²

Vlastos sees a vast difference between Plato's two ways of saving the elenchus: the way of the Gorgias, which merely assumes

¹ Vlastos, "Afterthoughts", p. 73.

² "Afterthoughts", p. 74.

the existence of enough ineradicable truths in everyone, and the way of the Meno, with the transmigration of the soul and the theory of recollection. Years passed between the writing of these dialogues, years during which Plato lost all confidence in the elenchus. "Then, one day," writes Vlastos, the theory of recollection came to Plato.

This is a fascinating story, and Vlastos makes it plausible with a wealth of references to the texts, and a shrewd consideration of the human and logical probabilities. I have no intention of arguing against it, except on one point which is not explicit in Vlastos' article, but is strongly implied. That implication is that after the Gorgias, Plato permanently lost faith in the idea that moral truths can be elicited from anyone by something like the elenchus. In any case, I want to put forward the hypothesis that at a certain point late in his career Plato returns to (if he ever departed from) both the Socratic concern with the good life, the right way to live; and that he depends on the assumption that there is enough truth in everyone to give us hope that we can learn in what the good life consists.

First, we ought to notice that though it is certainly true that the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul and of recollection is new in the Meno, that doctrine is closely related to the methodological assumption which Plato realizes, in the Gorgias, is needed to defend the elenchus. Indeed, the doctrine of recollection doesn't supplant the assumption of the Gorgias; it entails it. Viewed solely as a supplement to the elenchus, the theory of recollection has no need of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. Like the methodological assumption of the Gorgias, the theory of recollection postulates that there is enough ineradicable truth in each of us to insure that the elimination of inconsistencies ultimately results in the elimination of error; when all inconsistency is removed, what remains will be true. From a strictly methodological point of view, the chief difference between the two doctrines is that while the assumption of the Gorgias suggests that the only sure route to knowledge is the elenchus, the theory of recollection places no premium on the elimination of inconsistencies and so invites us to consider methods other than the elenchus in the search for truth.

And of course other methods do come to the fore in the middle and late dialogues: the various methods of "ascent" in the Republic, Symposium, and Phaedrus; the method of "hypothesis", of "collection and division"; and the method or methods of the Philebus. There is an obvious transfer of interest from moral problems to epistemological and ontological problems, a new concern (in the Theaetetus) about the possibility of perceptual knowledge, and a persistent worry about philosophical method.

Plato did not abandon the elenctic method; what philosopher would? Our concern is with the question what can be expected of that method, and what Plato thought it could deliver. The essential problem is the one with which we began: can philosophy hope to transcend what is inherent in the beliefs and values with which it begins? If not, consistency but not truth is all we can trust it

to deliver, and this is what the unaided elenchus promises. But if the theory of recollection is true, the elenchus can do more. The trouble is that the theory of recollection, treated as an essential assumption needed to support knowledge claims, drops out of sight in the dialogues almost as soon as it appears. It is crucial in the Meno, and plays an important role in the Phaedo. But by the end of the Phaedo the doctrine of recollection has been superseded by the method of hypothesis; this is not a method better suited to prove truths, as we shall see in a moment. The important thing is that Plato no longer seems willing to trust the theory of recollection. Recollection is introduced in the Republic, but it is obvious that quite different methods are the ones on which Plato relies in that work; there are further mentions of the theory of recollection in the Phaedrus, Philebus, and Laws, but in none of these dialogues does it serve a significant epistemological role.¹

It seems clear that Plato was not willing for long seriously to embrace the theory of recollection as a source of substantive moral truths. What, then, did he think to put in its place? If, as Vlastos convincingly insists, the "problem of the elenchus" obsessed the methodologically-minded Plato, how can he have relinquished the substance of his "lavish gift" to his teacher without finding a suitable substitute?

The answer which appeals to most Plato scholars is that Plato did find other methods in which he placed confidence. This may be true: certainly many methods are mentioned, some of them a number of times, and some of these methods come highly recommended by a character named "Socrates" or "The Eleatic Stranger", etc. Nevertheless, there are three good reasons for not accepting this answer as the last word on Plato's last word on the method of philosophy. The first is that we can find arguments in the dialogues that show why these methods are in one way or another inadequate or incomplete. The second is that when, in the Philebus, Plato returns once more to the question of the nature of the good life, these methods are not seen to provide the answer; despite several long and difficult discussions of method, it is the elenchus that provides the basic argument. The third reason, which the historically minded may consider irrelevant, is that we can see for ourselves that none of the alternative methods can provide a firm basis for moral truths, while there is, after all, support for the assumption which, in the Gorgias, is recognized as sufficient to defend the elenchus, the assumption that (in ethics at least, and perhaps metaphysics more generally) there are enough truths in each of us to make it plausible that once our beliefs in these matters are consistent they will be true. I do not think it ridiculous to suppose that Plato figured this out for himself; but the direct evidence is no more than suggestive.

It is far more than I can attempt here to survey all the philosophical methods Plato discusses, and the arguments he

¹ See Kenneth Sayre, Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved (Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 188-93.

produces against them; and I do not pretend to have made any new discoveries. What I shall do is indicate how, in the Philebus, the elenchus, and only the elenchus, can be claimed to have achieved a correct description of the good life.

The Philebus is a significant test case. It is a very late dialogue; probably only the Laws is later. It is directly concerned with a Socratic question (one might say the Socratic question), the nature of the good life. Even the phrasing of the problem reminds us of earlier works: the Philebus asks "what is the best possession a man could have" (19c), it enquires after "the proper goal for all living things" (60a). In the Republic, Socrates says "our argument is over no chance matter but over what is the way we ought to live" (Republic I. 352d; cf. Gorgias 500c).

The Philebus begins with a double elenchus. Socrates sums up the two starting positions: "Philebus holds that what is good...is enjoyment, pleasure, delight, and all that sort of thing. I hold, by contrast, that intelligence, thought, memory...are, for anything capable of them, preferable and superior to pleasure; indeed to all those capable of a share of them, whether now or in the future, they are of the greatest possible benefit." (Philebus 11c).¹ As in the early dialogues, it is assumed without question that "everything capable of knowing pursues" the good; this is taken to be an infallible test of what is acceptable as the good life. With the aid of this assumption, Socrates is able to prove that both Philebus' position and his own position are false.

PROTARCHUS: Neither of these lives seems to me worth choosing,...and I think anyone would agree with me.

SOCRATES: What about a joint life, Protagoras, made up of a mixture of both elements?

PROTARCHUS: One of pleasure, thought, and intelligence, you mean?

SOCRATES: Yes, and things of that sort.

PROTARCHUS: Anyone would choose that in preference to either of the other two, without exception.

SOCRATES: We are clear what follows for our present argument?

PROTARCHUS: Certainly. There are three possible lives before us, and of two of them neither is adequate or desirable for man or beast.

SOCRATES: Then it's surely clear that neither of these at least can be the good...For if any of us chose anything else he would take it in defiance of the nature of what is truly desirable... (Philebus 21e- 22b)

The argument has exactly the pattern Vlastos found problematic in the early dialogues; an interlocutor answers a question; Socrates gets him to agree to further premisses; the original

¹ Here and throughout I use J.C.B Gosling's translation in Plato: Philebus (Oxford, 1975). I am also indebted to Gosling's excellent commentary.

answer is shown to be inconsistent with the further premisses; it is then agreed by all hands that the negation of the original answer (or answers in the Philebus) has been proven true. The correctness of the conclusion depends on the truth of the unexamined further premisses; it is just this that made Vlastos decide that Plato could not accept the elenchus as leading to truth. Yet here in the Philebus there seems no room for doubt that Plato uses the elenchus, and accepts its results.

Two other features of the early elenchus are also conspicuous in the Philebus. There is, first, the feature on which Vlastos laid great stress, the insistence that the interlocutor sincerely express his own beliefs. One may guess that it is just to emphasize this point that has Plato substitute Protarchus for Philebus as the chief interlocutor: Philebus is too stubborn and crude to be counted on to answer honestly. But Socrates repeatedly makes certain that Protarchus is expressing his own views. At one point, Socrates turns to Philebus to ask if he agrees. We get this exchange:

PHILEBUS: My view is, and always will be, that pleasure is the undoubted winner,--but it is for you, Protarchus, to decide.

PROTARCHUS: As you have handed the argument over to me it is no longer for you to say whether or not to agree to Socrates' proposal. (Philebus 12a)

A second striking point is Socrates' insistence at every point that what he takes to be true, every untested assumption on which further results depend, be agreed upon. As we have just seen, he does not do so well with Philebus. But the agreement on which he depends is the agreement of those engaged in the dialectic. In the passage I quoted a minute ago, Socrates secures Protarchus' agreement no less than three times to "what anyone would choose"; when the question is asked in the right way, what everyone would choose is the good; and when the question is asked in the right way, everyone will agree that the mixed life of pleasure and intellect is better than the life of pure pleasure or the life of pure intellect. Early in the dialogue, Socrates makes clear that his own position is as much at risk as that of Protarchus: he says "I take it that we are not now just vying to prove my candidate or yours the winner, but shall join forces in favor of whatever is nearest the truth." (Philebus 14b) And at another point he remarks, "Should we then register our agreement with earlier generations, and instead of just citing other people's opinions without risk to ourselves, stick our necks out too..." (Philebus 29a) Towards the end, Socrates asks once more whether everyone would agree with the essential assumption on which the argument rests, and on the conclusion that the mixed life of pleasure and intelligence is best. He even suggests that "If anyone thinks we have overlooked anything...I hope he will now go back and state the matter more accurately." (Philebus 60d) At the very end, Protagoras proclaims: "We are now all agreed, Socrates, on the truth of your position."

(Philebus 67b) This is not, of course, the position with which Socrates began; it is the position reached by following the elenctic argument.

The central argument of one of Plato's last dialogues concerns, then, a major Socratic problem, employs the Socratic elenchus, and unambiguously endorses the outcome of the elenchus. Why, after entertaining such profound doubts about it, does Plato unquestioningly return to Socrates' method?

Those who are familiar with the Philebus will, of course, have noticed that I have been discussing a very small proportion of the material in that dialogue: the defeat of the pure lives of pleasure and intellect and the victory of the mixed life is assured in the first fifth of the dialogue, and the actual argument uses up barely more than three Stephanus pages. That is the heart of the dialogue; but there is, after all, a great deal more. And much of the rest is remote from anything we find in the early dialogues, or, for that matter, anywhere else in Plato. There is much confusing discussion of methods, and ontological doctrines are put forward that sound vaguely Pythagorean and perhaps something like the doctrines Aristotle attributes to Plato in the Metaphysics. Little of this material can be attributed to Socrates; at one time, scholars were reluctant to attribute it to Plato. We need not be concerned here with how these strange views are to be reconciled with the rest of what we think we know of Plato's late philosophy, nor with how they can be reconciled with one another. For I think it is reasonably clear nothing in the rest of the Philebus solves Vlastos' "problem of the elenchus", that is, shows why it yields truths, and if this is so, the central argument and result of the dialogue depends on nothing but the unadorned Socratic elenchus.

One important argument is not really elenctic (I have already mentioned it). In proving by the elenchus that neither the life of pleasure nor the pure life of the intellect is the good life, Socrates uses, as we have seen, two unexamined assumptions, which he and everyone concerned agrees are true. These are (1) the good is what everyone ("capable of knowing") prefers or would choose if he could and (2) no one would, on reflection (and aided by Socrates' arguments), choose either the pure life of pleasure or the pure life of the intellect. This completes the elenchus. Socrates then wins agreement to a further claim: (3) everyone would prefer the mixed life of pleasure and intelligence to either of the other two lives. This implies the negative conclusion of the elenchus, and so could have been used in place of (2). It is introduced, however, as an independent conclusion. But nothing here departs from the elenctic method: (3), like (1) and (2), is accepted once agreed to.

The bulk of the dialogue is devoted to a detailed examination of the various kinds of pleasure, with arguments designed to show why most pleasures are unsuited for inclusion in the good life. As a first step, Socrates undertakes to show that although all pleasures are alike in being pleasures, it is possible that they differ in that some are good and some are bad. The demonstration of this elementary point begins with a fairly lengthy, but

confusing, description of a method. Protarchus asks Socrates' help in finding a "better way to conduct the argument". Socrates obliges: "There could be no finer way than the one of which I have always been a devotee, though often it has slipped through my fingers and left me empty-handed and bewildered...It is not difficult to expound, but it is very difficult to apply. It has been responsible for bringing to light everything that has been discovered in the domain of any skill...it was a gift from the gods to men..." (Philebus 16b,c) The description of the method that follows is open to many interpretations, especially when one tries to square it with the subsequent four-fold division of all things into limits, unlimiteds, mixtures of the two, and the cause or causes of mixtures. But the uses to which Socrates puts this method, or these methods, is easier to understand. The first use is this: if we start with a collection of entities, we must first "posit a single form", then subdivide it into two or three more, until no more organized divisions are called for. This takes skill; it is easy to go wrong. So far the method sounds like the method of collection and division defended and practiced in the Sophist and Politicus. And that is exactly the use to which it is put. Socrates divides up the species of pleasure with the ultimate aim of distinguishing the good from the bad pleasures. But the method of collection and division cannot make these distinctions: at best it shows that there is no contradiction involved in saying pleasures are one in being pleasures, but may differ in other respects.

As the method is elaborated, the importance of limits, measures, proportion, and symmetry is increasingly stressed. Good things, good lives for example, are the result of the imposition of a limit or measure on one or more indefinite continua: such are the mixtures, among which the good life is to be found. Most pleasures, though not all, are argued to be unsuited for inclusion in a properly balanced and stable life; most forms of wisdom and even practical skills are worthy of inclusion. Mind plays a dual role; its functions and objects are admirable and desirable in themselves, and mind, being akin to the cosmic cause which accounts for all that is good in the universe, is itself the cause of the measured life.

I call attention to only two aspects of these somewhat tortured passages in the Philebus. The first is that no interpretation of the "god-given method", at least none with which I am familiar, can reasonably be said to provide either a substitute for or a supplement to the elenchus of the kind provided by the assumption of the Gorgias or the theory of recollection. The method of collection and division does not itself provide a guide as to which the true "units" are, nor how to tell when a division has been made "at the joints". But even if it did, no substantive moral (or other) truths could emerge; nor does Socrates suggest that they could. The four-fold classification of ontological features of the world does far more work, for it is clear that both the categorization of many pleasures as basically "unlimited" and the principles that guide the construction of the good life draw

heavily on the necessity of the presence, in all that is desirable, beautiful, or stable, of a limit. What the method entirely fails to do is to provide criteria for telling when a mixture is a good one. Sometimes Socrates talks as if every true mixture is good, and every limit a principle that produces a mixture. But this is no help, for we then want to know how to tell a limit from some other arrangement of parts; how to tell a mixture from a mere grab-bag of ingredients.

Plato seems aware of the fact that the "god-given" method gives no clear guidance in these matters. Although he stresses the superiority of the pure sciences, like mathematics, to the applied arts such as flute-playing and building, he compares the choice of ingredients for the good life, and their blending, to the work of a craftsman; when it comes to describing the good life, Socrates says: "Well, then, it would be a fair enough image to compare us to builders in this matter of the mixture of intelligence and pleasure, and say we had before us the material from which or with which to build." Protagoras: "That's a good comparison." Socrates: "Then our next business must be to try to mix them?" (Philebus 59e) One is reminded of the detailed examples drawn from music and phonetics earlier in the dialogue, which illustrate that producing a pleasing or acceptable product depends on more than the analytic methods which discriminate the ingredients; it depends as well on the skill and knowledge of the craftsman. The theme is familiar from the early Socratic dialogues.

The second aspect of the methodology of the Philebus to which I want to call attention is the role, or lack of it, of the theory of forms. Critics have argued endlessly over the question whether any of the four elements in the "god-given" method is to be identified with the forms. From the point of view of the present thesis, it doesn't matter. For as we have already seen, nothing in that method could, or is claimed to, yield substantive moral truths. Nor is it likely that at this stage in his development Plato would have relied on the theory of forms for this purpose. In the late dialogues he found more and more reasons to be dissatisfied with his earlier doctrines about the forms, and no aspect of this dissatisfaction is more evident than the abandonment of any close connection between the forms and value. The unity of the forms which earlier had insured their purity was given up when it became evident that analysis required that the forms blend with one another (as pleasure does with good and bad; the crucial discovery is made in the Sophist). The idea that value depends in some way on being like or resembling a form was recognized by Plato (in the Parmenides) to be incompatible with the epistemological or semantic functions of the forms. Value in the Philebus can no longer be connected with the forms as such; it may be that limits, or mixtures that have limits, are forms and are good; but what makes them good is not that they are forms or limits or mixtures,

¹ For a revealing treatment of this subject see Terence Irwin, Plato's Moral Theory (Clarendon Press, 1977).

but that they have symmetry, commensurability, and truth--that they are proper limits or appropriate mixtures.

My proposal then, is that when, in almost his last dialogue, Plato returned to the question of the nature of the good life, he also returned to the Socratic elenchus as the clearest and most reliable method for discovering how we ought to live. So it seems no surprise to me that in this dialogue the leader is once again Socrates. As we know, Socrates practically disappears from all the other late dialogues. In the Parmenides he is portrayed as very young, and it is the great Parmenides who directs the questioning, Socrates who responds. In the Critias and Timaeus Socrates is present, but makes no serious contribution; he is not present in the Laws. In the Sophist and Politicus, the two dialogues most closely related to the Philebus, Socrates turns over the discussion to the Eleatic Stranger. Only in the Philebus is he once again Plato's spokesman, and, if I am right, again speaks in his own person so far as basic method is concerned. He is Plato's Philosopher.

In the Sophist we are apparently promised a trio of dialogues, on the sophist, the politician, and the philosopher. The first two dialogues survive; there is no record of the third. By the most likely dating, the Philebus was written soon after the Politicus, about when the Philosopher should have been written. For a number of reasons we can see why the Philebus could not be called the Philosopher. But I like to think of it as taking the place of that unwritten dialogue. It is about Plato's philosopher, it comes back to the problem with which that philosopher was most concerned, and it accepts his way of doing philosophy for its most important results.

If, as I have argued, Plato returns in the Philebus to the confident use of the elenchus, it must be because he decided in the end that Socrates was right to trust that method. Clearly Plato had found nothing better--nothing that he did not come to criticize himself. What explains Plato's renewed confidence in the elenchus? As Vlastos explains, the elenchus would make for truth simply by insuring coherence in a set of beliefs if one could assume that in each of us there are always unshakable true beliefs inconsistent with the false. It is not necessary that these truths be the same for each of us, nor that we be able to identify them except through the extended use of the elenchus. Thus someone who practices the elenchus can, as Socrates repeatedly did, claim that he does not know what is true; it is enough that he has a method that leads to truth. The only question is whether there is reason to accept the assumption.

I think there is good reason to believe the assumption is true--true enough, anyway, to insure that when our beliefs are consistent they will in most large matters be true. The argument for this is long, and I have spelled it out as well as I can

elsewhere. But the argument hinges on a good Socratic intuition: it is only in the context of frank discussion, communication, and mutual exchange that trustworthy truths emerge. The dialectic imposes the constant burden of interpretation on questioner and questioned, and the process of mutual interpretation can go forward only because true agreements which survive the elenchus carry a presumption of truth.

In coming to see that Socrates was right to trust the elenchus to do more than insure consistency, Plato was returning to a point at which he started. James Joyce quotes (or misquotes) Maeterlink as saying: "If Socrates leave his house today he will find the sage seated on his doorstep." The same, I have urged, can be said about Plato; or even about philosophy.

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¹ In "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge": Kant oder Hegel, ed. by D. Henrich (Klett-Cotta, 1983).

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INTRODUCTION

The Philebus is one of the best preserved skeletons in the cupboard of Platonic scholarship. As cupboards go, this is a well stocked one; and yet, as skeletons in this cupboard go, the Philebus is peculiarly unnerving. For all the words that are heaped hopefully upon it, it won't quite stay dead; and for all the props and machines that are insinuated into it, it won't talk either. The experts have contrived all manner of subtle rigs to hold the bones respectably together, and yet the results are somehow always so gruesome that it is hard to believe the monster could have lived. What is wrong with the Philebus that the doctors (of philosophy) can neither cure nor decently retire it?

The answer is a string of paradoxes: the Philebus promises to reveal the highest mystery Plato knew -- the nature of the Good -- and yet not only is the revelation cryptic, but it is not even clear whether it is a revelation; the Philebus gives the longest account we have of Plato's method, but although that method itself is used to explain the method, its meaning and its application remain inscrutable; the Philebus attempts to define what the Republic calls the highest idea, but it never unambiguously mentions the theory of ideas; the Philebus seems to be the key to the most important problems in Plato's philosophy -- and yet we cannot find a single lock it fits. It is no wonder then that the Philebus is conceded by everyone to be a very important

work, but almost no one offers to tell us what it means. Nevertheless, that is the bold purpose of this thesis. I am going to try to explain the philosophic meaning and intention of Plato's Philebus.

Unfortunately it must be confessed at once that this task, so formidable and promising of hidden secrets, is here conceived as a fairly pedestrian chore -- so pedestrian that it is necessary to defend its method and importance.

About its difficulty there can scarcely be a reasonable doubt. It can be said without much exaggeration that no attempt has been made in any language to explain the philosophic content of the Philebus as a whole. The text has been edited by philologists, individual problems have been attacked, isolated segments of the dialogue have been analyzed and quoted to support one or another theory, and reputable scholars have explained away some of the difficulties. A German has interpreted the Philebus from the point of view of neo-Hegelianism, and more recently an Englishman has urbanely restated some of the central problems. To date, however, nothing on the scale of the commentaries on the other Platonic dialogues has been attempted for the Philebus. The closest thing to this, and the best, is the introduction to the new French edition by M. Diès; this brief and brilliant treatment of the Philebus pleasantly confirms, in a general way, many of the results reached in more detail in this thesis. But more important than the very few satisfactory works on the Philebus is the

combination of reverence, abhorrence and systematic neglect with which most scholars have treated it.

Yet the importance of the Philebus is seldom questioned, so that the value of an exegesis should be fairly plain. The Philebus is the only Platonic dialogue which explicitly deals with the question of the nature of the good life for man; it has what is clearly a very important analysis of being; it has a comprehensive discussion of the philosophic method; and it contains an obscure but highly interesting doctrine about value judgments. It is clear that our entire view of Plato's later philosophical position must be influenced by our interpretation of the Philebus. The difficulty and the significance of making an overall explanation of the purpose and meaning of the Philebus is thus fairly well attested; the point remains what form such an explanation should take. The ultimate purpose of an analysis such as this thesis attempts should, of course, be insight into philosophical truth. But such a purpose is ultimate. In the case of the Philebus it must be preceded by the spadework of interpretation. Before we can attempt to evaluate Plato's philosophy as a whole, we must know what it is that he means to say. And before we can know this, we must do our best to understand each individual work. My aim in this thesis is then very preliminary: it is to understand as fully as possible the meaning of a single Platonic dialogue. I do not thereby discredit the more advanced (and more interesting) job of overall interpretation

and criticism; but I do feel strongly that such attempts to erect a superstructure of criticism and interpretation must be set aside until a foundation of understanding of the parts has been built.

Because of the intentionally limited purpose of this monograph, I must note specifically certain general areas of interpretation that will be found lacking. In the first place, I have made no consistent attempt to reconcile the doctrines of the Philebus with those of other Platonic dialogues. I have used material from the other dialogues, of course, but my aim has always been to use this material to throw light on the Philebus, and not in order to provide a norm or basis for interpretation. That is to say, when the Philebus contradicts supposed doctrines from other dialogues, I have (for the most part) not let this alter my interpretation. I have sometimes mentioned such problems of reconciliation, and I have even occasionally suggested solutions. But the main point is that I have avoided consciously fitting my interpretation of the Philebus to any preconceived notions of the "Platonic philosophy."

My method in this respect can, I think, be justified in several ways. It seems to me the best hope of understanding the Philebus itself. If we approach it without preliminary categories into which we are going to force it, we surely have a better chance of discovering Plato's purpose. What right have we to assign prior authenticity to any particular dialogue or group of dialogues? The fact that we think we

understand the Phaedo or Republic better than the Philebus (which is not a very sure thing) is certainly no reason to suppose that somehow the Philebus must be accommodated to our theories of Platonism drawn from those dialogues. As a matter of fact, I can see several ways in which the Philebus might be used to considerable advantage to help us interpret aspects of the other dialogues, provided we take it as a whole and not as a series of independent paragraphs to be used at random to support our already-formed interpretations of those dialogues. I would also suggest that my approach to the Philebus can be justified by observing that there is very little evidence that Plato had any one consistent philosophy, or even that he thought he had, while there is plenty of evidence that he did not have one consistent philosophy, and some evidence that he thought he did not. This is not to deny that there are plenty of themes, views and attitudes which run through all the dialogues, and which give Platonism a certain tone and set which cannot, in a general way, be denied. And I feel certain there are some generalizations about Plato's ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics which hold true for almost everything he ever said. I am a good deal less certain that I know what these generalizations are, however; and whatever they are, they must be broad enough to leave very wide areas of variation open. So long as we are ignorant of the precise formulation these generalizations should take, the approach I have used in this thesis seems to me to be more than valid; it is de rigueur if we

are to arrive fairly and finally at any true conception of Platonism.

Not only have I not tried to reconcile the Philebus with the rest of what Plato has said or is supposed to have said, but I also have not tried to reconcile Plato with what I myself believe to be the truth. Where I think Plato is wrong or confused, I have sometimes said so, but I have attempted to guard myself from foisting upon Plato theories which I would prefer to defend myself. At the same time, I have attempted to express Plato's views, when I could, in terms which I found (and which I hope others will find) more unambiguous than Plato's. There is danger in this, but it is the necessary danger, of course, of all interpretation. The risk of misinterpretation is obviously inseparable from interpretation. What makes me more unhappy is to fail to make an interpretation at all; but I feel that this has happened in places. That is, there are places where I have tried to reduce the Philebus to language which was more comprehensible to me, and where I could not. When this has happened, I have been discouraged, but not entirely downcast. For there is certainly a point, whether I have reached it or not, where the violence done a historical idea by applying modern categories or terminology does more harm by reducing our grasp of the author's historical position than it does good by increasing our understanding of the philosophic issue involved.

The mere attempt to put an author's views in other language, that is, to interpret and understand them, often

gives the appearance of an attempt to solve the philosophic problems involved. I want very clearly then to banish any doubts about my intentions on this score. Naturally I am interested in knowing the truth about philosophic questions; and I also hope, indirectly, to assist my understanding of them by studying Plato's meaning. But nothing in this thesis is a direct attempt to solve any problem in philosophy, much less to solve all the problems Plato raises. I could hardly have set it as my task to solve all the problems Plato has raised; that is the continuing enterprise of the whole of western philosophy.

The question of interpreting Plato's position so that we can understand what he meant is closely involved with another problem, namely that of making Plato (in the Philebus) consistent with himself. This is, certainly, to my taste, the toughest aspect of interpretation: to know, that is, how far to go in trying to make the material to be interpreted self-consistent. It is shirking the main task of interpretation to assume either consistency or lack of it; on the whole, one is tempted to sin in the direction of doing one's best to fit the pieces together snugly when this seems at all possible. But I hope I have not gone too far in this direction. It is more valuable to confess defeat openly when attempts at consistent interpretation fail than to ignore the difficulty or to force consistency beyond all reasonable meaning of the original. I have in several cases decided that the Philebus suffers from

fundamental confusion or inconsistency; in such cases I have tried to state what I think the trouble is, and left it at that. This leaves me open to the accusation of failure to grasp the final unity and meaning of Plato, or of taking the original too literally, or too seriously, and so forth. These accusations I shall gladly declare to be justified the moment someone shows me a better way to understand the Philebus.

I believe it will be of some value to state briefly here what I consider the most important points in my interpretation of the Philebus. These points are, of course, inter-related, but for convenience they may be considered as three in number.

1. Subject matter. The first thesis which I wish to maintain is that the Philebus is intended, and is best interpreted, as a unified and systematic treatment of the nature of the good life for man. This may seem like a trivial point to make much of, I confess, but since no commentator (so far as I know) has held this view, it has been necessary to defend and demonstrate it at length. This thesis really involves two separate arguments. The first is, that the main problem with which the dialogue deals is the nature of the best life for man, and that it was with this problem in mind that Plato wrote the Philebus. The second is that every part of the dialogue is, in one way or another, directly related to this problem, and that there is an evident scheme or pattern in the dialogue which makes this clear. What I

am not arguing is that the connection between the various topics covered in the dialogue is of the sort which Plato imagined it to be, nor that the scheme is a logical or necessarily helpful one. All I intend to argue is that Plato did have a definite problem in mind and (what he conceived, at least) a systematic way of treating it. If I am right, then it is foolish to try to understand anything important about the Philebus until we grasp this unity of intention and treatment.

Since I have wanted to demonstrate the unity of the original work, I have written my interpretation in the form of a running commentary on the text of the Philebus, with very little rearrangement in the sequence of topics. If the general scope and structure of the dialogue were clear to begin with there might be more to be gained by treating the material in some other systematic manner. But in this case, since no exegesis exists which can show why the material in the Philebus is presented in the way in which Plato wrote it, I take it that the first job is to try and make sense of the dialogue in its present form. Even if many other problems remain to be solved when this is done, there will be a very obvious advantage to our understanding of Plato if we can reveal the original structure and interrelation of the parts of the Philebus.

The basic structure of the dialogue follows, I shall argue, from Plato's conception of the philosophic method of dialectic which is outlined early in the Philebus. This

method consists of three separate, but related, techniques. Together they form the techniques of any practical art; applied to the question of the good life for man, they constitute what, for lack of a better name, I have called the "Art of Happiness." The three techniques are collection, division, and combination. The first two are generally accepted as part of the late Platonic dialectic; the third is, however, entirely different from the other two, and absolutely necessary if dialectic is to produce any practical and useful results. Combination is the only aspect of dialectic which issues in synthetic judgments, and on its application depends the whole positive description of the good life in the Philebus.

I have divided the dialogue into three parts, basing the division on the predominance in each of one of the three aspects of dialectic. In the first, the task is conceived as that of defining roughly the scope of the Art of Happiness, and of finding some criteria in terms of which its product, the good life, may be judged. In the second, the major aspects and potential ingredients of the good life are studied by the use of the techniques of division. In the third part, the potential ingredients are judged for their value to the good life, and the acceptable ones are combined into the good life.

2. Universals and values. The second thesis which I shall maintain is that in the Philebus universals are not directly connected with the sources of value. The universals

are still called ideas, but they are not considered as particular patterns or icons, resemblance to which might be a test of value, nor is there any hint that the ideas exist in some superior or exclusive sense. Value is taken to inhere only in objects or complexes which exist in the world of change and life. I shall argue that one of the most important aspects of the Philebus is that the problem of the nature of universals is separated from the problem of the source and nature of value. This has the effect of diminishing certain problems concerning universals, even though it cannot be said to solve all problems concerning them. The "Platonic ideas" of the earlier dialogues do not, I shall maintain, appear anywhere in the Philebus; or rather, they appear in several different places, since their manifold functions have been divided among several discriminated elements.

3. The ontological basis of value. The third main point of interpretation which I wish to establish is that in the Philebus value is explained by a teleological theory of existence. Plato's teleological view of the universe, which is clearly set forth in a section on the ultimate elements of all existence, can only be understood in terms of an analogy. In this analogy, everything which exists is explained as the product of conscious rational purpose. In so far as the product can be explained at all, it is what a mind intended to create; to the extent that the product falls short of the

intention, it is irrational and, on Plato's theory, inexplicable. But what can be explained in terms of rational purpose is, by the same token, good, for it is the end which was envisaged. This, I believe, is the reasoning which we must find at the bottom of the value theory of the Philebus. The detailed conception of the good life follows directly from what Plato conceives to be the rational purpose of man -- not, of course, the purpose which any living man has in mind, but the true purpose for which he was created. This purpose can only be the purpose of some divine mind which patterned the universe, and man can grasp it only by trying to find and know the divine intention. According to Plato, this is the function of mind in man.

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In the Seventh Epistle Plato complains of those who have reported his doctrine of the Good, and repudiates their reports:

There is no writing of mine on this subject, nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study; but, as the result of long intercourse and a common life spent upon the thing, it is brought to birth in the soul suddenly, as light is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself. If I thought this could be adequately written down and stated to the world, what finer occupation could I have had in life than to write what would be of great service to mankind, and to reveal nature in the light of day to all men? But I do not even think the effort to attain this a good thing for men, except for the very few who can be enabled to discover these things themselves by means of a brief indication."¹

¹Seventh Epistle, 341C-E. Italics mine.

The Philebus is as close as Plato came to putting this "brief indication" into words, and it is up to us to find whether we are among the "very few" who can discover, if not the Good itself, at least the meaning which Plato intended us to find in his directions. But we must be on guard from the start, knowing that Plato intends us to learn no final answer, perhaps little positive doctrine, but instead a hint as to the direction in which we are to proceed, a sketch of the method and the purpose, rather than a detailed description of the goal. The Philebus tells us the road or way to the good, it arms us with weapons to take with us for protection from evil and error, and it leads us, if we can follow, to the house where the Good dwells. But when the door seems about to be opened, and we expect to be dazzled with the light of the True and the Beautiful, we are doomed quite necessarily to disappointment. If there ever was a dialogue which was unambiguously to show us the Good (and we may doubt that there was), then perhaps that dialogue was the abandoned Philosopher. As it is, we must be satisfied with second best. If Plato never told us what it was that the true philosopher knows (and how else could he have told us the essence of the philosopher?), at least he has written instead, in the Philebus, his fullest account of the Philosopher's method, the method by which the philosopher learns and creates the Good. To know the Good without mastering the way to it is impossible; and if we master the way, we need no further

help. That would surely be what Plato would wish us to understand before we begin.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM (11B-12B)

1. One of the theses I shall try to establish is that the central purpose of the Philebus is to describe the good for man. A second and related point is to show how the various other topics which are discussed are all subordinate, directly and consciously, to this purpose. It is necessary to insist upon the unity and purpose of the dialogue because they have been traditionally questioned by almost all scholars. I think it is obvious that if we mistake Plato's aim and purpose in writing the Philebus, there is little chance of our comprehending the argument. Yet if I am right most interpreters have made important mistakes as to the subject matter of the dialogue. These mistakes follow, I think, from a failure to grasp the unity of argument which relates the parts. Until we see this unity as Plato saw it, we are bound to miss the characteristic temper of the value theory of the Philebus because that theory depends absolutely, in my opinion, upon the treatments of dialectic and of ontology which occupy so much of the dialogue. To show that Plato wrote the Philebus to explain his theory of human good, and that all the major sections of the dialogue must be related to this purpose, is therefore no idle point which I cantankerously wish to make against the experts. I would hold that we cannot understand

Plato's basic position at all until we follow the reasoning which, in the Philebus, leads him to base his theory of value upon ontological considerations.

The fact that the Philebus deals with many apparently unrelated topics allied with the failure to discover any uniting bond has led interpreters to strange and contradictory opinions about the dialogue. Galen, for instance, is said to have written a book *περὶ τῶν ἐν Φιλήβῳ μεταβάσεων*. Schleiermacher felt that the Philebus must be an early work, an undigested conglomeration of notes. Poste, an early editor of the Philebus, felt that the variety of its subject matter could be explained only by assuming it to consist of two dialogues hastily assembled into one.¹ Grote writes:

The fault appears to me to lie in the very scheme of the dialogue. Attempts to discuss Ontology and Ethics in one and the same piece of reasoning, instead of elucidating both, only serve to darken both. Aristotle has already made a similar remark: and it is after reading the Philebus that we feel most distinctly the value of his comments on Plato in the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics.²

Shorey claims that the treatment of ethics and dialectic in the same dialogue is largely accidental, and that the two topics are not fundamentally related:³ the discussion of

1. E. Poste, Philebus of Plato.

2. G. Grote, Plato, and the Other Companions of Socrates, Vol. 2, p. 586.

3. Paul Shorey, What Plato Said, p. 317. Shorey does, however, recognize the fundamental unity of the dialogue in other respects (Cf. pp. 317, 319, 321, etc.).

dialectic is of only subsidiary importance, he contends.⁴

Henry Jackson, on the other hand, holds exactly the opposite opinion:

If Plato had been asked what the subject of the dialogue was, he would no doubt have answered 'I leave that to your own penetration'; but I am very much mistaken, if to himself, in his heart of hearts, the metaphysical element of the treatise was not vastly more important than the ethical.⁵

Jackson stood ready to split the dialogue into two parts written at different times if this was necessary in order to prove the lateness of the metaphysical passages. He writes:

I must confess that the ontology of the Philebus seems to me so certainly later than that of the Republic that, if there were (which I do not think there is) clear proof that the main argument of the Philebus is earlier than the corresponding passage in the Republic, I should not scruple to regard the ontological parts of the former dialogue as interpolations introduced by Plato himself subsequent to the composition of the latter.⁶

Even Hackforth, latest English editor of the Philebus, and one who stresses the unity of the dialogue far more than most, is forced to call one passage a "semi-independent discussion" which is "not an integral part of the dialogue"

4. Paul Shorey, The Origin of the Syllogism, Classical Philology, Vol. XIX.

5. Jackson, Journal of Philology, Vol. X, p. 273.

6. Ibid., pp. 266, 267.

and which "a modern author would have relegated to an appendix." 7

The proof that the many parts of the dialogue are integrated segments of a larger, unified argument about the good can only come with the detailed discussion of the structure and articulation of the Philebus; this begins with the next chapter of this monograph and dominates it to the end. But before we go on to the close analysis, it is worth observing what Plato unambiguously says the dialogue is about.

- 11B The announced problem of the dialogue is to decide between two theories as to the nature of the good life: one holds that "the good for all animate beings is pleasure"; the other that "the good is not pleasure but mind." The disputants further agree that they will attempt to define a "state or condition of the soul which can render the life of every man a happy life." The problem is presently referred back to as being "What the good is," and "whether we ought to give the title of the Good to pleasure or to intelligence or to some third thing."
- 11D
- 13E
- 14B
- 15C When the talk turns to the question whether pleasures are all good or not, Protagoras admits they must discuss this point as the "first task" before returning to the problem of the good life.

7. Hackforth, Plato's Examination of Pleasure, p. 105. To do him justice, however, Hackforth says in his introduction (p. 10) that "The formlessness of the work has been often exaggerated. The more I have studied it, the clearer has its structure become, and the more understandable its transitions, digressions, and postponements." Yet Hackforth holds (with many others) that the subject of the dialogue is not what Plato says it is, but is an attack upon hedonism (Op.cit.p.9).

18D,E After the method of dialectic has been expounded, Philebus asks how this discussion is related to the problem of the good life, and Socrates explains the relevance carefully. It will be necessary to use dialectic to discover what the real nature of pleasure and intelligence is.

19C Protagoras mentions that Socrates made an offer of this discussion "for the purpose of deciding what is the best of all things possessed by man," and the nature of the dispute is again summarized.

19C-20C Socrates now enumerates three characteristics which something must have if we are to call it the good, and pleasure and mind are tested by these criteria and found wanting. It is suggested that the good life must contain both pleasure and mind, but that one or the other of these two factors may come closer to being the cause of its goodness. The "objective" of the next part of the dialogue is therefore "to secure the second prize for reason."

A fourfold division of all that exists follows, and it is immediately put to the announced use of determining the place of pleasure and mind in the good life. We are explicitly reminded that this is the purpose: "What is our next point, and what was our purpose in getting where we have got? Wasn't it that we were trying to find out whether the second prize would go to pleasure or to intelligence?" It is finally shown that the cosmic mind creates the good of the universe as the human mind creates the good for man.

It will be remarked that up to this point the discussion has hinged entirely around the question of what the good life is. Both pleasure and mind have been rejected as constituting the entire good life, and both have been rejected on the same grounds so far. The "second prize" has been awarded to mind on the basis of an elaborate analogy. Certainly no one could contend that the refutation of hedonism is the main thesis so far, or that the analysis of pleasure dominates, or that Plato

"in his heart of hearts" felt the discussion of dialectic or ontology to be the core of the argument. Nor do I see how anyone could contend that the parts, up to here, are unrelated, accidentally juxtaposed, or whatnot. Yet we have now summarized one third of the dialogue. The next long third is devoted to the examination of pleasure, it is true, and this examination uses both the dialectical procedure outlined above and the fourfold ontological scheme. The explicit purpose of this examination of pleasure is, however, not to exclude pleasure entirely from the good life; nor is it to prove that pleasure cannot be the good (for this has adequately been shown for both mind and pleasure). The purpose of this section transcends the interest in anti-hedonism completely; its whole intent is to analyze pleasure so that we can decide which pleasures do, and which pleasures do not, belong in the good life (32C,D). A large part of the discussion of pleasure is devoted to showing that pleasure and mind are not really separable, and that value judgments and pleasures are closely related. The transition to this point is marked by Socrates, who says:

It certainly looks as if we were raising a question of some importance; is it relevant to what has preceded? We ought to have nothing to do with extraneous disquisitions, or with anything in the way of irrelevant discussion."(36D,E)

50D,E. Socrates concludes his treatment of the mixed pleasures by remarking that he has much more to say on the subject, but that he has said enough for the purpose of the present discussion. "I shall be willing to go into the whole question with you tomorrow, but for the present I want to address

myself to the matters which are still outstanding if we are to settle the problem set us by Philebus."

55C Next comes an examination of knowledge, which begins with the remark that this, like the review of pleasure, is part of the "joint attempt" to define the good life.

59E When this is complete, Socrates announces that "we have at hand the ingredients, intelligence and pleasure, ready to be mixed: the materials in which, or out of which, we as builders are to build our structure." The original scope and purpose of the
60A,B dialogue is again carefully repeated, and the arguments by which the lives of pure pleasure and pure intelligence were rejected are restated. Here,
60C as always, Socrates goes out of his way to treat pleasure and mind symmetrically, as if each deserved, and had received, equal treatment. And he concludes,
61B "our discussion has made it plain to us, now as at the outset, that we must not look for the good in the unmixed life, but in the mixed."

The rest of the dialogue is concerned with the selection of the kinds of pleasure and knowledge to be included in the good life. Here, of course, the results of the long analysis of pleasure and knowledge are used to help evaluate the candidates. All the forms of knowledge are included, but only some of the pleasures: mind thus wins on this score. But mind wins also on the larger score of being (as we saw in the ontological section) the cause of the harmonious mixture which is the good life. This point is emphasized by showing that the good is by nature
65A-E beautiful, true and measured, and these are qualities which are preeminently those of mind.

66A ff. The results of the dialogue are now summarized in a fivefold list in which mind and its qualities of measure and proportion win the first three places, practical knowledge the fourth, and the best pleasures come last.

66D There is one last recapitulation of the subject of the dialogue -- even Socrates remarks that he has been over the ground many times -- namely, whether pleasure or reason constituted the good life. The last words of the dialogue jubilate that pleasure not only has lost -- it is not even second or third in the good life; they boast likewise that reason, though not first, is "ever so much nearer and more
67A akin than pleasure to the character of the victor."

The intention of this brief survey of those passages in the Philebus in which the main course of the discussion is charted is to assist the understanding of the detailed analysis which will follow and to make it as clear as it is possible to make it what Plato has declared the main topic to be. When these passages are set before us it seems absurd that anyone could ever have been deceived about the subject matter and main pattern of the Philebus; yet such deception is the rule; there apparently are very few who are willing to take Plato's word about his own intention.

We can now turn to a preliminary examination of the problem to which the Philebus explicitly seeks a solution.

2. The Philebus avoids an exhaustive opening statement of its problem by assuming that the discussion is already in progress. Protarchus is about to relieve Philebus of the responsibility for the defense of the hedonistic position, which Socrates then summarizes. Philebus holds (Socrates explains) that delight, pleasure and joy are good to all creatures. This statement (11B) is of course intentionally vague as it stands, and only the course of true discussion can clarify it. Nevertheless, it is worth making a few remarks about the words themselves here. The conjunction of χαίρειν, ἡδονή and τελευσις⁸ is not meant to specify separate classes of emotions, but to indicate the scope of

8. This list may be taken as fairly definitive, since it is repeated in precisely this form at 19C.

a single class. Philebus wants to be sure he is not mistaken as saying merely that pleasure in some restricted sense is understood as being good. Anything that creates a positive satisfaction is to be included. The relation of ἀγαθόν εἶναι to these satisfactions is also indeterminate here: does it mean to equate the good with pleasure, interpreted in its broadest sense? Or does it intend to permit the possibility that other things also are good? This ambiguity is fairly settled in favor of the former interpretation when the original statement is recapitulated at the end of the dialogue (60A), for there Philebus' position is regarded as being that the two "names," "good" and "pleasant," are really and by nature one. Finally, Philebus says that pleasure is good "to all living creatures" (πᾶσι ζώοις). This phrase is also repeated at 60A, and Plato seems to have regarded it as an important addition. The reason for this will be clearer when we see what Socrates' thesis is.

Socrates puts his view in this way: wisdom, thought, memory and the related right opinion and true judgment are better than pleasure, and the most advantageous of all things, for all those who are capable of them (11B,C). The many full or partial restatements of the position vary the list of goods slightly, but the only important additions are knowledge and art.⁹ The carelessness with which the exact contents of the

9. 13E, 21D and 28A all list φρόνησις, νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη, while 59D omits the last; 19D adds σύνησις (intelligence) and τέχνη (art). 60B, the most complete restatement of the problem, mentions only φρόνησις, but 60D has μνήμη, φρόνησις, ἐπιστήμη and ἀληθείας δόξα. 64A has the same list as 60D but omits φρόνησις

lists are altered suggests that the statement is not meant to be precise in this direction. An area is indicated; its limits, if any, will be left to the discussion to define. Socrates states his position rather mildly when he says these things are better than pleasure, for he leaves open the chance that pleasure may be good also, and this possibility still is not excluded by saying that the noetic functions are the most advantageous of all things. At 60A, B where the two original positions are restated in somewhat modified terms, Socrates says all he ever claimed was that "the share of wisdom in the good is greater than that of pleasure."

A troubling matter in the Philebus hinges on the question what it is precisely that Plato means to indicate by the complex of words noted above (νοῦς, φρόνησις, etc.). The question which I raise is not one of terminology -- it is seldom profitable to try to find any precision in Plato's use of words; the question is one of consistency about what is meant. It is probable that Plato intends to talk about the same general thing in man which he believes (against the hedonist) to be most akin to the good. This thing he designates with different phrases at different times. The trouble arises when we find that it does not seem to be the same thing which is designated each time. The chief ambiguity is whether Plato is arguing that the superior element in the good life is mind or is knowledge. Whether mind is conceived as an organ, a function or a capacity of some sort, it is certainly

not the same thing as knowledge. Mind is what does the knowing, and knowledge is what is known. Yet Plato never draws a distinction between the two. In the earlier parts of the dialogue, it seems to be chiefly mind, the function of knowing (and all affiliated functions like remembering and opining), which is discussed. But when "mind" is finally examined and studied in order to judge its importance for the good life, it is various kinds of knowledge which are considered. The final list of elements in the good life puts mind and wisdom (νοῦς and φρόνησις) in one category, and science, art and true opinion (ἐπιστήμη, τέχνη, ὁρθὸς δόξα) in another. When we are told that mind wins second prize because it is the cause of the good life, this would seem to refer to mind as a function or capacity, not only for thinking, but also for doing. When we are told that pleasures would be worthless unless we had anticipations, knowledge and memory of them, then the reference would seem to be not to mind but to the knowledge, memories and anticipations which a mind has.

Probably the conclusion to which we are forced is that Plato did not consider it important for his purposes in the Philebus to distinguish between mind and knowledge. There is an obvious and necessary connection between the two, and he may have felt that this was enough reason to treat them as one. But I believe that if Plato had been more rigorous in his examination of just what it was in man's life which is most akin to the good, many of the difficulties of the

dialogue would diminish. One such difficulty is this: Plato eventually argues (54D) that pleasure cannot be a final good because it cannot be an end. I do not think his argument on this point is a good one, but apart from that, it suggests quite strongly that Plato does consider that mind or knowledge or some related thing is an end. Now it is very hard to see how mind (which is the cause of the goodness in the good life) can be an end. The fact that it is necessary, but not sufficient, for the good life implies that it is an indispensable means, but that it is not an end. It is a little more plausible to think of knowledge as an end, although even this is difficult to understand. It would seem most plausible to argue that the experience of knowing, remembering and so forth is an end; but Plato never says this. The virtual impossibility of deciding what it is precisely that Plato is talking about when he speaks of mind and knowledge (as if they were one) in the Philebus is one of the many difficulties we must face in trying to interpret the dialogue.

In stating his own preliminary position Socrates also adds the restricting phrase that mind and so forth are better and most advantageous only for those who are capable of them. This has been taken to mean that Philebus and Socrates are striving to solve two different problems; that Philebus wants to know what the good is for all creatures (presumably including plants as well as animals) while Socrates is interested only in the "good for man." One might agree that the two

points of view set rather different problems, without agreeing that this is the real difference. The difference might better be put in this way: Philebus is trying to define "goodness." He would like to answer this question: what does it mean to say something is good? He is not seeking the good, if there happens to be such a thing, nor the highest good, if there happens to be such a thing. Socrates, on the other hand, wants to know what things are good, and, in particular, which are best. This question must be answered, if it can be, in relation to something or somebody: -- best for whom? In the dialogue, both questions are quite definitely considered.

In spite of vacillation in the formulations of the problem,¹⁰ however, the ultimate aim of the Philebus seems clearly to be the description of the nature of the good life for man. In fact, much of the dialogue would be quite pointless if it were considered only as a search for a definition of the good for "every living being." A final passage even implies that evidence drawn from animals other than man is not pertinent to the problem at hand (67B).

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Cf. 11D, 22B. At 20D Socrates says the good life must be pursued by πᾶν τὸ γινώσκον. This is a hard phrase to translate without prejudice. It could mean "every intelligent being" but this would seem to indicate more than is meant. "Every aware thing" might be the most neutral. Philebus 22A speaks of "man or any living thing," and 22B says the good is desired by πᾶσι φύσιν, "all living things." This would seem to include even plants (cf. Timaeus 77A ff.), and probably shows that the γινώσκον of Philebus 20D should not be translated (as it is in the Loeb Edition) "intelligent being." Some editors would rather reject the broader terms, however. Badham in particular says "it is high time these φῶροι were weeded out of the text."

The fact that the dialogue quite clearly seeks an answer to the question "what is the good life for man?" does not mean that it does not touch on the broader question of what the good may be. The Philebus certainly does examine the broader question about value, "what are the (or some) criteria by which we can determine whether anything is good?" This is not the problem of the dialogue, because it is raised in order to help solve the dependent problem of the nature of the good life for man. But there can be no doubt that in this sense, the Philebus does discuss what it is that makes things good in general. Whether the discussion of what it is that makes things good in general provides a definition of goodness depends on whether the criteria which are listed are thought to constitute a definition of the essence of goodness. There is some evidence that Plato does so consider them, although it is impossible to say definitely that he does. This must remain an open question.

The Philebus takes as its central task, then, neither the discovery of the good in general, nor of the good for all living beings, but of the good life for man. An ambiguity lurks here also, however, which is not unrelated to the one concerning mind. This ambiguity can be understood by asking this question about the task of the Philebus: does it seek to tell us directly what the good life is like, or does it seek to tell us what qualities or possessions or abilities a man must have in order to live the good life?

These are certainly different questions, even though neither question can be said to be clear as it stands. The first question asks about the end or ends of life; the second assumes the ends and asks what means are necessary to attain them. To the first question we might expect such answers as: the good life is doing nice things for other people; or having the maximum of pleasure; or learning the truth. To the second question we might anticipate such answers as: to live the good life a man must have intelligence and memory; or he must be six feet tall; or he must be able to calculate the consequences of his actions. But different as these questions are, it appears that Plato attempts to answer both simultaneously and without discriminating them. As a result, both pleasure and mind are tested by criteria which tell whether they can constitute the good life; both are also spoken of as "possessions" (κτῆμα 66A). As a result, it is possible for Plato to treat of intelligence and pleasure as if both were "ingredients" on the same level, although one is most easily thought of as an ability or capacity necessary for attaining an end, while the other would seem to be an end (if it belonged in the good life at all). The truth is that the Philebus asks its question in the naivest possible form: which would you rather have, pleasure or mind? It never seems to have occurred to Plato that the reason he can give the small child's answer is that pleasure and mind as he interprets them are not necessarily competitors on the same level.

Having raised so many difficulties, I would like to make one helpful suggestion. It seems to me that behind the various questions which the Philebus explicitly raises lies another question which is never mentioned, but which is very close to the center of the problem. It is this question which I think Plato is really interested in, and it is a question the answer to which would solve the other questions immediately. And I think one reason Plato is not too worried about the strict formulation of the problems he does state is that all the while it is another problem with which he is primarily concerned. This further problem is this: What are the qualities of the good man? In this question, the other questions about the good life and the best possessions overlap; only the good man has those possessions which enable him to live the good life. Thus when we find that the "good life" combines pleasure with intelligence and knowledge, the apparent confusion of including intelligence as an experience can be partly resolved if we think of this rather as a statement about the good man: the good man will have some pleasures; he will also have a controlling intelligence. In the same way, the final list of "goods" at the end of the Philebus is more intelligible if we take it neither as a description of the good life nor as a list of possessions, but as a mixture of both as they apply to the good man.

It is interesting in this connection that Plato once speaks of pleasure and intelligence as "conditions and dispositions of the soul" (ἐξ ἧν ψυχῆς καὶ διαθέσειν) which may

make a man happy (11D). The important thing here is the insistence that pleasure or intelligence (or whatever the good may be) is a condition of the soul. The proper condition of the soul is surely what makes a man a good man; so that what is being debated (at this point) is whether intelligence or pleasure characterizes the condition of the good man's soul. And although the word εἶς does not turn up again (except in other contexts - e.g. 32E, 48C),¹¹ the idea is basic to Plato's thesis. The good for Plato is a state or condition of the soul; it is not something passing (like all experiences considered in themselves), which might be tested and evaluated at any one moment. It can only be recognized in the long run, in terms of its general tendency and direction. In the same way, justice in the Republic is a condition of the soul rather than separate actions; Plato calls it the "health of the soul" (Republic 443C-E). In the Philebus the proper mixture of the "good life" is constantly compared to the ideal ratio of health. Probably, therefore, we should be on our guard against any interpretation of the Philebus which would lead us to think of the good as a matter merely of "having" pleasure or mind or some combination of the two. The good is not having something; it is being something. I do not think it would misrepresent Plato's views very much to say that for him the good life for man is being a good man.

11. The word δι' ἑνός is repeated at 64C.

Such phrases as "the good life" and "the good man" invariably have, especially in a Platonic context, a specifically moral or ethical connotation. In the case of the present dialogue, however, it would be a mistake to limit the good to moral value. The Philebus is concerned with all value and the relation of value to the valuing subject; it is not primarily concerned with moral value, the question of why we blame or praise. This is a special subject which might be considered to fall within the scope of the larger, but it is not specifically pursued here. Moral conduct can be valuable or not just as other events and objects can be, of course, and moral conduct is discussed as a primary interest in many of Plato's works. But moral conduct and "virtue" are conspicuously absent from direct scrutiny in the Philebus. It would not be incorrect to say that the Philebus is not an ethical treatise, but a general treatise on value; in this respect it falls rather outside the main stream of Greek thought. Standing midway between the Republic and the Nicomachean Ethics, in many ways forming a transition between them, the Philebus nevertheless eschews almost completely direct consideration of the most important subjects of those two works, namely, the nature of moral virtue and justice.

CHAPTER II

THE ART OF DIALECTIC (12B-19B)

1. When the two opinions about the nature of the good life have been presented, Philebus is dismissed after he has formally disclaimed any responsibility for the outcome of the discussion (12B). Protarchus is on his own; Philebus cannot stop him from "making an agreement" with Socrates if he wants.

It is now proposed to evaluate the hedonistic view, that pleasure is the good. Socrates considers this proposition as if its supporters thought it were demonstrable from the meanings of the words alone. A considerable section (12B-14B) issues in the rather modest conclusion that this is not a very useful approach to the problem; that individual pleasures (like many other things) are such that different properties may properly be predicated of them.

This passage leads to the more serious question of the relation of ideas to one another, and after a cogent statement of the general problems associated with the ideas (15B,C) the discussion turns to Plato's most detailed account of the philosophic method (15A-19B). This method reveals three movements which are necessary if we are to "learn, teach and investigate"; these are collection, division, and combination. The first is the somewhat fumbling act of divining, through a process sometimes of sampling, sometimes of

intuiting, the nature of the unity to be defined or studied. The second proceeds to analyze this unity by dividing and subdividing it until the smallest units are reached. The third is the art of combining and classifying the material revealed by these divisions to form a harmonious whole. Unlike division, the combinatory art is cathartic, for it rejects elements which are disruptive and creates a hierarchy in which some elements rule and some are ruled.¹

The rest of the Philebus demonstrates how this three-fold method must be used to define and create the good life. The first part is devoted to discerning the scope and unity of the desired object; its scope is defined by a set of three criteria which a good life must have, and its unity is defined broadly as a combination of pleasure and intelligence properly mixed. This ends the "collection" and the first part of the dialogue. The original question, whether the

¹ Throughout this paper "dialectic" or "the art of dialectic" is used to refer to the entire philosophic method which includes the three subdivisions. Plato's usage is much less consistent; he often uses "dialectic" to refer to diaeresis alone, or to diaeresis and collection. The terms "division" and "diaeresis" have been used interchangeably in this thesis to refer to the process of analysis by which dialectic demonstrates the contents and structure of a concept or idea. "Combination" (and occasionally "synthesis") will be used to refer to the synthesizing aspect of dialectic which selects, judges and relates the appropriate elements revealed by diaeresis into a valuable and well-proportioned whole. Catharsis is one facet of combination, for it eliminates disruptive, inconsistent or false elements. All these words and their meanings will be explained presently.

life of mind or the life of pleasure is the good, is answered. But a new goal, which was always the real goal, is then set, namely, to decide on the relative positions of the two constituents of the good. The second part of the dialogue comprises a threefold application of the process of division. In the first application, a scheme of classification for all created things is suggested which helps us understand the ultimate nature of mind, pleasure and the mixed life. The next two applications are to pleasure and mind, which are then divided and subdivided to help us judge and evaluate them. The final step, combination and synthesis, involves the creative act of selecting, arranging and mixing the ingredients of the good life. This last function of dialectic is not contemplative but practical; it is the active work of a rational art. The synthetic movement complete, a summary is provided by a final definition of the good which combines the formal criteria of the mixture with an indication of the hierarchical structure of the contents.

This brief outline of the development of the argument of the Philebus is meant to suggest the significance of the section on method, for this section provides the only important key to the articulation of the whole dialogue. It relates the parts which otherwise appear to fall apart, and it gives meaning to what seems repetitious, unnecessary or arbitrary. It is worth saying this because the tendency has been, either with Shorey and Bury, to consider the passage on method as an

inconsequential diversion, or with Stenzel and Jackson, to think of it as the most important part of the dialogue. The point made here is that it is neither. The discussion of method is essential to the dialogue because it establishes a framework, because it explains the necessity for the lengthy sections on the analysis of pleasure and mind, because it relates the sets of criteria of the good to one another and to the overall scheme of the dialogue. At the same time, it is only a method, a tool, for learning and investigating; it is in this sense incidental to the main purpose.²

2. A preliminary section (12B-14B) serves both to destroy a certain naive view toward a hedonistic definition of the good, and at the same time introduces a far more serious discussion of method. The question to be answered is, does the fact that a number of things can be designated by the same word mean that these things are the same? For instance, the word "pleasure" is applied both to the experience of the libertine when he carouses and to the experience of the puritan when he righteously restrains himself; the fool is pleased with his

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An important book on the Philebus, Platos dialektische Ethik by Hans-Georg Godamer (Leipzig, 1931), also stresses the connection between the dialectical and ethical aspects of the dialogue. Godamer views dialectic, not as a tool or method, but as establishing the ethical hierarchy directly through its relation to the phenomena. He therefore speaks, not of Plato's ethical theory as being dialectical, but of the dialectic being ethical (p. 111). This would make the major interest of the dialogue the dialectic, although it would make the ethical content essential to that interest.

foolish hopes and the wise man with his wisdom. Certainly there seems to be a difference between these kinds of pleasure. Yet Protarchus contends that though these pleasures may originate from opposite sources, they are the same in being pleasures. Socrates retorts that "the most opposite things are made one" by this argument; for white and black are both colors. The hedonist claims all pleasant things are good; but he admits that pleasant things are unlike. What is common to both bad and good pleasures which lets the hedonist call both good? Since Protarchus (quite sensibly) resists the logic of this inference, Socrates tries to make it more palatable by reversing the positions, saying he would not be worthy of dialectic if he were to contend that no form of knowledge is unlike any other even if some forms of knowledge were shown to be opposite. The two parties then agree that both pleasures and forms of knowledge are many and different.

What are we to make of this passage? Socrates points out that actual examples of pleasure differ in some respects. Protarchus grants this, but contends that the examples must be alike in one respect: they must all be pleasures. It would seem difficult to make an argument out of this, but Socrates is determined to. His point is that although pleasures differ in other respects than having a common property which enables us to designate them all with the single word "pleasure," yet Protarchus implies that all pleasant things are similar in another respect, namely that they are good (13A,B). This would

appear to be a contention which might either be true or false, but Socrates argues as if some pleasures must be bad if pleasures differ in any respect whatsoever. This is modified somewhat to mean that some pleasures must be bad if some are "opposed" to others (13C), which Socrates apparently thinks he proved by the examples given in 12C, D. Again Socrates seems to be arguing fallaciously. For if he means by "opposed," "opposed in respect to goodness," then he is right; but he can hardly think he has proven this. If he means by "opposed," "very different in some respect" (which is the case with the example of black and white (12E), then nothing follows so far as the goodness or badness of pleasure is concerned.

It is possible to give more importance and cogency to Socrates' position, however. First, it is worth noting that this passage stands as an introduction to the discussion of real dialectic. The entire method of dispute illustrated here is to be classed as childish, easy, and a hindrance to speculation (14D). The value of Socrates' argument must be taken to be largely negative. The major import of the passage (as develops immediately below) is to demonstrate the uselessness of declaring the obvious paradox that objects are at the same time one (in respect to one name or quality) and many (in respect to many qualities). This is an imitation dialectic, or eristic, which can never lead to useful results, even though it is not wrong in itself.

But the text of the passage implies that Plato also thought he was refuting some argument which the hedonist might adduce to prevent the application of dialectic at all to the problem of the good. Such an argument would be to the effect that since all pleasures are one (having only one "name"), they must also all be either good or bad. Here Socrates skips the step which would prove that pleasures must be good, because he wants merely to show that the oneness of the class of pleasures implies nothing as to whether or not the entire class is further characterized by some other quality. But from Aristotle we learn what the argument may have been. Eudoxus reasoned that all pains are bad and that therefore all pleasures are good (Nicomachean Ethics 1172b, 18-20). Socrates does not want to refute this with Speusippus' answer³ because he intends to reject that answer also (Philebus 51A), nor can he refute it by an analysis of pains and pleasures, because the hedonist's position is just that analysis is useless since the proof was independent of the type of pleasure involved. But, as Aristotle was later to object more explicitly, this "proof" is accomplished merely by assuming a definition which contains the desired conclusion to begin with.⁴ This type of argument,

³ Nicomachean Ethics 1173a, 5-9. Speusippus held that both pleasures and pains are bad.

⁴ Anal. Post. 92a, 20-27; Topics 147b, 17-25. cf. H. Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato, p. 37.

called ἔκ τοῦ ἐναντίου because it proceeded from the definition of the opposite, was apparently common in the Academy. Clearly it has no more validity than to argue directly that all pleasures are good, which is the conclusion for which proof is sought. To argue it directly could only be done by claiming that if members of a class are alike in one respect, they must be alike in others. Protarchus never actually says this, but Socrates implies that this is his contention (13A). Socrates makes Protarchus admit that some pleasures differ in some respects. "How will that damage my position?" Protarchus asks. "Because I shall point out," says Socrates, "that although they differ, you give them still another designation in common. For you say that all pleasant things are good."⁵

This argument is very similar to one discussed in the Sophist. The Stranger is attacking the problem of non-being and negative statements in general. Before coming to the solution, which involves certain distinctions in the meaning of the word "is" and the conditions under which the ideas can and cannot combine, he considers a point of view which, if accepted, would deny the possibility of any ideas combining.

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This translation of the passage at 13A shows that no revision of the text is necessary. Cf. Bury, The Philebus of Plato, p. 7, n.

This is the view that only one word can be applied to one thing (or class).

Anyone can take a hand in the game and at once object that many things cannot be one, nor one thing many; indeed they delight in forbidding us to speak of a man as 'good'; we must only speak of a good as good, and of the man as man (Sophist 251B).

This doctrine can be related to that of the hedonist in the Philebus in this way: if one word applies properly to one thing only, then if we find another word which applies to the same thing, we must assume the two words mean the same. This is exactly the way in which the hedonist's attitude is stated in Philebus 60A: "the two names (or words), 'good' and 'pleasant', are in some sense one, and of one nature."

Plato objects to this theory about words, not so much because it is paradoxical or because of the support it may seem to lend to hedonism, as because it denies the possibility of dialectic and of communion among the ideas. As Socrates argues in the Republic (505C), if we define the good as pleasure, we simply obliterate the distinction between good and bad in any ordinary sense of the words. Analysis becomes useless, and dialectic, the tool of rational investigation, loses its application. Unless we can make distinctions within classes, unless ideas can be "divided" in some sense,

philosophy will be idle.⁷ This point turns out to be of great importance in the development of the rest of the Philebus. The real issue is not between Socrates and some hedonistic theory, but between two elements in Platonism itself. This issue hinges on the question (shortly to be introduced explicitly in the Philebus) how ideas or universals, which are one and indivisible, can be divided. It may appear at this stage in the discussion that the problem is only whether the particulars which fall under the same universal can differ from one another; but it soon becomes apparent that if these differences are to be made accessible to analysis, then the particulars must be divisible into subclasses which correspond, of course, to other universals. Diaeresis is just the matter of determining the number of these universals and their relation to each other and to the more inclusive universals.

The other point which is adumbrated here and which gives a special importance to this introductory passage is this: if, as is quite clear, there are to be good and bad pleasures, and it is the task of dialectic to discriminate them and group them, then there will be classes of pleasures falling under the genus pleasure which will be bad. This means that there must be a corresponding idea or universal which stands for the class of

⁷ Protagoras 331D ff. remarks that all things resemble one another in some sense or other. But it is not fair to describe things as like which have some point alike, however small, or as unlike that have some point unlike.

bad pleasures (of course there may be several such classes and several such ideas). The Parmenides had suggested that it might turn out to be the case that there were ideas of inferior or bad things, but the problem was dismissed there. In other late dialogues divisions are frequently made (such as those which classify the sophist in the Sophist) where one or more "parts" of the original idea are ideas of bad things. But it is here in the Philebus that the issue must be met, because here the explicit task is to find a basis for and a definition of the good. And in the earlier dialogues, the ideas were often held up as the source and origin of all value. The ideas were considered as ideal patterns the goodness of which particulars could share only in so far as the particulars resembled those patterns. Once it is admitted, however, that there can be ideas of bad things, it will no longer do to say that a thing is good simply in so far as it resembles an idea -- any idea; nor will it do to say that knowledge of universals is a knowledge of ends and therefore, without further ado, of the good. If some universals stand for good things and some for bad, then the mere fact of resembling a universal is no guarantee of goodness, and some other way of defining goodness must be found. This other way it is the central task of the Philebus to discover.

It must be remarked, finally, that Socrates has not up to this point shown that pleasure is not the good, nor does he assume he has proven it yet. All he has shown is that if the hedonistic thesis can be proven a priori, or if it is taken as

a definition, then we must abandon all analysis. But at the same time he has also indicated that neither will the theory of ideas provide a simple solution to the question at hand.

3. It is always possible, Socrates continues, to create apparent paradoxes by saying that something is both one and many. Protarchus, for instance, is one person, just himself; he is also tall, heavy, and dark complexioned, so he is many. And of course he is tall relative to Socrates but short relative to someone else. And so forth. To make such statements about particular objects, like Protarchus, which are generated and pass away, is childish and easy and should be discouraged, Socrates says (14D). But when we make such statements about universals like man, ox, beauty and the good, then there is zealous interest and controversy (15A).

It has been maintained that the kind of statements ridiculed here were once very important to Plato.⁸ Phaedo 102B-103A makes the paradoxes which arise by predicating tallness and smallness of one and the same particular one basis for the postulation of ideas. Republic 523A-526B calls the relation of the one to the many the basis for dialectical education. Jackson takes this apparent shift in attitude as proving that Plato changed his mind radically concerning

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Jackson, Journal of Philology, Vol. X, p. 264.

the nature of ultimate truth -- that it was no longer to be found in the hypostatized world of ideas.

I believe it is true that the Philebus represents a somewhat different attitude towards universals than the Republic and Phaedo⁹ but I also think it is dubious that the passage under scrutiny is so decisive in indicating the complexion of that difference. Here Plato is merely objecting to any undue emphasis on the paradoxes themselves. This certainly does not mean that the solution offered by the ideas is to be rejected, but merely that once found, the problem ceases to be very interesting. This is not because all problems involved in the relation between ideas and the individuals are solved, but because Plato felt that the ideas, no matter what their status, did solve the paradoxes of the "one and many" in regard to particulars. The Parmenides contains the first expression of relative indifference towards this problem. In that dialogue, Socrates considers it "not particularly remarkable" that one material object can have opposite predicates at different times or in different respects; this is explained, he says, by the theory of ideas.¹⁰

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Ibid., p. 266.

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Parmenides 128E-129E. Cf. also Sophist 251B, C. Cornford comments (Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 297): "...the old question how one thing can have many names is distinguished from the problem of the interrelations of Forms and dismissed as already solved by the theory of Forms, though the precise nature of this participation may remain obscure."

What our present passage does show concerning Plato's changed attitude towards the ideas is, I think, this: in the earlier dialogues Plato had used the paradoxes to demonstrate the inferiority of the passing world and the superiority of the realm of ideas where such paradoxes could not occur. In the Phaedo, Symposium, Republic and other middle dialogues the idea was treated as an icon, a perfect pattern, which was morally, ontologically and aesthetically superior to particulars as well as, of course, universal, changeless and immaterial. When the idea was considered as an icon, it was hard not to think of it as a thing, a very wonderful particular which was one more denotatum of some general word. But the paradox of being, for instance, both beautiful and ugly could never happen (Plato thought) to Absolute Beauty as it could to a particular beautiful object. Absolute beauty is always beautiful (Phaedo 100C, D). By the same token, two individual objects could never be really equal in length; but Absolute Equality is always and perfectly equal (Phaedo 74D). By the time he came to write the Sophist Plato realized that this argument would not serve to differentiate the ideas from particulars after all. For an idea could participate in opposites also. Any idea was the same as itself, for instance, but different from any other idea. As the Parmenides had hinted they might (129E, 130A), the ideas were now exhibiting the same embarrassing paradoxes as particulars. Nevertheless, the ideas remained the only satisfactory explanation of the paradoxes

regarding sensible objects. More important, the paradoxes with respect to the ideas could be mitigated if the ideas were not regarded as glorified particulars which could never be divided in any sense (the Sophist showed this). With this discovery, a crucial gap began to open between the function of the ideas as the immediate source of all value and the function of the ideas in the solution of the problems of knowledge.

Although, then, there were still ambiguities about the relation of idea to particular, the "miracles" about the things of becoming were no longer of great intrinsic interest compared to the problems regarding the interconnections of the ideas. Plato's purpose now was to demonstrate the possibility of "dividing" the ideas, not among particulars (the problem of the Parmenides), but among themselves. Where at first he had insisted on the oneness of the idea as a solution to the paradoxes concerning individuals, now the problem was to preserve this oneness while permitting diaeresis or division, which requires that ideas be "divisible" and have "parts." Where early dialogues like the Euthyphro and Meno stressed the unity of the idea exhibited in different particulars, Philebus 12D stresses the variation of kinds under a single concept. Where Republic 505C argued that particular pleasures must be condemned because they can be both good and bad, and hence belong to the changing world, the emphasis here is rather on the fact that the universal, pleasure, must be

divisible into subordinate classes, some good and some bad.¹¹

The solution of the question at hand, whether the good is pleasure, requires that ideas be divisible. The difficulties of the type involved in saying Protarchus is one and also great and small, heavy and light concern a particular (Protarchus), while the real problem concerns a universal (pleasure). A universal can "contain" contradictory particulars or contradictory species, because a class of objects, grouped by one characteristic, can include without contradiction units or classes denoted by another characteristic; whereas the particular cannot be said to contain differing characteristics, but to exhibit them, at different times, or in different relations. The problem in the two cases is different. In the case of pleasure, the problem is whether or not the examples which are legitimate cases of pleasure, and which notably differ in certain respects, can nevertheless exhibit some further characteristic in common, namely goodness. The problem in the case of Protarchus is whether the individual can exhibit one relation to one thing and another dissimilar relation to another thing at the same time. The answer to the second question is easy, even trivial, but the answer to the first is difficult, Plato felt. Some of the main problems of the Philebus therefore already begin to emerge as those of the whole late Platonic philosophy: how to maintain the

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Vide J. Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. 137 ff.

epistemology of the theory of ideas while ridding it of its ontological perplexities; how to re-establish the Platonic ethics without direct reliance upon the theory of ideas; how to validate the possibility and function of the dialectic and show its relevance to the discovery of ethical truth.

4. The difficulties Plato is interested in are not the paradoxes concerning particulars, then, but rather the nature of universals and their relation to each other. In one of the most compact and problematic passages in the Philebus, Socrates is made to summarize these difficulties. He is discussing such "unities" ($\mu\omicron\nu\acute{\alpha}\delta\omicron\varsigma$) as man, ox, beauty and the good, and he asks three questions about them:

- (1) Do they really exist?
- (2) In what sense can these unities, each being a unit apart from all others, admitting of no change or generation, yet all be one?
- (3) How is the unity related to the unlimited sensible particulars?¹²

The first and third questions are definite and need little explanation. The third is elaborated in the text into two subdivisions: are we to say that the monads are divided into parts which are distributed among the particulars, or are we to say that each monad is present in its entirety in

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This purports to be an accurate translation of Philebus 15B except for the third question, which has been simplified. Its full meaning is given, verbatim, in the second sentence which follows. Some of the considerations which have led to this interpretation follow.

each particular? This latter, Socrates adds, seems the most ridiculous of all. In any case, the problems raised in the third question are clearly those which were raised, but not solved, in the Parmenides.

The second question has proven the most difficult to understand.¹³ The text may well be corrupt. Yet none of the suggested emendations has yielded results appreciably more transparent than the original. Jackson reads the entire passage as if it comprised only two questions, the second being "how are we to suppose these monads -- if they are each of them eternally, immutably, one, neither coming into being, nor ceasing to be -- severally to retain this, their unity, and yet, either by division or by multiplication, to be distributed amongst a plurality of particulars?"¹⁴

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Bury, The Philebus of Plato, p. 13, n.5; p. 215 ff.

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Quoted in Bury, The Philebus of Plato, p. 215. Jackson expands this view in the Journal of Philology, Vol. X, pp. 262 ff. Hackforth (Plato's Examination of Pleasure, p. 20) accepts the same general interpretation as Jackson, believing that these are just two sentences, and that the second concerns, somehow, the relation of the monads and particulars. Yet his translation is so absurdly awkward that with hardly a change it can better be taken as intending three questions than two. I give Hackforth's translation of the second (and, I think, third) question: "How we are to conceive that each of them [the monads], being always one and the same and subject neither to generation nor destruction, nevertheless is, to begin with, most assuredly this single unity and yet subsequently comes to be in the infinite number of things that come into being -- an identical unity being thus found simultaneously in unity and in plurality." It is at once clear that what comes after the dash here adds nothing to what has been said, the sentence having already twice mentioned the unity and oneness of the monads and once the fact of their many examples. It is far simpler, I believe, to assume that the second question proposes some difficulty about the unity of the monads quite apart from particulars; it is entirely clear, of course, that the last part of the passage does deal with the problem of participation. The trouble is ~~that~~ if there is a

This interpretation requires a straining of the text, since μετὰ δὲ τούτῳ can be explained only if more than two points are intended. My greatest objection to Jackson's interpretation, however, is that it does not raise the problem of the relation of the monads to one another; yet the passage leading up to the questions, and the sequel, both require this as a major consideration. Since neither the first nor third question is directly about the interrelations of the ideas, it seems likely a priori that the second is. G. E. Moore¹⁵ believes that the second question does raise this point, but he is rather vague concerning the translation. The interpretation given here, which does not require an extraordinary pressure on the text, is simply this: how can these monads be one? We assume them to be completely separate, to exist without change or modification; but in doing this we attribute another predicate to them, namely unity or oneness. This at once raises the question of the communion of the ideas. If all ideas mingle with unity (or the Same, as in the Sophist) then are they any longer one, since they have taken on the character of a second idea?¹⁶ This is precisely the question which is important in the Philebus. Is the idea of pleasure a monad in the sense that it can never be analyzed or divided into two or more species? We have rejected this question

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Also quoted in Bury, The Philebus of Plato, pp. 215, 216.

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Just this point is raised in criticism of Parmenides in Sophist 244B ff. The argument there is that if the All is One, then it is not one because there are at least two, namely the all and the one.

with regard to the individuals as childish; the important thing to know is whether pleasure itself can be divided, not into particulars, but into other monads (such as good pleasures and bad pleasures). The first question and the third question raised in Philebus 15B are not relevant to the solution of this problem. It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that there is a second question, and that it raises the one point which is most central and vital to the further development of dialectic.

The ostensible reason for raising these questions at this point is, Socrates says, to distinguish problems which are "intensely interesting" and about which there is controversy (15A), from the earlier problems concerning the one and many which are "common property" and which almost everyone agrees should be disregarded (14D). But once asked, does Plato intend to provide the answers? Socrates remarks after listing the problems that a poor solution will cause the greatest embarrassment, while a good solution is a profound satisfaction (15C), and agrees with Protarchus that it is "our first duty to thresh this matter out." Jackson feels that this passage would be pointless unless Plato meant to solve the difficulties mentioned,¹⁷ and Stenzel is of the same opinion.¹⁸

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Jackson, Journal of Philology, Vol. X, p. 267.

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Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. 140.

Grote, on the other hand, sees that these problems are the same as those raised in the Parmenides, but he cannot find the answers in the Philebus or elsewhere.¹⁹ Certainly it was not the habit of Plato to answer all the questions he propounded. What we must ask is whether a solution is necessary for the discussion to proceed. Unfortunately, no clear answer to this question is possible, partly, of course, because it is not too clear what would constitute a solution. What happens, in fact, is this. The first question, whether the monads exist, is never explicitly discussed. I doubt that Plato ever seriously wondered whether universals exist -- the problem rather was the nature of the universals and their manner of existence. That he assumes their existence in some sense here is entirely clear because he assumes that the paradoxes concerning particulars are solved, and Plato held that this solution depended upon the existence of the ideas. The matter of the nature of the universals and their manner of existence is partly raised by the second two questions. And, if I am right, a rather revolutionary adjustment in the nature of the universals does emerge from the Philebus. This adjustment,

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G. Grote, Plato, Vol. II. p. 558. Shorey is partly right when he says that "...Plato does not state that these metaphysical problems must be solved before we can proceed. He merely says that we must come to such an understanding about them as will prevent the puzzle of the one and the many from confusing our inquiry. We have no reason to look for a solution of them in the subsequent course of the argument." (What Plato Said, p. 316). But this last sentence denies any real connection between the parts of the dialogue, and it is directly contradicted by the passage quoted above (15C, D).

as I have hinted, involves seeing more clearly than before that a universal is not a particular, that it does not have the characteristics of a special particular, that it is divisible by diaeresis, and that it cannot simply solve ethical problems by being a pattern or model, at least in any literal sense.

The second question, which I interpret as concerning the relationship of the ideas to one another, is a crucial one for the Philebus, and it is solved, or at least partly solved, by the new analysis of the ideas suggested above. The Sophist had already dealt with the problem of the inter-relationship of a selected few ideas, but not explicitly with the question of how such relationships are determined in the case of division. Nevertheless, the solution which the Sophist offers is applicable to division, and the Philebus makes this application; how, we shall see presently. In any case, there can be no doubt that Plato thinks the problem of the unit ideas being divided is being dealt with in the Philebus, and that he believes a solution sufficient to justify using diaeresis has been found.

The third question, concerning the relationship of universals and particulars, it is generally thought is nowhere solved in the Philebus or elsewhere in Plato. Since philosophers are by no means agreed upon any general analysis of the problem to this day, it would be pretty astonishing if they were to hold that Plato solved it. On the other hand, I

believe the Philebus has much to say on the question, and that some of Plato's earlier difficulties are solved, or solutions are at least suggested. Some of Plato's trouble with the ideas sprang from the assumption that ideas are like the particulars which participate in them: the idea Beauty is beautiful, for instance, and ideal Tallness is tall. This notion introduces the "third man" problem, as Plato saw before Aristotle did; on the other hand, the solution does not have to be so drastic as Aristotle's. Plato realized that the solution to this problem lay in recognizing the generality of universals and their utter difference from particulars -- it did not (at least necessarily) require some form of nominalism. Another closely related source of difficulty with the theory of ideas arose from the assumption that ideas are icons or patterns from which particulars are copied, but which are superior to particulars. As long as Plato held to this view the ideas could not solve the epistemological difficulties they were invented to deal with, for the ideas would not be divisible as classes or meanings (or however we wish to interpret universals), and there could be no ideas of bad things. In addition, the "third man" trouble would persist. But these perplexities again would be mitigated if the ideas were no longer considered as patterns (at least in the same sense as before) and were no longer considered as realer or better than particulars. This last remark, it will be found, can only be asserted with great reservations. Plato never

ceased to believe that ideas exist as the objects of knowledge, nor that they constitute the objects of the best knowledge. And it is by no means certain that he was entirely willing to give up the conception of the ideas as the source of reality and goodness in the world, as even a casual glance at the Timaeus will show. My point will rather be this; that Plato saw the difficulties involved in trying to make the ideas both universals and moral patterns at one and the same time, and he was willing to grant that this might be an error. The Philebus, I take it, is an attempt to show that philosophic method, based on the dialectic, does not have to rely on the questionable aspects of the theory of ideas, and that a rationalistic ethics can be built up without depending on ideal patterns which are also universals as a source of goodness.

The purpose of this brief indication of the attitude which I think Plato took towards the ideas in the Philebus is to make it plain that the three questions raised at Philebus 15B are not by any means ignored in the sequel. Plato saw these questions as problems, and he set out to deal with them as well as he could. To claim that he found definitive solutions would be to claim too much; but to claim that he ignored the problems or left them where he found them would be to claim far too little.

When we come to consider why Plato felt bound to raise, and try to answer, these objections to his theory of ideas, it is interesting to notice that there is evidence that Eudoxus

and Speusippus, whose ethical doctrines may be represented in the Philebus, are also among those who are referred to by Socrates as being intensely interested in the advanced form of the problem of the one and many (15A). Eudoxus held that particulars exist because of the mixture of ideas in them. This view is attacked in the Parmenides, and is questioned in the third problem stated in Philebus 15B. We know that in an early work now lost, On the Ideas, Aristotle used the very arguments of the Parmenides to combat the same theory; and Aristotle specifically mentioned Eudoxus.²⁰ This is some evidence that Plato was consciously attacking Eudoxus in the Parmenides and that he has him in mind in the Philebus.

When Plato asks whether the ideas exist, and whether they can mingle with one another, he may be thinking of Speusippus, who abandoned the ideas as separately existing entities apparently because he felt that to assume them would eliminate all possibility of dialectic.²¹ According to Aristotle²² the difficulty which Speusippus thought he saw in Plato's theory of ideas was that if the ideas are discrete, there is no way for the species to be related to the genus.

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This is known through Alexander's In Aristoteleis Metaphysica Commentaria 96, 39-94, 24 which recounts Aristotle's arguments against Eudoxus' version of the relation of ideas to particulars. Cf. H. Cherniss, The Riddle of the Early Academy, pp. 78, 79.

21 Cf. Cherniss, The Riddle of the Early Academy, pp. 38-41.

22 Metaphysics 1091a, b; 1072b; 1086a; 1090a.

If the "animality" in the ideas of man and horse is the same (idea of animal), then either the ideas of man and horse are the same, or the idea of animal must be separate from itself. Moreover, the idea of animal would simultaneously have contradictory characteristics.²³ In Topics 143b 11-32 Aristotle outlines this argument as a "stock method of disproving the theory of separate ideas by showing that the existence of such ideas would destroy the possibility of diaeresis and definition."²⁴ Now this is the very objection to the ideas which Plato answers in the Sophist and Philebus. The answer consists in saying that (to use the example given) the idea of Animal has parts, two of which are the ideas of Man and Horse. These two parts are not the same as each other or the same as Animal, but neither is the idea of Animal separate from itself, for its animality does not differ from one part to another. The ideas of Animal, Man and Horse are permanently "blended" without, however, being identified. When we say man is an animal, we do not negate the ideas of man and animal, but assert (according to Plato) that the idea of Animal pervades, or is blended with, the idea of Man. Speusippus' argument applies only if we think of the idea as a concrete entity, the "parts" of which are conceived as parts of its body rather than parts of its meaning or intention. This kind of existence and nature I believe Plato

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This argument is taken from Metaphysics 1039a 24-b
 19. Cf. Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato, Vol. 1, p.43.

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Cf. Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato, Vol. 1, pp. 5-7; 40.

was willing to forgo for the ideas, at least tentatively.

This may show that not only the ethical doctrines of the Philebus were common matters for dispute in the Academy, but also the metaphysical doctrines. The further fact that Speusippus and Eudoxus had interests in both fields suggests a possible connection between their ethical theories and metaphysics in turn. Speusippus, we know, was interested in maintaining dialectic as a device for arguing, among other things, that both pain and pleasure are opposite from the neutral state which he considered the good, a view which is discussed further on in the Philebus (44B). This he maintained against Eudoxus, who held that since pleasure is one, and is opposite to pain which is bad, all pleasure is good. From this Eudoxus reasoned that any particular which was pleasant by reason of being a "part" of the idea of pleasure, would also have to be good. In effect, this would be to deny the possibility of dialectic.

If these connections and arguments were explicitly in Plato's mind when he wrote the Philebus then we may interpret the dialogue as attempting to strike a mean not only between two opposed ethical doctrines but also between two views about the theory of ideas. We know that Plato rejected the view represented by Eudoxus. Like Speusippus, Plato wanted to retain dialectic as the most important method at the disposal of the philosopher. Perhaps Plato wished, then, to meet Speusippus' objections, so that dialectic might be retained

to defeat the hedonism of Eudoxus; but at the same time he did not wish to abandon his conviction that in some important sense, universals exist. Some alteration, he may have agreed, was necessary to meet Speusippus' objections. The trouble was that this alteration left the ideas powerless to explain (simply, anyway) the source of value in the world. The argument against hedonism was thus strengthened by keeping the dialectic intact -- but at the same time the positive grounds in favor of Plato's rationalistic ethical views were apparently destroyed.

If this analysis is accurate, then there is additional evidence for taking the Philebus as dealing consciously with a dispute between Eudoxus and Speusippus. At the same time, it increases our reason for believing in the inner unity and interdependence of the parts of the Philebus. For if I am right, the partial compromise with a worldly ethics which Plato makes in the Philebus was forced by the revision of the theory of ideas, and this revision in turn was forced by a desire to meet difficulties which he felt to be important. The end result is still idealism, both in ethics and epistemology, but it is an idealism definitely tempered compared to the uncompromising death-morality of the Phaedo, and if neither the hedonism of Eudoxus nor the nominalism of Speusippus are finally accepted, yet neither are the exaggerated anti-hedonism of Speusippus nor the exaggerated realism of Eudoxus. The Philebus is thus a curious double compromise between the opposing views.

And it should be strongly interesting to us because it shows so clearly just what in Platonism Plato was most anxious to preserve when the chips were down.

5. The one and the many, says Socrates, which are utilized by reason (ὁπὸ λόγων), always circulate everywhere through all our discussions, both now and in the past (15D). This is an ageless characteristic of the reasoning faculty itself in us. Because this is the case, there is an irresistible temptation to make trivial use of the one and the many, and any young man discovering this is apt joyously to impose his foolish arguments on anyone he can get hold of, rolling things up and kneading them into one, and then unrolling and dividing them (15E-16A). This is a reference to the "childish" form of argument dismissed earlier (15D) because it dealt only with perishable things.

Now however, Socrates is invited to find "some better road," and this he says is "that which I have always loved, although it has many times left me alone and confused" (16B, C). This method is a "gift of the gods to men,"²⁵ given to men by a divine source just as fire was given men by Prometheus. To it we owe all the inventions of art.²⁶ The ancients, who were

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Phaedrus 266B also stresses the fact that dialectic is a "divine" art.

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Cf. Protagoras 320D ff. Protagoras tells how the gods molded all creatures from a mixture of earth and fire and the elements compounded from these. All animals were given some equipment for survival; but when they came to man, none was left. So Prometheus stole wisdom in the arts and fire (321D) and made man a partaker of a divine portion (Θείας μοίρας - 322A).

nearer the gods, handed this tradition down to us: that all things which are ever said to be are derived from the one and the many, and have in them the limit and unlimited as part of their nature. Here follows a description of the method itself:

Since things are ordered in this way (as a result of being derived from the one and many), we must always assume that there is one idea (μία ἰδέα) of everything, and must hunt it out -- for we shall discover it there -- and if we lay hold of this one, then we must look in the one for two (if this is correct; if not, for three or another number); and these we must treat again in the same way, until from the original one (κατ'ἀρχὴς ἓν) not only do we see that there is one and many and infinite, but how many (ὅσους). And we must not bring the idea of the infinite (ἀπείροσ ἰδέαν) to plurality until we survey its number between the unlimited and the one. Then, and not until then, we may permit the one of each of everything (τὸ ἓν ἑκάστων τῶν πάντων) to pass on without restriction into the unlimited (16D, E).

This crucial passage contains much which is very obscure, and unfortunately the examples which are shortly to follow serve in many ways to enhance the confusion. Nevertheless, certain points do emerge even at first glance.

a. The language of the passage is of the sort which Plato often uses when he is speaking of important and difficult matters and is afraid of being taken too literally. He calls the dialectical method "the gift of the Gods" (or, he modestly says, so it seems to him); it came to man by Prometheus ("or someone like him"); and "men of old" have passed on this gift in the form of a "saying." The information is third hand at best then, and even at that is in epigrammatic form. Plato could hardly have been more careful to warn us

against taking the actual words too precisely.

b. What is described here is a method of "teaching, learning and investigating," and it is the "instrument through which every discovery ever made in the arts and sciences has been brought to light" (16C). Both this and the phrasing of the account itself make it entirely clear that the method deals with and yields understanding of the world of particulars. It is quite clear that the "ones" or "ideas" are discovered in the context of the many particulars and help us, somehow, to learn about and investigate the world, although how this is to take place is not yet clear.

c. There is a sudden and unexpected mention of the "limit" and "unlimited"; these are somehow linked with the one and the many, and like the one and the many, are to be found in all things. Later on the reason for this will emerge, and it will be found that the limit and unlimited are part of a general scheme of classification which embraces all the existing objects of the world. But even if we did not know this in advance, there are unmistakable hints that the "one idea" and the "many" which we are to find in it are worth looking for because the world is constituted in a certain way. For instance, "everything which is ever said to be is derived from the one and the many." I do not think that we can take this so literally as to mean that the visible universe is caused or created by the ideas, but it surely does mean that everything participates in some sense in the one and

the many. And let us be clear that this does not refer to the "paradoxes" that everything is one because it is itself, but many because it has many characteristics. It refers to the fact that everything we seek to investigate falls under some generic form, and that there is a discoverable set of species into which that form can be divided. There is thus a structure to the created universe which dialectic can trace out.²⁷ Why this is so will come later; right here it is merely stated as a fact: "because things are ordered in this way" (that is, are derived from the one and the many in the sense just given) we can always be sure that there is a generic form concealed in whatever we are investigating ("for we shall discover it there"). The method the Gods have handed down is not arbitrary. It owes its success to the fact that both dialectical discourse²⁸ and the created world are pre-evaded by the one and the many, the one of the genera and the many of the species. According to Plato, the dialectical method would not work if there were not monads (genera) and species to be discovered in the world. For such genera and species are, of

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Vid. Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. xxxiii.

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Cf. 15D: "...we get this identity of the one and the many cropping up everywhere as the result of the sentences we utter; in every single sentence ever uttered, in the past and in the present, there it is. What we are dealing with is a problem that will assuredly never cease to exist; this is not its first appearance; rather it is, in my view, something incidental to sentences themselves..."

course, universals, and hence fixed and unchanging. To the extent (and only to the extent) that there is evidence for them in the world can we understand the world. And to the extent (and only to the extent) that there is evidence for them in the world do we know that creation is not completely aimless and unintelligible. This is what I believe Plato's attitude to be, as I shall show in the sequel; I do not suggest that analysis would not disclose a basic confusion in his thought.

Close reading of the passage before us will reveal two of the three aspects of the method which dialectic uses to discover the truth. The analytic aspect of the method (diaeresis) receives the most emphasis here because it is in this dimension that the distinction between the childish and true form of the art of dialectic becomes clearest. It is possible, however, even in this highly condensed account, to find collection also described. Combination is not yet mentioned, and it is in fact only implicit in what follows. This will be explained presently.

6. Collection. The full dialectical method as outlined in the Philebus is intended to help us deal with any subject matter; it is capable of defining a species, classifying the species in a genus, defining a genus, or of leading us to the practical application of any special discipline. But it accomplishes all of these ends in the same way, by a complete investigation of a whole field of knowledge. We

learn about the parts, according to this method, only by mastering the whole. In the Philebus we are interested in understanding and defining a whole art, namely the art of living the good life, so that the lesser uses of dialectic are incidental. But it is the fact that dialectic, as here defined, must always start with the "one idea," the genus which embraces the whole subject, that determines the starting point of the method in every case.

No matter what it is we are interested in, then, we must begin by searching for the most general single idea which corresponds to the area of our interest or includes it. The nature of things, Socrates says, assures us that there always will be such a general single idea which embraces the subject of our investigation; our first act must therefore be to "hunt it out" so that we can "lay hold of it." This process applies whether it is a minimum species, a major subspecies, or a genus which we want to study; or the interrelations between them, which can be expressed either in theoretic or practical terms (this will be explained later); no matter what we want to define or know about, we must begin by finding the genus of the whole.

There are at least two obvious practical difficulties here, even if we grant from the start that there are a finite number of genera and species and that these exist both eternally and yet also embodied in the created universe waiting to be "hunted out." The first difficulty is that there must be many

(having granted there are not infinite) genera which include the same individuals and even classes of individuals. How are we to know which one to choose? The answer to this question seems to lie in the nature of our interest. When we investigate horses with a general biological interest, the genus is animal; when we investigate horses with war in mind we might classify them as weapons (species: live; sub-species: non-human, etc.). Plato could of course claim there was only one genus under which a given species or particular fell, but the classifications which he actually makes belie this. I do not believe that Plato had any practical, unambiguous solution to this question, nor do I see how there could be one. Let us grant, then, that when Plato tells us to look for the one idea, he means the one idea which is pertinent to our particular investigation and interest.

Even so, another problem arises. How general must our genus, our one idea, be to rate as a starting point? Obviously there is always a more general idea than the one we have until we reach the idea of everything. But if we are always to go back to it, then why does Plato speak as if there were different single ideas which we should hunt out in each case; indeed, what hunting would we need to do if we knew that every investigation would start from the idea of everything? One answer to this is that as a practical technique Plato takes only as general an idea as seems necessary for the adequate study of his subject. This is not a logical

rule, and there is no way to formulate it; but I am afraid there is no better. In the Philebus we know that the object of our search, the good life, is the subject of a fairly well defined science, and this is often the case, as in politics, shipbuilding, city-planning and so forth. In these cases Plato assumes as the genus the subject matter of the art to be studied. In many actual cases, arts or classes of arts (using "art" here in the broadest possible sense) provide Plato with his classifications. There is a special reason for this, as I shall show. At the moment it is worth remarking that arts emphasize purposes, and the essence or real definition which the Platonic idea enshrines is frequently couched in teleological terms.

The second answer to our objection that there is no way to decide how large a generalization to start with is that Plato quite frequently in the late dialogues did finally take the genus "everything" as his starting point; there are obvious examples in the Sophist, Timaeus, Philebus and Laws. The advice to look for the "one idea" of whatever we may be studying is thus often an invitation to start with the "one idea" which embraces all reality.

We have made finding the one idea sound as if it were merely a matter of deciding the scope of the subject to be studied; actually of course, "hunting out" the one idea is harder than that because it involves finding the "essence" of that unity. Plato does not tell us here what the essence

is or how exactly we are to go about finding it, but the examples of the method which follow, the information from other late dialogues, and above all, the whole approach and purpose of the early dialogues, give us some concept of what is intended. This does not mean, unfortunately, that no problems are left as to the nature of what we are calling collection, but only that these problems are not peculiar to the Philebus. I do not intend, therefore, to try to give any new solutions or analysis of Plato's theory of definition and essence in general but shall content myself with a few remarks which are especially pertinent to the Philebus. For the rest, the nature of the actual application of collection in the Philebus will be examined as we go on.

a. It would be too strong to say that the early dialogues are concerned with nothing but collection, but the remark is helpful if it assists us in seeing that collection means the entire process of defining or grasping the simple true nature or essence of the thing (or concept or idea) under examination. The word "simple" is inserted here to mark a distinction between Plato's attitude in the early dialogue and in the Philebus. In the early dialogues, a very large part of the task (possibly all of it) was concerned just with finding the important or "true" nature of bravery or holiness or virtue. In the Philebus this is still necessary, but the complete understanding of the unity to be studied is only revealed when its internal structure has been

analyzed (i.e., the pattern of species and subspecies contained in it shown). In other words, we can find a definition which determines the genus class without really knowing everything about it. Its essence is divisible, and the divisions must be made manifest before we have mastered the subject. That is not the end of the matter either; but the point is that collection (the purpose and end product of which is finding the "one form" we seek) is no longer conceived as a satisfactory conclusion to philosophical research.

b. It becomes fairly clear in the Philebus that what we want when we seek to define the essence of any idea (whether of a species or a genus) is a condition or criterion by which we can judge whether or not something belongs to that idea. It would be unhistorical to say that what Plato seeks is a class concept because Plato did not distinguish clearly between classes and properties, nor even always, as we have seen, between these and ideal particulars. And it would be unhistorical even if Plato made these distinctions, because his conception of division meant that he did not differentiate between two classes one of which had as members species and another^{of} which had as members all the particulars which fell under those species.

c. Once we face the fact that there are genuine ambiguities (from our point of view) in Plato's notion of the one generic form, we need not trifle with unreal problems concerning his meaning. In particular, we can now deal with

the question what "collection" involves. It is, as the Philebus says, a matter of hunting out the one form in the area of our interest. This I take to be identical with the process described in the Sophist as preceding division; before dialectic advances to division, we must first "discern clearly one form everywhere extended through many" (Sophist 253D). And this, as Cornford points out,²⁹ is the "preliminary process of Collection" described in Phaedrus 265D as "taking a synoptic survey of widely scattered forms and bringing them into a single form."

The question whether the genus is to be interpreted as a class of species or of particulars has been hotly debated; whether, that is, what the single idea brings together is what is common to the particulars that fall under it, or what is common to the species that fall under it.³⁰ The answer is, I think, that for Plato's purposes it did not matter which, and he really thought of both as being much the same thing. This

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Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 267.

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Ibid., p. 186 holds that collection "is wholly confined to the world of Forms." Stenzel, though perhaps less certainly, agrees (Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. xvi). Hackforth (Plato's Examination of Pleasure, pp. 142, 143) states that "It seems simplest to conclude that Plato means us always to think of the Forms mentioned in a collection (e.g. the various kinds gathered together into $\delta\omega\kappa\rho\iota\tau\eta\kappa\eta\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta\eta$ at Sophist 226B-C) as reached by a previous Collection of particulars, since it is in fact, according to the Phaedrus doctrine, only thus that they can be reached..." Philebus 16C-D he considers to be "ambiguous on this point."

may seem pretty peculiar when we reflect that Plato drew such a violent distinction between particulars and ideas; but reflection shows that this is not really the issue at all. Plato is interested here in finding the common form; it does not matter too much how we find it. The process is often quite elaborate, as we shall see. In any case, what we seek is general, not particular. If scanning particulars will lead us to see what is common to them, good. If scanning species will lead us to see what is common to them, also good; in both cases we end up in the same place since Plato thought of the genus as containing, ultimately, the features common both to the species and the individuals (as well as any sub-species, of course).³¹ A further consideration which leads to the same conclusion is this: it is often quite vague in any particular case just how Plato regards the collection of cases which are said to be contained in the single form. Plato very seldom actually mentions particular cases. What he will say is "now let us take pleasure (or pleasures); some are of the body and some of the mind." Here pleasures of the body and mind are two species of the genus pleasure; yet we often get the impression that this is a quick way of rounding up particulars.

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An objection to this view which might be offered by quoting the Republic to the effect that the dialectic "begins and ends" with ideas would only make explicit the fact that the dialectic of the Republic comprises but part of what we are calling dialectic here.

Or if this seems clearly a matter of collecting species, consider the "pleasure of the wise man who rejoices in his wisdom." This is of course still a type of pleasure, not a particular case; but it contains few enough cases to give the impression of particularity. In any event, one thing is clear; the infima species must be collected from particulars, or it would not be an infima species. Therefore we must consider that Plato conceives of collection as including the discovery of the common element both in lower forms and in particulars.

d. We still have described the process of finding the common form or idea only in vague or metaphorical language; we must "search for it," "hunt it out" or "lay hold of it." Now we must ask how this is to be done. There is certainly no one way to go about it, just as there is no one place to look. Since the early dialogues are largely concerned with finding and defining some universal, any method which is used in them is available here. The Philebus adds nothing important to this phase of the method; we are not bound then, to explain in detail the Socratic devices by which a universal is approached. In general, what is often called elenchus is most frequently used. This is a technique of question and answer by which a proposed definition or statement is tested both for self-consistency and for consistency with postulates accepted by both parties. What is to be tested is, in other words, taken as a hypothesis in order to see what the consequences would be if it were true.

The testing uses the obvious logical devices; the syllogism, sorites, reductio ad absurdum, and so on. Direct disproof can be effected always by quoting a contrary case; this is often done.

There are some questions which one might raise concerning the use of the elenchus for what we have called collection. First, it might be objected that what elenchus tests must be a statement or something which we can put as a statement, whereas what we are looking for is an idea or common form. Part of the answer is that for Plato every statement of importance is about some idea. This is not enough however, for every statement about a form is not one which defines its essential character. We must grant, therefore, that the elenchus can be used for other purposes than finding the "one form." But when we are looking for an idea, what we want, as we noted, is a definition of its essence. This may mean some sort of statement of identity (as, "the good for man is pleasure") or it may be a listing of criteria by which we can identify all those and just those cases which fall within the scope of the idea. But in any case, "finding" the idea means being able to make a true statement which gives the essence of the idea. Therefore elenchus can test whether or not we have found the idea.

Second, it may be objected that collection is a matter of scrutinizing particulars or species in order to see the common element, whereas the elenchus is a matter of testing

possible hypotheses about what that common element is. But how do we test the hypothesis? The main way is to note whether the cases which it would include are cases which we mutually agree come under the idea. If we discover that our criteria for defining the scope of the idea include cases which should fall outside, then the hypothesis is wrong; if we discover that there are cases which the criteria exclude which should be included, we reject the hypothesis. In either event, the testing is done by looking at the cases; and this is all that collection requires. The process may be more complicated, and it very frequently is when additional premisses are introduced. Probably it could always be shown that scrutiny of the particulars or the species took place at some juncture in the process. But rather than try to prove this, I am willing to grant that there might be arguments where the essence of an idea is arrived at by some other means; I would therefore extend the meaning of collection to include any such possible argument where the outcome is to discover the essence of the generic idea.

A final objection, and a serious one, to the use of elenchus for finding the one idea, is that as a testing procedure it is only decisive as a disproof. Discovery of contradictory cases can show that a hypothesis is wrong, and discovery of very many confirming cases can make a hypothesis very probable, but no number of cases can make it certain. Plato's method is suitable for getting only probable results,

while his epistemology demands certainty as an answer. Unfortunately, I do not think there is any good answer to this question. Professor Robinson, in what I believe to be a tenable theory about the "upward movement" of dialectic in the Republic,³² argues that the process which lets us know that a hypothesis is true (that is, no longer need be taken as a mere hypothesis) is the intuitive realization that not only have we found no objection to a hypothesis, but that there exists no objection. The elenchus, in other words, stops short of the final step; it is used to disprove inadequate theories, and it serves to try the adequate theory. But the last step which, because it yields certainty rather than probability is not inductive but intuitive, supervenes on the testing procedure.

Whether this is exactly what Plato meant by the upward movement of the dialectic in the Republic I do not know, but certainly it describes the actual technique which is often used in the dialogues. The significant thing, and one which cannot in any way be avoided, is that somewhere in the process of finding the one idea and of grasping the essential common character in a group of particulars or species, there comes a moment which cannot be described as rational proof or as

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R. Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, pp. 151 ff.

empirical induction but only as intuitive vision: suddenly we "see it."³³

One more remark about the negative aspect of the elenchus must be added. This is that the disproof of inadequate hypotheses is frequently very useful in discovering an adequate hypothesis. The relevant cases are reviewed during the testing procedure, and while we are formulating the criteria by which we judge the eligibility of genuine cases we are at the same time often making strides toward the discovery of a satisfactory definition of the essence sought. For example, two important hypotheses as to the essence of the good life are tested in the Philebus, both are rejected; but the criteria and cases which we use to refute the two hypotheses are highly useful in finding the one idea we seek. In the same way, the seven unsuccessful definitions of the sophist in the Sophist can easily be seen to be helpful in arriving at the satisfactory definition, and therefore, as Cornford has pointed out, serve as a collection. Thus the apparently negative results of the elenchus often add up indirectly to a positive conclusion and constitute a valid part of what we have called collection.

7. Division. The next step in the dialectical examination of a topic is division. This is the feature of

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Cf. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 186.

the method of the late dialogues which is commonly held to distinguish it from the early dialectic which was satisfied to reach the defining essence of the "one idea." That this distinction between the early and late dialogues is not absolute is clear enough from the fact that examples of division occur in the early dialogues; it is also evident (though less obviously) from the fact that division is sometimes used in the late dialogues just to arrive at a definition of an idea (as in the Sophist).³⁴ And as we go on, the interrelations between division and collection will become more intricate until at times it will be hard to distinguish the two. In particular, the impression we get from Plato's remarks on his method is that collection always precedes division; but in fact there is no rule of precedence at all, or the rule is much more complex than that. Yet collection and division can be distinguished, if not by their order of application, at least in their method of application. And if division is not entirely new to the late dialogues, the emphasis on it is.

We can partly understand why Plato no longer considered collection as the end of philosophy by recalling the discussion which led up to this digression on method. Two propositions were under consideration each of which pretended to define the essential nature of the good for men, and of these two let us select the first, namely "pleasure is the good for man." This

³⁴Cf. H. Cherniss, War-Time Publications Concerning Plato, in the American Journal of Philology, April 1947, p. 139.

is clearly enough the kind of statement which, if true, would show that we had found the "one idea" of the good for man. Now this particular statement could be disproven by pointing out one bad pleasure. But such a refutation would neither get us very far toward a satisfactory answer, nor would it be a real disproof of hedonism, since a minor modification of the meaning of the statement would protect it from this attack. The more useful procedure, Plato believes, is to forget the unity we seek for a moment and analyse the concept of pleasure. If large, important classes of pleasures turn out to be bad, then the hypothesis can really be refuted. And at the same time, we will have gained a much more critical knowledge of the nature of pleasure which may turn out to be useful in framing a satisfactory definition of the good life. Upon analysis it develops that some pleasures are bad and some good; this not only indicates that the simple identification of pleasure and the good life is wrong, but also suggests on the positive side that there are some pleasures which may belong in the good life. The division of the genus pleasure is therefore essential not only to our adequate understanding of pleasure but also to our framing a correct definition of the good life.

Ultimately, however, the most important reason for adding something more to dialectic beyond collection can be explained only by referring back to our discussion of Plato's revised attitude towards the ideas. At one time, Plato

considered that to know the essence of any idea was to know the ultimately real and valuable. Only after the question arose whether there could be ideas of inferior things (Parmenides), after the discovery that there can be classes of evil things such as a class of sophists (in the Sophist), and after the need arose to divide the genus pleasure into good and bad pleasures (Philebus), was it altogether clear that knowledge of ideas is not always knowledge of valuable ends. It might be plausible that in so far as a man partook of the idea Man he was a good man; that insofar as a knife partook of the idea Knife it was a good knife; that insofar as a state partook of the ideal just State, it was a good state; but it was not only improbable but patently false (to Plato) to say that insofar as a pleasure partook of the idea Pleasure it was a good pleasure. A genus such as Pleasure (or Art in the Sophist) might therefore have the epistemological unity that collection could confer on it without it being certain that all species or particulars which come under it are good, or are good to the degree of their participation.

a. In considering the technique of division in more detail, it will be useful to follow this sequence: first we will examine the structure of relationships which division is said to reveal; then the way in which this structure is discovered; then how division is thought to assist the philosopher in his aims.

In a general way, it is not hard to grasp the object of division. It is to arrive at a complete system of classification in which each thing to be classified falls not only into the class which includes all the objects under consideration, but also falls into some one smaller subgroup, and in turn into some one still smaller subgroup, and so on. There are certain important but simple requirements: the subgroups at any level must be mutually exclusive and yet comprehensive (exclude no item to be classified); each subgroup must fall wholly within some next higher group or subgroup. These rules always hold; there are other rules that hold for particular divisions. Any simple filing system in which there is no possibility of ambiguity or cross-filing will do: imagine, for instance, a vast central letter sorting machine in which all letters for the continental United States are sorted. The letters would enter through a single chute marked U.S.A.; this chute would divide into 49 marked with the names of the states and the District of Columbia; then each of these would divide into numerous counties, townships, etc. and so on to the smallest subdivision. Ideally, no letter would lack a route from top to bottom, no letter could properly end up in more than one place, and there would be an unambiguous answer as to the classification of each letter at any level.

This example serves to point up an important aspect of Plato's concept of division: the divisions which it makes correspond to important "facts" in the real world. The United

States, Colorado and New Jersey, Astoria and Grand Rapids are not logical inventions nor mere arbitrary subdivisions; they are names of geographical areas which are distinguished by such practical matters as state and city administrations, communication systems and so forth. In the Philebus Plato stresses the fact that dialectic cannot be conceived as using any arbitrary set of subdivisions which might serve to exhaust the original genus. Instead we must always search for the "particular number" of species and subspecies which is appropriate to the case. We do not decide how many subdivisions we wish any more than the postal department decides how many states there are; we inspect the situation to see just "how many" divisions are actually there. We are not finished dividing until we discover both the precise number of species at each level and also just how many levels there are. This excludes the possibility of a mere dichotomy based on one species and a contradictory (as "color" might be divided into "red" and "non-red").³⁵ Division by dichotomy is

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Division through dichotomy is permitted in the Politicus (e.g. at 258B, C) and in the Sophist (cf. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 170 ff.). The difference, of course, is that in these dialogues Plato is chiefly interested in finding a definition of a particular subspecies. When such a definition is sought, only one side or fraction of each division is worth following, the one into which the object to be defined falls. Thus each division is divided into "being" (the object being in it) and "not-being" (the object not being in the other part or parts). (Vid. Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, pp. 92, 93. Cf. Politicus 257C.) The final subdivision is the thing we sought to define, and the definition consists of all the units which fell under the "being" side. (This is the συνπλοκή εἰδῶν of Sophist 221A.) In the Philebus the interest is in the highest genera, pleasure, mind and good, and so this restricted method of division is less interesting except in so far as it explains how "false pleasures" can "be."

ruled out, however, only when the purpose of division is to analyse a whole subject matter like pleasure.

It is of course a commonplace now to recognize that classifications are highly conventional, that there are infinitely many alternative systems, and that the choice between them is based on no other objective factors than our interests and purposes and the usefulness of such classifications in attaining our purposes. This was not Plato's view, however. That it was not is absolutely clear from the passage before us which makes the entire task of division depend precisely on finding the "natural" divisions in things. Why it was not is a rather longer story, and one which will be developed later; in general, the reason is that Plato believed the world to be an object of purposeful design and that therefore there are real patterns and categories embedded in creation which we must discover in order to understand it.

I stress this point here because there are aspects of Plato's actual use of division which suggest that he did not always cleave consistently to this theory. There are numerous divisions of the genus Art in Plato, for instance, which do not use the same subdivisions; and there are several different ways of dividing the aspects of dialectic; and of dividing the genus Everything; and so forth. But I am not sure that the general theory that divisions can be based on some real and positive features of the created world apart from our interests and purposes requires that there always be a unique schema. It is

almost impossible to argue the point without giving Plato's theory a far more precise meaning. The conviction that there are purposes and ends not our own ~~and~~ which are expressed in nature is a doctrine which can be worked out in many ways, and I do not think it is clear enough how Plato intended it to decide the question at stake.

Other difficulties arise when we find that Plato, for all his warnings, often neglects to finish divisions which he begins (Art in the Sophist), sometimes speaks as if divisions were quite arbitrary (Philebus 23D), and often divides artificial objects as well as natural, although we would expect no "natural joints" between artificial objects.³⁶ Yet these difficulties only serve to show the practical problems involved in the belief that science can profit from the assumption that there are scrutable ends in the created universe; they are not evidence that Plato ever abandoned his conviction. Plato never claimed that he had discovered the truth or applied the dialectic

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On "dividing at the joints" and the question whether there are ideas of artificial objects. Cf. Politicus 259D, 285B, 287C; Phaedrus 265E. According to Aristotle (Metaphysics 1070a 18) the "natural entities" (ὁμοῖα φύσει) were the only things of which there were ideas for Plato. Epicrates is said to have written a play which mentioned the finding of these natural entities as the principal activity of the Academy (Athenaeus ii. 59D). Jackson, Stenzel, and others have felt that this passage in the Philebus shows that Plato had decided to abandon ideas of artificial objects (like the bed in the Republic). It is not very certain, however, why dividing at the joints should exclude beds or anything else from division. The Parmenides suggested that when Socrates grew up, he would not hesitate to admit ideas of all kinds of objects. (Cf. W. D. Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics, Vol. I, pp. xlix-li.)

properly in any particular case and he often suggests that any actual scheme of division may be wrong. But this suggestion is not that of a man who thinks of divisions as arbitrary, useful devices; such a man would never call a scheme false, but only useless or confusing. We are bound to conclude that no matter what the difficulties inherent in the view may be nor how inconsistent his practice is, Plato never abandoned the conviction that there are "natural" divisions in the world and that dialectic is right when it finds them and wrong when it does not.

So far we have made use of an analogy to explain Plato's conception of division. Now we must ask more definitely what it is precisely that division divides. It does not divide physical objects as the mail-sorter does; what then? Looking at the passage in Philebus 16C, D we find that the summum genus, the subaltern genera and infima species are described as "ideas" and as "ones." Nothing is said about dividing as such; we are merely told to look for the one idea (the genus), then for two (ideas) or three or however many there are, and so on. All that we can safely say, then, is that division reveals a certain set of relationships between ideas. Finding these relationships in no way alters the ideas themselves; whatever division does, it does not change the ideas. Nor does division change the particulars which participate in the ideas. The process of division is therefore primarily a process of discovery.

What does division discover? First of all, as we have said, a relationship between ideas; also, of course, since this relationship applies to the world, it discovers something about the world. Without asking which part of the discovery comes first, let us examine the relationship of the ideas which is to be uncovered.

This is a matter to which I do not think there is any direct answer in Plato for the reason that Plato never decided unambiguously what the ideas were. Particularly in the Philebus where, if I am right, Plato quite consciously suspended judgement about the nature of the ideas and their manner of existence, we can expect no definite decisions as to the way in which they are related. There are some comments which we can pertinently make, however, which may assist in understanding the part which division plays in the Philebus.

The general question of the relationships of the ideas is considered in the Sophist. The discussion there is not about our particular problem, which concerns only the relationships involved in division, but it is obviously relevant because our problem is a case which falls under the scope of the broader problem discussed there. In the Sophist, Plato speaks of the ideas "blending." Some ideas, he says, necessarily blend with each other; for some others blending is possible but not necessary; for the rest blending is impossible. As an example Plato suggests a very simple division in which the genus is Existence and the two species are Motion and Rest. Here it is

necessary for Motion and Rest to blend with Existence; and it is impossible for Rest and Motion to blend with each other. These relationships will hold between the corresponding ideas of any division: it will always be impossible for the species at any given level to blend with one another; it will always be necessary for the species at any given level to blend with the species or genus which includes them. Further, when there are more than two levels to the division, the ideas on the third level and below must blend, not only with the ideas on the next level above, but also (since these ideas are blended with those above them) with every idea in the hierarchy above. Blending, in other words, would seem to be a transitive relation.

But this does not turn out to be the case. Blending is transitive provided we always move in the same direction, upwards or downwards, through the division. But blending is never transitive when we apply it to the relation between species in the same level; for each of them will blend with the species or genus above, but they do not blend with one another. The trouble is, simply, that "blending" suggests mere mingling, which is a symmetrical relation; when A mingles with B, then B mingles with A. But the relation between species and genus in division is asymmetrical: since a horse is necessarily an animal, but an animal is not necessarily a horse, it is clear that the universal Horse does not "blend" with the universal Animal in the same way that the universal Animal "blends" with the universal Horse. "Blending" is therefore a misleading word, because it

suggests a misleading metaphor. "Blending" would be a better word for the third aspect of dialectic, which I have called "combining"; and Plato does, I think, use "blending" in this way also. In any case, we can clarify our notion of the relation between the species and genus in division if we forget about blending and think instead of some simple asymmetrical relation. Then we can also say that the relation is transitive; if R is the relation which stands between any species and genus, then if Horse R Vertebrate and Vertebrate R Animal, then Horse R Animal. But since R is not symmetrical (as "blending" suggested), we cannot derive the false result Horse R Dog because although Horse R Animal is true, Animal R Dog is false.

These considerations of a very simple nature combine to suggest that the relationships involved in a simple division may be expressed by the notion of class inclusion. In other words, if ideas were classes, the relations between them in division would follow the simple rules of a class calculus. The generic idea is the all-inclusive class, and every other idea is an included class. The infima species are the smallest classes. Every relation between two ideas (classes) in this system is completely expressed by the notion of inclusion; there is no partial overlapping.

This view towards the ideas has the virtue of making the vague term "blending" exact and giving it a logical meaning which can be used precisely in manipulations. And I believe a great deal that Plato says about the ideas and division in the

late dialogues, particularly the Philebus, can be squared with the assumption that ideas are classes. Nevertheless, I am not arguing for the interpretation of the ideas as classes, chiefly because I think that while such an interpretation is helpful when used tentatively, it obscures the real ambiguity in Plato's thought when applied dogmatically. There is plenty in Plato that resists the thesis that ideas are classes -- I hardly need mention this -- and it would be no service to try and deny it.

Before passing on to the next point, however, I should like to discuss the position advanced by F. M. Cornford concerning the blending of the ideas in the Sophist. Cornford contends that the ontological implications of Aristotle's treatment of genus and species cannot be attributed to Plato.³⁷ The chief reason he gives is that the genus and species do not exist in their own right for Aristotle and they do for Plato. This means, Cornford says, that the highest genus for Aristotle is the furthest removed from reality and the most empty of content, while for Plato it is "the richest, a universe of real being, a whole containing all that is real in a single order."³⁸ Plato's dialectic tells us about ideas, Cornford remarks, not individuals or classes of individuals, while in Aristotle's philosophy the only proper subject for a statement is a particular substance.³⁹

³⁷ Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 268, 269.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 270.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 268.

This distinction leads Cornford to conclude that (1) the ideas cannot be classes and (2) therefore the blending of the ideas cannot be represented by the notion of class inclusion.⁴⁰

Now I do not wish to discredit Cornford's very manful attempt to make sense out of this part of Plato's epistemology, and much of what he says is plainly helpful. The distinction he draws between Plato and Aristotle was, after all, insisted on by Aristotle. Nevertheless, I would like to show that the distinction is not so easily drawn as either Cornford or Aristotle seems to think; and also that Cornford has given no good reason for not considering the ideas as classes and the blending the relation of class inclusion.

Quite general considerations, which have very often been remarked before, suffice to show that there is less clarity than confusion in the distinction between Aristotle's predicates and Plato's ideas at the level we are discussing. "Division," whatever it may divide and whatever the relations between the things divided, is certainly common to both philosophers. They may mean different things, and they may describe what happens differently, but there is a suspicious similarity in the result. And let us look closer. Aristotle, we are told, said only individual substances could be the subjects of sentences. This may be so: nevertheless Aristotle also said that the individual was, per se, unknowable, and that it was only the universal

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Ibid., pp. 270, 271.

predicates which yielded knowledge. Furthermore, Cornford gives, as a perfectly good (and standard) Aristotelian subject "all men"; but "all men" is neither an individual nor a mere aggregate (cf. Cornford, op. cit., p. 270, n.1) but a class, which is abstract and universal. Aristotle is very often willing to make statements about abstract universals, and his statements about them are very similar to Plato's remarks about the ideas. Furthermore, the relations between Aristotle's abstract universals (genera and species) in division are the same as the relations between the Platonic ideas in division. And both men agree that we can know the abstract universals but not the particulars. The difference between them, then, is not, as Cornford would suggest, in their account of division; it is in their answer to the question whether the abstract universals, with which both are agreed that division deals, exist. And here, of course, we are taught that Aristotle and Plato are exactly opposed.

It would go very far from the subject of this thesis to examine this point in detail. For the sake of our argument, it is enough to have shown that in the actual technique of division there is no important difference between Plato and Aristotle, and that there thus remains no clear objection, on this score, to the view that Plato's dialectic deals with classes and that the relation between the ideas in division is that of class inclusion. Nevertheless, I wish to add a remark which I believe is not impertinent on the question of

the existence of the ideas. The difference which is said to remain between Aristotle and Plato in this matter is not so much exaggerated as it is misrepresented. The misrepresentation lies in taking Aristotle at his own valuation when he tells us that there is an absolute distinction between his own and Plato's views towards the existence of abstract entities. There may be a distinction, but it is not a very clear one. Let us think of Plato first. What kind of existence does Plato say the ideas have? These are the main points on which Plato relies to prove the existence of the ideas: they are the objects of certain knowledge; they are changeless; they exist out of space and time; they cannot be objects of sensation. And how about Aristotle? He would agree that the genera and species, which he correlates with the formal aspect in things, are the only intelligible factors; that they are changeless; that they are abstract, not concrete; that they are not sensible in themselves. Furthermore, about half the time he holds that the real essence of a thing is its formal cause which is defined in terms of genus and species; at other times he says the essence is the final cause, which turns out to be defined in the same way. This surely marks no important difference with Plato, whose idea is just such a mixture of form and purpose. Our conclusion up to this point would be apt to be that for Plato and Aristotle "existence" is an honorific term to be applied according to taste -- and that their taste differed.

Probably the real difference, however, and the important one, concerns the locus of value. In this respect too, both Plato and Aristotle have basic confusions which brings them unexpectedly together. But even granting this, there is a very broad difference in ethical theory between the early dialogues of Plato and the Nicomachean Ethics which no one can miss, and this difference affects the status of the ideas. Without laboring the point, the difference can perhaps be brought out by saying that Plato, in the early dialogues, cannot decide whether the ideas are abstract entities or particular, concrete entities (that is, things with such properties as tallness, beauty and perhaps even location). Plato wants the ideas to resolve certain epistemological questions, which require that they be abstract; but certain ethical problems seem to require that the ideas be particular patterns which other particulars resemble. The whole problem of participation was greatly aggravated, as I have remarked, because the ideas were sometimes thought of as particulars. And this aspect of the ideas Aristotle very rightly criticized and ridiculed. If by existent Plato meant concrete and particular, then Aristotle certainly was justified in holding that the ideas should not be said to exist.

My view is, as has been stated, that Plato had given up, at least tentatively in the Philebus, any contention that the ideas are concrete or patterns. As a matter of fact, Plato never once states that the ideas exist in the Philebus,

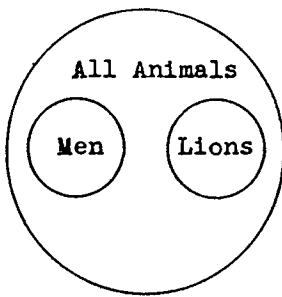
much less that they are realer than particulars; and, as we shall see, he very carefully avoids making the ideas responsible for value. Of course, he does say that dialectic examines the ideas and their relations, and that dialectic knows the eternally true and the real (Philebus 58A). But the ideas are found in particulars; perhaps they are classes of particulars; and what is known about genera and species is known about the entire world. The knowledge which dialectic yields is of the world as well as of ideas, although of the world only insofar as it is informed; the reality which dialectic knows is therefore not necessarily the ideas.

The question why Aristotle continued to belabor Plato for a view to which Plato clearly saw the objections himself can only be answered by conjecture. The abandonment of the idea as concrete pattern may not have been permanent. We find the doctrine, although clothed in myth, in the Timaeus; and the Seventh Epistle certainly asserts it. Our concern here is with the Philebus alone, and in the Philebus, nothing is made to depend on the assumption of any particular sort of existence or value in the idea. That the ideas exist may still be assumed; but this alone lacks the usual Platonic tone unless accompanied with the assertion that only the ideas exist -- and this we do not find.

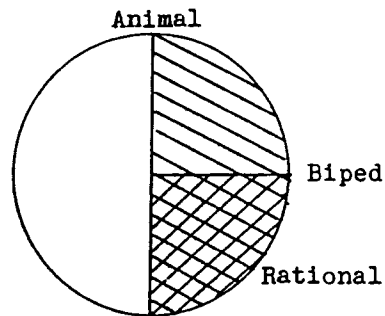
There is a point in the Cornford argument to which I would like to return. Cornford contended that since dialectic is never about particulars it could never be about classes

(such as "all men," "all animals," etc.). To make this point clear, as well as the point that the blending of the ideas is not the same thing as class inclusion, he provided two diagrams, one showing the relation of class inclusion, the other of blending. I reproduce them here:⁴¹

1. Class Inclusion



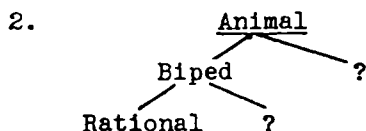
2. Blending



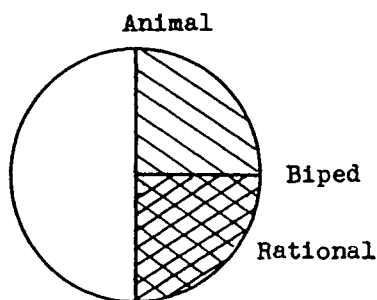
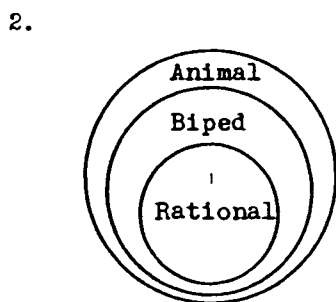
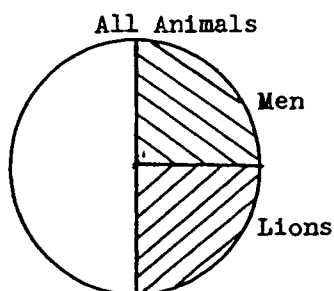
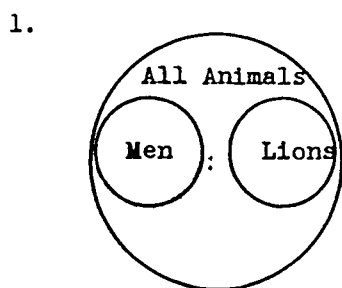
In the diagram on the left, the circles enclose classes; in the circle on the right, the variously shaded sectors represent different ideas. Where there are overlapping shadings, the ideas are "blending." Here, for reasons which I do not understand, Cornford has represented two different divisions for comparison. But of course, there is no reason not to represent the same division in the two ways and thus come closer to a decision as to what the difference is between the two types of diagram, and hence (according to Cornford) between Aristotle and Plato and between class inclusion and blending. To make the point quite clear, let us first represent by the usual schemata the two divisions suggested by Cornford. They are:

⁴¹.

Ibid., pp. 270, 271.



We see at once that one of these divisions is quite different in nature from the other; but it can hardly be held that the scheme, as distinguished from the terms or concepts, on the left is more suitable to Aristotle than Plato; both Plato and Aristotle use both sorts of schemes. Now let us represent each of these divisions by Cornford's two methods.



These diagrams, in which no attempt has been made to alter the way in which the spaces are named, should suffice to show that there is no difference of any importance in the pictorial part of the diagrams between the two methods suggested by Cornford. The use of circles within the outer circle in one case and the use of pie-divisions in the other is not a logical difference

and does not alter the relations of the parts. Nor does the shading of the sectors add anything (in a logical sense) to the right hand circles, since an altogether similar system of overlapping shadings could easily be added to the left hand diagrams.

To this Cornford would probably answer that the difference between the diagrams (apart from the labels) is not meant to be a logical difference, but merely a visual suggestion of what Plato might mean by blending, and that the difference in the labels reveals the important difference. It would be hard to argue about this, since the difference between the two types of diagrams would then be held to be one of psychological suggestion; the question what the difference to be suggested is remains, and must be examined with respect to the labels. The difference to which we are reduced, then, is that some of the diagrams seem to concern classes (e.g. all animals) while the others concern properties (e.g. animal, biped, rational). With respect to the phrase "all animals," it is quite certain that it does designate a class; such words as "animal" however, are actually ambiguous, and can be used to designate either a class or a property. In general, we would say that the extension of a word like "animal" was a class and its intension was a property. (The same, of course, is true of such words as "man" and "lion"). Now, is it right to say that the diagrams numbered 1 represent relations between extensions (or classes) and that those numbered 2 represent relations between intensions; or, in general, that

this is the difference between Aristotle's and Plato's conception of division? We have already shown that there is nothing about the form of such diagrams which would tell us that one kind concerned classes and the other properties. In fact, we may say quite generally that the relations between the intensions and the extensions of terms used in division can be represented by exactly the same kinds of diagrams. This is not, however, to say that the relations between the intensions and extensions of certain terms will always be represented by the same diagrams; this is not the case, of course. The reason is that extensions are determined by the facts of the world, while intensions are not. As a result, the relations between extensions sometimes depend upon the accidents of nature, while the relations between intensions are independent of such accidents. In spite of this difference, however, the relations between extensions can often (not always) be known and stated quite independently of fact; and in these cases, the diagrams which represent the relations between intensions and extensions will be (at least from a logical point of view) identical. For example, whatever the facts of the world might be, it would be true that all men were animals (i.e., that the extension of the term "man" is a subclass of the extension of the term "animal"); this would be true even if there were no men. This is true because of the relations between the intensions of the terms "man" and "animal." And all such cases, where the relations of the extensions are determined by the relations of the

intensions, can be represented by identical diagrams; and in all such cases, there is no reason, so far as the relations given in division are concerned, not to state those relations by a class calculus -- that is, in terms of the extensions.

The question whether division deals with extensions or with intensions turns out, then, to be quite undecided by the diagrams we use to represent it in all those cases where the relations between extensions are determined by the relations between intensions. It is fair to say, then, that in such cases, division may be considered as neutral as to whether what its terms designate are classes or properties.

We might consider that the problem could be approached by seeing whether Plato (or Aristotle) ever makes statements in a division the truth of which depends on extensions. A clear case would be such a statement as "men are featherless bipeds" -- a statement which Plato seems to toy with, but not definitely expouse; in the Politicus. But unfortunately, many cases are ambiguous because we are not given definitions (i.e., we are not told the intensions) of the terms involved. Does the truth of the statement that men are bipeds depend on the extensions of the terms "man" and "biped," or does it follow from their intensions? We can only tell if we know what the intensions are, and this is often a matter of convention. In general, however, I believe we can say with some assurance with respect to division, that neither Plato nor Aristotle is much interested in relations between extensions which do not follow from

the intensions of terms. The reason I feel reasonably sure about this is that division, for both philosophers, deals with the relations between entities which are designated by their essential characteristics. And whatever else it may mean, one thing is certain about the essential characteristics of a thing -- they are determined by intensions, and never by extensions alone. In other words, it is enough to know that intensions alone do not require that featherless bipeds be men to know that the essence of man cannot be defined by the terms "featherless" and "biped."

The outcome of this discussion is not a solution to the question whether ideas are classes or properties, nor to the question what the difference between Platonic ideas and Aristotelian universals is. The outcome is entirely negative, and may be stated in this way: the difference between division based on extensions and division based on intensions is not the difference between Plato and Aristotle. Both men seem to be interested only in cases where the relations of extensions are determined by the relations of intensions; this seems to be required by the fact that they deal only with essences. In any case, both men speak of universals, whether these be conceived as classes or as properties -- and the question whether either philosopher means by universals classes or properties is not settled by the way they use division. For division based on the intension of terms will say exactly the same things

whether those terms are taken primarily as designating classes or not. Thus the fact that Aristotle says, for instance "all men are animals" does not mean that he is dealing with individuals, or with classes, in any sense that Plato is not when he says "man is an animal." Both statements may be taken either as saying that the class of men is included in the class of animals; or as saying that ^{having} the property of being a man is necessarily implied by ^{having} the property of being an animal. This I maintain, of course, only with regard to division; my point is merely (as against Cornford) that division does not require that the terms employed designate (exclusively) classes, or properties; still less does it require that either properties or classes exist. Therefore, Cornford has said nothing against a possible interpretation of "blending" as class inclusion; nor has he shown that, so far as division is concerned, Aristotle talks exclusively about individuals or classes (Cornford confuses the two) while Plato talks exclusively about properties. By the same token, I cannot see the justification for Cornford's statement that for Plato the highest idea is "richest" while for Aristotle the highest genus is "poorest"; from a logical point of view, they seem to come to the same thing.

b. We now come to the question, how a division is to be constructed, i.e., how we are meant to discover the relations between ideas (however conceived) which are set forth in a division. Plato describes this process as vaguely, and in much the same way, as he described how we discover the

common character in a collection. Here are the main passages which deal with finding divisions:

- 16D ...when we grasp the one (μεταλάβωμεν) we must go on from one form to look (σκοπεῖν) for two, if there are two, otherwise for three or some other number of forms...
- 17C,D ...when you have grasped...the number and nature of the intervals...
- 17D ...only then, when you have grasped (λάβῃς) all this (the divisions) have you gained real understanding; and whatever be the 'one' that you have selected for investigating, that is the way to get insight about it.
- 18A When you have got your 'one,'....whatever it may be, you must not immediately turn your eyes to the unlimited, but to a number...(you) must discern (κατανοεῖν) this or that number embracing the multitude.
- 18B,C Theuth...discerned (κατανόησεν) the existence, in that unlimited variety, of the vowels -- not 'vowel' in the singular, but 'vowels' in the plural... and as a third class he discriminated (διεστήσατο) ...the mutes...he divided up the noiseless ones... in the end he found a number of things, and affixed to the whole collection, as to each single member of it, the name 'letter.'

These instructions are not very clear; we must, therefore, consider in what way we are to "discern," "grasp" or "look for" the divisions we seek. Several answers suggest themselves: we may find the divisions by scrutinizing the genus; or by some form of deductive reasoning; or by the "inductive" process of collection; or by collection plus some further process.

1. By scrutinizing the genus. Division generally proceeds by taking some universal as genus and "dividing" it into two or more species. Each of these is then divided in

turn until the division is complete. The answer to the question how a division is made would therefore seem to be that we simply look at the universal to be divided until we see the joints, and then divide. If Cornford is right that the genus is the "richest" idea, this should be easy; it is hard to see what "rich" can mean except that the genus is so constructed that we can find the species in it without searching elsewhere.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to see how this could be done. There would seem to be nothing about the universal Animal which, per se, suggests the universal Cat or Horse. The species do suggest the genus; it does follow from the nature of the universal Cat that every cat is an animal (or that whatever has the property of being a cat has the property of being an animal). But this is the reverse of division, and lends no weight to the theory that we can "discover" the species in the genus.

ii. By deductive reasoning. If mere scrutiny of the genus yields no clue as to the species, then there is perhaps some train of deductive reasoning which will lead from the genus to the species. This has apparently been the opinion of those scholars who have identified division with the downward movement of the dialectic in the Republic.⁴² There can

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Cf. Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, p. 171 for a full account and criticism of this view.

be little doubt that the downward movement of dialectic in the Republic represents a deductive procedure: it depends on using certain hypotheses as premisses and deducing consequences from them. But in what sense can division be said to do this? Nothing can be deduced from a universal; deduction can only follow from a statement.

Suppose, however, that we enlarge our view of division somewhat. Collection, we found, may be said to culminate in a discovery of the essence of the genus, and the essential nature of the genus can be proclaimed in a statement. Division might be said, loosely, to start from this statement, instead of from the universal alone. Can we deduce some statement about the species from the statement which defines the essence of the genus? For example, can we deduce the truth of

1. All cats are animals

from

2. Animals are living bodies with a soul (or some acceptable definition of "animal")? Obviously we cannot unless we have some further premise. Such a premise would presumably tell us the definition of "cat"; and this would presumably be 1 in conjunction with one or more other statements. But in that case, 1 would follow directly from this other premise, and 2 would be unnecessary. There would thus seem to be no sense in which we could be said to be able to deduce the species from the genus.

Of course, this is not to deny that the relations between universals which divisions reveal are analytic truths: the truth of 1 does follow from the relations between the universals Cat and Animal, and can be deduced from the definitions of their essences. But such truths as 1 can only be proven when we know the definitions from which they can be deduced, and when we know these definitions, we already know the structure of the division we seek.

iii. By induction. There is a way of discovering a division suggested in the Philebus which does not go down from the genus, but starts from the particulars and rises to the genus. When, for some reason, we must start with the "unlimited" (that is, the particulars), then

we must not go immediately to the one (genus), but must think of a number having some definite quantity (the species) and must end by passing from all to one (18A,B).

Since this passage occurs in a sentence which describes division, it is unlikely that Plato thinks he is describing collection again. Nor is there anything about collection which requires that we think of some definite number of species as we go from the individuals to the genus. Collection, in fact, does just what we are told not to do in this passage: it goes immediately from the "unlimited" to the "one." Nor do I see any way in which we can interpret this as the upward path of the dialectic in the Republic; for here we are clearly speaking of ideas (universals), not hypotheses or statements. And there is no special reason to warn anyone against going too

rapidly to a statement which is not a hypothesis, because there is no way it could be done.

It seems certain, then, that we have before us what Plato considers an alternative way of discovering a division. This method consists in going, not from the individuals directly to the genus, as in collection, but in going from the individuals to the infima species, from the infima species to the subaltern species (if any), and so forth until we reach the genus. The question now is, how do we "go" from one to another? How, first, do we go from the particulars to the infima species? Plato does not tell us. The reason, I think, is that the process is logically identical to collection. It is true that collection goes directly to the genus. There is, as we have seen, no real way to tell what the genus must be; but even if we restrict collection to the discovery of the common element which defines the genus in any given hierarchy, there is no logical difference between collection (defined in this strict way) and the process which finds the common element in the particulars which defines the infima species. And since collection can also consist in finding the common element in a number of species, there is no reason the higher steps cannot also be called collections; in any case, they are exactly similar to collections. Thus in the "reverse division" of Philebus 18A, B we have found one way, at least, in which a division can be discovered: by a series of collections.

iv. Collection and Division. Does this mean there is no difference between collection and division? It is evident at once that it does not. Even if we were to decide that

there is no other way of finding a division than through the use of collection, still the process of division would differ from the process of collection. The process of collection involves inspecting a group of particulars or species and stating their essential common element. Examples of such statements as the outcome of collections might be: "all men are rational animals," "the good life is a mixture of pleasure and intelligence," "the subject of this art is all sound with pitch," "the quality common to acquisitive art and productive art is the quality of being an art." The process of division involves recognizing the logical relations between various universals, and stating these relations in terms of species and genus. Division thus issues in such statements as "all men are either Greeks or barbarians," "art may be divided into the acquisitive arts and the productive arts," "pleasures are either mixed or pure." It can be seen that if we made a series of collections which exhausted the structure of a division, and we were to put the results into statements, then not only would we know the structure of the division, but the statements in which we put our knowledge of the structure (i.e. the statements of division) would be directly deducible from the statements of collection. To take a simple example, suppose we have a genus, Color, with just three species, Red, Yellow and Blue. Collection, let us say, inspects the cases of redness and states that "everything that is red reflects light of wavelength n "; and similarly for blue and yellow (substituting other constants for " n "). Collection also examines the species and states that "everything that has color has a wavelength of n or m or r ."

Division can now state that "everything that is colored is either red, yellow or blue," and it is clear that this statement follows deductively from the results of the collections.

We might say, then, that the relations between species and genus in a division exist whether we know them or not, that these relations are always stated in one way when we "divide," and that they may be stated in another when we "collect." I say "may" because collection proper may also go immediately from the particulars to the genus. But if it does, then the further relations in the division can only be discovered by performing other, subordinate collections: we must always see that some higher genus is common to the species before we know that we can "divide" that genus.

There is one further question which needs to be decided. If we perform all the collections necessary to discovering all the relations of a division, then can we say that division, as separate from collection, yields any new information beyond what can be deduced from the statements of collection? The answer would seem to be that it does. The additional information is this: that the division is complete. Suppose we know that the property common to red, blue and yellow is that they are colors (that is, they have one of the wavelengths which define colors). Suppose, further, that we know this is the essential common feature; in other words, that no cases can turn up which are colors but do not have one of the given wavelengths. Even then, there is no guarantee, when we come to

division, that we have collected all the species. If we know that we have, this is in any case an additional piece of information which is not essential to collection. But how could we know that we knew all the species in a given genus? Collection can not tell us it; nor do I see how else it could be learned, or, if it were known, proven. We must, I think, conclude that this is something which is somehow given intuitively; and that it is something which we must know in order to proclaim that a division is complete.

c. We may now summarize the useful results which may be expected from the process of division. Division reveals a group of relations between universals or ideas; these relations are determined a priori by the nature of the universals themselves. As a result, a number of analytic statements can be made about the relations of the universals. These statements may concern classes or properties; the two kinds of statements can be intertranslated. Some of these statements can be considered as definitions.

In addition to the statements which follow from the essential nature of the universals involved in a division, Plato seems to believe that there are several other truths we learn from a division. These other truths cannot be said to follow from the nature of the universals alone; they are not analytically true, but are synthetic statements about the world; Plato nevertheless considers them to be a priori. These truths are of two kinds. The first convey the information that

the division is complete. Such information would be analytic only if a division were dichotomous in the logical sense; Plato excludes such divisions in the Philebus. Therefore division, as discussed in the Philebus tells us something about the world: namely, that no species exist which are not included in the division. The reason Plato believes he knows this is, I think, that he believes that the world was created by a rational mind. The rational mind used dialectic (including, presumably, division with its genera and species) as a guide in creating the world; it is therefore certain that the number of species will not increase or change, and that there is a real pattern in the universe for us to find and study. The second kind of information which division conveys about the world follows from the same teleological assumptions: it is that there are absolutely definite species (and genera) embedded in the universe, and that therefore some schemes of division are true and others false. By "embedded in the universe" I mean only that the particulars which exist can be understood and studied (in Plato's opinion) only if we hit on the right dialectical scheme, because this scheme was used by the divine mind which created the world. This last point is no different than what Plato has in mind when he tells us that dialectic must "divide at the joints" or that it must find "the particular number" between the one and the indefinite.

In the Philebus, the various things which we can learn from division and collection combine to form the analysis of

the subject under scrutiny. The subject of the Philebus is the good life. Collection discovers that one feature which something must have to be a good life is that it must be a mixture of pleasure and intelligence. Division shows that this mixture can be exhaustively divided into two species, pleasure and intelligence. Division also shows that each of these can be divided in turn. A large part of the dialogue is then devoted to discovering the essential features of each of the sub-species. This much should make it clear in what sense Plato believes that collection and division can analyze the subject matter of an art.

8. Before we turn to the final aspect of dialectic, combination, we may look briefly at the illustrations of dialectic which Plato provides.

Plato draws his examples from the arts of music and phonetics; this brings it to our attention at once that the practical application of dialectic is always some specific art.⁴³ Collection and division, it would seem, could be applied to any subject matter whatsoever; and this may be true. But a practical art requires something more, so that dialectic cannot be complete with collection and division. To this point we shall return.

43.

Cf. Godamer, Platos dialektische Ethik, p. 15
 "...alles was durch Logos bestimmt ist und damit in Verfügungsbereich eine Wissens steht, erhält seine verbindende Gewissheit von der Dialektik. Alle Wissenschaft und alle Techne ist solche positive Dialektik."

The first illustration is the art of phonetics (or "art of letters," 18D). What is presented to the senses is undifferentiated sound as it issues from the mouth (17B). The mind at once grasps this as constituting the subject-matter of the art; it is "one" in this sense (17B); but what the "seal of its unity" is we can only discover by applying collection. Collection was first applied to spoken sound by an Egyptian named Theuth, Plato tells us.⁴⁴ By a series of collections, he found in spoken sound three species, which he named vowels, mutes and sonants. These species he then divided each into its separate kinds (the individual letters). He noticed next that these were the infima species and he gave them a name in common, calling them all letters. "Letter" being the generic name for all the sounds, he had now arrived, by an irregular route of collections and divisions, at the generic idea; at the same time, he had discovered the whole division. He recognized that the division was complete, that no one part could be comprehended without grasping the whole, and that therefore he had discovered or invented the basis of an art, the "art of letters" (18C,D).

The second illustration is musical. It is somewhat less clear in detail than the first illustration, but the same

44.

Theuth is described as a "god or godlike man," presumably because all dialectic is a gift from the gods. Thus, just as it is a divine beneficence that makes dialectic apply to the structure of the world, so the first recognition of that structure in any particular art is due to the divine spark in man. Cf. Timaeus 47C: sound is a "gift from heaven."

general pattern emerges. In this case, the subject-matter to be studied is again sound, but this time it is sound with a pitch, musical sound. What Plato takes to begin with is again the totality of heard sound, in which no distinctions are made. This totality, he notes, is "unlimited" in the sense that the sounds in it belong to an endless high-low continuum of pitch; it is also unlimited because we recognize no divisions. Next, three distinctions are made in this continuum: we detect high, low and the "level" pitch.⁴⁵ We then proceed, in some way which Plato does not specify, to subdivide into the various intervals. Depending on the precise meaning of the terms, the genus would be "note," "interval" or "scale"; it is difficult to decide which.

In considering these examples of the art of dialectic, it is probably more helpful to look for clues as to what Plato considered the typical form which dialectic might take than for a demonstration of all the principles of dialectic in general. For instance, the precise sequence in which collection and division follow one another is probably not important; we have seen that the process of discovering the relations between genus and species in a division relies, in the end, on certain intui-

45.

There is a problem here. It is hard for us to think of high, low and the "level" as species unless some specific pitch is assigned to the "level." Otherwise the terms would appear to be relational, so that any particular note could only be called low in relation to some other, or to some level. Possibly Plato means that highness and lowness supply the clue to a classification of intervals (cf. 17C), and it is the intervals themselves which provide the species and sub-species.

tive leaps; probably, then, there is no single established way to find them. What is important, I think, is the nature of the starting point, and the nature of the revealed structure of forms when we have finished.

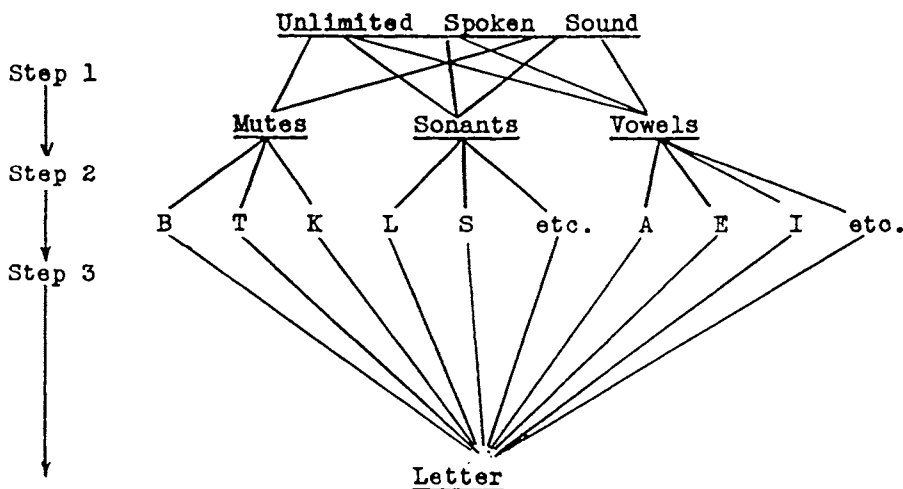
The starting point, in the typical case, is the body of particulars to be studied. But sometimes, as with musical sound, we do not really know what a particular is until we have analyzed the subject-matter. And even if the starting point is the body of particulars, we cannot, of course, name the class of particulars by its essential defining characteristic; this is one of the things we wish to discover. For this reason, Plato chooses to designate the subject-matter to be studied in some other way. Sometimes he designates the subject-matter as a continuum without definite limits. To make quite clear how such a continuum could determine the subject-matter would require naming some characteristic which was common to all the things to be studied; this does not worry Plato, because the characteristic which was named would not be the essential characteristic which allows us to divide the subject-matter. For example, sound, in both the case of spoken sound and of musical sound, is a generic idea. As such, we could proceed to divide it. The trouble is, that sound is an ambiguous genus. It may refer to all particular sounds (letters or notes), or it may refer to the undifferentiated sound which we hear. It may (in the case of music) refer to the abstract continuum of audible frequencies running from high to low. Any one of these

definitions of sound makes it "one" in some sense, and such that it could be divided. Actually, however, what Plato seems to do in each case is to consider inadequate the definition which names the subject-matter as a unit class instead of naming the divided parts. Sound, meaning the low-high continuum, is the starting point of collection, but not of division. Division starts from the genus which gives a name to the particulars which are discriminated by the infima species. The genus, properly, is the class of all the particulars (or the essential property which is common to the particulars); it is not the one continuum or undifferentiated area where the particulars are to be found. This means that in practice we usually begin with a continuum or undifferentiated area (the high-low continuum of music, or spoken sound), and "discover" within this continuum or area the species. This is the process of collection. Collecting the species, we find the higher species, and so on to the genus. The genus is then defined by the characteristic common to the units defined by the infima species (letter, in the case of phonetics).

This way of discovering a division and designating its starting point and the kind of genus it seeks is not, I believe, common to all the late dialogues, nor is it strictly applicable to all the divisions of the Philebus. But it is the characteristic form which dialectic takes in the Philebus. It is important to see this, because it is only in this way that we can understand why Plato felt that dialectic introduces order into an unordered

or undifferentiated subject-matter. This is a loose way of speaking, of course; dialectic does not really change the subject-matter, but only shows us how to understand it. It introduces order into our understanding of the subject-matter. When the subject-matter is the good life, however, it is not a long step from introducing order into our understanding of it to introducing order into our life.

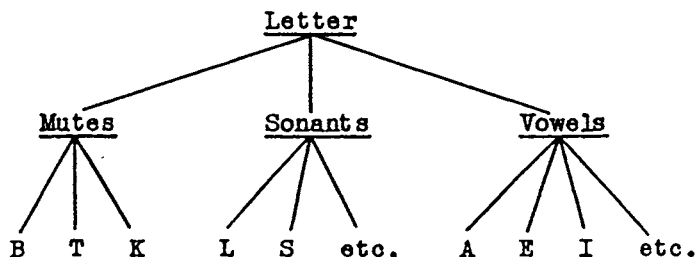
I will now append a rough diagram to indicate the actual sequence by which the subject-matter of the art of phonetics was discovered.



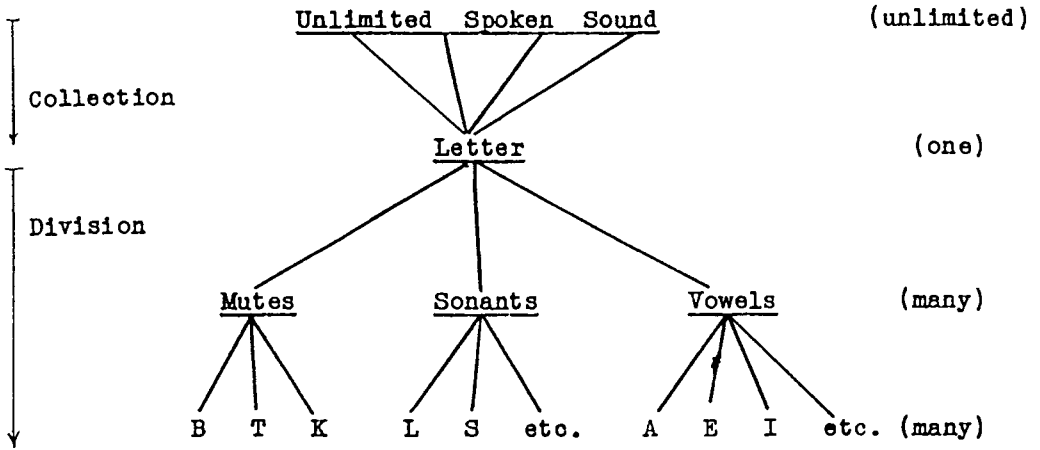
The first step here looks like a division, but it is not; it is a series of three collections, because basically it involves seeing a common element in a group of particulars. Of course, it follows that those particulars can be divided; but the element common to all the particulars is only discovered at the

end. The second step is one of division. The third step is again a collection. Since the outcome of the three steps is to discover the essential common element in the particulars which make up the subject-matter, I believe it would be possible to call this entire process a collection.

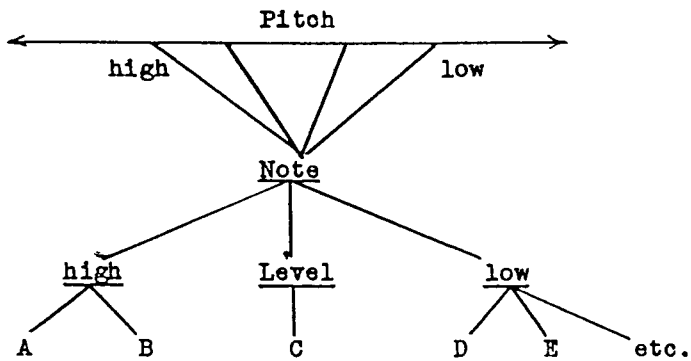
This is not Plato's usage, however. Plato sees that the above process reveals all we need to know to construct the desired division, and he therefore thinks of the process as combining collection and division. Strictly, however, division would result in a diagram like this:



We shall use the term "division" to speak of the process of discovering or stating the relations between genus and species in the order shown here. The two steps of collection and division could, I believe, be represented by a composite diagram of this nature (in which there is no attempt made to show the actual sequence of discovery):



To show how this method might be applied to music, I append a conjectural composite diagram showing how Plato may have intended dialectic to apply to music:



9. Combination. Nothing in our treatment of collection and division would suggest that dialectic ever provides a reason for declaring that any particular event or object exists. Collection and division, as we have seen, may tell us that if something has certain characteristics, then it must have others (if x is a dog then x is an animal); or that if something is to be a member of a certain class, then it must exhibit certain characteristics (only something which is the product of a conscious purpose is a product of art). But they cannot tell us that any one particular must in fact exist, or that anything must have certain properties.⁴⁶

Even if this were the case, however, that a dialectic comprised of collection and division told us nothing about what must exist, we might expect that it would tell us what should exist. Particularly when the thing to be studied is an art, we would anticipate that dialectic would arrive at a definition or discovery of some goal, norm, standard or ideal towards which that art should strive. In many Platonic works, we receive the impression that this is just the function of dialectic: to discover the true ends or goals of all endeavor. In the earlier dialogues, this end was uniformly represented as an idea, and the purpose of dialectic was

46.

This follows from the interpretation of collection and division given here. But others (e.g. Stenzel) have believed that division can make definite statements about the existence of particulars. This theory will be discussed briefly in the next section.

therefore to grasp, define or understand this idea. Now we must ask if there is any way in which collection and division could provide such an end for practical activity.

Let us consider collection first. In some cases, at least, it is clear that collection provides no clue as to the end or goal of an art. Collection, in the "art of letters," yielded the result that there is a common characteristic of the individuals which make up spoken sound, which is the characteristic of being a letter. Even if we conceived the goal of the "art of letters" to be the production of perfect letters (which is not very probable) the mere discovery of the common element in the existing particulars would be no hint as to what the perfect letter should be. Nor will it help much to say that what collection discovers is the essence, which is not found by mere induction, and that the essence is the true (i.e. "correct") type or goal; for in this case at least we are not told anything further about the common essence except that it is to be a letter. If the genus in the case of the musical art is Note, the same remarks apply. And if, as is likely, Plato considers here as elsewhere that the "art of letters" is only part of the art of grammar, and the art of music is the art of producing beautiful and harmonious melodies, then it is even clearer that collection and division, as represented in the Philebus, cannot tell what the ends of those arts are.

But is collection always so sterile with respect to ends? How about the collection which tells us that the good

life must be a mixture of pleasure and intelligence? Isn't the mixed life the goal which every man should strive for? If I am right, and the mixed life is the genus which is divided in the Philebus, and if collection reveals the essential common element, then why can't we say that collection here has found the essence of the good life -- what "makes it good," and therefore constitutes it an end?

These questions are hard to answer. The answer is not really direct, but must take the form of a series of remarks, the combined force of which is, I believe, to show convincingly that collection cannot, as Plato once hoped, ever yield practical goals for action. In the first place, although it is true that collection is supposed to discover the "true" and "essential" common element in a group of particulars, what it actually finds is always too general or vague to serve as a practical description of an end. There is nothing in theory, perhaps, to prevent the "essential" common element discovered by collection from being precise and detailed enough to serve as a goal, since collection is not truly inductive and what it "discovers" is therefore arbitrary. But in practice, the result of collection is more often either to describe the genus to which any particular must belong in order to belong to the scope of a given art, or else to give criteria (i.e., necessary conditions) which serve as guides in further search for the goal or end. The genera Note and Letter are examples of the first sort; the genus Mixed Life is an example of the second sort. And in fact, both sorts of

outcome to collection serve in much the same way. If we were to use as a genus Pleasure and Intelligence instead of Mixed Life, we would have a parallel case; and collection tells us no more about the Mixed Life than that it is composed, somehow, of pleasure and intelligence. In each case, then, collection really tells us only what the elements are which are available for use by the art; it does not tell us how these elements are to be combined to produce a good product. Collection, in these cases, tells us the essential common nature of the individuals which are to be combined, mixed, or blended by the art; it does not tell us the essential nature of the combination, mixture, or blend. The "essence" which is discovered by collection is, in the examples we have discussed at any rate, neither good nor bad, but merely neutral from the point of view of the art which deals with it. Products of art are complex, they are made up of parts, and it is the proper relation of these parts which constitutes their value. Collection, as it is practiced in the Philebus, seeks to define the parts, but not the pattern or relation of the parts.

I would not wish to contend that collection, as Plato uses it, never defines ends. Ends can be defined in many ways, in the most general and abstract terms, or in highly concrete terms. I restrict my claim to this: that nothing Plato says in his explicit account of collection (and division) in the Philebus suggests that he thinks collection discovers or defines ends; that the examples he gives show that it does not

define ends; and that the application of collection to the problem of the good life in the Philebus does not define the end in the sense in which it is sought and finally found. And I would suggest, although I do not argue, that Plato never did actually use collection alone to arrive at the description of an end. Yet that he believed it could be done, at least at one period in his life, seems almost certain from famous passages in the Republic and Symposium.

The second consideration which I feel is important in showing that in practice Plato did not depend on collection alone to yield knowledge of ends is that he used division. I do not mean that division yields knowledge of ends either, but that if collection sufficed, there would be no reason for division. The method which Plato says is so useful for "learning, teaching and investigating" is chiefly described as division; yet if collection sufficed to define and describe the goals we seek, why would we need division? Division merely tells us the species which fall under the genus; these would not be of any further use to us if the genus were the end of our researches. Thus the fact that Plato emphasizes the usefulness of division in investigating a field of knowledge after collection has identified it shows us that he did not consider collection to be sufficient.

We have already enumerated the results we can expect from division; they are knowledge of the relations between a group of ideas and grasp of the essential structure of part

of the created world. Is there any way in which these results might be considered as giving knowledge of the desired end or purpose of an art?

In the Sophist, the relations between the ideas which are shown by division are spoken of, we have seen, as "blending." In that dialogue we also are told that the dialectician is the man who knows how the ideas blend; which blend with which, and which do not (Sophist 253C-E). This knowledge of how the ideas blend is compared to the knowledge of the musician, who possesses the "art of recognizing the sounds that can or cannot be blended" (Sophist 253B), and of the grammarian, who possesses the art of combining letters together properly to form words (Sophist 253A, B). Now grammar and music are the same two arts which are quoted as examples of the application of dialectic in the Philebus. And, to anticipate, we are going to find that knowledge of the good life in the Philebus is a matter of knowing how to blend, mix or combine the various elements which compose it. All of this would suggest that division, or division and collection together (both seem to be mentioned in Sophist 253D), do yield knowledge of the desired product of an art. And certainly, if division (or division and collection) can tell us how to blend or mix ideas in the same way that the musician knows how to blend notes or the grammarian knows how to blend letters, then division can tell us what we need to know about the end of an art. For it would tell us how to mix or blend the various kinds of elements treated by the art in

order to produce a good or ideal product. In fact, if division could tell us this much, then it is difficult to see how knowledge of division in any particular sphere would differ from the knowledge of the specialist. If the dialectician, by knowing how the forms blend in division in the case of music thereby knows how the notes should blend to make good music, then his knowledge and that of the musician would seem (with respect to music) to be identical. The musician who knows how to blend notes surely knows in general the types of notes which blend and the rules of their blending, or he could not know in particular which notes to blend; thus his knowledge is of ideas as much as the dialectician's.

Here we must stop and take stock. That Plato thought that dialectic, interpreted very broadly, could discover and define the ends of practical arts, is perhaps true. But that he believed that division alone could do it, I doubt; I shall try to explain why. First we must notice a difference in the context in which the arts of music and grammar are treated in the Sophist and the Philebus. In the Sophist these two arts are presented as analogies to dialectic. The musician knows how to blend notes (or types of notes?) as the dialectician knows how to blend ideas. In the Philebus, the two arts are examples of dialectic, and we are shown that the musician or grammarian must know what division reveals about his art to be a good musician or grammarian. Plato never says, therefore, that division tells the musician or grammarian how to blend notes or letters.

Nevertheless, the fact that the words "blend," "mix" and "combine" are applied indiscriminately to letters, notes, ideas and the elements of the good life suggest that Plato meant that division does give this knowledge. If he did not, then we have a rather confusing terminology to deal with. Yet this is, I believe, the case. The "blending" or "mixing" of the ideas in the Sophist unambiguously refers to the relations of ideas which are revealed by division. And the relations specifically meant are those of genus to species. Thus, for instance, the letter A "blends" with the genus Letter; so does the letter B, and so forth. But the letter A does not, and never can, blend with the letter B; it is a general principle of division that species on the same level cannot blend with one another (Sophist 252D, 254D). This is simply because no particular can belong to two infima species (in the same division) at the same time. On the other hand, the blending of notes or letters which the musician and grammarian use to produce music or words refers equally clearly to the individuals which belong to the infima species. The grammarian, for example, knows that vowels must stand between mutes or sonants (Sophist 253A). (This does not mean that the musician and grammarian do not need and use the knowledge they gain from division, of course. It means that the knowledge which they have which tells them how to produce a desirable product -- the knowledge of the end of their art -- is not given by division.) It follows necessarily, then, that the blending

of ideas which division deals with is not the blending of elements which described the final product of an art. Division will tell what the infima species are, and how these are related to higher species and to the genus. But it will not tell how the infima species are to be related to one another to form a complex, valuable whole. Division is necessary to every art because it shows the intelligible structure of the subject-matter, and reveals the types of individuals available for combination into valuable products; but something more is needed to tell how these types should be combined.

There are thus two completely separate senses in which Plato uses the words "blend," "mix" and "combine," and these cannot possibly both be the function of division. In order to refer univocally to the second sense of the words, which applies to the blending of kinds of individuals with each other to form a valuable product, I shall use the word "combination." It should be understood that Plato also uses the word (as well as others) sometimes to refer to the relation of species to genus, which I call "division."

The question may now well be raised whether combination is a part of dialectic or not. The account of dialectic in the Sophist does not mention combination, but only collection and division, and the passage in the Philebus obviously deals, chiefly at any rate, with collection and division alone. Furthermore, combination introduces an element of evaluation and practical application which is not present in division and

collection; it might therefore be better to say that every art uses dialectic in the form of division and collection, but that combination goes beyond dialectic and provides the norms and guides for each art. To restrict dialectic to division and collection would thus both be consonant with the treatment of dialectic in the Sophist and Philebus and would have the virtue of making dialectic the methodological element common to all the arts while distinguishing by a separate word the practical element in each art which makes it an individual art.

There are, however, good reasons for thinking that Plato considered combination as part of dialectic. Undoubtedly Plato often discussed dialectic as if it comprised only division and collection, but perhaps more often he equated dialectic with philosophic method in general. And philosophic method for Plato included the discovery and definition of ends. This is, of course, explicitly stated in the Republic and elsewhere in the early and middle dialogues. But also in the Philebus, where ideas are not identified with ends, nor dialectic merely with the discovery of the idea which constitutes an end, Plato still definitely believes that dialectic defines ends. The dialectical method, Plato tells us in the Philebus just before the passage we have been considering (16C) "is indeed the instrument through which every discovery ever made in the sphere of the arts and sciences has been brought to light." And near the end of the dialogue, we are told that the "outcome

of the present discussion" is the "creation of an incorporeal ordered system" (64B), where the system referred to is clearly the well-mixed, or good, life, and not the logical system revealed by division. In the Politicus (282B), Plato speaks quite explicitly of the "combinatory art" which, like weaving, tells the statesman how to bring together the various elements to make a good state. As Cornford says, Plato believes the "practical task of the philosopher as statesman is synthetic. Possibly the Philosopher, had it been written, would have completed the account of the philosophic method by recognizing the synthetic or intuitive moment in dialectic..."⁴⁷ In my view, the Philebus comes as close as Plato came to giving an account of the "synthetic" or combinatory aspect of dialectic.

In the end, it should be realized that the decision to call combination an aspect of dialectic is only partly justified by Plato's own usage. The best reason for this decision will be found if we discover that the philosophic method, as applied in the Philebus, involves the use of combination. In any case, since Plato's own usage is ambiguous, it is to a large extent an arbitrary matter of terminology. From here on, then, we shall consider that there are three aspects to dialectic (as it is used in the Philebus): collection, division, and combination.

47.

Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 183.

In the remaining portion of the present section, I am going to make some general remarks about combination as I think it is used by Plato in the Philebus. Combination, unlike collection and division, is not reducible, even in part, to logical terms; it introduces matters of empirical, or at any rate value, judgment, and so it cannot be treated with even the slight element of precision to which the other parts of dialectic are amenable. There is, however, a section of the Philebus which discusses the general principles on which Plato bases his use of combination. That section is the section on the four "ontological" elements, and will be considered in due course. Thus what I say here is only of an introductory nature.

a. The statements which express the relations between universals which are found by division are (with some possible exceptions already noted) analytic in character; they follow logically from the meanings of the words to which the universals correspond. But the knowledge which combination yields is not of this character. It states, rather, what things should be like, or what states of affairs or events or objects are valuable or good. Its statements are therefore normative and are value judgments. Division might tell us, for instance, that black is a color, that white is a color, and that nothing can be both black and white at the same time. Combination, on the other hand, might tell us that black and white must be combined in a certain way to produce a beautiful picture. Division can tell us that no letter can be a mute and a vowel simultaneously;

but from among the infinitely many ways that letters can be combined to form words and sentences, division can make no selection. It is the combinatory art which tells the musician, also, how to combine notes into intervals which are lovely or virtuous. With respect to the good life, collection may inform us that the good life will contain pleasures and functions of intelligence; division may tell us what kinds of pleasures and functions of intelligence there are; but only combination can reveal which of these elements shall be combined, and how, to make the good life.

The contrast between division and combination is not properly expressed by saying that one deals with universals while the other deals with particulars. The statements which both make deal equally with ideas. The statements in which the truths of combination are couched speak of kinds of things, of qualities or classes, as do the statements which speak of the relations between species and genera. There is no difference, that I can see, in this respect, between the statement that "all cats are animals" and the statement that "the perfect household should contain cats, dogs and pigs." If one of these statements speaks of universals or ideas, or implies something about universals, or ideas, then so does the other. The difference is that the first statement is true because of the meanings of the words themselves, and for that reason alone, while the second, if it is true at all, is true for some other reason.

I do not mean to infer that the statements which are made by combination are not true a priori. That they are not

analytic is, I think apparent. But Plato believes, I am sure, that the truths of value, of combination, are known a priori, and that they follow from the eternal nature of the world and its creator.

b. A second point which should be made about combination is that it is always related to a particular art. Of course, it can be discussed in general, just as collection and division can. But the principles of collection and division can be stated, at any rate, without any necessary reference to purpose or product. In practice, the way collection and division are used is often related to the subject-matter of an art; but this is not essential to their nature, nor is it always true of Plato's practice. On the other hand, whenever collection and division precede combination, they are related to a specific art because combination must describe how certain elements, distinguished by division, are to be combined to create a valuable product. The point is that collection and division can be applied to find and "divide" any generic idea; this idea need not establish the subject-matter of an art. But if combination is to follow, then division must have provided kinds or species which are suitable for combination.

The terms "art" and "subject-matter of an art" as used above, and previously, are unfortunately vague. The word "art" is certainly being used in a broader sense than is usual in English and even, though less certainly, in a broader sense than the word "τέχνη" in Greek. Plato, of course, frequently extends

the use of words, and "~~τε~~χη" is one of the words which we come to understand in a very broad sense in the late dialogues. Nevertheless, I am aware that I have probably gone further even than Plato in my consistently wide use of the word. The reason and justification for this extension, if it is one, will become clearer in future parts of this thesis. Here I will only say that I have consistently assumed that there exists an art with respect to every entity which can be considered a product of art. I consider anything to be a product of art which can be explained in terms of a conscious, rational, purpose. The created universe, and everything in it which belongs to the world of becoming, is for Plato a product of art, both those things which are created by man and those which are not. There is therefore nothing in the created universe which cannot be explained and analyzed in terms of an art. This statement must be modified in a certain way to explain why many things which exist are not perfect; we will consider this presently.

c. Combination may usefully be thought of as comprising three separate steps, although in practice these are not always discriminated. These we may call evaluation, selection and mixing. Strictly speaking, the wisdom of combination is concentrated in the last of these steps; but since we think here of combination as everything which must be added to collection and division to reveal the nature of the valuable product, we may include in combination the processes which necessarily lead from the truths of division to the final result.

Evaluation is the process of determining the worth or value of the various kinds of elements which form the subject-matter of an art from the point of view of their ultimate places in the final product. Evaluation is not necessarily a naïve "weighing" of values, because it may as easily mean determining the true function or nature of the element being considered. But in any case, the purpose of evaluation is to study and analyze each potential element in the final product with an eye to learning its use or value to that product.

Selection is best expressed negatively by saying that it determines which elements are unsuitable for the final product. It corresponds directly, therefore, to the art of purification which, in the Sophist, is said to "expel the worse and retain what is better" (226D). There is such a negative aspect to every art: medicine casts out disease, politics casts out those people who disrupt the community (Politicus 308E), and the "art of happiness" casts out the disruptive pleasures (Philebus 63D,E).

Finally, mixing is the process of combining the selected elements into a harmonious whole. This process Plato compares to weaving (Politicus 282B ff) and to mixing water with wine (Philebus 61B, C). It may be understood in two possible ways, both of which are derived from the productive arts. The mixing may be thought of as a blending of various ingredients (water and wine, warp and woof, cotton and wool), or it may be thought of as an imposition of form or shape on a material (as the pot is made out of clay, the figure carved in stone, the boat made

of wood). As the art becomes less like the manual arts, from which these analogies are drawn, the clear meanings of these two sorts of "mixing" begin to fade, and the explanation becomes analogical or metaphysical. As we have already hinted, in the case of the good life Plato sometimes speaks of the elements as ingredients, sometimes as form and matter. The confusion which results is best understood by seeing as clearly as possible the two analogical sources for the concept of mixing.

CHAPTER III

THREE CRITERIA OF THE GOOD (19C-22C)

1. The purpose of the rest of the Philebus is to determine what follows from the application of the philosopher's method to the question, what is the good life for man?

The first step toward answering this question is collection. Collection, we have seen, is a matter of searching for the essential common element in a class of entities. The end of collection is reached when this essential common element can be stated. Just what is essential and what is not is, of course, vague. In the example from the art of grammar, the element common to the class of all letters was merely that each member of the class had the property of belonging to the class -- was, that is, a letter. But often Plato expected more from collection. With reference to a particular art, it would seem that there are several (perhaps many) classes in which collection might seek the essential common property. In what we have chiefly treated as the typical case, collection seeks the property common to all the individuals which might be thought of as ingredients in the mixture which the art seeks. There is no logical rule which prevents collection from seeking the characteristic common to all the good mixtures or products, however; this is in fact what collection most commonly did seek in the

early dialogues. If collection succeeded in finding the really essential characteristic of all good products, then neither division nor combination would be necessary. But the fact is that what collection seemed capable of finding in this way was either an empty or tautologous formal definition, or else, as often, nothing at all.

Between the collection which seeks the common characteristic in the elements of the mixture and the collection which seeks the common characteristic of all good mixtures there is the collection which states some characteristic common to all good mixtures, but a characteristic which is not sufficient or (perhaps) not essential. In the Philebus, the outcome of collection is embodied in the statement that the good life is some sort of mixture containing as elements functions of mind and pleasures. It does not state what functions of mind or what pleasures are needed for the good mixture nor how they are to be mixed. Collection in this case can therefore be thought of as naming a necessary but not sufficient condition for the good life; or it can be thought of as specifying a larger class (i.e. all mixtures which combine functions of mind and pleasures) within which the class of good mixtures is to be found.

The result of collection in the Philebus thus tells us very clearly what the elements for the final mixture are: they are functions of mind or pleasures. So far, it yields no different kind of knowledge about the good life than

collection yields about grammar when it finds that all the elements for combination into words are letters. But the collection of the Philebus adds a further piece of information: it reveals that for something to be a good life, it must contain two kinds of elements, functions of mind and pleasures. The collection of the Philebus therefore starts by seeking some common characteristic in all good lives rather than some common characteristic in the elements which make up good lives; in this respect it resembles the collection of the earlier dialogues. And like the earlier dialogues, it begins the search by examining various proposed definitions of the final unity to test their validity. In the testing of these proposals, criteria are formulated which provide necessary conditions which any acceptable definition must satisfy. But collection does not attempt to state the acceptable definition; having indicated the approximate area in which it may be found, division and combination are used to complete the task.

Two tentative indications of the scope of the good have been suggested. In this sense we have "collected" definitions or hypotheses, just as the Stranger collected definitions to find the nature of the sophist.¹ It is now necessary to "test" these suggestions against any criteria which we feel must be satisfied if a definition is to be accepted. If there is an

1.

Cf. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 187. "...these first six Divisions actually, though not formally, serve the purpose of a Collection preliminary to the seventh."

art of happiness, a subject-matter with which it deals, and a content which may be analyzed, we must identify this content and describe this subject-matter first.

2. Two possibilities have been suggested: pleasure is the good; or mind (and its affiliates) is the good.² If either of these proposals is correct, then collection is terminated and analysis can begin; but Socrates suggests that neither mind nor pleasure is the good. Either intuition or discovery of examples which disprove one or both of the proposed hypotheses must supply Socrates with this hint; he tells us that "some god has given him a vague recollection" (20B), so we may assume that it is intuition. We might expect Socrates to suggest some third definition or hypothesis about the nature of the good; but instead of doing this straightway, he proposes three criteria by which any such hypothesis may be judged. The result of the application of these criteria (which are accepted without demur as self-evident by Protarchus) is that the good is found to require something, at least, of both mind and pleasure.

Whatever is the good in the inclusive sense of constituting the entire content of happiness must satisfy these criteria, says Socrates: it must be 1. complete (τέλειον), 2. sufficient (ἱκανόν), and 3. hunted, desired, sought for by every knowing creature (20C, D). This last is expanded: "every knowing

2.

Where "is the good" means, to be more precise, "constitutes, or is the sole element in, the good life for man."

creature wishes to catch and possess the good, and is interested in nothing in which the good is not included."

It is now proposed to test the two original suggestions as to the nature of the good to see if either fulfills the conditions. Before examining the criteria, it will be valuable to see how they are applied. The application is not systematic, in that the three conditions are not used one at a time, but rather in a manner which relates them to one another. Socrates proposes to apply the tests to purified, abstract lives: if either pleasure or mind is the good,³ then it will not need anything more. He first proposes to take the life of pleasure alone, devoid of any noetic character. Protarchus says this would satisfy him; he needs no wisdom or intelligence to calculate his pleasures if it be part of the assumption that he already has them. But, Socrates points out, he would not be able to know he was enjoying the pleasures, he could not remember those past, or anticipate those future (21B, C). Asked if he would choose such a life, Protarchus says he would not.

In this case at least, the tests emerge as one: is it desired? This is considered the vital question which eliminates the life of pleasure. If we ask why the life of pleasure is not desired, the answer is in terms of the other criteria; because it is not sufficient, or not complete. But these are not higher courts of appeal. If we ask in turn how we know the life of pleasure is not sufficient, or complete, the only

3.

See note on previous page.

answer can be, because we desire something more. Therefore we can in effect eliminate sufficiency and completeness in terms of desire. Now when we ask why the life of pleasure is not desired, the answer is, because something more is desired. If this is objected to as including the idea of completeness or sufficiency, then it is necessary to realize that desire in this context is from the first defined as all-inclusive. To be good, a thing must be desired; to be the good, nothing else may be desired. Sufficiency and completeness are not superfluous to the test, but are explanatory of what is meant by it. They are not intended to remove the good from the scope of desire.

The examination of the life of mind is even briefer, and explicitly appeals to the third test only. "Neither of the two lives," says Protarchus, "can ever appear desirable to me, or, I think, to anyone else" (21D, E).

3. Turning to the three criteria, let us examine them in reverse order. "Every knowing creature hunts the good, desires it, wishes to catch and possess it." This is meant, and stated, as a necessary condition, a sine qua non, of the good, not as a definition. The good must be related to the desire of sentient beings. But this is not the same as saying that everything desired is good, nor the same as saying that the content of the good must be known. The object of desire may not be known. For this reason, it would be possible to choose contrary to desire, where the choice concerned a means or a part of the entire context desired. Such error would of

course be due to ignorance, or "some unfortunate necessity" (22B). What is really desired is not ever strictly an object; it is satisfaction of the desire. This is why Plato speaks of the good as a "state or condition" (ἔστις καὶ δῖαθησις 11D). Desire is often directed to some act or object, which is spoken of as the object of desire. But our judgment may err; if the act or object does not satisfy the desire, it was not the true object of desire. We chose "contrary to the nature of the truly desirable" (ἀληθῶς ἀίρετόν, 22B).⁴ The good is the object of search, not necessarily the subject of knowledge. The phrasing of the passage is broad enough to cover every kind of desire, interest, or pursuit and every kind of entity, object, state of affairs, totality of events, satisfaction, process or feeling which might be desired. But the good need not be the thing or event actually possessed or experienced. Once the thing desired is obtained or realized, it may not turn out to be good. Possession may be unprofitable. "Do you think the possession of the whole world is of any value without the good?" asks Socrates in the Republic (505B). For something to be good it must be desired; but once possessed it may not satisfy the desire. The good is that thing, or total state of affairs which, when possessed, actually does

4.

Cf. Protagoras 358C, D. Socrates says, "No one willingly goes after evil or what he thinks to be evil; it is not human nature, it seems, to do so -- to wish to go after what one thinks to be evil in preference to the good."

satisfy the desire or desires. This is the sense in which the good is the "best of human possessions" (ἀνθρωπίνων κτημάτων ἄριστον, 19C); we can speak of it as the "most advantageous" (ὠφελιμώτατον ἅπᾶντων, 11C).

These remarks show, I think, that it would be an error to say that Plato believed that being desired is the essential attribute of the good life. If it were the essential attribute, then I think Plato would be involved in a form of relativism; he would be bound to admit not only (as he does admit) that in some sense every one does desire the good life, but also that the good life is good because it is desired by someone. And this I am almost certain he does not believe. This is his position: man has a natural purpose or end, and this can be expressed in terms of the good life. When a man lives the good life and pursues his natural purpose, he will be happy. The natural purpose is the same for all men, when expressed in certain ways (expressed in other ways, it may differ, as the Republic shows). Therefore, there is one kind of purpose or one kind of life which will make each man truly happy. Now it is a matter of fact that everyone desires to be happy. This is an empirical fact in which Plato believes. And this explains what he means when he says that the good life is desired by everyone; everyone wants to be happy, and there is only one kind of life which will make men happy. But of course people may be wrong about what the good life is like -- if they could not be wrong, there would be no unhappiness in the world.

Now if Plato is wrong when he believes that all men desire to be happy, then of course what men desire is no test of the good life in any sense at all. And it could be the case that it is false that all men desire to be happy. Plato never considers this possibility.

Let us assume that Plato is right, and that it is a fact of nature that all men do desire to be happy. It still does not follow necessarily that all men do desire the good life; to prove this, it is necessary to assume a further fact, namely that men will be happy if they live the good life. Plato believes this is true because he believes there is a benevolent and rational mind which ordered the universe. If this were not the case, there would be no reason at all why the man who lived the good life should be happy, and therefore no reason he should desire it. In any case, although Plato accepts these two facts about the world, that everybody desires to be happy, and that living the good life will make everyone happy, it still is almost certain that he does not believe that the reason the good life is good is because it makes people happy or because it is desired. For if this were the reason the good life is good, then even if everyone happened to desire the same thing, it would still be the case that the goodness of the good life depended upon its being desired (or upon its making someone happy), and therefore the good life would be, by definition, relative to the person who desired it or to the person it made happy. But the rest of the Philebus makes it

entirely clear -- if we were ever inclined to doubt it -- that Plato never abandoned his conviction that the essential test of goodness is objective and independent of anyone's desire for it or use for it. The good life is truly desirable, and people do desire it, in the formal sense that they desire what will make them happy. But being desired, in this sense, is not what makes the good life good. What makes it good is the fact that it is man's true purpose, that is, the purpose for which he was created. Thus the goodness of the good life in no way depends on the fact that anyone desires it or even on the fact that it will make anyone happy; but being desired, in the sense explained, remains one criterion of the good.

When we read that being desired is a test of the good life, then, we must guard ourselves against two misapprehensions. The first is that this means that the things men desire are good; this is surely not Plato's meaning. Men desire the good only in the general, formal sense that they desire what will make them happy. This is only another way of saying what Socrates often said; that if a man knew the good, he would desire it. It would therefore be less misleading to say (as Plato does say once in the Philebus, 22B) that the good is the truly desirable rather than that it is what men do desire. The second misapprehension to be avoided is that the desirability of the good constitutes part of its essential nature; strictly speaking, this is an accident. It depends on two laws of nature, one to the effect that the

good life will make all men happy, the second to the effect that all men desire to be happy. Plato believes both of these generalizations to be true, and so he believes that desirability is a true sign of the good life.

Plato believed that men do desire the good life (in the formal sense described) because he considered desire (which is always, as we shall learn, of the soul) to be closely related to the "determining principle of the whole creature" (35d). This "determining principle" is, I think, Plato's phrase for man's natural drive towards his true (i. e. "essential") purpose. Men do, Plato believed, really desire to be healthy and happy; thus there is a sense in which men's desires are directed towards the good. But men do actually misjudge not only the means to health and happiness, but also the ends, thinking health and happiness to be differently constituted than they are. The true test of the good life is thus objective; the good life is connected only formally with any man's actual desires. What makes it good is the fact that it expresses man's true purpose or "essence" -- not the purpose from which any man necessarily acts, but the purpose for which he was created. Man's true purpose is not, therefore, his own purpose (except in a very special sense). To give such a theory a meaning we must assume a purpose in nature which quite transcends man's own desires.

If this hypothetical account of the significance of the criteria of desirability in the Philebus is correct, then what validity can Plato have supposed that it had? For granting

the conclusion that men do desire the good life in the sense explained, yet from this follows nothing as to the actual contents of the good life. We know Plato felt that most men pursue the wrong goals all their lives (cf. 67B). How can he then use what men do desire as a test of what the good life should be? The answer, I think, lies in the use of the elenchus. If Plato is right, when people see what it is that will make them happy, they will desire it. The method of philosophy, properly applied, may make them see that their present desires are confused, contradictory or actually misdirected. If they do see this, they will abandon their error and desire the truly desirable. The application of the criterion of desire really requires the guiding hand of truth to be any help in learning the nature of the good life.

4. Now we may turn to the other two criteria of the good. To be good something must be desired; to be the whole good it must also be sufficient. This we interpreted as an explanation of what desire means in this context. The good must be more than the true object of some desire; it must be the object of enough desires, or of a desire which is sufficient. In a later passage the Philebus speaks of a $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma\ \acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\nu\acute{o}\nu$, a sufficient limit (30C). It is enough to accomplish its purpose, fulfill its function. Again, the knowledge of eternal verities is splendid, it is the highest and best knowledge, but it is not $\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\nu\omega\delta\varsigma$ (62A); more is needed for a

man to find his way home at night. What is desired must be sufficient in the sense that it must be capable of perpetuating itself. It must provide for itself. What is sufficient is sufficient for something. It implies instrumentality ⁵ of some sort. As the test of the life of pleasure showed, a life is not desired unless it includes certain conditions of the existence of desire. We may still think we want mind in order to live the life of pleasure; but pleasure alone is not sufficient to live the life of pleasure. To be sufficient, the good requires at least some noetic elements in order to be desired, even as a life of pleasure. The life of the mind (as is less clearly shown) would not suffice without some elements of pleasure. If a man possesses the good, he has no further need; this is the meaning of the perfectly sufficient (τὸ ἱκανὸν τελεώτατον, 60C).

5. But the good is more than sufficient, it is inclusive; not only does it not need anything, but it is complete. There is no going behind it and asking, why is it good? It is final, in the further sense of τελεόν: no further end can fall outside it. There is no sense, says Diotima in the Symposium, in asking why a man wants to be happy, because happiness is the good, the ultimate object of desire. There is no other question to ask;

5.

Cf. Bury, The Philebus of Plato, p. 212. The Phaedo 101E speaks of a hypothesis sufficient to explain the phenomena.

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this answer is final (τέλος).⁶ The good is complete in the sense of containing not only its own conditions for existence, but its own reason for existence, just as the properly built building or state or universe contains its own reason for existence. "The properly built state will be perfectly good," Plato says in the Republic.⁷ The world constructed by the demiurge in the Timaeus is "whole and complete" (ὅλον καὶ τέλειον , Timaeus 34B) because it is self-contained; nothing visible is left outside, nothing goes in and nothing comes out. it is self-sufficing (αὐταρκες Timaeus 33D).

These remarks give some indication of how Plato uses the words for "end" and "final." Applied to the good life for man, their meaning is, I think, this: from the point of view of man, the good life which we seek to define must be such that no end falls outside it. This applies in two senses. In the first sense, it means that there must be no important (i.e. "essential") aspects of man's life which are left unsatisfied. If there is any legitimate end which a man may or should seek, then it must be included in the good life. In the second sense, it means that the good life must be defined in terms of ends, not means. When we are through defining the good life, it must not be possible to raise the question what it is a means to. The good life must be defined as that for which man does things, not as something done for the sake of something else.

6.

Symposium 205A.

7.

Republic 427E.

Perhaps Plato is right in saying that the good life should be an end in itself, but I have some doubt that the ethical theory of the Philebus defines it so that it can be considered in that way. If man's good is to be defined in terms of man's "essential nature," his "true purpose," then the good life is ultimately good because it is a means to realizing that nature or attaining that purpose. Although Plato always insists that the good must be an end, his teleological view of the universe leads him to a position where every human good is a means. The Philebus shows that this paradox does not depend on the theory of ideas, but is an outcome of the view that the world is a product of purposeful, rational and conscious plan. I include this remark merely to mark the fact that I recognize a basic difficulty in the views which (I think correctly) I attribute to Plato. But to enlarge this criticism would require a discussion of fundamental ethical problems which is clearly beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Aristotle, it is interesting to note, uses much the same criteria as the Philebus to prove that happiness is the good. The good, he says, is something final (τέλειον) and not just something which is a means.⁸ Such a thing is chosen for itself alone, not for the sake of something else. The good

8.

Nicomachean Ethics 1097a 27.

must be self-sufficient (αὐτάρκης⁹), that which, merely standing by itself alone, renders life desirable (αἱρετόν) and lacking in nothing. "Those who deny that that which all creatures seek to obtain is good, are surely talking nonsense."¹⁰ The good is not just one among many; it must include all goods, or we could always add another to it and proclaim the new sum to be a greater good. Whatever more we desire must be added to the complete good, since the good is the object of all desire.¹¹ Eudoxus, Aristotle tells us, used just this argument to prove that pleasure is the good.¹² He contended that if pleasure is added to any good, it is better; but only the good can make better. Hence pleasure is the good. But Aristotle counters by quoting the Philebus. "A similar argument is employed by Plato," Aristotle remarks, "to refute the view that pleasure is the good: the life of pleasure, he urges, is more desirable in combination with intelligence than without it; but if pleasure combined with something else is better than pleasure alone, it is not the good, for the good is not rendered more desirable by the addition of anything to it."

The conclusion of this section of the Philebus is that neither the life of pleasure nor the life of mind is

9.

Ibid., 1097b 7. "It seems it must be," says Aristotle, perhaps in a resigned reference to the Philebus.

10.

Ibid., 1172b.

11.

Ibid., 1097b 15 ff.

12.

Ibid., 1172b.

the good. Both are desired, but neither is complete or even sufficient as an object of desire. The good must contain at least these two elements. This is enough to decide the original issue of the dialogue. Neither pleasure nor mind has won. But Socrates now proposes a third life, a combined life made up of both the other two. "Every single person without exception" will prefer this combined life (22A). This is no guarantee that still further elements could not be found for a still fuller good; and indeed the criteria of completeness and sufficiency are never directly applied to the mixed life itself. The collection is finished. The general contents of the good life for man have been determined.

I have already explained why I do not think that desirability alone is a true definition of the essence of the good life. But neither do I believe that the three criteria together constitute a true definition of the good life, by Plato's standards. Ordinarily, we might agree that if everything that satisfied the three criteria was a good life, and if nothing satisfied the criteria which was not a good life, then the three criteria would constitute a necessary and sufficient condition for the good life, and would be a satisfactory definition. But although I feel reasonably sure that Plato intends his three criteria to be necessary and sufficient for determining a good life, I am also fairly sure he does not think they constitute a satisfactory definition. One reason for saying this is that Plato is not satisfied with a definition

unless it defines the essence of the thing to be defined, and as we have already remarked, the essence of a complex unity like the good life is described only when we state the component elements and how they are combined. To find out the elements, reject the bad, select the necessary, and blend them together; these are the tasks of division and combination.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF COMBINATION (23C-31B)

1. The purpose of the present section of the Philebus is to extend the discussion of philosophic method to combination. This is achieved through an analysis of all good mixtures; it attempts to explain what it is that makes any mixture a good mixture. It is then shown that this analysis is applicable to the good life because the good life is a created mixture like everything else of value in the universe. By showing how the analysis of all good mixtures applies to the good life, Plato answers the second question asked in the Philebus, namely, whether mind or pleasure is the cause of the goodness of the good life. The present section is thus preliminary to combination, just as the previous section was preliminary to collection and division. The application of the principles outlined in the present section comes later in the dialogue, however. The present section explains the principles of combination, and shows that they apply to the good life; it does not yet proceed to discuss how the good life is constituted.

It might appropriately be asked why this discussion of the principles of combination does not come either earlier or later in the dialogue. It would seem that it should either be combined with the previous section on method, or else that it should immediately precede the application of combination

toward the end of the dialogue. Actually, it appears after collection is complete, and before division begins. What reasons can be given for this sequence?

The reason the discussion of the principles of combination does not come earlier seems to me to be largely due to the demands of the dialogue form. Although the Philebus is far more direct and makes fewer concessions to the dialogue form than most Platonic works, the concessions which are made are not wholly nominal. By and large, the development of the argument is little influenced by the fact that it is supposed to be a debate. But the arrangement is somewhat modified by the desire to be persuasive, to elicit admissions from the reader in the most painless sequence, to lead the learner from the easy point to the difficult. Thus, while the positive didactic program of the Philebus can be described simply as the task of discovering the true nature of the good life for man, Plato actually poses a series of other problems which lead the reader on to this subject by stages. The first problem which is set is that of deciding whether either pleasure or intelligence alone constitutes the good life; this question is answered in the negative, but at the same time it is shown that the good life is a mixture of pleasure and intelligence. In order to discover this much requires no discussion of combination at all. Combination would tell us this much, to be sure; but Plato seems to have believed that since he could go this far without explaining his definite views on the positive nature of good

mixtures, he would be more persuasive to present the argument without unneeded assumptions. This explains, I believe, why Plato did not advance his views on combination before this point.

The second problem set in the Philebus is whether mind or pleasure can be considered the cause of the good life. The answer to this problem does require an analysis of the principles of combination; it therefore naturally comes at this point. Showing that the analysis of good mixtures applies to the good life as one case suffices to answer this second problem; the third problem, which is the full task of the dialogue, can then be tackled: this is, to describe the nature of the ingredients in the good life and how they are combined. Before this can be done, division must reveal all the ingredients available for combination. Thus the fact that Plato wishes to lead the reader to appreciate the causative nature of mind before he goes on to examine the potential ingredients of the good life in detail explains why the present passage does not come later than it does.

An even more important reason why the present section precedes the division of the species of pleasure is this: while division proper expresses logical relations between classes or properties, and the assumption is that division discovers the "essential" character of the species, there nevertheless remains, as we noted previously, a problem of just what species are to be taken as "natural" for a particular study. The present discussion of combination, with its demonstration of how this analysis is to be applied to the creation of the good life,

indicates what principles can be usefully employed in the division. If, in other words, combination is to evaluate, select and combine certain ingredients, then division must divide in such a way that these ingredients are the species which are "discovered." In the rest of the Philebus, then, the results of the present section are used not only for the final combination, but also to assist the division. This is not an accident; it is, in fact, an implicit result of the dialectical method. For if combination is to combine the appropriate kinds of things, these are the very classes or qualities (ideas) to which we must direct our attention from the start. The apparent arbitrariness of the original selection of genus, species and fundamentum divisionis is thus mitigated by the knowledge that we must collect and divide with an eye to producing results which will be useful to combination.

In addition, the sections of the Philebus which discover the various species of pleasure and intelligence cannot be said to restrict themselves to the business of stating the analytic relations between genus and species. Division can no more say what exists than what should exist; yet much of the section which deals with the kinds of pleasure can be interpreted as assuming or endeavoring to demonstrate that the various species which are discriminated do, in fact, exist. More than this, the division is accompanied by prolonged studies of each species which can most accurately be

considered as evaluative: this part of the sections on pleasure and intelligence belongs, then, on our analysis, to combination. These are reasons which indicate why the sections which are to follow, which divide intelligence and pleasure into species, also do much more than this, and contain elements which are really evaluative, and belong to combination. Both to assist division to divide wisely -- at the useful "joints" --; and to provide a basis for the evaluation which takes place during division, the present section on good mixtures must come before division begins.

2. Let us now consider the nature of this section on the principles of combination. I wish to state immediately that I believe there is basic confusion in Plato's treatment of the subject, and that I cannot see any way whatsoever of interpreting his words which is true to their meaning and yet consistent. Part of the difficulty is due to Plato's erratic use of words; for instance, the word "mixture" in the present and subsequent sections of the dialogue is used in at least three quite distinct and contradictory ways, and this in spite of the fact that the word is introduced quite formally. Such total ambiguity in the use of words, where the meaning is obscure in any case, is certain to make the task of interpretation very hard; and it is bound to leave any interpretation open to easy refutation from some passage in the original dialogue. But part of the difficulty comes not simply from

the fact Plato uses the same words in quite different ways, but as well from the fact that he has a definite tendency to confuse the different meanings of the same word with each other. These two difficulties together make it highly unlikely that there will ever be general agreement as to Plato's meaning because it is so certain that there can be no consistent interpretation to which all the evidence can point.

What I intend to do here, therefore, is to argue for no one detailed, consistent interpretation, since I am relatively sure there is no such interpretation which is correct. Instead, I am going to outline, first, a very general theory which I think expresses part (but by no means all) of what Plato means. I am then going to indicate several somewhat more detailed theories which are (in a rather vague sense) derivative from the first, general, theory, and which, while all consistent with the general theory, are not all consistent with each other. These further, more detailed theories, express at least some of the further things which I believe Plato had in mind when he wrote this part of the Philebus.

a. The general theory is as follows: among those entities which do or might exist in the world (including objects, events, feelings, institutions, animals, etc.) only those which are complex in some sense can be said properly to be intrinsically good. The complexity means that there are discriminable parts, elements or aspects. The fact of complexity may be expressed by saying that the good entity

is a "mixture" of the parts, elements, or aspects. Every good entity is thus a mixture. Of all the relations between the parts, elements or aspects of a good entity, there is one, or there are several, because of which the entity is a good entity. This relation, or group of relations, because of which an entity is a good entity, and which stands between the parts, elements or aspects of that entity, is called a "limit." Every entity which has a limit may be said to be "limited." A complex entity which is not limited, fails to be limited because of a certain relation, or group of relations, which does not hold between its parts, elements or aspects. The absence of this relation or relations can be expressed positively as the presence of another relation or relations. When this other relation (or relations) is present, the entity is said to be "unlimited," or "an unlimited."

Whenever, in the course of events, an entity which is limited appears, this can only be due to the presence of a cause of a certain kind. This cause serves to explain the existence of any good entity in the world. It explains it in this way: first, it is an efficient agent, which actually creates the entity which has a limit. Second, it provides a reason for the existence of the entity. By a reason, I mean that the agent has a reason, that is, a purpose. This purpose, or intention, is why the agent creates the good entity. Such a reason or purpose provides the only true explanation which can be given for the existence of anything; if anything else

exists, it cannot be explained. Thus if there are any entities which exist and which are not limited (i.e., which are unlimited) then these cannot be caused by the special cause we are discussing, nor explained by it.

The name which Plato gives to the agent which causes the existence of all good entities and which has the reason for their existence is "mind."

b. This is the general theory, which I believe is about the maximum that can be said which is consistent with everything, or practically everything, which Plato says about combination in the Philebus, and which is not obviously inconsistent with itself. It is pretty vague, and it leaves out very much which we would want to include; but I do not see how more can be included without raising problems of consistency. I am now going to suggest three somewhat more detailed theories all of which, it seems to me, are consistent with the general theory, but which are not strictly consistent with each other. The first of these is the most primitive, and probably represents a level of interpretation which reflects the genesis of the entire analysis. This theory is based directly on an analogy with the artisan and his work, and owes its cogency to the analogy. In its simplest form, this theory conceives of the "mind" as a maker or artisan who has the power to create objects and who has a purpose or reason in mind for creating them which acts as a guide and goal. The "limit" is the form which the object must have to

serve its purpose. This form may most easily be thought of as a series of spatial relations; but perhaps there are other ways of thinking of it. The material from which the object is made, but before the object is made from it, is an "unlimited." The material always has some shape, of course, but it is unlimited until it has the shape which the artisan has in mind. When the material has the right shape (i.e., is limited) then the object is a "mixture." The sense in which it is a mixture is rather difficult. It is this: it is a mixture of limit and an unlimited. The unlimited is the material before it has the proper shape. When the proper shape is given it by the artisan, it has limit. Speaking loosely, we may say that a limit was "mixed" with an unlimited. But the material as such, on this interpretation, is not the unlimited: it is the material with a wrong form. Thus this interpretation agrees with Plato's repeated assurances that when something has a limit, it is no longer unlimited (24A, B; 24C, D; 25D, E). It also agrees with the fact that Plato tells us clearly that existing entities can be unlimited. These considerations suggest that the mixture, on the above interpretation, cannot be resolved into a limit and an unlimited at any one time; the "mixture" of limit and an unlimited is rather a matter of temporal succession; first there is an unlimited; then the agent makes it limited, at which time the unlimited is gone. For the "it" which survives this change, there is no term in this analysis.

A modification of this interpretation would involve considering an unlimited as the material aspect of an object. In this case, a mixture would really be analysable into a limit and an unlimited (i.e. "form and matter"). And certainly Plato does often speak very clearly of the mixture as being a mixture of a limit and an unlimited (23D; 25D; 26B). Furthermore, unlimiteds are characterized as "having no bounds", "suffering no bounds to be set" (24B), which would seem to suggest that unlimiteds are abstractions from existing entities rather than existing entities. I believe that Plato did think of the present analysis sometimes in these terms. But it clearly is not consistent with the earlier version of this interpretation, which made unlimiteds existing entities, and which, therefore, implied that the same entity could not be both an unlimited and limited at the same time. And of the two versions of this interpretation, I think the first is consistent with more of what Plato says, because it is quite vital to his argument to be able to say that existing entities are unlimiteds.

c. The second theory which I wish to propose as coming under the general theory is the most important. It is the theory which fits more of what Plato says in the present passage of the Philebus than any other, and it is quite clear in its general outline. This second theory is this: the particular sense in which an entity must be complex in order to be good is that it must exhibit a proper relation between certain sets of "opposites." These opposites, derived from Pythagorean and

Empedoclean sources, are conceived either as properties or as actual elements. Any good entity which exists, such as a healthy body, good weather, or the entire universe, is to be thought of as a balance between different elements. To take one aspect of the healthy body, temperature, we must think of the right temperature as produced by the presence in the body of the right amounts of heat and cold, just as we get the right temperature in our bath by adjusting the cold and hot water faucets. It is true that we do not think of the right temperature as being a mixture of hot and cold, even though it is produced by blending hot and cold elements; but Plato does. Clearer examples of what Plato means might therefore be these: a certain shade of gray is produced by mixing proper proportions of white and black; these two colors remain in the mixture, and could be physically separated. Or in music, if a vibrating string is fretted in the precise center, then each of the segments will produce the same note; if it is fretted a third of the way from an end, it will produce a certain note and another an octave higher. In these cases, the proper relation of lengths in the string produces consonant intervals; the interval (or rather, the chord made up of two notes) is a "mixture" of the two sounds.

This last example is a good one because it illustrates the possibility that the right relation can be expressed in quantitative, precise terms. Plato would like to think that all right mixtures can be defined in such terms, and most of

what he says with respect to this matter is couched in semi-mathematical language. He never does demonstrate how other mixtures can be defined mathematically on the analogy with the tuned string, but he assumes, or at least hopes, that it can be done. In any case, this is really a side issue. The point is that every mixture is good because of some relation between its parts, and on this theory, that relation is between opposite elements like hot and cold, high and low, dry and moist. The name for this relation (in the case where it is correct) is a "limit", and it must be thought of, ideally, as a mathematical ratio between the quantitative aspects of the opposed elements. When an existing entity exhibits this proper relation, it is a "mixture."

The crucial problem with respect to this theory, is how to interpret an unlimited. The problem, briefly, is this. Plato speaks repeatedly of an unlimited as being indeterminate, as if it were a continuum of some sort in which there is no definite proportion or ratio. When a limit is "mixed" with this continuum, he seems to say, then there is no longer a continuum, but a definite, numerically expressible, ratio between elements of the continuum. Neglecting the questions which would arise if we tried to express this theory more precisely, the real problem is this: how can an existing entity be indeterminate? If the body in health has some one (proper) relation between a hot element and a cold, how can we deny that when the body is unhealthy it has some other

(wrong) relation between the two elements? Yet Plato says quite plainly that when determinateness is "applied" to the unlimited, the result is always a mixture -- i.e., the right mixture, and a great deal of the point of the dialogue depends upon showing that actually existing entities are unlimited. I believe it is therefore necessary to reject the interpretation of an unlimited as an indeterminate continuum in the sense explained above -- a sense which requires that an unlimited could never exist, because it would be an abstraction of some sort. It may be that Plato does think of an unlimited as an abstraction and as a continuum in this sense sometimes, but such an interpretation does not fit with very much that he says.

I believe the best way to interpret an unlimited is as an existing entity which has the wrong relation between the opposites. It then becomes possible to speak consistently of examples of bad health, or of certain pleasures, as unlimiteds (or of having the characteristic of being unlimited). Unlimiteds are thus as determinate, in the sense of having some definite relation between the opposites, as mixtures.

In what sense, then, are they indeterminate at all? I believe the answer is this: an entity which is limited has the right relation between the opposites. When this happens, such an entity is stable; it has a tendency, at least, to maintain that same relation, and to remain at rest, so far as that relation is concerned. Why this is so, I shall not explain here; but that Plato believes it, there

can be little doubt. An entity which is unlimited, on the other hand, is out of whack. It is unbalanced, unstable, and has a constant tendency to become either better balanced or worse. This is what it means to say that it is indeterminate: it does not maintain the same condition with respect to the relations of the opposites. Over any period of time, it cannot be said to exhibit any one relation. Therefore, according to Plato, we cannot say that it is truly determined. The passages in the present section of the Philebus which seem to bear out this interpretation are these:

At 24D, Socrates says that "'hotter' never stops where it is, but is always going a point further, and the same applies to 'colder,' whereas definite quantity is something that has stopped going and is fixed." Here I believe he means that a thing which is hotter or colder than the correct temperature is an improper mixture of hot and cold elements, and therefore is unstable, and becomes still hotter, or colder, as time goes on. But something which has definite quantity -- i.e., which remains at one definite point in the balance between hot and cold -- is fixed; and this can only happen when the balance is right. At 24E we read that "when we find things becoming more or less anything, or admitting of terms like 'stronger,' 'slighter,' 'very' and so forth, we ought to reckon them all as belonging to a single kind, namely that of the Unlimited..." In other words, an entity is unlimited when it is unstable and one element is becoming more or less dominant with respect to its opposite.

The guide to this interpretation is, of course, the assumption that there are types or species which represent the norms for existence. Such norms would, on this interpretation, be defined in terms of the proper relations between opposites. With respect to "amounts" of each opposite present in a complex entity, some other given amount would always be correct to maintain the proper relation. Thus any improper relation could always be said to be due to an "excess" or "deficiency" of some opposite, while the proper relation would be a "mean" between excess and deficiency. Thus Plato tells us that the proper relation (limit) in the case of "severe cold" or "stifling heat" "removes all that is excessive and unlimited, and creates measure and balance" (26A).

The distinction between an entity which has limit and one which is unlimited is, as I have just interpreted it, a physical theory. It states that when a certain given relation between opposite elements obtains in animals or events or institutions of given types, then a stable state will result which will tend, at least, to remain constant. It states also that when this proper relation is not present, the entity in question will tend, at least, to be unstable, and in a constant state of change. Such a statement of the theory as a physical theory expresses, however, only part of what Plato intends. I believe he would argue that even if this physical theory were untrue, it would still be the case that the unlimited entity was indeterminate, although in a somewhat different sense. I can-

not pretend to be able to state this further point with any clarity, and I am not very sure what it amounts to. It depends, I believe, on the metaphysical doctrine that only the really typical entity, the entity which does, in fact, exhibit the proper relation between opposites, can be truly said to be any one thing, even if it only happens to exist for a second, whereas an unlimited is not really any one thing, even if it happens to remain unchanged. This is partly to be explained, probably, in some way which indicates that the properly constructed entity is an end (that is, it is what the cause intends to produce) while any other sort of entity is not an end. And ends remain fixed in a sense in which other things do not; the end remains the same, even if the object does not. Thus an unlimited, since it exists in the passing world, is bound to change sometimes; while a mixture, although it also exists in the passing world, cannot change and still remain that correct mixture. I recognize that there is a question-begging ambiguity in this argument; perhaps it is due to my inability to understand Plato's true meaning, or perhaps it is not Plato's argument at all, or perhaps Plato's position is, partly, based on some confusion. We shall return to discuss these problems presently, although not with the hope of "solving" them.

d. The third theory which fits with the general theory outlined at the beginning of this discussion is quite similar to the second theory in many respects, but is not quite the

same, and is not really compatible with it. In this third theory, a mixture again is an existing entity which exhibits a proper relation between parts, and a proper relation is a limit, and an existing entity which has the wrong relation between parts is said to be unlimited. The difference is that in this third theory, the parts are not strictly opposites at all, but are just various elements which may be considered on the analogy of ingredients. A mixture, on this theory, is any complex made up of different parts, provided the parts are the right parts, in the right relations, and performing their proper functions. Examples of such mixtures are the good state, the good life, and the soul of the virtuous man. These mixtures cannot be said with any accuracy to be mixtures of opposites; rather they are mixtures of various different elements. While Plato treats pleasure in the rest of the Philebus according to the second theory, he treats the good life according to this third theory. It is harder, on this last theory, to see how a mathematical definition of a limit can be given, nor does Plato ever try to give such a definition for the mixture of the good life. In the third theory, the notion of the proper function, the appropriate achievement of each element (cf. 66A), becomes more important than the notion of a proportion or ratio. As a result, the final mixture of the good life includes as one element mind, whose function is to impose a limit upon pleasures by stopping them at one point (the right point); in this way, pleasures become limited within the larger limited entity which

is the good life. This illustrates the overlapping application of the second and third theories we have been discussing.

If this third theory could be stated more precisely, it might be possible to decide whether, in general, it is true that the parts or ingredients which constitute a mixture must themselves be limited in the sense given to "limited" by any one of the theories. It seems fairly certain that, for a mixture (according to the third theory) to remain that mixture, each of the elements must remain fixed, or true to type. In a consonant chord, for instance, each note making up that chord must remain just that note; in the good state, each man must cleave to his appropriate task; and so forth. The question really is, whether trueness to type, stability, fixedness, are always to be accounted for by one of the three theories given above. If so, then it is likely that every mixture (in the third theory) is composed of elements which already have a limit. This is an obscure point. However, I am inclined to believe that trueness to type and stability, as Plato conceives them, are always to be explained in terms of one of the above theories, or on some theory which is closely similar to one of them. In any case, trueness to type and stability are very often to be explained in one of these ways; and it is not unlikely that Plato thought they could always be explained by the apparatus of the present section of the Philebus, because he says that wherever we find order and stability in the universe, we must credit the causal agent, whose stable product is always analysable as a mixture.

3. The third theory, which interprets the mixture as a complex entity with a right relation, or group of relations, between various elements (which are not necessarily "opposites") seems to fit best (or perhaps it would be better to say, fits most literally) with the account of division which has already been given. Division, it was found, reveals the kinds of elements available for combination into a mixture. In the typical case, these elements are not "opposites," although this possibility is not ruled out; in the typical case, these elements are just the sort required for making a mixture according to the third theory. The different letters distinguished by the grammarian, the different classes of men distinguished by the politician-philosopher, the different elements of the good life, or the different elements in the good soul: all these are the kinds of entities distinguished as species by division in its typical application, and combined together by a mindful cause to form a true mixture which exhibits limit.

This connection between division and combination has already, in a general way, been discussed in a previous section, when it was shown why collection and division could not, either singly, or together, ever tell us how to produce a good mixture. But I would like now to touch on another question concerning the relation of division and collection on the one hand, and combination on the other. This is the question raised by Plato when he tells us that the concepts of limit and unlimit are common to the analysis of division and to the analysis of combination.

Before discussing what this may mean, it may be well to have the passage before us in which Plato makes this claim.

At the beginning of the section on combination, the problem arises as to how the analysis is to proceed. Socrates admits that "...if my objective is to secure the second prize for reason I must have weapons different from those of my previous arguments; though possibly some may be the same" (23B), and he immediately repeats that "we might apply part of what we were saying before" (23C). The "part" to which he refers is made clear a sentence or two later where Socrates remarks that "God revealed (as we said before) two constituents of things, the unlimited and the limit." Looking back over the discussion of dialectic earlier in the dialogue, we notice that the concepts which played the largest part were what were called the "one," the "many" and the "unlimited." In one passage only did the word "limit" occur, namely at 16C, D, where we were told that, according to a "saying" handed down from ancient times, "all things that are ever said to be consist of a one and a many, and have in their nature a limit and unlimitedness. Since things are ordered in this way..." and it goes on to explain that we must look for this "one" and "many" if we would understand things. What is the parallel to which Plato is trying to direct our attention between division and combination?

The simplest answer which is consistent with what has been said is that, given a certain type of complex entity (such as the good life), we see first that it is one when we see that

there is a single idea which embraces all of its aspects or elements (pleasures and functions of mind); we then see that it is many when we divide this generic idea into the species (into all the various pleasures and functions of mind); we recognize the fact that the final product will be unlimited unless the right elements are combined in the right ways; and if we do combine the right elements in the right ways, we will have a mixture which has a limit. This is simply an outline of the stages of dialectic from collection through division to combination, and it shows one sense in which Plato might mean the statement that the same thing may, viewed in different ways, be one, many, limited and unlimited. This explanation of Plato's meaning is not a very satisfactory one, however. It is not very satisfactory because Plato seems to be stating a definite parallelism between the analysis of division and of combination which this interpretation does not suggest. Plato says, in introducing the analysis of combination, that the concepts of limit and unlimitedness have already been revealed; this must refer to more than the mere mention of the words at 16C. The implication is that limit and unlimit are either to be identified with some of the concepts previously introduced, or else that they are to be considered as derived from them in some sense. In trying to understand Plato's meaning, let us first try to decide what the phrase "all things that are said to be" refers to; for these are the things which are said to consist of a one and a many and also to have in their nature a limit and unlimitedness. The

"things" here may be ideas, for we remember that Plato was very strong in his assertions that, although particulars can be said to be "one" and "many," it is eristical to make anything of this, while it is important that ideas are one and many; and division, with which he was mainly concerned, deals with the oneness and manyness of ideas. The remark that these are things which are "said to be" need not rule out ideas, for ideas are, of course, "said to be" by Plato and Platonists. The objection to taking the "things that are said to be" as ideas is that it is impossible to see how ideas could be said to have an unlimited aspect; no possible interpretation of unlimitedness would suggest that an idea could be unlimited, or even that it would be meaningful to say that an idea was unlimited.¹ It is of the essence of an idea that it be fixed, permanent and immaterial, which are the very opposite characteristics to those of unlimited entities. The "things which are said to be" cannot, then, possibly be ideas, which are the very things which, in the discussion of division, were said to be one and many.

The key to the passage must, perhaps, be sought elsewhere, in the words "since things are ordered in this way."

1.

There are scholars who have thought that the ideas, like particulars, are created from the limit and the unlimited (as in our first theory). This notion has a few good arguments in its favor, and one insuperable argument against it; I shall discuss it presently, but dismiss it here.

This refers, I think, quite generally to the whole created universe. The created universe, as we learn from the analysis of combination, contains elements of order and permanence; ideas are not created; but individuals are created, if not perfectly, at least generally in accord with the permanent types with their normal balance of parts or elements. If this were not so, then we could never find the "ones" and the "manys" by "looking" for them in the world; if this were not so, it would not be apparent (as it was to Plato) that everything is created by a rational cause. Division, as we recall, tells us the relation between ideas, between species and genus; but we know as well that the genus and the species are not arbitrary conventions, but represent types, examples of which really exist in the world. This is why division must divide "at the joints." The typicalness of the individuals we find in nature is due to the rational cause; and it is what (on one theory) we called "limit." To be true to type, to remain fixed at the proper norm which establishes the essence of the species: these are the characteristics of an entity which has limit. There is, therefore, a relation between the species discovered by division, the "many," and the limit which characterizes individuals which are true to type. It is limit which makes division possible. It is "because things are ordered this way" that we can collect and divide, and the ordering that is meant is the creation of things with limit by the beneficent cause.

We have thus found a kind of correspondence, or connection at any rate, between the limit and the species discovered by division, and perhaps this is all Plato intended us to find. Even this much is open to a serious difficulty, however, which is this: division, to operate as Plato wants it to, must uncover some species of pleasures as necessarily unlimited. Not every species is a type which the intelligent cause would want to use as a guide in creating limited mixtures, therefore. The fact is that Plato wants to use division sometimes in a way which leaves it free to classify many things which are not "types" or "species" in the normative, evaluative sense at all; this is precisely why every idea is not an idea of something good. But Plato never escaped completely from his inclination towards the theory that if you could define something, it was somehow good, even though he continued to define bad things. This difficulty does not vitiate the fundamental value theory of the Philebus, however, for normative types and universals are not identified through most of the dialogue.

Carrying further the connection between the analysis of combination and the analysis of division, we notice that the term "unlimited" is common to both schemes. In treating division, Plato speaks of the "unlimited number" which division must not approach until all the many species have been found (16D-17A); and this is generally, and I think rightly, taken to refer to the unlimited (i.e. unknown and indefinite) number of particulars which belong to the species. What is unlimited

here is the number of actually existing examples of each class discovered by division; as we found, division can never tell us how many such examples there are, nor can it tell us anything about them as individuals; it can only tell us about them as members of the class. Unlimitedness in the analysis of combination was, in most cases, taken as the characteristic of some one entity which it had because its parts were out of kilter; in the other case, it was taken as the material aspect of an entity. We can see, then, that in division what is unlimited is a number; in combination, it is a single thing. Thus the two cannot be identified. But there is a connection: insofar as an individual runs true to type, the definition of its essence applies to it. It is the individual variations which are not covered by the definition. It is the individuals, just so far as they are individuals, that account for the multiplicity of the unlimited in one case, or the variation from the norm in the other. It is the individual, untypical variation in both cases which makes something unlimited. I think Plato would say that this connection showed that just as division "imposes order" on the unlimited number of particulars by seizing on the common elements and ignoring the individual elements, so the good cause "imposes order" on the unlimited, complex individual by setting it right and giving it limit -- by imposing the typical, normal and stable condition upon it, and eliminating the atypical, excessive and abnormal elements.

I do not want to give the impression that I think this account of the relation between the analyses of division and

combination is highly satisfactory. What I have said seems to me largely confused and based on vague analogies. But so far as I can see, it is true to Plato's meaning, and I think it serves a purpose if it makes the sources of confusion somewhat clearer, and the analogies more explicit. Some of the problems raised here will be reconsidered in a later section.

It is now time to remind ourselves that the purpose of the present section on combination is to decide certain questions about the good life. The first step is to show that the analysis of combination applies to the good life by identifying the various aspects of the analysis with aspects of the good life. Most of the rest of this section will, therefore, be taken up with a discussion of the four elements of the present analysis with particular attention to their application to the good life.

4. The Unlimited. So far, we have seen that entities of certain kinds may be said to be unlimited, but we have not discussed what Plato means by the unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον). It is quite clear what is meant however. Using the terminology of the passage on collection and division, Plato says that the unlimited is a "one" which is "split up into many," and that in defining and treating it we should try to "collect the many into one," and learn how it is "both one and many" (23E). He repeats that he will "try to show that the unlimited is, in some sense, many" (24A). Finally, a defining characteristic is found which attaches to every entity which is unlimited, and this is accepted

as a "sign" of the unlimited (24E); everything which has this characteristic is to be "put into the class of the unlimited" because this is what makes the class "one" (25A). The unlimited is, then, a universal or idea, and like other generic ideas, it is both one and many. In a similar way, the limit and the mixture are also "ones," ideas, which can be defined by collection and divided into "many." The category of the cause may possibly have no idea; at least we are not told that it does; but with respect to the unlimited, the limit and the mixture, there is without doubt an idea in each case. I cannot see how there can be the slightest doubt that Plato intends us to believe that the unlimited, the limit, and the mixture are generic ideas, for he expressly uses the terminology taken from the discussion of generic ideas to talk about them. Nor do I know for certain whether anyone has ever questioned that Plato means them as ideas. Scholars have very frequently argued as if they questioned it, but I think what they really have wanted to question was whether examples of the limit, the unlimited and the mixture, were ideas. This is, of course, a very different question indeed, and it is unfortunate that practically every discussion of the matter confuses the two questions. The second question, whether examples of the limit, unlimited and mixture can be ideas, I shall discuss at appropriate places in this section.

As a typical example of the confusion between the questions, whether all four classes are ideas, or whether

their members are ideas, I refer to H. Cherniss' review of the Diès edition of the Philebus.^{1.1} According to Cherniss, Diès argues that all the four "kinds" are meant to be ideas. "With regard to the $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$," writes Cherniss, "he admits that what is produced or engendered is not an intelligible entity, but he insists that the $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$ qua class is so." I would not even agree that examples of the $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$ are unintelligible; but they are certainly not ideas, and Dies seems to me to be absolutely right in saying that the class of mixtures is an idea, as are the other classes. Cherniss, however, misses the point. "This notion ... seems to me to be quite mistaken" he remarks, and quotes Grube^{1.2} to the effect that "there is not a shadow of a hint that $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$ anywhere in the Philebus refers to anything but the world of phenomena." There is more than a shadow of a hint that $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$ does not refer to the entire world of phenomena; but I agree that all examples of the $\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\acute{o}\nu$ do belong to the world of phenomena. What Cherniss does not see is that this does not contradict the assertion that the class of all mixtures is an idea. Cherniss tries to prove his point by a reference to the phrase $\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\iota\kappa\tau\omicron\tau\alpha \ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha$ in Philebus 59C which he assumes applies to the ideas. Actually, as I shall argue later, this passage, which does not mention the ideas at all, may refer to mixtures or ingredients of mixtures rather than ideas. But even if it applies to ideas, it does not mean

1.1 Some War-Time Publications Concerning Plato, American Journal of Philology, July, 1947.

1.2 Plato's Thought, p. 303.

unmixed in the same sense in which mixtures are mixed; for, as I shall show later, Plato uses "unmixed" to mean "pure" -- an adjective which applies to such phenomena as pleasures in the Philebus, when they arise from a proper mixture in the body.

Cherniss also thinks there cannot be an idea of the unlimited, even though Plato expressly says there is (16D-E); Cherniss tries to explain away the phrase τὴν τοῦ ἀπείρου ἰδέαν by calling it an oxymoron -- a rather cavalier argument. He does not account for other passages which clearly imply the same (23C; 23E; 24E; 25A). But his trouble surely springs from the failure to distinguish between a class and its members.

Plato undertakes, then, to show the "oneness" of the unlimited in the usual way; by collecting examples for scrutiny, and by then identifying the essential common element. The essential common element is, of course, a characteristic of some sort; by the same token, it defines a class. Whether it is the common characteristic, or the class, which is the idea, is not at all certain. Plato speaks of both, of the unlimited "in things" (23C) and of the class of things which are unlimited (25A); and there is no clear way to tell which is the true "one." But, as we said before, it does not matter much for the purposes at hand, even though it might matter a good deal in some other contexts. Collection here, as often, is a matter of collecting, not particulars, but kinds of particulars, so that when collection is finished it is already known what the "many" are: division and collection are simultaneously accomplished. Socrates

begins the collection by giving one type of thing which is unlimited: anything which is indeterminate with respect to hot and cold (24A).² To this are added numerous other examples as the discussion continues.³ We are now immediately told the unifying principle which makes these examples examples of the unlimited: all the examples (or, to be precise, kinds or species of examples) involve "more and less" (τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον). Something which is unlimited is unfixed; it admits no end (24A); it has no beginning, middle or end (31A). It may alter indefinitely in either direction. As soon as something unlimited stops at a specific number or measure, a specific temperature or pitch or speed or loudness, then there is "an end to the more and less" (24B). When the more and less are present, they prevent any definite quantity (πρόσον, 24C), for "if they allowed quantity and measure (τὸ μέτρον) to appear in the precinct of the more and less, then these latter would be driven from their rightful place" (24D). An unlimited is characterized by the fact that it is in flux: "the hotter and the colder are always advancing and never remain; but quantity does remain and does not progress" (24D).

2.

It is unnecessary to review again the various ways in which this may be interpreted; see the previous section.

3.

Others are: more emphatic and quieter (24C); greater and smaller (24C); drier and wetter (25C); quicker and slower (25C); tinier and larger (25C); higher and lower in pitch (26A); quick and slow in tempo (26A); hotter and colder weather (26A); often and seldom intense or dull pleasures (52C).

We must not make the mistake of regarding the more and less as two subdivisions of the unity of the unlimited. The "more and less" is rather the "seal of unity" which we have discovered in the many examples (25A). This is the sign⁴ (σημεῖον, 24E) which reduces the many to a unity (25D). It is no longer necessary to examine all examples, since we have found the uniting principle. The collection is complete; to the best of our ability we have done what was required -- have "collected all things that are scattered and split up and impressed upon them the sign of some one nature" (25A). Summarizing the result of this operation, Socrates says:

In order to save the time of examining all examples, we proposed as the nature of the infinite: -- that it is all things which appear to us to become more or less, emphatic and gentle, excessive and so forth; these are to be put in the class of the infinite (τὸ τοῦ ἀπειροῦ γένος) as their unity. (24E, 25A).

The unlimited is the class of all things not definitely fixed and true to type. Since it contains nothing determined, the members of the class are not directly amenable to knowledge. In this sense, the unlimited supplies the irrational element in reality which the ἀπειρον of dialectic supplied in discourse. Just as the indeterminate number of individuals is beyond the scope of diaeresis, so the indeterminate quality of unlimited things is beyond the scope of limit which creates intelligible

4.

'Sign' means here simply 'characteristic' or 'property.' It reduces the many to a unity in the sense that the many examples can now be said to belong to one class, i.e. the class of all things which have the property of being "more and less."

reality. The ὁμαίρον is the end term of both discourse and the sensible world. In both cases it stands outside the scan of reason, but is the "material" out of which reason can create order. The unlimited of the Philebus expresses, among other things, the possibility of form; in the sense that it is the class of things which do not have fixed form, but could have it, it is one of the elements "from which" (ἐξ ὧν, 27A) things with limit come into being; from it, by the agency of the cause, things "become into being" (γίνεσθαι εἰς οὐσίαν, 26D).

Plato now explains that pleasure is to be placed in the category of the unlimited. As it finally turns out, this means some pleasures only. But in any case, the position is that among the number of things which belong to the class of the unlimited, there is a subclass which is made up of pleasures. This is, presumably, one of the facts which division discovers, although proving it occupies a good third of our dialogue. We must not, at any rate, consider the present section as more than a promise of what is to come; that many pleasures are in fact unlimited, that some must always be unlimited, that some are often unlimited but may be limited, and that a few are, by nature, limited, is the burden of much of the Philebus. Here we can expect only an announcement of the theses in broad terms.

Let us see, then, what Plato has to say at this stage concerning pleasure. Pleasure, he tells us, is "among the things which admit of more and less," for pleasure and pain form a continuum which has no limit (27E). This is eagerly

admitted by Philebus, who speaks up in one of his rare but rather violent moments of articulateness, because "pleasure would not be completely good if it were not unlimited in quantity and quality" (27E). This shows (as it is meant to) that Philebus has not been following the argument at all, for it has already been agreed that the good is a mixture, which must exhibit limit. Socrates merely points out that if Philebus is right, then pain is as good as pleasure, since it is equally unlimited (28A). But in any case, it is clear from what Philebus has said that pleasures (and pains) belong to the class of the unlimited. This applies to individual pleasures and pains, taken in themselves, apart from any other factor.⁵ And since it applies to individual pleasures, it applies as well to the life of pleasure, for the life of pleasure is constituted, by hypothesis, entirely of pleasures (27E). But although both individual pleasures (some of them) and the life of pure pleasure are unlimited, it would be an error to confuse the two: single pleasures and single lives may be unlimited, but this is no reason to confuse a life with a pleasure. It is by no means impossible that a life which contains some limiting agent may contain pleasures and yet not be unlimited; the argument so far is just that pleasure itself can provide the life of pleasure with no limiting factor. But it is hardly an argument yet: it is merely an affirmation.

5.

"Pleasure is itself unlimited and belongs to that class that does not and never will contain within itself and derived from itself either beginning, or middle, or end." (31A).

If we think of an entity which is unlimited as the "material" which may become limited (and this is surely one way Plato uses the concept) then it is a fair question whether the life of pleasure is to be conceived in this way: is it the only kind of unlimited out of which the art of happiness creates order and harmony? Since this section of the Philebus assigns all the aspects of the art of happiness to the appropriate categories, and the life of pleasure is the only one which is named as unlimited, there is possibly some evidence in favor of an affirmative reply. This is not to identify pleasure with the good, of course, since the art must, in creating a limit in the unlimited, eliminate many pleasures; moreover, the pleasures which are ordered and proportioned would still constitute only one aspect of the good: they would be neither the relation between the parts, nor the cause which creates the definite (right) relation, nor the mixture which is the good itself. Pleasure may in some sense assure the possibility of the good life, but it could never create or be the good life.⁶

Plausible as it may be, I doubt that even this concession to pleasure is true to Plato's thought. It is true that the life of pleasure is an unlimited life; this does not mean, however, that pleasures are the only possible ingredients for a good life. And of course we know that reason and intelligence are ingredients

6.

Aristotle's objection to calling pleasure unlimited (Nicomachean Ethics 1173a) misses the point, for it fails to see that pleasure is unlimited, not because one can be more or less pleased, but because pleasure cannot provide a definite limit to itself.

along with some pleasures in the good life. And the fact that the pure life of pleasure is the only unlimited life mentioned by Plato does not eliminate the possibility of infinitely more unlimited lives. The life of pure mind would, I suspect, be also unlimited, although for very different reasons; it could not be a "good mixture." Even a life of pleasure and reason could be unlimited if it combined the two elements wrongly -- if, for instance, mind were used merely as a tool to assist pleasure to attain its ends.

5. The Limit. Like the Unlimited, the Limit is a universal, an idea, either a class or a property. However, examples of the Limit cannot be, as in the case of the Unlimited (on some interpretations) things which exist in the world. Limitedness and unlimitedness are both properties which define classes of entities existing in the world; but there was also a sense in which we could speak of a thing which was unlimited as "an unlimited," whereas we cannot say that "a limit" is a thing at all. "A limit" is rather a relation of some kind which holds between the elements, parts, or aspects of a particular entity, and when this relation does hold, we say that that entity "has a limit." Having a limit is thus a property of existing particulars, the property of having a certain relation (a limit) between parts. I do not mean that a limit is a property, but only that when a certain relation holds between the parts of an entity, then it is said to "have a limit" or to be "limited." The phrase "has a limit" is thus not strictly grammatical; however, the usage is unambiguous.

The difference between the way the phrase "a limit" is used and the way the phrase "an unlimited" may be used is important only because it explains how Plato can say (as he frequently does in the Philebus) that a "mixture" of a limit and an unlimited is a thing with a limit. Obviously if both a limit and an unlimited were merely properties, the "mixture" of the two could never be an existing thing; but a mixture is an existing thing. But because an unlimited can be a thing, it is possible to speak of it as being "mixed" with a limit to produce a "mixture." This is still pretty confusing, to be sure, because an "unlimited" is so-called because it is unlimited, and it is unlimited because it has no limit; thus at any one moment we cannot truthfully say that an unlimited has a limit. Nevertheless, there is a comprehensible meaning, derived primarily from the arts, in which we can say that a block of wood is given a shape, or a blob of clay is "mixed" with a pot-shape to produce a pot; and this is the kind of thing Plato has in mind when he speaks of the good product as a mixture of a limit with an unlimited. He could not speak in this way if an unlimited were not an entity existing in the world.

We have already discussed the various interpretations of the notion of the limit which may be made, and indeed must be made, in order to understand all that Plato requires of it. These interpretations were three in number, and considered the limit, respectively, as the shape or form of an object; as the proportion between "opposite" elements in an object, expressed

(at least ideally) in numerical terms; and as the relation between various "parts" or "elements" in a complex object where these parts or elements could not be considered as opposites. As we said previously, Plato does not distinguish these three interpretations; they are suggested here chiefly as a method of clarifying our own thinking about Plato's meaning. For many purposes, the differences between these interpretations are not important. In what follows, therefore, we shall concentrate mainly on the aspects which they have in common: in each case, having a limit is the property of an entity by virtue of which its parts or elements are, in some way, properly related to one another. The difference between the various interpretations hinges on what we take these parts or elements to be, and hence on how we think of their relation to one another; but the interpretations agree in that the limit in an object is always the relation which holds between its parts or elements and which makes it a mixture, i.e. a good object.

Now let us see how Plato seeks to define the limit. Since it is an idea, or universal, the attempt to define it means to perform a collection, the outcome of which should be discovery of the essential element common to all examples of the limit. The collection of examples is easy enough; they are, as often, species rather than particulars, so that we see at once how the limit is "many" (although not "how many," since we are given no reason to suppose that the enumeration is exhaustive; if we were told "how many" the limit is, division would be complete).

Examples of kinds of limit are "equality and the equal; then the double and everything which is a number in relation to a number or a measure in relation to a measure" (25A, B). These examples have one thing in common: they are ratios or proportions. The most obvious proportion is 1:1, the equal. The double probably means the ratio 1:2. Then follow all further relations (ratios) of number to number. What does the relation of measure to measure add? We can only guess that this is meant to cover ratios which are not strictly numerical; in health, for instance, it is a relation between certain elements in the body which provides a ratio. The balance of color in a picture is not immediately expressed in terms of numbers. If this is the difference intended between measure and number, then we may take the difference between equality and the equal to be similar. The equal is the numerical ratio 1:1. Equality is equal balance between non-numerical elements. There remains the fact, however, that Plato hopes somehow to assimilate the non-numerical cases to the numerical. But just what a relation of a "measure to a measure" can mean in a non-numerical sense remains a mystery, at least for the moment.

What, then, is the "seal of unity" which is common to all the kinds of limit? Or, if not to the kinds, then to all the particular entities which have a limit? Plato confesses that although he has given examples of kinds of limit, he has not yet defined the characteristic which they have in common

which makes them examples. (25D).⁷ This characteristic will, however, become apparent when we examine mixtures. For mixtures are all examples of particulars which have a limit; what is common to them will therefore define the class of limited objects. Socrates now states that the "family of the limit" includes such kinds as "the equal and the double and everything which makes an end to the opposition between contraries and makes them

7.

At 25D Socrates speaks of the "family of the limit," which means either the class of particulars which have a limit (cf. 23D, 23E, 25A, all of which speak of the class of things with limit) or the class of species of limit; Plato does not distinguish these two. This class, he says, "we omitted to collect just now; just as we collected the family of the Unlimited together so we ought to have collected that family which shows the character of limit; but we didn't." Hackforth (p. 47) explains the failure to find the uniting characteristic by saying that what is lacking is a statement as to what ratio would, in each case, be right for a kind of mixture (health, climate, etc.) To give all these correct ratios would, he says, be "unnecessary and unimportant." But surely Hackforth is wrong in thinking that such a statement of correct ratios would be what is desired; what is desired is rather what is common to all such correct ratios. Bury and Badham are closer to right on this point (cf. Bury, p. 168).

commensurable and harmonious through number" (25D, E).⁸

This tells us more than we knew before: mixtures are limited because of a ratio between the parts (here thought of as "opposites") which makes those parts "commensurable and harmonious" in some numerical sense. Soon after, we are told that it is a limit in the case of health (25E), music (26A), right temperature (26A), good weather (26B), and in fact every beautiful thing in the world (26B) which makes that thing a mixture. This, according to Socrates, is enough to show how "the nature of the limit is one" (26D): its unity is discovered, apparently, in the fact that the class of objects which have limit can be simply defined as the class of harmonious and commensurable mixtures.

This discovery of the uniting property which defines the class of limited objects must, according to the Platonic

8.

In this passage, I take "the equal and the double" as being a species of limit; 25A makes such an interpretation inevitable, it seems to me. When, in the next sentence, Protarchus speaks of the "mixture of these elements" he is speaking of the third kind of entity, i.e., the mixture; but whether he means it is a mixture of the limit and unlimited or of opposites with one another, is obscure, and remains obscure throughout the following section. Nevertheless, that 25D, E, the passage translated above in the text, is meant to give at least the beginning of a definition of the unity of the limit, I do not doubt. Bury emends the text to produce the same (or almost the same) effect as our interpretation with respect to the definition of the limit, but he is forced to lose the significance of the last sentence with respect to the mixture. He also must distinguish "three generations" of both limit and unlimited where no such hierarchy exists (Bury, *The Philebus of Plato*, p. 168). The Loeb edition of the *Philebus* does much worse, taking the class of the "equal and double" as the mixture.

philosophy, hit upon the "essential" property which makes the class the "offspring of the limit." In a word, the possession of a harmonious and commensurable relation between parts or elements can be neither an accidental attribute of the members of the class, nor even an attribute deductively or causally related to the fact of being limited; the possession of this attribute must rather constitute the limited aspect of the thing. Not only is the class of limited objects identical with the class of harmonious and commensurable mixtures, but the property of being limited must be identical with the property of being a harmonious and commensurable mixture.

We have thus defined the class of objects with limit; we have yet to define the class of limits. A limit is not a concrete object; it is a relation. A member of the class of objects having limit is a concrete object; a member of the class of limits is a relation. But it is clear how one is to be derived from the other: each concrete entity which is a harmonious mixture is so because it has a certain relation between its parts or elements. This relation is a limit. All particulars which share this same relation between parts have the same limit. A limit is any given (proper) relation between parts or elements which will make an entity a harmonious mixture. Such a limit obviously may be common to a number of particulars; having a limit is a property of particulars. And there seems no reason, aside from the fact that Plato never says so explicitly, for not calling a limit a universal or idea. This question will be treated presently.

Now let us consider Plato's treatment of the "unity" of the limit. I think it is apparent at once that it is not very satisfactory. The definition in terms of the mixture seems, at least at first sight, circular. To be sure, only mixtures have a limit. But what is a mixture? A mixture can only be defined as something in which certain elements or parts have a given relation -- a limit. However we conceive the mixture, or the unlimited which is, in some sense, related to it, we must always say that it is a mixture and not something else because it has a limit. Before going on with the question what a limit is, or how it is to be known or defined, therefore, it will be well to see what Plato has to say about the mixture. We can then return to the limit.

6. The Mixture. The class of mixtures is meant to be defined, apparently, by the following passage: Protarchus says that he understands what the limit and the unlimited are, but that he does not yet grasp what the "third thing" is.

Socrates: The reason is that you are overwhelmed by the multitude of members of the third class. Yet there were a multitude of kinds in the unlimited class also, and we succeeded anyway in seeing that it was one class because we characterized all the members with one property, that of being "more or less."

Protarchus: Right.

Socrates: Nor were we troubled about the limit, either as to its being many, or by nature one.

Protarchus: No, we weren't.

Socrates: Well, as to the third class, I intend to define it as one by including in it all the offspring of the first two classes, which come into being through the measures that are produced with the help of the limit. (26C, D).

Whether Plato means here to mark a difference between the kind of definition required for the mixture and for the limit and the unlimited is uncertain. In one respect, they are all the same: all of them are both one and many, and all of them are generic ideas. The class of entities defined by each is one class, and the unity of that class can be grasped only when we see the essential property which characterizes each member. And one difference, at least, distinguishes the kind of definition required for the mixture and for the limit: in the end, we decided that the class of entities which are limited differed from the class of limits. The first of these two classes is made up of concrete entities; the second is made up of relations of a certain sort, and is thus a class of abstract entities. Now the class of mixtures is made up, like the class of objects with limit, of concrete entities; and in fact, the two classes are the same class, because as we have seen, a limit has so far been defined as the kind of relation which exists between the parts or elements of a mixture. We recognize, then, that members of the class which is or corresponds to the genus mixture are concrete entities, and thus differ fundamentally from members of the class which is or corresponds to the genus limit. This may be the meaning of the remark that there is such an overwhelming multitude of

examples of the mixture (26C): the number of such examples would be, to use the terminology of the section on division, unlimited, while there are only a definite number ("many") examples of limit, since limits correspond to species, and the number of species is finite. It may also be that the members of the class of the mixture are spoken of as "coming into being" (26D) because they are existing entities in the created world; but this phrase may mean more than this.

These considerations, along with the examples of the mixture already mentioned, have suggested almost unanimously to scholars, and correctly I believe, that Plato means us to take examples of the mixture to be actually existing entities in the created world. Many scholars have gone beyond this, and have claimed that all existing entities in the created world are mixtures. This seems to me to be altogether wrong; but it is an error which follows from the view that a limit is a general principle of definiteness, so that every particular would have to be limited. This view, in turn, springs from an interpretation of the unlimited as a general principle of indefiniteness. I cannot say that I understand this theory very well, although it, or something like it, is quite usually accepted. Nevertheless, I am not at all prepared to say that such an interpretation is wrong. Plato's words are very vague, and, I believe, require a number of different interpretations if we are to explain them. This interpretation may, therefore, be one correct one. Nevertheless, it has the very difficult

consequence that all existing entities in the created world are mixtures; and yet mixtures are clearly described as the beauties of the created world, the harmonious and properly constructed complexes. And I do not think anyone wishes to claim that Plato thought everything in the world was beautiful and harmonious. But this is perhaps not enough to condemn the theory; in a doctrine which is already confused and probably contradictory, there is no principle on which we can exclude an interpretation which leads to an absurd conclusion.

I wish, however, to approach the matter in a somewhat different way. Let us reconsider the statement that all mixtures are particular existing entities. Now let us ask in what way two mixtures would differ which had the same limit. Since a mixture is a complex entity in which the parts bear some particular relation to each other, we can classify all mixtures with the same limit as the same kind of mixture. And since a limit is a relation, and a number of particulars may have the same relation between parts, it is clear that there are species of mixtures which correspond to the various limits. It would be natural to speak of the particulars which fell under each of these species as having the "same mixture" or even as being the same mixture, although this later would not be strictly correct. Now it seems to be implied by Plato that there is some one limit which characterizes all the good members of each species in the world, and each kind of entity or event. In other words, there is just one limit for weather,

one for a man's health, one for a man's soul, and so forth. Now in what way, if any, would particular good examples of the same species of mixture differ? All would have the same limit, and all would be, with respect to the mixture concerned, perfect. Can there be more than one example of perfection, or would all the examples be, in fact, the same?

Considerations of this sort have led some to suggest that the mixture has taken over the function of the Platonic idea. There is something to be said for the view; and yet it can hardly be accepted if we hold to the fact that mixtures are created and are particulars. We will return to this question later. For the moment, I think it is clear that if two examples of the same species of mixture differ, it must be due to something besides the limit, for the limit is what they have in common which makes us say that they are examples of the same species. The difference must, indeed, spring from the unlimited if a mixture can be completely analyzed into a limit and an unlimited. I have said that, on a typical interpretation, an unlimited must be thought of as a particular with a wrong relation between its parts. Such a particular would, of course, have many properties besides those involved in the relations of its parts, or at least besides those with which a limit was concerned; these properties, whatever they were, would remain when a limit was imposed which related the parts properly with respect to the nature of the limit. It would be these other properties of the unlimited which remained when the entity became limited which

would enable us to distinguish one example of a species of mixture from another. These other properties would, presumably, include those of location and time.⁹

Suppose now that we think of an unlimited as a continuum. This is a very common view of the way in which it is to be interpreted. People are led to this view, as we have seen, by the remarks that an unlimited "goes on" in both directions, that it "has no definite number," and that "as soon as a definite number comes," the unlimited disappears. On this view, an unlimited could never be an entity existing in the created world, because all such entities have some definite temperature or length or whatnot; they are determinate. On this view, it is considered that there is one continuum which is common to all the possible states of health, let us say. Now according to this theory, a mixture somehow brings together this continuum with a definite limit. But assuming that this idea could be rendered intelligible, the difficulty would remain that if a mixture could be completely analysed into a limit and an unlimited, then there would be no difference between two examples of the same species of mixture. For the limit would be the same; and so would the unlimited. There would be no residue of properties which would make the examples differ. I conclude, therefore, that we cannot accept as the main interpretation of an unlimited that it is a continuum, or any other abstract entity. I will

9.

It goes beyond the scope of this discussion to consider the scheme of the Timaeus; however, I may mention that at this point, at least, an unlimited, on my interpretation, seems to bear some resemblance to the receptacle.

grant, however, that there are passages in the Philebus which seem to imply this; such passages must, I think, if they do actually imply this, be deemed inconsistent with the view that mixtures are particular entities in the created world.

Even if we exclude from consideration, however, the interpretation of the unlimited as a continuum, we are still left with a number of possible interpretations of the mixture. At one time or another, then, Plato considers the mixture as a mixture of "opposed" elements, like hot and cold water; as a mixture of a limit with an unlimited; and as a mixture of various elements or ingredients, like sand, water and cement in concrete. On any of these interpretations, an unlimited may be a particular entity with wrongly related parts, while a mixture is, on any of these interpretations, a particular entity with rightly related parts. And on each of these interpretations, an unlimited is characterized by not having a limit, while a mixture is characterized by having a limit. Of these interpretations, either the first or the third may be reconciled with the second; they are two different ways of speaking of the same thing. Why we call it a mixture is somewhat different in the two cases, but it may be the same thing which we do call it. Suppose we take the case of concrete. If it is made of the right proportions of water, cement and sand, it is a mixture, and the proportion between the parts is a limit. But this mixture may be thought of as a mixture of sand, cement and water; or as a mixture of a limit with an unlimited where the unlimited

was a compound of sand, water and cement in the wrong proportions. Making it a mixture would involve, of course, changing the proportions. The second way of speaking is suggestive rather than literal, but Plato uses it quite frequently, as we have seen. In any case, we see that although in the two ways of speaking, we call the finished product a mixture for a slightly different reason, yet it is the same product which we call a mixture in both cases.

The same remarks obtain about the relation between the first and second interpretations. There is a question, however, about the relation between the first and third interpretations. There are times when it is hard to tell just what "opposites" are, and perhaps any list of elements contains some opposites. But typically, I think the "opposites" usually refer to pairs of terms like "hot and cold," "dry and moist" which are said to characterize unlimiteds. I have explained that I do not think this means that an unlimited is a continuum, but rather that it is a complex entity which lacks equilibrium and therefore is always changing, getting hotter or colder, drier or moister. The right temperature, or humidity, is conceived by Plato, on the analogy of the harmonics of a plucked string, as a mixture of two opposed elements. In the case of the concrete, the notion of opposites would seem to apply, for instance, to the ingredient of water: the proper moistness would be thought of as a mixture of the right amount of moistness with the right amount of dryness. As we know, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and other

pre-Socratics conceived definite quantities in this way. I would agree that this interpretation seems more applicable to the elements of a mixture in the third interpretation than to such a mixture itself. But of course there is nothing to prevent a mixture from being made up of other mixtures; and such in fact is the good life.

The good life had already been characterized as a mixture of pleasure and reason (22A) before the present discussion began; yet although Plato has been using the notion of mixture in the present discussion primarily to refer to a mixture of an unlimited and a limit, he feels no difficulty in stating that the good life is a mixture because it combines pleasure and reason (27D). This is enough, if we needed further proof, to show that Plato uses these two meanings of mixture without discrimination. It may be that Plato acknowledges the two interpretations of the mixture when he says, after assigning the mixed life to the class of mixtures, that the class of mixtures "does not consist of just two things, but of all unlimited things bound fast by the limit; hence it is correct to make our victorious life a member of it" (27D). This passage is obscure, and the subject of debate and emendation.¹⁰ It may be that Plato says that the good life need not be considered as made up of two things because he wants the reader to realize that a mixture can be a mixture of a number of ingredients as well as a mixture of a limit and an unlimited.

¹⁰.

Cf. Bury, p. 49, n. 11.

But this does not seem to fit the quotation. In the first place, there are only two main ingredients, or kinds of ingredients, mentioned here, so that to imply more ingredients is not very enlightening at this point. What the passage seems to say is that the class of mixtures has more than two members; that it includes all cases where an unlimited thing is "bound" by a limit; and that therefore there is room for the mixed life. The trouble with this interpretation is that we cannot assign any reasonable meaning to the remark that there might be only two members of the class; who could possibly think that the limit and unlimited were members of the class of mixtures? Yet I am regretfully inclined to believe that this is the confusion in Plato's mind. However, as we have seen, the same entity can be a mixture in both senses simultaneously, so that no contradiction is necessarily involved. Confusion arises only when we try to identify the elements of one interpretation with those of the other; specifically, if we try to identify reason with a limit and pleasure with the entire set of ingredients for the good life. The first of these confusions is relatively easy to avoid, although the reason for avoiding it is clear only if we keep the two interpretations apart. For it should be clear that mind (or intelligence, or reason, or knowledge) cannot be a limit, which is a relation; but it can create a mixture (or, speaking metaphorically, can create a limit in an unlimited). And mind is also a necessary ingredient in the mixture, because a mixture is self-sufficient and self-

sustaining. The second confusion is difficult to avoid because Plato speaks both of individual pleasures as being unlimited, and of the life of pleasure as being unlimited. These are two different points and yet they are hardly ever discriminated by scholars. Plato intends us to accept both points: an individual pleasure is a complex entity just as a life is, and it can be a mixture or an unlimited, just as a life can. The confusion arises because (1) a life composed entirely of pleasures must, in Plato's opinion, be unlimited and (2) a life which contains a pleasure which is unlimited must be unlimited. The connection therefore, between unlimited pleasures and an unlimited life is very close; and this is, I think, one cause of confusion. And since this confusion is primarily one of confusing an ingredient in an unlimited life with the unlimited life itself this confusion is directly related to a confusion of two interpretations of the word "mixture." A fuller examination of these points must await the analysis of the nature of pleasures, for various pleasures are unlimited in different senses, and cause a life to be unlimited in different ways.

The placement of the good life of pleasure and reason in the mixed class wins for it "first place" in the race between the life of reason, the life of pleasure and the mixed life (27D); this result was assured even prior to the present discussion by the preliminary work of collection, but it may now be considered a sure thing. The advance which has been

made, of course, consists in the realization that the good life cannot be just any mixture of pleasure and reason, but must be a mixture "bound" by a limit; consisting, that is, in the "right" pleasures and functions of reason related in the "right" ways. The mixed life was already characterized as the only life good in itself, a final end, wholly desirable, and self-contained. It is now seen to belong to the class of things created good by virtue of a certain relation between their parts, such things as health, music, temperate weather and the starry heavens. Such goods are the only intrinsic goods; other goods may be, as we shall learn later, "for the sake of" some mixture (54A ff.), or may be good as the "cause" of a mixture (22C, D), but these are derivative goods, and their value depends on their relation to an intrinsic good, which is always a mixture.

It is now time to consider again the question what property (or properties) it is which a mixture has which makes it an intrinsic good. The immediate answer is that it is the property of having a limit, or being limited. This follows directly from the fact, already discussed, that the statements "x is a mixture" and "x is limited" are equivalent. Since all intrinsic goods are mixtures and (if our interpretation is correct) all mixtures are intrinsic goods, it follows that "x is intrinsically good" and "x is a mixture" are also equivalent, and, further, that the predicates "intrinsically good" and "limited" are likewise equivalent. Since, in what follows, the discussion will be entirely about intrinsic goods,

we can drop the qualifying adjective and say, for our present purposes, that the predicates "good" and "limited" are equivalent.

Thus the promised discussion about the meaning of the limit turns out to be a discussion of the meaning of the good. Before going on to consider what the limit means in the Philebus it is proper therefore to strike an appropriate pose of modesty. This discussion cannot and does not make any claim to completeness or certainty. Here as always Plato, in approaching the good, gives us vague hints, obscure metaphors and dark terms. He tells us here as elsewhere that the truths concerning these matters are "revealed by the Gods," "handed down from of old" and so forth. And the "road" which the discussion of the Philebus provides is just that: a method, and a pointing, an aid to the discovery of the good. But although the Philebus takes us further up the road than any other dialogue, I doubt very much that Plato means us to think that the revelation is complete and full; such a claim would be very far from the spirit of Platonism.

The difficulties that stand between us and a full understanding of Plato's view of the good are not entirely that he tells us too little; for in a sense, we are told too much. There are too many statements in the Philebus alone about the good for it to be clear how all these statements can be combined into one theory. No sooner do we frame a final hypothesis about the Platonic good than we find that it is not

final; we can always discover a reason -- or several -- for the ultimate postulate for which there should be no reasons. We never seem to hit rock bottom. This characteristic of all attempts to interpret the Platonic good is, of course, really a direct result of Plato's method: in a theory where we are never asked to accept any statement as final, or more than an aid, we have, perhaps, no right to demand that the totality of statements form a coherent system.

After making it as clear as possible, then, that in what follows there can be expected no magic key which will unlock the Platonic secret once and for all, we may proceed boldly with our discussion. The assumption on which we will go, but for which no arguments will be given, is that underlying the value-theory of the Philebus there are some premisses which are more basic than others; and that although no interpretation which sets these forth can claim certainty, or even consistency with all that Plato says, yet that there is a real gain in setting them forth. Finally, I want to say plainly that there is no theory about the Platonic good (in the Philebus) which I can understand and against which I cannot find many good arguments; and my own theory shares this characteristic. That there are fewer good arguments against my view than others, I would, naturally, contend. But much as I would like to demonstrate this in full, it is neither wholly within my power nor, even roughly, within the temporal and spatial span of this thesis to do so. What follows must, then, be taken as a brief,

over-dogmatic statement of an interpretation for which very little is explicitly claimed. To someone to whom it appears usefully and correctly oriented it may seem to provide some insight into the basic assumptions of Plato's philosophy; to someone who doubts its fundamental correctness, there is little here to compel conviction. But the history of Platonic criticism suggests rather strongly that no interpretation of the crucial doctrines in Plato will ever meet with unqualified approval; perhaps it is some consolation that this is as Plato wished it to be (Seventh Epistle, 341A-E).

First let us repeat a warning. On the interpretation given here, the adjective "good" (or "limited") meaningfully attaches to the name of a particular entity, and properly attaches only to the name of an entity which is a mixture. There is no meaningful way, on this interpretation, of saying that a limit is good, or that the limit is good. A limit is a relation, a universal, and on the theory given here, only a particular can properly be said to be good, or limited. The limit is also a universal, as has been explained, and thus is excluded from the range of things which may be good. All we could say about the relation between a limit and the good would be that all the particulars with a given limit between parts are good; and we could further say that the class of entities which are limited is identical with the class of entities which are good. Since the limit is the universal which is, or corresponds to, or defines ¹¹ this class, there would be

11.

This phraseology indicates the fact that the precise nature of the Platonic universal remains undecided.

no reason, aside from the fact that Plato avoids saying so, for not calling the limit the "idea of the good." But it would have to be understood that Plato never says this, and that there would be no reason whatsoever for calling it good. If this is correct, then we must reject the view that a particular is good because it resembles a universal which is good; and if ideas are universals, then we must also reject the view that ideas are grandiose particulars or patterns which particulars must resemble to be good. I do not think there is any doubt that in the Philebus ideas are universals; therefore if the present theory is correct, there is no way that the goodness of ideas can account for the goodness of particulars. This point has received some attention in the section on dialectic, and we shall return to it presently.

Mixtures, entities which are limited, are the only things which are intrinsically good, according to this theory. Further, if we adhere strictly to our present assumption, there is no meaning in the question "Why is it good for something to have a limit?", for this is like asking "Why is it good for something to be good?" Such a question could be meaningful only if we used the word good in two senses: but here we mean "intrinsically good" in both cases. The question is not, therefore, like asking "Why is it good for something to be yellow?" but rather (grammatically) like asking "Why is it yellow for something to be yellow?": which makes no sense. This follows, of course, only if it means exactly the same

thing to say "x is good" as to say "x has a limit." If the two did not mean exactly the same, but one could be inferred from the other, or there was a casual connection between them, then of course it would make sense to ask "Why is it good for something to have a limit?" On the view we are considering, however, it means the same thing to say "x is good" and "x is limited," and so long as we hold to this, we cannot meaningfully ask why it is good for something to have a limit. All we can ask is for an explanation or analysis of the term "limited."

We have already learned that an entity is limited when it has a certain relation between analysable parts. But what is this relation? So far, we are able to make two further remarks about it: first, the relation should, ideally at least, be expressed, or capable of expression, in mathematical terms. More specifically, it should be expressed as a relation between magnitudes; as a ratio or proportion. Second, this relation is the "right" relation for the parts of a certain species or type of entity. Let us take up these two points in reverse order.

The relation must be the "right" relation for a given type or species. According to this theory, there are a finite number of species in the world, and every entity belongs to one or another. Since there are many things which are unlimited, we cannot say that a limit directly defines the class of entities which belongs to the species; for in that case, only mixtures, i.e. good entities, would belong to each species.

A limit must, therefore, go beyond the defining characteristics of a species to describe the characteristics of a "proper" or "true" example of the species. A limit could, however, be said to define a species in this way: a species is the class of entities which has a given limit, plus the class of entities which should have that limit. This definition would work provided we could always tell, once we knew all the possible limits, which one an entity should have. It is not incredible, at least, that the world should be so constituted that every entity in it always more clearly resembled some one mixture than any other. If this were the case, then each entity would be said to belong to the species whose corresponding limit was a property of a mixture most like that entity; and, according to this theory, the limit of the mixture which the entity most resembled would be the limit which it "should have." We now see why a limit does not directly define a species: the class of things with a certain limit is a sub-class of a species, namely, the class of those things which are mixtures. But indirectly, the species is defined by the limit because the species is defined by combining this sub-class with the class of entities which most resemble any mixture in the sub-class. The nature of this resemblance is by no means clear, but for our present purposes, we do not need to examine it.

The question at hand is whether the existence of species in the world is any assistance in learning what a limit is, or what the adjective "limited" means. And I think it is clear

that the existence of species, even if it were a fact, would, in itself, be no help. For even if we could discover a species by observation, apart from a knowledge of the limit involved, we would have no clue as to the sub-class of mixtures. In order to define the sub-class of mixtures, we would have to know in advance what the limit for the species should be, and mere observation of the larger class of the species could not tell us this. The assumption that the entities in the world divide into natural species is thus not enough, by itself, to determine the norm or limit which the entities of a given species should have.

It may be suggested at this point that the notion of a ratio or proportion between the parts will provide a solution. Since if we now ask, what ratio is the proper one, we are asking the same question over again, this suggestion is useful only if we hold that if there is any ratio or proportion between the parts, the entity is a mixture. This view has often been held by interpreters of the Philebus, and it seems to receive support from many passages in the dialogue.¹² Yet these passages can be

12.

Many of these passages have already been mentioned. Of these, 25A, B is the most important: it states that a limit is "any term expressing a ratio of a number to a number, or a measure to a measure." 24B says something is unlimited if it "has no end (τέλος)," implying that something is limited if it does have a τέλος. 24D suggests that when a thing has a limit it has a πρόσον, definite quantity. But the interpretation of a limit as any definite ratio between parts really rests, as we have pointed out at length, on the assumption that every entity in the created world is a mixture, and if we reject this view, we will find little reason in the text to suggest that any ratio or proportion is a limit. The passages, such as the two above, which seem to say that any ratio or proportion is a limit, can be interpreted otherwise, as we shall show.

interpreted in another way; and they must be interpreted in another way if we are to explain many other passages. Quite general considerations make it unlikely that Plato means that any ratio or proportion between the parts is a limit. In the ordinary meaning of a ratio or proportion, any musical interval, no matter how discordant, can be expressed as some ratio between string lengths; if a temperature is thought of as a mixture of hot and cold elements, obviously any temperature can be expressed as some ratio between these elements; and so forth. In politics, Plato's prejudice against the ratio of "equality" is clearly set forth in the Republic and elsewhere.¹³ In whatever usual sense the right relation between parts can be expressed as a ratio or proportion, so, then, can the wrong. It cannot mean the same thing to say "x has a limit" and "x has a numerically expressible relation between its parts," if we use the words in any normal way.

There is a typically Platonic way of using predicates which is rather different, however, and which may provide a clue to the meaning of "limited." This typically Platonic way of using predicates is not the normal, everyday way of using them, but it can, in general, be explained as follows:

13.

Cf. Winspear, The Genesis of Plato's Thought, p.209. Laws, 757A-C states that there is one kind of equality which simply gives each man the same honors and rights, and another "true form" of equality which divides unequally according to the worth of each man. Plato believes in the latter.

Let us assume, with Plato (and common sense) that there are natural species in the world. Now let us consider an individual member of such a species, for instance Cornelia, who is a Persian cat. We are in the habit of predicating various properties of such an individual without altering our view as to what individual it is. We might say "Cornelia is gray" or "Cornelia is going to have kittens," or even "Cornelia is a good cat," without altering our opinion that it is the same Cornelia to whom we refer. Now suppose we observe Cornelia's condition, and we say "Cornelia is going to have kittens." Two days later we change this to "Cornelia has six kittens." Ordinarily, we would consider that both of these statements were true and that there was no contradiction between them because they were uttered at different times. We would think of the first statement as meaning "On July 6th Cornelia is going to have kittens" and the second as meaning "On July 8th Cornelia has six kittens." So much for common usage.

Plato is often unwilling to admit that the temporal reference is justified. He feels that all statements should share the timeless certainty of statements about the relations between universals, where no reference to time is necessary. He is therefore inclined, in some contexts, to say that either it must be true of Cornelia at all times that she has six kittens, or it is not true at all. A statement such as "Cornelia has six kittens" according to Plato belongs to

"opinion," not knowledge, not because it is merely probable, but because it is not always true. A true statement is one which contains no temporal reference; a statement which refers to some property of an entity which does not change. This is not a very precise explanation of Plato's special use of predicates, but it will serve to indicate what I have in mind.

I do not wish to analyse here Plato's reasons for this view; some of them are quite difficult to refute, as we all know. The point remains, and I think will be admitted by most scholars, that Plato does, at least at times, hold this view about statements of this kind.

Now we may reconsider the theory that an entity which has any given relation between its parts is a mixture. If we use words in the special way explained above, then the statement that a particular entity has a given relation between its parts will mean that it has that relation at all times. Now I think there is some truth in this interpretation, taken in this way. The reason there is some truth in it is this. It will be true to say, on this theory, that a given entity is a mixture, or has a limit, if, and only if, it has some given relation between its parts at all times. Now this will not mean that there are many possible relations between the parts for entities in the same species in case the following generalization is true: an entity belonging to a given species will maintain any given relation between its parts if, and only if, that relation is the correct relation for members of that species. If this

generalization is true, then there will be only one relation between the parts for all the members of a given species which will remain the same -- the right one. And I think that, with some limitations, Plato believes this generalization to be true, and that it is one of the basic assumptions in his ethical views.

First I wish to point out that, if this generalization is true, then it provides a definition of the "right" relation between parts, and hence for the meaning of the terms "mixture," "limit" and "good." The right relation can be defined as that one relation, in any given species, which will remain fixed. A mixture can be defined as any entity which has this right relation; a limit is the one right relation which is common to the members of a species; and something can be said to be good if it has a limit.

Second, it should be noted that these definitions are quite independent of the special way of using words explained above. That is, the right relation can be defined as the one relation which will remain fixed, using the words in their normal sense. It will be true, however, that if anything has the right relation, then it will continue to (by the definition), and hence it will be true, in the special sense, that such a thing has a given relation. But if we return to the normal usage, this will have the advantage that we can speak of entities which have the wrong relation between the parts. Using the words in the special way, we could not say this, since every wrong relation would be such that it would not remain a characteristic of the same entity.

Every entity (or every complex entity) in the created world which is not a mixture -- every unlimited, in other words -- has such a relation between the parts which will alter in time; and if we wish to be able to say that any particular entity is unlimited, then we must abandon the special way of using the words.

The generalization on which the definition of "proper relation" is based must now be examined. First I shall try to explain somewhat more fully what it means, and then I shall discuss some difficulties involved. The generalization assumes, we have seen, that there are a finite number of identifiable species in the world. The word "species" here is not very good because it suggests that the only kinds of entities to be discussed are biological types.¹⁴ All that is meant to be included in the assumption is whatever meaning must be given to the statement that every entity in the world has some one essence. An essence is some definable property or set of properties which is common to a class of particulars; ideally, each particular has just one essence, and thus falls uniquely into some one class. The difficulties in following out this view in practice have been discussed in the section on dialectic; they are insoluble in my opinion. The point however is just this: the word "species" is used here to indicate the class defined by an

14.

I am overlooking entirely, for the time being, the relation between these species and those discovered by collection, which involves the question whether there are "bad" species. This point will be discussed in the last section of the present chapter.

essence. Thus there can be species of inanimate objects, of manmade objects, of institutions, and, indeed, of any kind of entity whatsoever which can exist in the world. Whatever has an essence belongs to a species.

With this proviso as to the theoretical scope of the notion of species, it is now safe to say that the generalization under discussion is best explained with reference to biological types, and that it derives very much of its force from its application to such cases. We may now consider a representative application of the generalization in such a case. Plato follows the typical Greek medical theory that an animal contains a number of different elements, which may be thought of as opposed, such as hot and cold and dry and moist elements. Exactly how these elements are to be understood need not concern us. According to this theory, health may be defined as the right relation between opposed elements; ideally, as a relation between quantities. Any increase in the amount of one element in relation to the others will create illness, or, in extreme cases, death. It is understood, of course, that it is the relation between the quantities that matters, not the absolute quantities themselves. Now the generalization states that when the relation between these quantities is right, it will remain that same relation, and that when the relation is wrong, it will not remain that same relation. In other words, an animal which is healthy will remain healthy, and one which is ill will either get iller, or better, or will at least change from one state of illness to another. A very

great deal of the Philebus is devoted to showing that most pleasures are bad because they are caused by changes in bodily condition. Obviously, a man who was a "mixture" (i.e. in whom the elements were properly related) could never feel such pleasures. This explains, I think, why the good life is a "state or condition";¹⁵ it is not due to some passing property of a man, but it is a condition which, if it exists at all, will continue.

This explains also, I would contend, the passages which introduce the concepts of the limit and unlimited. The statement that "the more and less dwells in the nature" of an unlimited (24A) means, according to this interpretation, that an unlimited is always becoming more or less hot or cold, dry or moist, but not that it is not some definite temperature, or dryness, at any one time. That an unlimited is an entity in the created world (and not a continuum) is also suggested by the remark that an unlimited will continue to be unlimited as long as it is more or less something (24B). The "more and less" do not "allow any definite quantity to exist" and "thereby do away with fixed quantity" (24C) because if a thing is unlimited it cannot be truly said (in the special sense explained before) to have any one definite quantity (or proportion between quantities) over a

15.

11D. I do not mean that the good life is to be identified with health. The good life is called a state of the soul and hence refers, apparently, to a proper relation of elements in the soul, not the body. But probably the correct view is that the "mixed man" has a complex proper relation which involves both soul and body and their elements. In this case, the good life is the life of the mixed man, and requires a proper mixture both of soul and body.

length of time. This is made clear in this way: "hotter and colder are always progressing and never stay put; while definite quantity is something that has stopped going on and is fixed" (24D). Thus "when we find things becoming 'more' or 'less' anything...we ought reckon them all as belonging to a single kind, that of the unlimited" (24E, 25A).

These are the most important passages in this section of the Philebus which bear on the interpretation of the limit. Toward the end of the dialogue, however, there are several passages which discuss very explicitly the question what properties a mixture has which make it good. Since we are arguing that goodness and limitedness are equivalent, these passages must also be considered as attempting to explain the meaning of limitedness.

In turning now to these passages, we are altering the sequence of Plato's presentation; and this requires some justification in view of the general approach of this thesis. The justification is this: at the point where these passages occur, the main course of the argument is really terminated. It has already been decided what the constituents of the good life are and how they are to be blended. In approaching the summary, Plato wishes to emphasize the fact that while neither reason nor pleasure alone is the good life, yet ~~that~~ reason has established itself in a far loftier and more worthwhile position than pleasure. To make this point, Plato, in the summary, reconsiders in detail the properties of a mixture

which make it good in order to show the greater importance of reason. It is a dramatic, not a logical demand which puts this important discussion near the end of the Philebus. We will not, then, be accused of altering Plato's basic argument if we take material from this final portion of the dialogue to supplement the present one. Our purpose in scrutinizing this material will be to find what evidence there is for these views, already adumbrated: that it is mixtures, and only mixtures, which are good; that all mixtures are created, particular entities in the world; that mixtures are good because of some property which they share; and that this property may, in some contexts, be defined by the generalization discussed above.¹⁶

In examining the texts, it is necessary to mention one of the basic difficulties which will beset our interpretation. In these passages, Plato discusses three different things: the nature of the good life for men; the nature of any mixture; and the nature of the property which an entity must have to be a mixture. Clearly these are three different things; clearly, also, they are closely related. The confusion springs from the fact that we cannot always tell which it is that Plato is talking about. Offhand, it would not seem as if there could be much

16.

This generalization stated that "an entity belonging to a given species will maintain any given relation between its parts if and only if that relation is the correct relation for members of that species." In effect, this means that there is one, and only one, relation between the parts of an entity which will remain fixed; and this relation is the correct one. Any entity, then, which has this correct relation between parts is a mixture, and is limited.

confusion. Obviously all good things must have some property in common if they are all good; and this property must attach to the good life for man as well as other mixtures. There is no trouble in saying that it is because it has this property that a thing is good, nor in saying that if a thing does not have this property, it cannot be good. The confusion arises, however, on a point which is rather difficult to deal with. This is that Plato sometimes seems to speak as if it were the property which makes a thing good which is good, rather than the entity which has the property. This property is, or corresponds to, a universal, and hence is, or corresponds to, an idea. Although Plato does not explicitly call it this, there is no reason, provided we are cautious in not implying too much of the doctrine of earlier dialogues, not to call this idea the idea of the good. Now the trouble is that, on our interpretation, the idea of the good could not strictly be said to be good; not, at least, in the same sense that a mixture is said to be good. There would, therefore, be no meaning in the statement that a man desires the idea of the good. What he desires is an entity which has the property which is, or corresponds to, the idea of the good. If it were proper to say that a man desired the idea of the good, then the idea of the good would have to be conceived as a mixture itself, a glorified particular; and the "third man" problem would be upon us again. Yet the whole discussion of the good life at 22C ff. made it clear that it was the mixed life, made up of pleasures and intelligence, which was the complete and final good for man.

Thus it is more consistent, and, I think, generally borne out by most passages in the Philebus, to assume that what is good is always a mixture. I cannot decide for certain whether Plato relapses into the kind of speech which is common to the early dialogues in speaking of the idea of the good; but if he does, then this usage contradicts much that is, in my opinion, more basic in the value theory of the Philebus. Let us in any case be clear about one thing: there is no such relapse implied by speaking of the property common to all good things by virtue of which they are good. The relapse is only implied if the particulars are said to resemble the property, and hence to be good because it is. And it is by no means certain that Plato says or means this at any point in the Philebus. On the other hand, there is very much, as we have seen, to show that the entities which can properly be said to be good are created individuals, mixtures. If Plato is tempted to speak as if the idea of the good were an ingredient in mixtures, the goodness of which is transferred to the mixture, we must, it seems to me, take such language metaphorically if we are to understand the basic position of the dialogue.

In order not to shirk my task, however, I will call attention to the passages which seem most damaging to my view, and indicate briefly how I think they might be interpreted.

At 22D, we hear the first mention of "whatever it may be" in the mixed life "which makes it both desirable and good," and it is opined that this will be "more akin and more similar"

to mind than to pleasure. Mind and pleasure are, at least frequently, considered as ingredients in the good life; the implication may be felt, therefore, that whatever it may be that makes the mixture good is also an ingredient. Such an interpretation is hardly necessary, however. What is referred to may be a property, provided we take "more akin and more similar" in the broad sense in which it may be intended. For the chief argument in favor of mind finally turns out to be that it is the cause of all mixtures. Mind and the property of being good are thus what "makes a thing good" in quite different senses; the kinship hinges rather on the fact that mind is the agent which creates anything which has the property of being good.

Much later in the dialogue, we are reminded explicitly of the characterization of the good life as complete, final and desirable in a passage which states, again, that the good is such that "a creature that possesses it permanently, completely and absolutely, has never any need of anything else; its satisfaction is perfect" (60C). To be certain that we understand that "the good" is the mixed life, we are told again that neither the life of pleasure nor the life of reason can be the good; therefore "neither of the two can be the perfect thing that everyone desires, the completely good" (τὸ παντάπασιν ἀγαθόν, 61A).¹⁷ So far so good. Up to this

17.

To translate this "the absolute good" (with Hackforth, p. 126) is, it seems to me, to go quite beyond the meaning of παντάπασιν. The meaning is that the mixed life is complete while the lives of pleasure and reason are not.

point the passage seems unambiguously to be about the mixed life. Now, however, we are told that we have not found the good at all, but that we have "in a sense found a way to the good" because we now know where it "lives" (61A). Thus we must look in the "well mixed life" (61B) for the good. The sudden change here, in which "the good" is first used to apply to the mixed life, and then to the property in general which all mixtures have, is certainly confusing. Yet it seems to me that the difficulty largely disappears when we see that this shift of meaning has taken place. The good life for man is "the good" for man, and there is no other. But of course, it is not the good in general; it is the good for man because it has some property which all good things have. But this does not mean that the property, or the idea which corresponds to it, is the good for man, or that the good for man resembles this property. Rather, it has this property, and it resembles all other goods because it has it. The reason for the shift in meaning in the passage quoted is something else. Plato is interested again in finding out whether pleasure or mind has the leading part in making the good life good. Merely knowing that it is the mixed life which is good will not reveal this, for the mixed life contains both pleasure and reason. But the mixed life is good because it combines pleasure and reason in the right way; and it is this property of having the right relation between parts for which mind is responsible. For this reason, Plato turns to consider the property which good

things have in common, in order to show that mind is the cause of it in nature.

Finally, I wish to discuss a passage at 64C ff. which begins by stating that "we now stand upon the threshold of the good and of the habitation of the good."¹⁸ Socrates asks again what it is in the mixed life which makes it valuable (τιμιώτατον) and is the cause of our approval of that state. The property which a mixture has which makes it good is then explained in terms of three other properties which, taken together as one, "may most properly be regarded as the reason (or cause) in a mixture [which makes it good] and through the goodness of which the mixture has become good" (65A). Here the same difficulty seems to arise, namely that it is the goodness of the three properties, or ideas, which makes the mixture good. Yet I think that it is not entirely unreasonable to take the final statement as meaning that it is these three properties (taken as one) which make a mixture good, not because they are good themselves, but because anything which has them as properties is good. This is not precisely what Plato says, but I do not think it is impossible that it is what he means. And the entire passage can certainly be most easily understood if we interpret it as meaning that a mixture is

18.

The passage may be corrupt and perhaps should read: "we now stand upon the threshold of the good and of the habitation where all that is like the good resides." In this case, I would suggest that "like the good" must mean "has the property of being good."

good (has the property of being good) because it is beautiful, well-proportioned and true. In this case it would be an analysis, or explanation, of the meaning of the adjective "good." The alternative is to interpret the passage as stating that a mixture is good because it has three properties, each of which is good; in which case we could only go on to ask what property each of the properties has which makes it good.

These remarks suffice to show how these passages must be taken if my interpretation of the Philebus is to be upheld. They are not meant as proof that these passages demand such an interpretation; on the contrary, they are the passages most damaging to my argument, and which I have displayed here only in the hope that others will agree that they may be taken in a way consistent with my view of Plato's meaning.

Let us, then, assume that it is particular entities which are good, and that there is some property which they share which causes them to be good, not because the property is good, but because it is the property of good things. Once this is assumed, it is our job to continue the search for this property, for it will constitute a definition or analysis of the adjective "good." And, granted our assumption, there is no doubt at all, from the passages just examined, that it is mixtures which we must scrutinize to discover this property: "we must seek the good, not in the unmixed, but in the mixed life" (81B). But it is not just in the mixed life, but in mixtures in general that we must look; for we want to know

what the property is which makes anything a good mixture.¹⁹

I now wish to consider those passages which seem to give some support to the hypothesis that the property which an entity has which makes it good is the property of having the right relation (a "limit") between its parts, where the right relation is defined as the one relation which will remain fixed.

The property which a thing must have to be good is, according to Plato, indicated, defined or to be "hunted down" by three properties "taken as one" (65A). These three are truth, proportion and beauty (ἀλήθεια, ἡμετερία, κάλλος). Together, these name or indicate the property which is also named or indicated by the adjective "good." If we could understand what Plato means by them, we would thus understand what he means by "good."²⁰ Let us therefore examine this composite property.

That aspect of the property of the mixture which makes it good and which is indicated by the term ἀλήθεια is introduced in a somewhat different way than the rest: it is intro-

19.

Several times it is implied, or stated directly, that the discussion of the good has expanded from the good for men to the good in general: cf. 53E; 64C; 65B. But this is of course implied in any case by the search for the property which is the "cause" of the goodness of the mixed life.

20.

Subject, of course, to the qualification that these in turn may only be hints -- a qualification which serves only to warn us that even if we could understand the three terms, we still might not understand the good, but gives no indication of what would still be lacking.

duced first as an ingredient (64B). This however is not important; Plato constantly speaks of ingredients and properties interchangeably, as we have seen (the final list of "goods" at the end of the dialogue includes both). As Hackforth says, "what Socrates says here should not be taken literally."²¹ Yet I cannot agree that all that Plato means to express is "his hope and faith that the kind of life indicated is no impossible ideal"; what is not to be taken literally is the notion that truth is an ingredient in the good life like pleasure and intelligence. Hackforth in fact translates the word as "reality"; and in this, Bury seems to agree, at least in part.²² Bury seems to hold, if I understand him, that the word here refers to the finished and complete mixture, "the ἀλήθεια of which resides in its symmetry and beauty, that is in its exact correspondence to its Ideal archetype." According to this view, the Ideal archetype has symmetry and beauty, and the individual mixture has ἀλήθεια if it corresponds to the ideal. Such a view may well receive support from many passages in Plato. Yet I cannot see that it is very helpful. What we are trying to define are the properties which an entity has which make it good. If we believe in an "Ideal archetype," then what we want are the properties which such an archetype has which an individual entity may

²¹.

Hackforth, p. 133.

²².

R. G. Bury, The Philebus of Plato, pp. 208, 210.

also have. An archetype cannot have the property of corresponding to itself; at least this would tell us nothing about it. But if an individual has the property of exactly corresponding to an Ideal archetype, then surely it need have no other property; and again we would know nothing about what makes it good. As Aristotle saw long ago, the notion that something is good because it "corresponds" to an ideal archetype is an empty principle which leaves us where we were to begin with. Nor does it seem reasonable that here Plato would place on a level the property of corresponding to an ideal with two other properties which the individual must have to be good.

For the notion of "corresponding to an Ideal archetype" we must substitute another if we are to learn anything about the good. And I would suggest that we substitute the notion of "trueness to type." At first blush, this would seem to mean the same, or much the same, thing. It abolishes the concept of an ikon or ideal archetype in favor of the concept of species; otherwise, how does it differ? The difference lies in this: by trueness to type I mean remaining true to type. Something is good if it remains true to type. This is indeed still no help unless we hold to our generalization that an entity will not remain in a given state unless it is true to type. Thus the notion of permanence may be part, at least, of the meaning of goodness. This is what I take Plato to mean when he says that to be good, an entity must have ἀλήθεια: "for an entity with which we don't mix truth will never really

come into being, and if it ever did it wouldn't continue in being" (64B). This means, on my interpretation, that an entity is not true to type unless it exists and continues to exist as that same entity. One aspect of goodness, then, is permanence; only mixtures remain mixtures.

This point I find reinforced in a rather interesting way by a discussion a few pages earlier the point of which is to show that pleasure cannot be the good for man, or, indeed, a good at all (53C-55A). This passage considers only those pleasures which result from changes in the body which are indications that it is not a mixture, changes from "hotter" to "colder" or "moister" to "drier." The point hinges on the fact that since such pleasures are caused by alterations in the bodily state, the man who is feeling them must be becoming something different at each moment; Plato speaks of the pleasure itself, in such a case, as becoming (53C, 54C, 54E). Now if it is true that pleasure is becoming (in this sense), then, Plato argues, it cannot be the good for man.²³ The reason is that goods in general are ends, and ends belong to "being," not to becoming (54C, D). This may mean to the average Platonist that goods or ends are ideas, and that a pleasure, being an entity in the created world, therefore cannot be an end. But

23.

The argument is hypothetical because some pleasures are not becoming; that is, they do not result from alterations in the basic relations of the elements in the body. Plato is merely assuming, for the moment, a theory which certain "subtle thinkers" hold (53C).

we have only to read this passage to see that here, at least, the difference between ends and means is the difference between particulars which change and particulars which do not. Pleasures are condemned, not because they exist in the passing world, but because they come into being and pass away: "pleasure is something that comes to be, but in no case ever is" (54D). But there is another life, the mixed life, which contains no pleasures of this sort, and in which the proper balance of bodily elements is maintained, which is good (55A). And there are pleasures, we learn elsewhere, which can be experienced in this neutral, stable condition. Thus ends, of which the perfectly desirable mixed life is an example, are real in the ordinary sense: they exist in the world. Whenever an activity or an art is practiced, it has such a practical, particular goal, just as the end of shipbuilding is the well built ship (54B). And it is part of the character of such a goal or end that it be permanent, that it remain true to type, that it maintain its proper structure.

The view that a mixture is a mixture, and that it is good, because it maintains its true character in time, suggests a somewhat startling interpretation of another passage of the Philebus, one which deals with the subject matter of dialectic (57E ff). Plato is considering the various kinds of knowledge with respect to the certainty of their assertions, and he finds, of course, that dialectic is the most certain. Dialectic, he says, "has to do with that which is, that which exists in reality (τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ὄντως), ever unchanged." Following

directly the passage above in which the mixed life and the well built ship are called αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό (53D) and οὐσίαν (54A), it does not seem out of the question, at any rate, that the objects of dialectic to which Plato refers are the unchanging entities in the created world -- the mixtures. This would be in line with our view that dialectic includes combination, which tells us what kinds of ingredients must be combined in what ways to form mixtures. There is a sense in which combination deals with ideas, as we have seen, for it speaks of kinds of ingredients. And the mixtures of one species are all alike with respect to the limit which they share, and by virtue of which they are good members of that species; so that combination again deals with the general characteristics of a class of entities; it defines, as Socrates calls it, "an incorporeal ordered system for the rightful control of a corporeal subject" (64B). But although even the combinatory aspect of dialectic deals, to this extent, with ideas, yet the truths of combination are not, as we saw, the analytic truths of division. And if combination speaks of how things are made good, and good things are mixtures, then there is certainly a sense in which its subject matter is particular entities and not ideas. The problem is that the particular entities with which combination deals are, like ideas, in some sense permanent; like ideas, they not only exist but they continue to exist. There is thus no easy way of deciding what it is that Plato means when he tells us that dialectic deals with the real which does not change.

Dialectic, we are again told, deals with what always is, not with things which are coming to be (59A); its statements, unlike other sciences, are certain because its subject matter is free from change; "we can never get a permanent grasp on anything that is entirely devoid of permanence" (59B). It is possible that the things free from change which are referred to here are mixtures; this possibility is increased, as I have said, by the fact that immediately before this passage it was mixtures which were spoken of as being and as unchanging.

At 59C we are told that "we find fixity, purity, truth and what we call perfect clarity in those entities which remain unchanged and unmixed, or in what is most like them." The entities first mentioned have always been taken to be ideas, while the things most like them have been thought to be the heavenly bodies (cf. Hackforth, p. 122). Yet fixity has been found to be a property of the neutral life in which the "true" pleasures are felt (51C, D), purity is a property of these pleasures (52C), and so is truth (52D). They are also said to have clarity (52D, 53A). We have already seen that the pure pleasures result from a bodily state which does not change and hence, unlike the pleasures which are "always becoming," the pure pleasures can be said to remain unchanged. The term which has convinced most critics not only that this passage deals exclusively with ideas, but also that mixtures are not ideas, is the term "unmixed." I would agree that mixtures are not ideas, but not that only ideas are "unmixed."

For, as we shall learn, Plato in the Philebus uses the word "mixture" not only to refer to the good and limited entity, but also to the unlimited entity. This usage is highly contradictory, but there can be no doubt that it exists. It is in the later^t sense that pleasures are condemned because they are "mixed pleasures." Pure pleasures, on the other hand, which arise in the neutral bodily state of health (when the body is a mixture in the first sense), are called "unmixed" (52B; cf. 53A). They are unmixed because they are "pure"; because, that is, they arise in a bodily state which does not require or involve a process which brings a simultaneous or consequent pain. In exactly the same sense in which a "mixed pleasure" is unlimited, then, an "unmixed pleasure" is limited (they "have measure," and therefore belong to the "class of things with measure" 52C) and, it would seem, therefore a mixture. If a pleasure belongs to the class of the unlimited because it arises in a bodily state which is unlimited, then it is consistent to say that a pleasure which arises when the body is limited is a mixture. Thus it is quite proper, on Plato's strange terminology, to speak of an unlimited as being "mixed" and of a mixture as being "unmixed." I conclude, then, that the entities which are called "unmixed" at 59C may be mixtures; and at any rate, they certainly may be the pure ingredients of a mixture, for the pure pleasures have been spoken of as "unmixed." And I conclude further, that since every single adjective applied to the subject matter of

dialectic in 59C has been applied previously to the pure pleasures, then it is not necessarily the case that Plato is referring exclusively to ideas.²⁴

If it is mixtures or pure ingredients of mixtures (I am inclined to the view that all pure ingredients of mixtures are mixtures) which are called true, pure, precise and so forth in this passage, what are the entities which are "most like them?" The answer could only be, entities which closely resemble mixtures, which are almost perfectly good. This suggests a whole line of thought which we have not considered; and there is perhaps not very much to be said about it. This is that so far we have spoken only of mixtures as good; but are some unlimiteds better than others? The answer almost certainly is that they are; the more closely an unlimited resembles a mixture, the better it is. This view does not modify any of the results we have reached. The entities referred to above as like mixtures may best be interpreted, then, as unlimiteds which resemble mixtures. We shall not raise the question at this point whether any existing entity, on Plato's philosophy, can ever be a mixture; if it cannot, then combination still has a subject matter in those entities which come closest to being mixtures.

24.

The properties attributed to the objects of dialectic are: fixity, purity, truth, clarity; and they are said to be unchanging and unmixed. We have just shown that pure pleasures have all these properties.

Now let us briefly consider those two other facets of the property which makes mixtures good, proportion and beauty.

Proportion refers obviously to the relation between the parts, ingredients or elements of a mixture; if an entity has a limit, it has proportion. Proportion I take not to be identical with a limit, however, but rather the property which an entity has if the parts are related by a limit. Proportion, in this context, is not the property of an entity with any ratio or relation between the parts, but with the right relation between the parts. In this usage, a thing has proportion if it is "well-proportioned." The question again, of course, is what the right relation is which gives a thing proportion. And here we receive a few more meager hints which suggest that it is just that relation which is self-preserving. The most important passage reads as follows:

...any compound, however constituted, that does not in some way exhibit measure and proportion, is the ruin both of its ingredients and, first of all, of itself; it is no real mixture, but literally an unmixed mess and a calamity to whoever possesses it. (64D, E).

This passage states as clearly as any the principle which I have suggested, that an entity with any relation between its parts which is not the right one will alter with respect to that relation: it will ruin its ingredients and itself. The only property of an entity which will endure is limitedness, which is equivalent to goodness -- as well as truth and proportion. Once again the one objective criterion

by which we can judge whether or not something is good is its permanence, its ability to endure as that thing. And this criterion works, if it does, because of the generalization with which we introduced this section; it works, that is, if there is just one relation between the parts which, in a member of a given species, will remain just that relation.²⁵

Beauty does not turn out to add much to our knowledge of the good. We are told quite plainly in fact that "the qualities of measure and proportion invariably constitute beauty and excellence" (64E). Beauty would seem, therefore, simply to be the aesthetic aspect of right proportion, and it enlists our support for the life of reason because, Socrates says, the life of pleasure is vulgar and ugly (65E). It is not irrelevant to note, however, that the pure pleasures of aesthetic appreciation are those which arise while the body is in a state of rest and equilibrium (51A ff.) and that the objects of purest beauty are, for Plato, simple unchanging tones and colors and shapes which do not alter their form (51C).

This concludes the direct evidence in favor of the view that goodness is a kind of permanence and that the right relation between parts which exists in a mixture is the aspect which remains permanent. I shall consider some objections to

25.

A small piece of additional evidence for this interpretation of the good is possibly contained in the phrase which tells us that the good will be found in the mixture which is most "peaceful" (ἀστυλαγγοτάτην); literally, "without internal strife" (63E).

this view and the generalization upon which it is based presently. First I wish briefly to examine another point. It will be recalled that the present discussion arose from an attempt to discover the nature of a "limit," the relation which exists between the parts of a mixture. The tentative outcome, which I believe is true to much of the theory of the good in the Philebus, has shown that Plato sometimes is inclined to think of a limit as that relation between parts in a mixture which remains fixed and permanent. Another aspect of a limit which we promised to discuss, and which Plato seems to imply, is that a limit can be expressed numerically. Let us consider what this may mean.

The numerical aspect of the good is a very difficult thing to grasp in Plato, and it may be well if I confess at once that if it is a theory which can be expressed with any precision, then I do not know what it is. The best that I can do is indicate why I believe Plato thought there was a connection between the good and mathematics, with a hint as to how he may have hoped that the good could be defined in numerical terms.

One kind of connection between mathematics and the good is set forth in the Republic. In the Republic, mathematics is considered, first, as a kind of training in dialectic, a training intended to use the mind to dealing with precise terms and truths which are indubitable. But more than this, it is implied that the truths of mathematics are derived in

some way from the idea of the good. The nature of this derivation is never made clear, although it is very often said that Plato means that mathematics can be deduced from the idea of the good. But if this is an accurate way of representing Plato's view in the Republic, it is still not much help to us unless we are shown how such a deduction could be performed; and this we are never shown. The hard kernel with which we are left, therefore, is the opinion that the truths of ethics (or more broadly, of value) are at least as certain as those of mathematics. And this is an opinion which I think Plato never gave up, but which he always considered to be essential to his theory of the good. We can see this in the Philebus, not only in the attempt to give the good numerical expression, but also in the consideration of the various arts. In evaluating the arts, Plato judges those most true which make the largest use of number (55C ff.); and it is dialectic which is the most exact, precise and certain (58A ff.).

I do not think that there is any contradiction between the view that the truths of value are as certain as those of mathematics, and the view that the truths of value are not analytic in the same sense as those of division. We have argued that the analytic truths of division, which are true because of the unalterable relations between ideas, cannot directly yield the truths of combination. But this does not exclude the possibility that the truths of combination (which

are the truths of value) may be as certain as the truths of division. Although I would not agree with Plato that both sorts of truths have the same kind of certainty, I cannot see that there is any contradiction in holding that both sorts of truths are equally certain. And this is, it seems probable, Plato's view.

So far, then, the connection between mathematics and the good is one of analogy only: the truths of mathematics are clearly certain, and independent of the particular facts of existence, and Plato has told us that he holds the truths of value to share these characteristics. This much does not seem to exhaust the connection which Plato hints, however. For, in some contexts at least, Plato appears to take mathematics as more than a model of certitude; he wishes to assimilate, in some way, the truths of value to the truths of mathematics.²⁶ And it is clear that if this could be done, it would completely obliterate the distinction between the truths of division and the truths of combination. Let us see what Plato accomplishes in this direction, then.

We have already noticed that Plato frequently speaks of the relation between the parts of a mixture as a ratio or proportion (25D), and many of the examples of mixtures seem

26.

Judging from the statements of the Republic, we might be justified in putting this the other way around, and saying that Plato wishes to assimilate the truths of mathematics to the truths of value. But whether, in the end, there would be a difference, or what this difference might be, is a matter which I cannot see any way of deciding.

to be mixtures because of the numerical properties of the limit. In the case of music (26A), the traditional example taken from the Pythagoreans, the possibility of reducing the qualitative heard differences to quantitative relations between string lengths has already been discussed; this would seem to be a genuine case where both "right" and "wrong" intervals can be expressed numerically. In the case of temperature (26A), there can again be no doubt that once a decision is made as to what constitutes a correct level, this level can be expressed numerically. This applies to the temperature of the body as well as to the temperature of the atmosphere. Each of these is an example where the limit is a relation between "opposites."

What can we say, however, where the limit is a relation between ingredients? Here again, as we have seen, there are surely some cases where the relation may be at least partly numerical (the well-mixed concrete, the well-mixed cake, where the limit insures the proper relative quantities of ingredients). These are, in fact, just the cases where the mixture is made up of ingredients each of which is a mixture of "opposites," where the rightness of each ingredient can be measured numerically. The problem, it seems to me, becomes acute in those cases in which Plato is most interested, however: in the case of such mixtures as the good life and the good state. How can the relation between mind and pleasure be expressed numerically, or the relation between the guardians and the craftsmen?

There are two considerations which bear on this question. The first concerns the possibility of judging such an ingredient as pleasure (or mind) in numerical terms. The treatment of pleasure suggests such a possibility because pleasures are evaluated in terms of the bodily conditions under which they arise. Thus if bodily health (and illness) can be expressed in numerical terms (as is clearly the case with temperature, at least) then there is a sense in which pleasures may be evaluated numerically. Such an evaluation could draw no distinction between all those pleasures which arise when the body is in a state of health; but possibly this is not necessary from Plato's point of view. The various arts which are functions of mind are also judged in terms of the numerical exactitude with which they treat their subjects; but it is by no means clear how a number could thus be assigned to the arts themselves. The crucial point becomes, therefore, how the right relation between mind (or its functions) and pleasure can be expressed numerically. For although there is some sense in which each ingredient may be evaluated numerically, there does not seem to be any way that the relation between them can be expressed as a ratio. Nor, in fact, does Plato try to show how this could be done. The relevance of number in this case is that number is an aid in judging each ingredient; but it gives no clue as to how the limit itself, on which the goodness of the mixture depends, can be expressed as a ratio.

The second consideration with respect to such cases as the mixed life shows conclusively, it seems to me, that the relation between the parts of such a mixture can never, at least fully, be expressed numerically. The consideration is this: it is vital to Plato's view of the good life that the relation between the parts express the essential functions of those parts. Especially with respect to mind, its relation to pleasure surely cannot be stated fully without saying that mind must guide or limit pleasures. The relation between mind and pleasures is therefore one which perforce implies the functional character of the parts. It is hard to see how such a relation can be given direct numerical expression; the same holds true of the relations between the various parts of the state explained in the Republic and the relations between the parts of the soul set forth in the Phaedrus, the Republic and elsewhere.

If I am right, therefore, then although there are very many cases in which the proper relation between parts may be expressed in numerical terms, the very cases in which Plato is most interested not only are not expressed by him in numerical terms, but could not be so expressed.

The reason, probably, that Plato wishes to express the limit of a mixture numerically is that he hopes in this way not only to make the statement of the limit precise, but also to give it the same sort of certitude which belongs to the statements of mathematics. If this is his reason, then

it seems to me that he was mistaken, for the mere fact that a proposition can be stated mathematically is no proof that it is true for mathematical reasons. The interval of an octave can be expressed as a ratio, but it does not follow from mathematical considerations alone that an octave is a "good" interval. The normal temperature of the healthy body can be expressed as a number (and possibly as a ratio), but mathematics can give no reason for accepting this number as the right one. I conclude, therefore, not only that Plato failed in his hope of expressing the good (in the important cases) in numerical terms, but that his probable reason for the attempt was an erroneous one. For merely to be able to express the good in numerical terms would be no evidence, in itself, that the truths of value were as certain as the truths of pure mathematics.

This terminates the consideration of the principles of combination, and hence of the theory of the good, in so far as they can be derived from what Plato says about the limit, the unlimited and the mixture. The results are highly inconclusive -- more so, if possible, than has been indicated -- and only one positive thesis of any importance has so far been revealed. This thesis is that the property which makes things good can be defined in terms of a permanent relation between parts. The degree to which this interpretation is supported by the texts has been to some extent explored. And I think that as an interpretation of Plato's theory of the good in

the Philebus, it has a degree of truth. There lurks, however, a very basic ambiguity in the theory thus interpreted, and once this ambiguity is revealed, it becomes clear that either the theory is incomplete as it stands (or circular) or else it cannot be the whole theory to which Plato subscribes. To separate out the two parts of the theory, to show why the acceptable part cannot be the whole theory, and to show why the incomplete or circular part cannot depend entirely on the considerations already brought forward; to show these things is to bring the discussion into a new area, the center and feature of which is the concept of the cause. What follows may, therefore, be considered as an introduction to the final one of the four elements in the analysis of the principles of combination.

7. The Cause of the Mixture. The one result at which we have tentatively arrived in our attempt to define the right relation between parts which makes an entity good depends, as we have seen, upon the principle that there is one, and only one, such relation which will remain permanently that relation. It is now time to inquire, on somewhat new grounds, into the status of this principle. The major question concerns the way in which we are to take the principle: as a definition, as a statement of necessary and infallible connection, or as an empirical generalization.

In the preceding sections, we have assumed that the Principle is a definition, that the right relation and the

permanent relation mean the same thing, and hence that goodness and permanence, of a certain kind, are identical. Further, we have, although not explicitly, assumed that the relation in question could be defined in physical terms, and hence that the permanence was of a physical nature. And these assumptions are, as I have tried to show, to some extent justified by passages in the Philebus. Nor do I think it is open to reasonable doubt that Plato quite often, in other dialogues, speaks as if goodness and physical endurance were identical. In the Republic particularly, every arrangement in the good state seems to be subordinated to the goal of achieving just such a relation between the parts which will endure. Justice, which in the Republic plays a role similar to that of the limit in the Philebus, is a proper relation between parts in the state, and the one criterion of the just relation appears, in many contexts, to be definable as the one relation which results in maintaining the status quo -- in preserving, in fact, just that relation between the parts. It is not enough, to support this thesis, merely to say that the right relation causes the state to maintain the right relation; it is necessary to contend that the right relation and the relation which is maintained mean the same relation, and that hence permanence and goodness are identical. But this thesis may be supported by the Republic, for the right relation is that which establishes the functions and relations between the various classes of individuals in the state, and

this is the very relation which must remain fixed if we are to call the state a good state.

In spite of these considerations, it seems to me that this theory of value is not consistent with some other assumptions which Plato makes in the Philebus and cannot therefore be accepted without reservation as an interpretation of the Philebus. But before I go on to examine the alternative theory which seems to me to be present in Plato's thinking, it is worth making a remark to avoid misinterpretation. The alternative theory is, I think, at least as important an interpretation of the Philebus as the first, and quite possibly it is closer to the basic attitude towards the good which we find in Plato. Yet it is a very unsatisfactory theory, and it is both less clear and less plausible, it seems to me, than the first. Although I would not subscribe to the first theory myself, yet it is a theory which can, I believe, be made fairly clear, and it is not self-contradictory. The second theory, on the other hand, if I understand it at all, is quite useless in determining what things are good in the world, even though it defines what goodness is. And if the second theory is plausible, it is only because it assumes, at base, something like the first theory; so that not only does it have its own faults, but also those of the first theory. I do not wish it to be thought, therefore, that I am endorsing the alternative theory about to be considered; on the contrary, I consider it less satisfactory than the first.

We may now go on to discuss the validity of the principle upon which the first definition of goodness is based. Let us entertain the possibility that this principle, instead of defining goodness as the having of a permanent relation between parts, merely states that if something is good, then it will maintain the same relation between parts. We might still hold that having this relation is also what makes the thing good, without defining the right relation as the permanent one. In other words, one might very well hold that to be good is to have the right relation between parts, and that, in fact, anything which had this relation would continue to have it, without holding that it means the same thing to have the right relation and to have the permanent relation. This can be seen in this way. Someone who holds to the first view, that the principle defines the meaning of goodness, would be bound to agree that no matter what the world was like, the permanent relation was the right one. Someone who held to the second view would admit that if the world were differently made, or different facts held true, then the permanent relation might not be the right one, and something which was good might change with respect to this relation (and would therefore no longer be good). The supporter of this second view does not think that the meaning of goodness is contained in the notion of the permanent relation, but he merely states that as a matter of fact, with the world as it is, the permanent relation and the good

relation are always the same. The permanent relation and the right relation denote the same relations, but, according to this second view, they do not connote the same relations. This second view may be stated in this way: a right relation between parts is, in this world, a necessary and sufficient condition for the permanent relation. Once the difference between these two views is stated, it becomes doubtful, I think, which of the two views is actually supported by the passages so far quoted in favor of the first view. And I confess I do not see any way to decide which of these views is most apt to be that of Plato. I think he was inclined sometimes toward one and sometimes toward the other, but that since he did not distinguish them explicitly, it is impossible to tell which is the most accurate interpretation of the passages examined.

As long as the principle is held to be unalterably true, even in this second sense, a great deal is gained with respect to our knowledge of the good, for it will remain true that, even if we do not know what it means (connotatively) to say something is good, we will always be able to tell what things are, in fact, good. The new theory would then depend, for our ability to identify good things, upon the truth of the principle, whereas on the first theory, the truth of the principle could not be called in question since it was a definition. The trouble is that as soon as we make the theory of the good depend on the truth of the principle, the question

arises whether it is true; and it seems quite evident that, on Plato's assumptions, it almost certainly is not.

The question quite simply is this: is it true that if an entity ever has the right relation between its parts, it always has the right relation between its parts; and that there exists no other relation between parts which will remain the same? If there is just one case where an entity at one time has a right relation between parts, and at another time does not, then clearly the principle is not true, and goodness and permanence are not only not connotatively equivalent, but they are also not denotatively equivalent. And in that case, the principle will not serve to define goodness at all, or even, unambiguously, to indicate good entities.

The objection to the principle which occurs to us immediately is that it seems to conflict with one interpretation of the mixture, namely the interpretation which assumes that a mixture is an entity which once had a wrong relation between parts (an unlimited) and which has been caused to have a right relation, thus becoming a mixture (in a sense already explained) of an unlimited and a limit. And this conflict, it seems to me, is insurmountable as long as the principle is stated in its present form. For both on general grounds, and on the basis of particular examples, I think it is evident that Plato does believe that unlimited entities can, in some cases, be made limited. On general grounds it

is likely that he would hold this, for if he did not, there would be no way something bad could ever become good. And if this were the case, then there would be no moral struggle, no sense in "tending our soul," or in trying to mend the ailing state. For it would simply be the fact of the matter that the only thing that could be good would be good to begin with, and if it were good to begin with, it would, by the principle, never become bad.

But also by particular examples we can show that Plato believed unlimited things could become limited. The Republic is perhaps the best example, for there we certainly learn how a state which is corrupt and unlimited could be made a mixture. It is true that Plato sometimes expresses doubt as to whether it will, in fact, ever come about, but he does not seem to question the theoretical possibility; and the same possibility is reasserted in the Laws. Also in the Philebus, even if we do not rely on the passages on the mixture (26A ff.) which seem to assert that unlimited things can be made limited, we can find evidence that the construction of the good life can take place, working with elements which were, to begin with, unlimited (28A; 31A).

This point is possibly of no/ great importance, however, for an alteration of the principle itself can cure it of the difficulty. The principle can simply be rephrased to state that an entity which ever comes to have the right relation between parts will continue to have this relation. There will

then be no difficulty in holding that an unlimited may become limited, and the principle will then deal only with the period which commences when the entity becomes limited.

Any objection to the modified principle must hinge, therefore, on the possibility that an entity which is limited may become, subsequently, unlimited. And we must see, again, that if so much as one entity can be limited, and then unlimited, the modified principle must also be rejected.

This question is a difficult one because there are arguments in Plato which imply that a mixture may deteriorate and others which imply that it may not. The arguments which support the view that a mixture cannot, or never will, in fact, deteriorate are the arguments which support the principle, and hence the first theory of the good which we have been discussing. And to the arguments and passages in support of this view which we have already quoted, we may add a general consideration. This consideration arises out of a question which has been bruited but not explicitly brought out. The question is this: if finality and self-sufficiency are, along with others, criteria of the good, then can any entity be considered an intrinsic good which does not include in its own nature the conditions of its continued existence? In the case of a state, this is surely one test of its goodness; the same seems to be true of the good life (for mind must be an ingredient just because it is an indispensable agent in creating and maintaining the good life). It is true of some entities that they

must be self-sustaining to be intrinsic goods; but is it true of all? There does not, off hand, seem to be any way in which the order of the starry heavens, or good temperature, or harmonious music could be said to be self-sustaining, and these are also mixtures. Is it then a characteristic of some mixtures only that they are self-sustaining? Or is it rather the case that such examples as good music, good weather and even the order of the starry heavens are not really intrinsic goods, are not mixtures, in the fullest sense of the word? I do not see any way to decide this matter, although it is important to know the answer. It seems to me that the chief arguments on which mind is admitted to the mixture of the good life suggest that any mixture must include the main conditions of its own continued existence; but I do not see how this principle can be applied to many examples which Plato gives of mixtures.

The reason it is of some importance to know the answer to this question is that if it is not a universal criterion of a mixture that it include the conditions of its continued existence, then it is far less likely that continued existence, as suggested by our main principle, is a necessary attribute of a good entity. On the other hand, if it is a universal criterion of a mixture that it include the conditions of its continued existence, then one would be justified in saying that, if this criterion were really satisfied, then no mixture could ever cease to be a mixture. This problem, which never

is raised explicitly by Plato in the Philebus, is handled in a rather unsatisfactory way in the Republic. For there the evidence favors both answers: the good state is designed with the one purpose of promulgating itself; and yet we are told how even the perfect state may deteriorate.

At this point, it seems to me, we touch on a problem in Platonism so basic and so difficult that any full treatment of it must necessarily be omitted from this thesis. The problem concerns, in fact, the question whether or not a really good thing can exist at all in the passing world; whether, that is, the mere existence of such a thing would not automatically remove it from the realm of becoming into another realm. Can the perfect change? If it can, it would not seem to be perfect; if it cannot, it would seem that it breaks the laws of existence in the visible universe. This is the paradox which, apparently, Plato was unable to resolve. What does seem obvious, to me at any rate, is that the Philebus says, whatever it may imply to the contrary, that perfectly good things do exist in the visible universe; they are the "mixtures," the things with "limit." The fact that their perfection makes them tend towards permanence; that they are ends and not just means; that they can be said, therefore, in one sense at least, to "be" rather than to "become"; that they may be said, as they attain perfection, to "become into being"; all these facts do not remove these perfectly good things from the realm of ordinarily existing, particular entities, and

it is, indeed, necessary to their goodness that these things do exist in the commonsense meaning of the word "exist."

If we must decide, therefore, in the face of the paradox, whether to admit that perfectly good things do change, or to admit that perfectly good things do not exist, I think we must accept the first rather than the second admission. And in accepting it, we decide, it must also be apparent, that not even perfectly good things can be guaranteed continued existence or unchanging excellence. The perfect state can, paradoxically perhaps, deteriorate, and the good man can fall prey to error. Good weather can change to bad, and all the works of reason may be overwhelmed by the forces of evil.

The notion of the "perfectly good" entity need not, however, be invoked in order to complete the necessary argument. For whether or not the mixtures which Plato tells us exist in the world of change are perfectly good, it is clear, if our previous interpretations have any validity, that they are the only things which can properly be said to be good at all; and if such mixtures may alter for the worse, the principle which we have been discussing must in any case be false. And I think it is altogether certain, on the basis of much of what Plato says and implies, that this principle is false. In other words, although I think there is very much evidence for the principle, I think there is also very much evidence against it. All that is required, to disprove the principle, is that one

mixture, at least, become unlimited. And almost anyone would agree that Plato believes that this might happen, not just once, but very often; in fact, Plato might even hold that it would always happen, in which case the principle would be absolutely false. The objection to the principle taken as a definition is that, in many contexts, Plato simply does not think that goodness and permanence (of the sort indicated) are identical. He might hold that something which was perfectly good would in fact be permanent; but, as we have seen, this does not mean that permanence and goodness are connotatively equivalent. This alone does not prove that permanence and goodness are not connotatively equivalent, either, of course; nor do I think that this doctrine, which I have gone to some pains to show is consistent with much that Plato says, can be proven wrong. If, indeed, as I think is the case, Plato does assert that perfectly good things exist, then the principle is proven inconsistent, and this is a good reason to hunt for another theory of the good. But even if it is not inconsistent, it may still be false, and I wish, in the sequel, to assume that it is.

We will, then, agree once more that mixtures do, on occasion, exist, and that they are good; we will leave aside the question of "perfect" goodness. We will also assume that goodness is not connotatively equivalent to permanence, and that, in fact, it is not even necessarily denotatively equivalent. We must, therefore, once again raise the question, what it is that makes a thing good.

It is important to see that the refusal to accept the principle on which the previous definition of the adjective "good" was based does not mean a refusal to admit any relation between goodness and permanence. Refusal to admit the principle as a definition leaves open the possibility, as we have seen, that what is good always is permanent. This possibility we have, however, also rejected. What connection remains, then? The connection which, it seems to me, is definitely implied by the passages already examined, if they do not imply the principle, is this: if an entity is good, it will tend to remain good, i.e. to preserve that relation between parts which made it good. Such an entity will be so constituted that it is stable; it will resist change. Force of circumstances may be too much for it, so that alteration does result; ideally, however, the origin of such alteration will come from outside the entity.

So far, I am merely stating boldly the connection which, in my opinion, Plato implied existed between goodness and permanence when he did not imply that permanence defined goodness. I think it is quite clear, however, from the evidence of the Republic and the passages already examined from the Philebus, that if they do not imply that goodness is permanence, then they surely do imply that goodness (still defined as having the right relation between parts) usually results in permanence, or tends toward permanence.

There is a possibility, then, that this tendency might provide an ostensive definition of the good. This would be the

case if the tendency could be defined in some objectively determinable way. It might, for instance, be the case that good things retain the given relation between the parts which makes them good longer than anything else ever retains any given relation between parts; or that, statistically, the right relation is retained longer in more cases than any other. Such examples suggest that it might be possible, if our assumption about the connection between permanence and goodness is true, that we could always tell when a thing is good.

But while this might tell us what the right relation between parts is which makes a thing good, we would be no closer to knowing what it is that makes this the right relation. We realize this at once when we see that although (if our assumption is true) good things do tend to be permanent, still it is not this tendency that makes them good. For consider this possibility: suppose that we know what the relation between parts is that makes a man a good man. Suppose also that, in a certain situation, retaining this given relation will result in a man's death (perhaps the death of Socrates is an example). Such a case does not disprove the assumption that goodness generally tends to permanence. But it does show that it is not the tendency which makes the thing good; for in this case the goodness results in impermanence. And if Plato is willing to concede one such case where goodness might result in impermanence, then it is clear that it is not the tendency which makes the thing good.

This example, and others like it, might serve to suggest that, even if goodness merely tends to permanence, the connection can be made more instructive if we add that a good thing would be permanent if there were no external disruptive forces. To this modified principle, I think Plato would be willing to agree. The trouble is that it is not a very useful principle. How are we to define "disruptive forces"? Or "external"? It might be interesting to consider these problems. We can afford to avoid them, however, because even if they could be answered, we still would not know what it is that makes something good.

We may grant, in any case, that this modified principle is a true expression of Plato's position, and that it explains, in some sense, why it is that goodness does, as a matter of fact, tend to make a thing permanent. We may, therefore, ask why it is that goodness does tend to permanence. How do we know that goodness tends to permanence, or that if there were no external disruptive forces, goodness would always entail permanence? How can we possibly know these things unless we know first what it means to say something is good?

Plato's answer, I believe, is this: the only way in which we can know these things is by recognizing that the good operates as a cause. If there were not a causal agent which made it true, there would be no reason at all for a good thing to tend to be permanent, and no reason to assume that, under ideal conditions, the good would always survive. The

fact that, in this world, the good merely tends to survive shows that the causal character of the good is not omnipotent; on the other hand, the fact of the tendency proves its potency.

Whether or not this is Plato's argument -- and I believe it is -- there can be no doubt that this is his answer. Things are good because they are made good; that is, they are created by an agent or cause which works for the good. The answer to the question, what makes a thing good, is that the cause or agent makes it good.

This last sentence obviously contains a joker. We began our inquiry by searching for the property or properties which an entity must have to be good, and we spoke of this property (or these properties) as what makes the entity good. The "making" had, however, no causal implications. We could say, if we pleased, that this property was the "cause" of the goodness of the entity which had it; but this use of "cause" does not imply causation: the words "reason for" would serve as well. A property is not an efficient cause or agent; it would be quite meaningless to speak of "redness" or "permanence" or "symmetry" as a causal agent. Clearly, then, we have not yet said what the property is which constitutes the goodness of an entity. Before going on to state what this property may be, it is necessary to remark, however, that Plato seems sometimes to be guilty of the confusion just noticed. Just as previously we noted that he sometimes confuses an ingredient of a good entity with the property which constitutes its goodness, so we

note now that he sometimes confuses the efficient cause of the goodness of a good entity with the property which constitutes its goodness. These two confusions are not independent. For in the important case of the confusion, the causal agent is also an ingredient in the good entity. This will, however, become clearer presently.

Although an agent cannot be a property, the fact that things which are good are good because they are created or made good by an agent suggests that there is a property which constitutes their goodness, namely, that of being made by the agent.

This suggestion is unserviceable for only one reason: the agent or cause which Plato postulates also creates entities which are not good. In fact, the agent which makes good things makes everything,²⁷ so that the property of being made by the cause or agent cannot be the property designated by the adjective "good." It is, however, a characteristic of the cause not only that it produces what is good, but also that it always strives to create good things. The end of our search, therefore, is this: an entity is good if it represents that which the cause or agent intended. We may say, then, that "x is good" is equivalent to "x is what the cause or agent intended"; the property which constitutes goodness is thus defined in terms

27.

This can be easily seen from Philebus 26E, 27A; "... between that which is made and that which comes to be there is a mere verbal difference," and, "there is only a verbal difference between a cause and a maker." Cf. 28D ff.

of the purpose of the cause or agent. This is the second ultimate definition of the good which I find in the Philebus, and the one which, it seems to me, is the most basic. To prove that it is the most basic is, probably, impossible, for there is, as I have tried to demonstrate, evidence in favor of an entirely different definition. But there are reasons for accepting this definition as more basic, and these I shall indicate.

The negative reasons for accepting this second definition of the good and rejecting the first (as an interpretation of the Philebus) have already been discussed; they are those arguments which tend to show why, on Plato's own grounds, the first definition is unsatisfactory. The positive reasons are more difficult to state. One reason, of course, is that Plato seems to say just this in the passage which introduces the cause or agent as a principle of explanation. This will be examined immediately. The second, and perhaps more persuasive, reason is that much of the argument of the Philebus apparently hinges, in Plato's opinion, on this second definition. For the importance of mind in the good life, Plato thinks, is established most definitely by this second definition.

Let us now consider directly what Plato tells us about the agent or cause, the purpose or intent of which defines goodness. The cause, as one of the four "principles" which Plato uses to explain the nature of the good, is first introduced with the following remarks:

Socrates: ...It looks as if I'm a ridiculous sort of fellow when I try to divide things up into classes and enumerate them.

Protarchus: How's that, my fine fellow?

Socrates: It seems to me now that I require a fourth kind in addition.

Protarchus: What is it?

Socrates: Observe the cause of the mixing of those two [the limit and unlimited], and take this cause as the fourth factor in addition to the other three (23D).

This passage invites two comments, aside from the general doctrine which it states in common with the subsequent, and fuller, exposition. The first concerns the fact that apparently this fourth factor is mentioned as an after-thought, as if it had occurred to Plato only when he had named the other three. This is the view, in fact, of Bury,²⁸ who argues that the fourth factor is introduced last, and by the way as it were, because the fourth factor applies only to phenomenal entities, while the other three apply as well to ideal entities. I am inclined to think there is something in this argument, although I would not put it with the confidence of Bury. I would agree, that is, that the first three elements alone do present the possibility of a value theory quite independent of the fourth element; this is the hypothesis on which we examined the first three elements. To

28.

The Philebus of Plato, pp. lxxii - lxxiv.

this extent, I think Bury right; and I think he is the only commentator ever to have pointed it out. But I cannot agree that Plato ever thought that the theory, based on the first three elements, could account-for the ideas, for, as I have shown, the mixtures which are treated are, whether we take the "cause" into account or not, particular entities in the passing world. I wish to postpone any further questions about the ideas for the present, however; these will be treated in the next section. Nor do I think Bury is right in thinking that the present passage shows the "cause" to be an afterthought. The Philebus (like the other dialogues) is full of half-humorous introductions of new points inserted as if they had just occurred to the main speaker; and we all know this for the dialectical trick that it is. One of the most important lines of argument in the Philebus hinges on the "cause," namely the line of argument which proves mind to be the most important element in the good life; it is unreasonable, therefore, to take seriously the suggestion that the basis of this argument was an "afterthought."

The second point raised by the present passage is this: is there just one causal agent, or is there a class of such agents? Is the fourth factor, that is, both "one and many" like the other three, or does it differ fundamentally from them? I think it is likely that there is, according to Plato, a class to which the cause belongs. 23D, just quoted, speaks first of the division into classes (εἶδη) which has

resulted in the first three, and goes on to speak of the fourth class ($\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$). At 30B, Socrates speaks unambiguously of the four classes ($\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$), naming the cause along with the others. At the beginning of 30E, and again at 31A, we are told that mind belongs to that one of the four classes "which we called the cause of all things."²⁹ Here we must separate two questions: first, whether there is a "class of the cause" at all, and second, how many members the class contains. To the first question, the answer seems to be that Plato believes there is such a class. But this does not tell us much; for clearly there can be classes which contain only one member. The answer to the second question is more important, and more difficult. The difficulty is this: if there is more than one member of the class, then it becomes very obscure how we are to define the good. Are we to assume that the purpose of every cause is the same? Or is our definition to imply a certain relativism; that is, if the purposes of the various causes differ, do we then hold that different things are good, depending on the cause we have in mind?

This problem is obviously of great importance when we consider the relation of the human mind to the class of the cause. Much of the argument of the Philebus depends on the relation between these two. Yet it would seem that either of

29.

Hackforth (*op. cit.*, p. 57) translates the first of these passages, "...mind belongs to the family of what we called the cause of all things." A family is, of course, a class; in any case, he gives the usual translation of the second passage (31A).

the possible answers is unsatisfactory. If the human mind is a member of the class of the cause, then clearly it is what makes (i. e. causes) the good life to be good, because its purposes are, by definition, good. But this would, equally clearly, make the good relative to each human mind; and this result would be antithetical to everything most basic in Plato's ethics. On the other hand, if the human mind is not a member of the class of the cause, then the argument that it is the cause of the goodness of the good life can no longer be considered established. There may be some other connection between the human mind and the class of the cause, however, which will relieve the dilemma. This point will be considered presently. Meanwhile, I shall state in anticipation my main conclusion. I think it is fairly evident that the arguments against placing the human mind in the class of the cause -- of the cause whose purposes define goodness, that is -- are conclusive, whereas the arguments in favor are not equally conclusive, and I shall contend, therefore, that the human mind (or rather, human minds) does not belong to the class of the cause. For the same kind of reason (namely that another answer would lead to relativism) I am impelled to conclude, as well, that there is just one member of the class of the cause. Plato's speech does, in fact, often imply this quite unambiguously (28C; 38D; 30C); the other cases to the contrary quoted above must, I think, be explained.³⁰ There remains a certain vagueness on this

30.

I refer to the expressions at 30E and 31A.

point, however, and I am not at all certain what the final answer, drawn from the Philebus, should be.

We may now go on to consider the rest of what Plato states about the cause (which we will now assume to be the sole member of the class of the cause). According to Plato, everything which comes into being must have a cause (26E). This cause is the agent; there is no difference between a creator and a cause, just as there is no difference between that which comes into being and that which is created (27A). In every case where a ratio (limit) is imposed on an unlimited, this is due to an act of creation. Further, to the extent that anything exhibits limit, it is the result of purpose. We may, therefore, speak of the agent as a maker (δημιουργός, 27B), whose intention precedes his creation (27A). Where design exists in the universe, this is no accident; the intelligibility of the world is the outcome of design. Everything in the world which exhibits rational pattern is created, from the orbits of the planets to the cloth on the loom.

Quite evidently, Plato is here basing his account of the goodness in the world upon an analogy with a human craftsman, just as he does in the Timaeus. It is well, however, to guard against taking the analogy too literally, or with the same implications of literalness which we find in the Timaeus. One difference between the Philebus and Timaeus on this score is obvious: it is that in the Timaeus the cosmic agent has models after which he patterns his work, so that the goodness

of his product may be defined in terms of his success in copying the models. Theoretically, at least, this theory would enable Plato to define goodness without recourse to the causal agent at all. In the Philebus, it is the intention of the causal agent which defines the good, and there are no models. This point will be touched upon further presently. A second, and important, difference between the analogy in the Timaeus with the human craftsman and that in the Philebus is this: in the Timaeus the causal agent is compared directly to the human craftsman and the things of the world to the products of the craftsman's art. In the Philebus, the causal agent is compared to the human mind or reason, while the things of the world which are caused by the cosmic agent are compared to man's body. This difference is reinforced, it seems to me, when we recall that the demiurgos of the Timaeus creates the world with a mind and body, so that any parallel between microcosm and macrocosm in that dialogue automatically would discount a comparison between the demiurgos and the human mind. The comparison is rather between the universe as a product of the demiurgos and man as a product.

The difference stressed here is not meant to constitute in any way a full dress comparison between the Timaeus and Philebus; the point is rather to show that there is not, on this point, a strict parallel between the two dialogues. It is necessary to mention this only because it is usual, and natural, to interpret the Philebus quite strictly in terms

of the Timaeus, and at this particular point, such an interpretation is apt to be misleading. The significance of the difference is quite important, for it is on the basis of the analogy of the Philebus that Plato argues for the primacy of mind in the good life, while the analogy of the Timaeus would simply serve to show that if a man is good, this is due to the demiurgos.

Plato now goes on to argue, from the analogy between the cosmic agent and the human mind, that the cause of goodness in man is man's mind. We must, therefore, examine the basis of this argument. First, Plato sets about establishing the fact that the cosmic cause or agent is intelligent and may therefore be called a Mind or Reason. This view he supports with three kinds of arguments, from authority, from direct evidence, and from analogy.

a. Plato points out that he has the support of religion and authority in his assertion that there is an intelligent mind which orders and creates the visible universe, and whose purposes are good.

28C ...all the wise agree...that in reason we have the king of heaven and earth.

28D Are we to say, Protarchus, that the sum of things or what we call this universe is controlled by a power that is irrational and blind, and by mere chance, or on the contrary to follow our predecessors in saying that it is governed by reason and a wondrous regulating intelligence?

29A ...what earlier thinkers agree upon...

30D ...it supports those ancient thinkers...who declared that reason always rules all things.

28E [the opposite view]...seems to me sheer blasphemy. There is, however, some opposition to this view; at least we are warned to be prepared to make a stand "...if some clever person asserts that the world is not as we describe it, but devoid of order" (29A).

b. But Plato is not satisfied by this appeal to authority, and states plainly that it is necessary to "take a share of the risk" (29A) by advancing some independent arguments. First, he contends that certain observed phenomena can be best explained by assuming an intelligent cause.

28E To maintain that reason orders it all does justice to the spectacle of the ordered universe, of the sun, the moon, the stars and the revolution of the whole heaven...

To this passage may, I think, be added the one from 28D quoted above which also suggests, although more vaguely, that the observed universe exhibits order of a kind which suggests a purposeful agent. We may also quote some earlier passages concerning the kinds of mixtures in the world as evidence of the sort of phenomena which Plato believed demonstrate the existence of a good cause. Plato there mentions as mixtures, and therefore (we learn later) products of the cause, "fair weather and all other beautiful things" (26B). He goes on:

and indeed there are countless more things I omit to enumerate, such as beauty and strength along with health, besides a whole host of fair things found in our souls (26B).

Finally, he adds the "law and order" established among men to the list of the works of reason (26B).

c. The final argument, and the one by which Plato seems to set most store, is based on a rather elaborate analogy between man and the universe, in which man's body is compared to the physical features of the world, and man's mind is compared to the cosmic agent or mind. I here paraphrase Plato's words:

- 29A-C The elements of fire, water, air and earth are in the natures of all living bodies, and also in the universe at large. These elements are small and poor in us and not at all pure; but in the universe they are wonderful and beautiful and have all the power appropriate to them. Moreover, the elements in the universe sustain and produce those in living creatures. As these elements combined together into one in a living creature are called a body ($\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$) so, gathered together as a cosmos, they also form a body. And our body is derived from that of the universe and obtains from it its sustenance. Just
- 29D-E as our body has a soul, so the universe must have one, for our body is only a weak copy of the universe. In man, it is the "sum of all wisdom" (i.e., mind), which "implants the soul in the body, and provides the art of physical exercise and medical
- 30A treatment when the body is ill, and which is in general a composing and healing power." It is absurd to assume such a power in the individual, and not
- 30B assume one in the universe (which is in every other respect similar, and which exhibits such staggering
- 30C examples of harmony and order as the seasons, the arrangement of the planets, the sequence of the years).

Before going on to examine these arguments, it is well to quote Plato as to the precise conclusion which he wishes to draw from them. The conclusion is this:

- 30E ...that mind belongs to the family of [or the class of³¹] what we called the cause of all things.

31.

There is a question of textual emendation here which I cannot pretend to settle. The trouble is that both readings are demanded, but for different reasons, by the argument. This will be discussed below. Cf. Hackforth, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 47, n. 14.

31A ...we have now arrived at a fairly satisfactory demonstration of what class reason belongs to, and what function it possesses.

31A ...reason was found akin to the cause, and belonging... to that class...

The impression we receive from these passages, taken alone, is that there are two classes, that of causes and that of minds, and that the second class is included in the first. This is, I think, a conclusion which Plato would in some sense approve; but it hardly can be said to be supported by the reasoning which precedes it. For the gist of that reasoning is rather that the cosmic agent or cause performs in the universe the same function that mind performs in man, and that, therefore, the cosmic agent either is a mind, or is like a mind. This would seem to recommend the view that the class of agents belongs to the class of minds rather than vice versa. And the truth is that this is a conclusion also required by the sequel. Plato needs to be able to say, both that all minds are agents, and also that all agents are minds. This suggests that the proper interpretation of the above remarks is simply that the two classes, those of mind and agent, are identical. Yet this easy solution would lead to unsatisfactory results for reasons partly indicated previously. Before restating these, however, I think it is fair to Plato to say that the three passages just quoted which contain the conclusion of his results concerning the relation of mind and causal agent, are almost purposely vague, and that it is not from them that we can accuse him of confusion. For the word translated "class"

(γένος) has no technical meaning for Plato, and may as well mean "kind"; or it may simply indicate, in this context, that reason has the property of being an agent; or, still less definitely, that reason is like a causal agent (31A) or is, somehow, derived from it (30E, on Hackforth's interpretation).

The question is, what Plato wishes to show from the relation between mind and agent; and here we must return to the point made previously, that there are two quite different theses which he is interested in maintaining. The first thesis is that there is a single intelligent causal agent in the universe which has created everything that exists, and which works for (intends) the good. The second is that man's mind is part of, akin to or derived from, this intelligent causal agent and should, therefore, strive to accomplish the same, or similar, ends. To what extent, and in what way, do Plato's arguments support these two theses?

The argument from authority can hardly be evaluated in any but a historical sense. The historical significance of the argument is, to my mind, to indicate the way in which Plato, while abandoning the ideal theory as the direct source and explanation of value, nevertheless retains most of the basic characteristics of his value theory based on essences through a teleological view of the universe. The result, so far as value theory is concerned, is to explain more satisfactorily how things in the passing world can be good. The result, so far as epistemology is concerned, is that some of the problems

about universals are divorced from ethical considerations. And the result, so far as our understanding of Plato is concerned, is to show that the true basis of his theory of value rests not on the theory of ideas, but on the teleological view of the universe. That this, historically, represents a return to an earlier stage of the religious and mystical Greek tradition, is, I think true. But the theory of ideas, in so far as it was related to ethical questions, always derived its ethical connotations from the teleological view in any case; so that far from being a step backwards, the value theory of the Philebus rather has the virtue, as I have remarked before, of divorcing, to some extent, problems of ethics from problems of epistemology. And by basing value directly on the teleological view of the world, it does not really regress, but simply skips an unnecessary step in the argument which had seemed to involve universals.

These remarks of a historical nature are not meant to be a substitute for analysis, however, and they are indicative of my main line of argument rather than a precise statement of it. We must now return to the other evidence which Plato gives in support of his teleological views.

The first real argument is that the pattern and design in the universe can be explained only by assuming an intelligent cause. There is, I think, one way in which this is certainly true, on Plato's grounds. This follows directly from the meaning which Plato sometimes gives to the word

"explain." Plato held, at least in some contexts, that the only real explanation of the existence of a thing, the only "cause" which really accounts for why a thing is as it is, is a cause which is directed toward an end, which has a purpose. For Plato, the question was not whether or not there could be a mechanistic explanation; he admitted such explanations. He merely denied that they really explain. The famous passage in the Phaedo (97B ff.) makes it clear that when we ask why something is as it is, the interesting answer is in terms of purpose. Only purpose can explain order: if the universe embodies order, it is because it is an expression of purpose. If we wish to explain vision, for instance, we can give a physical explanation in terms of light, surfaces, and so forth. But the real explanation is in terms of intelligent purpose, which explains the usefulness of vision (Timaeus 56D, E). The expression of mind is always intelligence and purpose; wherever we find symmetry, order, proportion, we must assume a mind as cause. Reason creates order and renders things intelligible because it has a goal, a reason.³² It is clear, I think, that this is not an argument, but a definition. Plato proposes that we agree: "a true cause, the meaning of which alone can give a real explanation of an event, must be an efficient agent with a purpose." And of course, this is one typical sense in which it is common to ask for explanations; it is only peculiar to Plato and others who accept the teleo-

32.

Cf. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, p. 166 ff.

logical view that this kind of explanation is demanded for everything.

Yet even for Plato, this kind of explanation cannot explain everything. It can, in fact, explain only those things which are created by the cause. This difficulty disappears if we assert that everything is created by the cause; and Plato does assert this. But it is still the case that this kind of explanation will not explain everything, provided the cause fails of its purpose; provided, that is, some things in the world fall short of the intention of the cause. And there must be such things which do fall short of the intention of the cause, for the intention or purpose of the cause is (by definition) good, and there are things which are not good. It follows, then, that some things cannot be explained at all (in the required sense); and in fact it follows that only good things can be explained.

With these consequences of the definition of explanation Plato would, I think, be willing to agree. The consequence that many things cannot be explained, at least to a certain extent, he would accept; for these would be just those individuals which deviated from the norm, the specific individuality of which is always, on Plato's philosophy, inexplicable (as the passage on division and collection showed). The consequence that only the good can be explained follows, of course, from the other; Plato would assent to it also, contending, I think, that it was just the good entities (mixtures) which the cause was meant to explain.

The difficulty which remains is this: the reason for introducing the cause was to provide a definition of the adjective "good," and this it did, for we decided a thing was to be called good if it corresponded to the purpose or intention of the cause. But then we can hardly consider it an argument in favor of the view that the pattern and design in the universe can only be explained by an intelligent cause that this pattern and design are good; for they are good by definition. If it is true that the pattern and design in the universe can only be explained by an intelligent cause because this is the only way anything can be explained, then we have learned nothing as to whether there is in fact an intelligent cause, nor, if there is, what things can be explained by it. It would, indeed, hardly have been worth while to consider this particular point if it were not for the fact that Plato seems sometimes to argue that since only a purpose can explain there must be purposes to explain the universe. But whether or not this is true, it plainly lends no weight to the view that these purposes are good.

But Plato's fundamental point is not thus to be disposed of; the fundamental point is rather that there are observed phenomena which demand purposeful explanation. This argument differs from the first because it depends upon the actual nature of the universe; the first would apply, if it applied at all, to any universe. Now this second argument must maintain this: that there are phenomena which can only

be explained by an intelligent cause. And I cannot see what property it is that these phenomena have unless it is that they resemble, in some way, the products of an intelligent creature; for unless we are to assume the point to be proven, there are, to begin with, no other known intelligent causes.

In this way, the arguments grouped above under b. and those grouped under c. are seen to be based on the same reasoning: both, that is, contend that since parts (at least) of the universe resemble (in some way) the products of human purpose, and since it is the human purpose which explains the human product, there must be a cause which resembles (in some way) the human purpose in the universe to explain those parts of the universe which resemble the human product. The argument is, in other words, based on an analogy, and proceeds from man to the universe, holding that a similarity of effects implies a similarity of causes. In stating the analogy, I have spoken of human products; but the real product, in this case, is, as we have seen, the human body and not some external product.

Once we have stated the analogy in this way, a very obvious difficulty appears. If the cosmic cause is inferred from the human mind, what right do we have to assume that its purposes are better than man's? If our sole knowledge of the cosmic cause springs from the analogy, why could we not as reasonably conclude that, where the universe does not serve our own ends, the cause was either less powerful, in its

sphere, than we in ours; or that its purposes were less good? Plato relies upon this reasoning: the bodily elements which are ordered by the human mind in man are, in man, "of little account," "very far from being pure in quality or possessing a power befitting their real nature" (29B). Fire, for instance, in man is "...small in quantity and weak and inconsiderable, whereas the fire in the universe is wonderful in respect of its mass, its beauty, and all the powers that belong to fire" (29C). From this dissimilarity, of a certain sort, Plato therefore argues to a similar kind of dissimilarity between the cosmic reason and the human reason: presumably, the cosmic reason is purer in quality, larger in quantity, stronger and more considerable, more beautiful, and possesses more completely the powers which are appropriate to it. The question remains, on what basis are we to assume that the purposes of the cosmic cause are better? We may argue, if we please, that the cosmic bodily elements are better in every way, and that therefore the cosmic cause has better purposes; but this is obviously fallacious. It is fallacious because it is, at this point, only we ourselves who judge it to be better; and if we know it is better, then our own purposes are not proven worse than those of the cosmic agent. When we see a man who has built a better house than our own we do not credit him with better purposes, but only with more success or better means; the fact that we judge his house better shows that the superiority of his house is no proof of his superior

purpose. It is, I would say, quite impossible to judge another man's purposes superior to our own on the basis of our own evaluation of his works.

It is not, however, my main purpose to level criticisms against Plato's position; I wish rather to understand as well as possible what that position is. Let us assume, therefore, that Plato has shown that the cosmic cause has purposes superior to our own; there can be no doubt, at least, that he does believe this.

There is one more point which must be mentioned to complete the account of Plato's position with regard to the cosmic cause. Plato does not depend entirely on the analogy to explain the relation between man's mind and the world's mind; there is as well a causal connection. The evidence for this connection is, to be sure, an analogical argument again, but this time the analogy is differently constructed. In the earlier analogy, Plato argued from the similarity of man's body and the physical universe to a similarity of controlling and ordering causes. In this new analogy, he argues from the similarity of the relation between body and cause in man and the universe to a similar source and origin for the cause and for the body. This second analogy accepts, in other words, the results of the first. It then goes beyond, in this way: not only does the body of man resemble the physical universe; it is also sustained, produced and nourished by it (29C), and derived from it (29E). And since man's body is controlled, cured and maintained by his mind just as the world's body is controlled by the cosmic mind, we must

infer that man's mind is sustained, produced and nourished by, and derived from, the cosmic mind (30A). Plato presents these two analogies together; but they are in fact quite different, since one is used only to establish the existence and excellence of the cosmic mind and purpose, while the second indicates the causal connection between man and the universe.

With this material before us, we can go on to examine how Plato conceives that the assumption of a cosmic mind or purpose establishes his theory of value. Concerning the first thesis, that there is a cause which explains the existence of good things, we have seen the arguments on which Plato bases this contention. Following this line of interpretation, we must say that every mixture is, by definition, a creation of the cosmic agent. This would follow alone from the assertion that everything in the visible world is created by the cause. But we can say more about mixtures, namely that they express the full intention or purpose of the cause. If there are, as I believe Plato held, a finite number of kinds of mixtures, then the element common to these would be that in each there was the same limit, that is, the same relation between parts. And this would be just that relation which made any entity which had it good. This limit could be defined in terms of the purpose of the cosmic mind; having a limit would, by definition, be the characteristic which constituted the goodness of the entity.

It is important to stress the fact that it is one conclusion from this line of reasoning that every mixture

in the universe is created by the cosmic cause, is ordered by it, represents its full intention and purpose, and owes its goodness entirely to this source. This applies to the good life for man as well as every other mixture. If the life of pleasure constitutes an unlimited, the right relation between mind and pleasure a limit, and the good life is the mixture of this (or another) unlimited with this limit, then the cause of the mixture, according to the results just reached, is the cosmic cause or mind. There is nothing contradictory about this view, taken by itself, in the fact that the cosmic mind creates and orders the mixture in man, and that the mixture in man contains, as an element, the human mind. This is, in fact, no more contradictory than for the rulers of the state to so order the state that the individuals in it perform their functions properly, and in doing so use their minds to direct and order their activities. Nor do I think there is any difficulty, necessarily, in the fact that, on this view, one kind of unlimited life (the life of pleasure) contains no mind at all; for in introducing a limit into such a life, the cosmic agent would necessarily add mind to the mixture. It is true that if we consider an unlimited as a "material" in which ingredients already present can be combined by the cause to form a mixture, then a difficulty does arise. But there are other ways of interpreting an unlimited, as we have seen; as long as we simply define an unlimited as a complex having a wrong relation between parts, this difficulty does not arise.

When we further remark that, according to Plato, the pure life of pleasure (with no noetic content) is impossible because some mind is always present, we see that, in fact, every life, no matter how bad, always contains although perhaps in improper relations the ingredients necessary to the mixture.

According to this view, it is the cosmic cause which is responsible for every mixture. We can also say that, even if no mixture did exist in the world, the definition of a mixture would follow from the aim or purpose of the cosmic agent. We may therefore correctly say, it seems to me, that the true aim or purpose of man is established by the purpose of the cause. And there is no reason not to call this true aim or purpose man's essence.³³ But when we say that the mixture of the good life is man's true purpose, it is clear that we do not mean that any man necessarily knows what it is, or actually aims for it. The good life (as we said in the chapter on the three criteria) is man's purpose in the sense that man should aim for it. It is the "truly desirable." But it is also the desired, not because man desires it in fact, but because it is desired by the cosmic cause. And even if man did, singly, or universally, desire it, it still would be

33.

Thus, at 32B, Plato speaks of the mixture which constitutes health as an essence (οὐσία) to which man returns after the λύσιν της φύσεως of pain. This is the very mixture which is the aim or purpose of the art of medicine, where the art of medicine is considered one aspect of the "sum of all wisdom" (30B).

good not for this reason, but because, and only because,
the cosmic agent desired it.³⁴

There are many scholars who will object at this point (if, indeed, they would not have objected long before this) that it is not because the cause desires it that a thing is good, but that the cause desires it because it is good. And for this view they would adduce evidence drawn from the theory of ideas, in some of its ramifications, and most particularly from the Timaeus. This is, of course, one of the very most troublesome problems in Plato; and I have no intention of trying to solve it. I shall admit, for instance, that there is nothing in the Philebus to contradict this view, and someone who contends it cannot be directly refuted. But I shall also insist that there is nothing in the Philebus to support it: no mention of an Idea of the Good, of eternal models, or of the reasons for the purposes of the cosmic cause. It may be argued with logic that if we can give no reasons for the purposes of the cosmic cause, then we can explain nothing by assuming a cosmic cause; and I would agree. But neither, so far as I can see, would we be any better off by assuming a cosmic cause plus an eternal source of value; this would merely put the difficulty off another step. Such considerations cannot, therefore, force any decision on us with regard

34.

With this interpretation Hackforth apparently agrees. He says "The result of the present section is not that our intelligence makes the mixed life good: it is the Cosmic Reason that does so..." (op. cit., p. 49). The ambiguity lurking in the word "makes" in Plato's reasoning lurks here as well, however.

to the source of value in the Philebus. And since Plato clearly does argue for the cosmic cause, but mentions no more ultimate measure or source of value, we may as well conclude that he stopped with the cosmic cause, and regarded its purposes as the ultimate ends in the universe. And from the point of view taken in this thesis, such an interpretation is superior for another reason, for it makes no ethical demands on the ideas as such, and leaves them free to perform their epistemological duties.³⁵

35.

It might be held by some that since I have here given to the cosmic cause just those functions performed by the idea of the good in the Republic, what this amounts to is identifying the idea of the good and the cause. There is, of course, a very great deal to be said for this view; and most of it has been said very ably. I quote in particular Werner Jaeger (Paideia, Vol. II, p. 286): "Actually, the leading proof of the 'divine' character of the Good is that it has made Plato's God into a 'measure' like itself. For, as Plato says in The Laws, God is the measure of all things; and he is the measure of all things because he is the Good." The quotation from the Laws (716C) is, I think, a very major piece of evidence for the interpretation we have been stressing here. Yet it does not conclusively settle the matter; for the quotation does not state that God (the cause) determines what is good by his measuring. Perhaps more conclusive, in fact, is the remark in the Laws that there is nothing in life worth taking seriously except God (803C). Jaeger's statement that God is the measure because he is the Good goes beyond anything which I have said, and, in fact contradicts my position at one point; I rather hold that God is the measure because his purposes are good; and it is just on the basis of this difference that I distinguish between the source of value in the Philebus and the idea of the good in the Republic. Yet if we hold (as Jaeger seems to suggest, op. cit., p. 286) that the idea of the good is not really an idea at all, then any reason for holding that God is the measure because he is good disappears, and a reconciliation becomes possible.

We may now, finally, return to the second of the two points which we said Plato wished to establish from the consideration of the cosmic cause. We shall now assume that the first point has been made: that there is a cosmic cause which creates everything in the universe and explains what can be explained by its purposes. And we shall assume, in particular, that the good for man, the mixed life, is created by the cause (when it is successful), and that the purpose of the cause, in the case of man, defines what man should be and what kind of life he should lead. The problem now is to see how this leads to the second point, which is that the good life for man depends upon man's own mind and reason.

As we have already seen, there are conclusive reasons against saying that man's mind should lead and control because man's mind belongs to the class of the cause. It may be that Plato does imply this; the passages quoted seem to lend credence to such a view. But, as we also noted, these passages are perhaps not intended in a literal way; and we shall do better to assume that they are not. It is true that the first analogy does argue that all causes adequate to explain certain kinds of phenomena must be minds; this directly requires that the human mind and the cosmic cause both belong to one common class, namely, the class of causes adequate to explain these kinds of phenomena. But is this the class of the cause? The answer is no if we mean by the class of the cause the kind of cause whose purposes define good ends. For there is only one member of this

class, and that is the cosmic mind or cause. If man's mind belonged to this class, then all men would have perfectly good purposes; but all men do not have perfectly good purposes. Man's mind therefore may belong to the class of ordering causes, but not to the class of ordering causes which always aim for the good.

The relation between man's mind and the cosmic cause cannot, then, properly be expressed by saying that man's mind belongs to the class of the cause. The relation is rather conveyed by the notion of similarity: the human mind is "akin to," or part of, or derived from, or "belongs to the family of" the cosmic cause (in the way in which the human body is related to the physical universe). These are vague and unsatisfactory notions; some of them, perhaps, can be explained only in mystical terms, if at all. If the human mind is derived from, or part of, the cosmic cause, then it may be that this somehow overcomes the difficulty concerning the identity of the controlling factor in man. But I cannot see that this really helps much, because if man can err -- and it is only in this case that we are interested in the question -- then his purposes differ from those of the cosmic mind, and the gulf opens again. Once this difference is admitted, the problem of the function of man's mind remains. Nor, it would seem, can any other form of kinship or similarity between the cosmic mind and the human mind ever establish the fact that man's mind should guide or control man's life unless it can show that man's purposes are as good as those of the cosmic mind; and

There is, finally, the contention that each of the elements in man has a function performed more perfectly by the same elements in nature, and that therefore man's mind must perform, although on a lesser scale, the same function as the world's mind -- the function of controlling and guiding. It may first be pointed out that this reasoning is circular; of course man's mind performs this function, since it was from this function that the world's mind was inferred. But even if this objection were waived, it is hard to see how this would suggest that man's mind should order and control man's life. The analogy with the universe may, that is, show that man's mind does perform such a function; it can hardly, in itself, indicate that it is good that it should.

There is a slightly different way of viewing the matter which may seem useful, however. It may be said that if it really is the function of mind to control and order the organism which possesses it, then this means that mind should perform this function. By saying it "really" is the function we must mean that it is the true and essential purpose of mind to perform this function. If this is so, it is because it is the purpose or intention of the cosmic cause that man's body should be ordered by man's mind. And I do not doubt that Plato does believe this. The problem is, how do we know it? The analogy with the universe cannot tell us this, for that analogy was perceived by observing the similarity of the universe to man and not vice versa. It cannot be argued that this is a

general principle of goodness, for many things are good which have no mind at all: music, good weather, and so forth. I would conclude, therefore, that there is no direct evidence in the arguments stated by Plato for believing that the mind of man should control and guide his purposes. But I do not deny that there may be very good reasons for this belief, nor that Plato has given some indirect reasons for believing it.

Our failure, however, to defend Plato's position on this point results in a connected failure to explain precisely how it is that man's mind can create a mixture in man's life. There is no difficulty in saying that man should pursue the ends set by the cosmic cause; the difficulty is that all good ends, once accomplished, are said to be the work of the cosmic cause. It might be argued that this does not present a real difficulty: that we can say that the cosmic cause, like a good ruler, leaves his subjects free to pursue the right ends, and that it is, in fact, part of his purpose that the ends be freely sought. This is a metaphysical and religious doctrine which I cannot pretend to understand. Let us assume, however, that it has some meaning, and proceed. Yet there still remains the related problem that man's mind is both part of the good life (as created by the cosmic cause) and cause of the good life (as created by the human mind). And if we are to keep this analysis on the same level, then cause and ingredient cannot be combined. There remain, in other words, two ways of looking at the mixed life: as created by the cosmic cause,

it contains mind as ingredient, performing its proper function; as created by the human mind, it is a mixture of bodily ingredients controlled and ordered by the proper relations. If we say that the creative cause must always, on principle, be included as an ingredient, then we must insist that the starry heavens contain the cosmic cause as part of their mixture, that good music contain the musician as part of its harmony, and that the beautiful jar contain the potter in its symmetry.

Yet here we may, perhaps, go back to our earlier criterion of the good as the self-sufficient and permanent, and argue that in the case of living organisms alone, like men, animals, the universe and the state, a peculiar rule applies: they must contain their own ordering agent, a principle of self-determination and an ability to learn and strive for good ends. If this contradicts, or is at least not borne out by, other considerations, we must at least grant that it is not, taken alone, contradictory. There is no reason that the good for man should not require that the ordering and directive mind be part of the very mixture which it orders, just as the ruler determines his own function in the state. As creative agent and cause, the mind creates the mixture which is the good life. Formally, mind, considered as a cause, stands outside the bodily mixture. But the good life must be sufficient; that is, it must contain the conditions of its own continuation. One of the conditions of this continuation is that mind be one part of the good life, so that the mixture can be maintained and created at

each new moment.³⁶ Therefore, practically, or synthetically, the good life must contain mind.³⁷ Analysis of the function of mind reveals mind as the creative cause; the practical synthesis of the mixture can be expected to place mind in its proper place in the mixture.³⁸ This marks at this point mind's superiority to pleasure. Pleasure and mind are alike parts of the mixture; but mind alone is cause as well.

We are now left with two unanswered questions. Mind has been shown superior to pleasure because it is cause of the mixture. But it is only by a trick of grammar that we can say it is "what makes the mixture good." It has been shown to be an indispensable means to the good life, and an essential ingredient if the mixture is to be complete. Further, it is mind which learns and executes the good ends of the cosmic mind. But what "makes the good life good" in the sense demanded is, as we have seen, the purpose of the cosmic mind. We may say that if the human mind acts according to the good, then its purposes define the good also; but this is not strictly true, for the mixture may be made good for this reason, but it has

36.

In the same way, Timaeus 88D, E recommends that we keep the body in motion to "hold in check the internal and external motions in a natural balance...such as we described in speaking of the universe."

37.

This is merely an application of a more general principle explained by Wild, Plato's Theory of Man, p. 25.

38.

Mind, in this respect, is like Love in Empedocles' cosmology. As Aristotle remarks, "The Love of Empedocles is both an efficient cause, for it brings things together, and a material cause, for it is part of the mixture." (Metaphysics A, 10. 1075b 3).

the property of being good only, still, because it is the purpose of the cosmic mind. Perhaps, however, this is to miss the mystical depth of Plato's meaning. When the human mind does share the purpose of the cosmic mind, then perhaps, as the Neoplatonists believed, it becomes one with it; and in this case, it would be proper to say, I suppose, that it is the human mind that makes the good life good in every sense.

The second unanswered question is this: even if we accept the results so far outlined as valid, what we have arrived at is 1. a definition of the good in terms of the purposes of the cosmic cause and 2. a partial description of the good for man. This description asserts that the good life is a mixture of pleasure and of mind in which mind orders and directs. But for the art of combination to provide a full description of the good life, it must name the kinds and forms of knowledge and of pleasure, select those which are good, and tell how to mix them.

But before beginning this task, I wish to examine briefly by way of appendix to this and previous sections, certain problems concerning the ideas.

8. The matters to be considered in this section center around various problems concerning the ideas. First we shall discuss some questions raised by the interpretation of the ideas implied by our treatment of the Philebus. Next, we shall review certain suggestions which have been made concerning the

relation between the ideal theory and the fourfold classification of the present chapter. Finally, we shall briefly summarize our conclusions with respect to the three "problems" raised in Philebus 15B about the ideas.

a. The first question emerges directly from considerations of the previous section. The question is this: granted that Plato is right in positing a cosmic agent whose purposes define what is good, and granting that man's mind has the twin functions of learning the cosmic purposes and of acting upon them to order human life, how is man to discover what the true purposes or ends of the cosmic agent are? This question, put this broadly, obviously takes in a huge territory: it covers the whole scope of philosophy for Plato, for it is the problem of the good restated. I intend here to touch upon the problem at one corner. One answer which Plato gives to the question how we discover the cosmic purposes seems to be that we study or observe something about the created universe. The universe, as we have learned, is entirely the product of the cosmic agent, and this agent works for good ends. The trouble, of course, is that these ends are seldom perfectly realized; in fact, if they were, there would be no moral problem for man. The question, therefore, is to know how we can tell what in the universe represents the intention of the cosmic agent. We can say that it is just those things, or aspects of things, which exhibit pattern, regularity and intelligent plan; but

of course, while this is true, it tells us nothing, for if we know in advance how to judge these things good, we have no need to look at the universe to discover good ends.

There is, in my opinion, as I have already said, no valid answer to this question. What I wish to do here is examine some of the consequences of one sort of suggestion which Plato seems to endorse. This suggestion hinges upon the analogy between man and the universe. Man's mind, Plato holds, not only serves (or should serve) the same creative function in man as the cosmic mind serves in the universe, but it also contains, potentially at least, the same sort of intellectual capacity for dealing with problems of value. The characteristics of dialectic, particularly its use of the "one and the many," are not only characteristics of man's mind, but they are characteristics of intelligence wherever it is found ("something incidental to reasoning itself, never to pass, never to fade," 15D). For this reason, the world, created by the cosmic agent, exhibits somehow the consequences of these aspects of dialectic ("...all things which are ever said to exist are sprung from the one and many...", 16C). It is for this reason alone that the "ones" and "manys" are discoverable by inspection; because, that is, the principles of rationality are embodied in both the human and the cosmic mind, so that the human mind has the opportunity of understanding the cosmic product and grasping therein the true purpose.

It is for this reason as well, I think, that Plato

considers dialectic a gift of the gods (16C); man deserves no credit for his ability to grasp the divine plan in the universe; this is due to the god-given fact that man's mind resembles, to a degree, the cosmic mind.³⁹ As Plato says in the Laws (644D-645A) it is because we are the creations of god that we must cooperate with the gentle guidance of the "golden cord of reason."

The Philebus, the Laws, and the Timaeus have in common this, that they see a moral necessity in proving that the actual created universe embodies logical structure and good purposes, for this alone makes it possible for man's reason to approach the divine intention. This is, I think, what

39.

This provides some clue, perhaps, to the surprising number of appeals to divine inspiration in the Philebus. Many of these appear to be somewhat ironic in character; the general force of such recourse to unsupported authority would seem to be to call attention to the intuitive character of the evidence or reasoning involved. It also calls attention to the fact that the intelligibility of the universe is itself, in the end, a divine gift. The structure of the universe is harmonious and rational because a rational cause made it so. There is no reason to suppose it might not have been otherwise. The structure of discourse flows from the same source of rationality, and therefore partakes of the same miracle of intelligibility as the visible universe. This is the faith of rationalism.

A partial list of appeals to divine guidance in the Philebus includes: Socrates and Philebus call on their respective gods, and Socrates speaks of his "awe of the gods" (12B); dialectic is a gift from the gods (16C); the gods handed down this method of learning, investigating and teaching (16E); some god or godlike man discovered the science of phonetics (18B); some god gives Socrates a vague memory of a "third life" (20B); god revealed two elements in the universe (23C); god will tell us what the mixed class is (25B); it is "impious" to believe the universe is not ordered (28E); some god must preside over the mixture (61C).

Aristotle means when he says Plato subscribes to the theory of Empedocles that like knows like.⁴⁰ Man understands the universe because the elements of his soul correspond to those in the universe. The Timaeus develops this thesis the farthest.⁴¹ In the Timaeus, the world-soul is constructed as a ratio of Existence, Sameness, and Difference (35B) and this constitutes a limit for the world's body (36E).⁴² Men's souls are created out of the same ingredients (41D), and establish ratios between the desires in the human body (42A). Reason or mind is interpreted as one aspect of soul (29B).

The reason we must study the universe is, therefore, just this: everything has in it, somehow, both the one and the many and the limit and unlimited. This is not clear to the eye alone; it needs the eye of the mind also. Neverthe-

40.

De Anima 404b, 16 ff. Cf. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, p. 94 ff.

41.

Cf. Timaeus 29A, 36E ff. The world is the best of all things which have become because it has been "fashioned on the model of that which is comprehensible by rational discourse." Furthermore, because of the correlation between the order of the universe and the order in man, we can study the universe with profit. Thrice the Timaeus (47A-C; 68E-69A; 90C, D) makes the point that we will win to the best life by observing the harmonies of the cosmos and the heavens. In this way we can have similar harmony in our lives, and mind will rule in us as it does in the universe. "We must search out the divine for the sake of such happiness as our nature admits" (Timaeus 68E, 69A).

42.

True discourse is also directly related to this structure of the world soul (Timaeus 37B ff.). These are, needless to say, the same categories which the Sophist showed to explain the possibility of dialectic (cf. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, pp. 59-66).

less, these things are there if only we look for them. They are in man in the same sense: man has an essence, a proper limit, also, not always realized, to be sure, but potentially there and discoverable. The eye of the mind gives its aid to the discovery by the use of the god-given gift of dialectic.

I do not pretend that by stating Plato's position in this way I have solved any of the problems which have been previously considered. Nor, for that matter, can I pretend to make clear, through the passages just quoted, what it is that Plato means when he says that the world embodies the intelligibility of dialectic. I have introduced the subject again for the purpose, rather, of bringing together two related points which seem to me to raise a special problem concerning the ideas as I have interpreted them in the Philebus.

I have already considered, in the chapter on division and collection, the question how the "ones" and "manys" are to be discovered in the universe. I have also, in the introduction to this chapter, considered what Plato may mean by saying that there is a connection between the one and the many and the limit and the unlimited. At that point I raised the question, without discussing it, how the essential defining characteristic of a species sought by collection as a preliminary to division could be related to the ends or purposes also supposed to be, somehow, discoverable in nature. This problem is now brought into focus by the present discussion in which we are

examining how good ends are to be found, through the use of dialectic, by examining the world.

The problem, as I see it, is this. The task of collection is to find and define the essential common element in a group of particulars -- which is, of course, an idea. For if there are not such essences or ideas, then dialectic and, indeed, all rational discourse, are, according to Plato, impossible.⁴³ And it is these ideas, discovered by collection, which division relates in various ways. But the trouble is that there are classes of -- and hence ideas of -- bad things. And there would seem to be many objects which belong to classes which leave them, by themselves, neutral in value until they are combined together or with other things (some pleasures, letters, notes, etc.). And, I have insisted, unless dialectic can discover such classes of neutral and bad entities, combination cannot perform its proper functions of selection and rejection.

Are there, then, bad essences? This would seem to be our conclusion. And if so, then the principle of the one and the many which (somehow) pervades the created universe can hardly reveal the purposes of the cosmic cause; for all its purposes, if not creations, are good. It will not help, it seems to me, to say (as we have previously suggested) that

43.

Cf. Parmenides 135B, C and Robinson's comments, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, p. 75.

all infima species may be defined in terms of the good members. It is true that we may define species which have good members in terms of the class of good members plus those that should be good members. There would, of course, be the problem of circularity in discovering which the good members were; but even granting that this could be overcome, what could we say of those classes (of pleasures, for instance) all of whose members are bad?

There is no satisfactory solution, that I can see, to these problems. The treatment of division and collection, and its application, in the Philebus requires that the ideas be free to define all kinds of classes, classes of good objects, classes of bad objects, and classes of neutral objects. Yet it is also clearly stated that even these classifications are, somehow, objective, and dependent on the peculiar structure of the universe. Yet if the ideas are to be thus free of any direct connection with value, then whatever it is about the universe which makes these classifications objectively valid cannot be the same aspect which reveals the true ends and purposes of the cosmic agent. We may say, if we please, that the universe contains evidence of both sorts, that there are the classifications due to the one and the many, and the "essences" required by them; and that there are the ends and purposes due to the limit, and the "essences" required by them. But we cannot say that the same aspect of the universe reveals both.

b. I wish now to discuss the status of the ideas in the Philebus from a somewhat different point of view. In the course of the following remarks, I am not going to introduce any new conclusions or arguments. My purpose is rather to bring together into one place certain matters which have so far been considered separately. In the passage on division and collection, I stressed the point that the ideas in the Philebus were, unlike the ideas in some of the earlier dialogues, true universals in that they were not conceived as patterns or models which were good in themselves and which individuals resembled. In the present chapter on the principles of combination I have tried to show how the source of value can, on Plato's terms, be accounted for without making these assumptions about the ideas. I wish now to consider in what way the fourfold analysis of value is related to the functions which the ideas once performed. Suppose, in other words, that we grant that the ideas of the Philebus are the pale reflections of the earlier ideas, and that they have an epistemological function only; where, exactly, in the fourfold scheme are the old functions of the ideas taken up?

This is the question which has, in one form or another, probably attracted more attention than any other in the Philebus. If some scholars are right, in fact, the discussion of this point began with Aristotle; certainly it has not yet come to an end. I cannot, therefore, pretend to do more than touch

on certain aspects of the problem as they bear on my own interpretation.⁴⁴

It is interesting to note the degree to which the words ἰδέα and εἶδος have disappeared from the crucial passages of the Philebus in favor of neutral terms like τὸ ἐν and μονάδος.⁴⁵ One passage in the Philebus (58A ff.) does speak of dialectic as the highest and purest of all the arts because it deals with the really real and immutable knowledge. The ideas are not mentioned, however, as we have seen, and the permanence of the knowledge dialectic yields is nowhere said to depend on any assumptions about the ideas. Failure to mention the ideas, or, in mentioning them, to attribute to them the characteristics stressed in earlier dialogues is surely indicative. And it is especially noticeable in the passage on the fourfold classification that the ideas are never, as far as we can tell, once referred to. After recording this fact, and after noting the failure of other critics to discover anywhere in the fourfold classification one element which can clearly be identified with the ideas, a few

44.

There is a very fine and comprehensive summary of the history of the debate on this subject in Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato, Vol. I, pp. xiii ff. Also see Hackforth, op. cit., pp. 39-43.

45.

The passage on dialectic at 15B ff. uses ἰδέα only twice, and one of these occurrences is not very indicative. Other occurrences of the word ἰδέα in the Philebus are: 16D "one idea" must be sought in each case; 16D "the idea of the unlimited"; 25B "the idea of the third class." Some occurrences of εἶδος: 32B (twice); 33C; 48E; 51E. εἶδος is used throughout the dialogue as meaning "class"; none of these cases suggests the special attributes given to the ideas in the Republic, Phaedo or Symposium.

scholars have decided that this classification is not related to the theory of ideas at all. A. E. Taylor, for instance, concludes that "...it seems plain that the fourfold classification was devised with a view to a problem where the forms are not specially relevant, and the true solution is thus that they find no place in this classification."⁴⁶ W. D. Ross reaches the same conclusion, stating, "It is in fact impossible to find any clear relation between the metaphysics of the Philebus and the ideal theory. Plato is working out a new analysis of reality without troubling himself about its relation to his old analysis."⁴⁷ Cherniss seems to have come to the same conclusion.⁴⁸ And with these statements I am, in general, in agreement. I agree, that is, that neither the ideas of the earlier dialogues nor the ideas of the section on division in the Philebus are to be identified with any one element of the fourfold classification. I do not agree, however, that the problem which the fourfold classification was devised to meet is one where the forms are "not specially relevant" nor that Plato did not trouble himself about the relation between the two schemes. In my opinion, the fourfold classification is very obviously relevant to the problem of the source and definition of the good, and surely no one could

⁴⁶.

Plato, p. 417.

⁴⁷.

Aristotle's Metaphysics I, p. 165.

⁴⁸.

See particularly his review of the Diès edition of the Philebus in Some War-Time Publications Concerning Plato, American Journal of Philology, July, 1947.

argue that the ideas, as conceived in the Republic or Phaedo, were not relevant to this problem. Of course, the ideas mentioned in the section of the Philebus on division are not directly relevant; but this is not the theory of ideas of the early dialogues. It is my thesis, then, that Plato was very definitely troubling himself about the relation between the fourfold classification and the theory of ideas, and that he contrived the former just to deal with the problems set by the latter. In the Philebus, if I am right, the functions performed by the ideas in the earlier dialogues are divided, some being performed by the monads of the section on division (which I have called the "ideas of the Philebus") and others being performed by different elements of the fourfold classification.

An important but difficult question about the status of the ideas in the Philebus is introduced by Aristotle's testimony in the first book of the Metaphysics and elsewhere. Aristotle ascribes these doctrines to Plato: (1) There are mathematical objects separate from both ideas and sensibles and intermediate between them; (2) Ideas are identical with non-mathematic numbers; (3) Idea-numbers are derived somehow from one and the dyad of the great-small. Jackson has tried to reconcile these points with the Philebus and the other late Platonic dialogues, but his attempts require considerable stretching of the evidence.⁴⁹ Cherniss contends that in general

49.

We shall consider Jackson's arguments presently.

Aristotle's evidence is worth very little, saying that all attempts to find the Aristotelian Plato in the Philebus and other dialogues have failed.⁵⁰ It is very tempting to try to find Aristotle's remarks borne out by the Philebus, however, and the effort will no doubt be renewed. Yet no way seems clear which does not do violence to the texts. One of the most enlightened attitudes towards this problem has been set forth by Glenn R. Morrow.⁵¹ Morrow contends that it is inconceivable that Aristotle should invent, although he might misinterpret, Plato's doctrines. Morrow then shows that nothing Aristotle says is directly incompatible with an attempt to interpret the Philebus from his (Aristotle's) point of view. Failure to find the ideas in the Philebus may have baffled Aristotle, and he tried to interpret them into both the section on dialectic and the later section on the four ontological elements. Aristotle was not the last to do this. Specifically, Morrow says, the notion of mathematical objects could come from Philebus 15D-19B, where Aristotle took the ideas to be the highest forms, the "certain number" of definite forms in between as the intermediates. Ideas as non-mathematical numbers could be derived by equating the "limit," which Plato describes in somewhat

50.

Riddle of the Early Academy, pp. 76, 77; cf. also Vol. I. Aristotle's Criticism of Plato.

51.

The Philosophical Review, March, 1946, pp. 190-199.

mathematical terms (25A), with the ideas. Lastly, the notion that ideal-numbers are generated from the one and the great-small could also be an interpretation of the section of the Philebus on the limit and unlimited (which Plato calls the more and less).

Into the intricacies of the problems involved here we cannot enter. One remark is, however, called for: if the evidence of Aristotle is worth anything at all as an interpretation of the Philebus, then we must very considerably revise our own views of the dialogue. We may, I think, be excused from any detailed consideration of Aristotle's remarks by the fact that no one, as Cherniss says, has so far found any satisfactory way to reconcile Aristotle's statements with the Philebus (or any other dialogue). Morrow may be right, that Aristotle was simply striving to interpret the Philebus in terms of the earlier theory of ideas. If this is so, then he was, in my opinion, as bound to misinterpret the Philebus as other scholars have who tried to do the same.

In looking at the fourfold classification of the Philebus we may at once agree, it seems to me, that the unlimited cannot perform any function ever satisfied by the ideas. The cosmic cause is another matter; we have already discussed its similarity to the idea of the good in the Republic. I have nothing to add to that point now, except to remark that whatever potency the ideas may ever have had in effecting their own realization in the world (and apart from the idea of the Good, there is a

question to what degree Plato thought they had such potency), this function has been taken over by the causal agent.

In the concept of the limit there are very obviously some of the characteristics of the idea. A limit is, as we have interpreted it, a universal, and hence an idea in the same way in which the monads of the Philebus are ideas. A limit is therefore uncreated, imperishable, eternal, and does not exist in space or time. It is, moreover, that which a number of particulars have in common. All those particulars which have it in common belong to the same species, having the same relation between parts (for a limit is a relation). And, most impressive of all, only good entities have a limit, and all good entities do have a limit; all the good entities of the same species have, of course, the same limit. It is therefore the case that there is just one limit for every species (or every species which has any good members). This one limit defines the purpose of the cosmic cause with respect to all the members of a species, for the goodness of an entity may alternatively be defined as having the right relation between parts (i.e. a limit) or as realizing the purpose of the cause; these are equivalent statements.

Taking the limit then, that is, the class of all limits (which is, of course, like the other three classifications, an idea), we see that it is the only one of the classifications whose members are, in turn ideas (meaning here, universals; ideas in the sense of the Philebus). And it does not take

pointing out that the characteristics of limits are characteristics which they have in common with the ideas, not only of the Philebus, but of the earlier dialogues.

In what sense, then, can we object to saying that limits perform the functions performed by the ideas of the earlier dialogues? The answer is that just because the limits perform the functions of the ideas which they do, they cannot perform some other functions: for contradictory attributes were, in the earlier theory of ideas, given to the forms. Chiefly, the objection to taking limits as equivalent to the ideas of the earlier dialogues is this: limits are true universals, and cannot, therefore be patterns or icons. Particulars do not resemble limits; they have the property of having a limit. For the same reason, it is meaningless to say that particulars are good because limits are good. Possibly limits are, in some remote sense, good; but if they are, this is no argument for the goodness of the particulars. Particulars are good because it is good to have a limit; but particulars do not resemble universals, and so even some assumed virtue in the universal could never communicate itself to the particular. Nor is there any way in which a limit can be an end; the end is rather a Particular having a limit. If it is true that only ends exist (as Plato says in the Philebus), then this is not the sort of existence which limits have, for the ends Plato is thinking of are mixtures, particulars.

Not being an icon or pattern which a particular can resemble, a limit also does not have the peculiar sort of oneness or indivisibility attributed to the ideas in the early dialogues. It is neither particular nor concrete, so that physical indivisibility is meaningless for it; and as an idea like other ideas in the Philebus, it must be both one and many.

Finally, while all limits are universals, not all universals are limits; for there are, as we have pointed out, ideas of bad things and of neutral things. Limits are, in fact, restricted to infima species, so that no structure of limits could, as in division, be built up as it can of ideas. Yet if we identified limits with ideas, we would have to say all ideas were of good things, and that there were only ideas of infima species. This cannot apply to the ideas of the Philebus.

Finally, we may consider mixtures. Mixtures clearly have many of the characteristics of the ideal. As we have seen, only something which has a limit, which is good, is a mixture. According to our interpretation, it is only mixtures which may properly be said to be good, and all mixtures are good. In the Philebus, the connection between value and the mixture is closer than between value and any other factor. An obvious proposal would therefore be that the ethical function performed earlier by the ideas has been taken over not by the limit, but by the mixture. Mixtures are not

abstract, as limits are. A limit does not exist in the sense in which mixtures -- or ends -- do. But the passing object which for a moment attains measure -- becomes a true mixture -- becomes for that moment perfect, and thus attains true existence; it "becomes into being." Thus it would combine, like the ideas of the early dialogues, existence and value. Furthermore, mixtures have the element of particularity and realized pattern which a true model or icon must have; other particulars can resemble a mixture, just as particulars were said to resemble the ideas when the ideas were considered as models. Value and being inhere in the mixture. The mixed life is the object of desire; furthermore, it is not in flux, but is at rest because it has a definite limit (24D). All these qualities are attributed to the ideas in the earlier dialogues.

It is arguments like these which prompted Henry Jackson to suggest that the ideas are contained in the mixed class of the Philebus.⁵² Arguing that the difficulties about the ideas suggested in Philebus 15B were certainly intended to be settled, he contends that the analysis of dialectic does not do this (as Stenzel believes) but that the fourfold classification does. Noting the ideal character of the mixture, Jackson says that

52.

Jackson, Journal of Philology, Vol. X. This is one of a series of articles which appeared between 1882 and 1888 and which contained a complete analysis of Plato's later theory of ideas.

"perfection and existence are identical... Thus when τὸ μέτρον, i. e., the appropriate πῶσον, is added to a given ἀπειρον, perfection and existence are results."⁵³ The multiplicity of particulars arises when other than the perfect ratios are imposed on the unlimited. Each of these is more or less similar to the perfect mixture, but the idea (i.e., the perfect mixture) is still only one. Since both the particulars and the ideas result from a joining of limit with the unlimited, Jackson holds that his interpretation is supported by Aristotle's remarks that for Plato both ideas and particulars spring from two elements, the one and the indefinite dyad.⁵⁴ This theory, according to Jackson, also shows how Aristotle could say that the ideas had become numbers for Plato, for the ideas are now mixtures which are characterized by specific ratios like equality and the double.

In one way, I believe Jackson was right, because he saw that an important change had come over the theory of ideas and that somehow the explanation of value in the Philebus must be found in the fourfold classification. Jackson's error, it seems to me, lay in not going far enough with this line of reasoning and seeing that Plato had actually divorced the epistemological and the value aspects of the ideas. Jackson therefore reverses Plato's procedure and tries to coalesce

53.

Jackson, loc. cit., p. 278.

54.

Ibid., p. 285 ff.

the ideas of the dialectical section of the Philebus with some element in the fourfold classification. Since the fit is not very good one way or another, he decided on the mixture as the locus of the ideas because it combined existence and value.

Unfortunately for this interpretation, however, the existence of the mixtures is not the kind of existence Plato ever attributed to the ideas; quite the opposite. For mixtures are created, they exist in the passing world, and they can perish. The existence of mixtures is contingent, and depends upon matter of fact. Further, there would not seem to be much in the contention that there is just one mixture for each species. There is just one limit for each species. But, as we have seen, mixtures can differ numerically and can surely have some properties that differ: those of location and time, at least. It is true, of course, that any mixture could act as a norm for the members of a species; but there could more than one such model.

Aside from these considerations, Jackson's thesis suffers from other difficulties.⁵⁵ It seems unlikely that Plato would be so deliberately obscure as to mention the ideas only in the passage on method, but intend us to find them in the mixture. Aristotle speaks of the one and the large-small as creating the ideas (Metaphysics I 6, 987b); Jackson must therefore equate

55.

Ross, in a detailed criticism, shows that neither his interpretation of Metaphysics A nor of the Philebus can be maintained (Aristotle's Metaphysics I, pp. 164 ff.).

the one of dialectic with the limit of the analysis of becoming.
But as Cherniss says:⁵⁶

Unfortunately for all attempts to maintain the correspondence [of the one and the limit], the class of the mixture in the dialogue is distinctly and unequivocally equated with the objects and events of the phenomenal world...while the ideas are called 'monads' and are described as 'eternally immutable and unmixed' (15A).

The basic confusion for Aristotle (as for many other commentators) may have arisen from the fact that the word ἄπειρον occurs in both the dialectical and the ontological scheme. It is possible to see how the ideas are, in some sense, derivative from the unity (one) and the unlimited (number of particulars), since they are spoken of as a "certain number," a specific "many." But these ideas are not generated; the notion of the particular and the idea as created springs from an attempt to coalesce the two terms of diaeresis with the limit and unlimited of the ontological analysis. This is the only way we can understand Aristotle's discovery of a "material cause" of the ideas.

c. Finally, I wish to summarize my conclusions about the ideas in the Philebus as they bear on the three problems raised by Plato at 15B. (1) The first of these three problems was whether the ideas exist. As I have already stated in Chapter II, I do not see any reason to believe that Plato ever abandoned his conviction that universals exist, and exist eternally, unchanged, out of space and time, and that without

56.

The Riddle of the Early Academy, p. 18.

them dialectic would be impossible. It is true that Plato never asserts the existence of the ideas in the Philebus (unless we so interpret 58A), and so it is possible either that he no longer believed in it, or that he had serious doubts and wished to proceed without making his argument depend upon it. I think there is evidence (as I have tried to show) that Plato was concerned, not only about the third-man problem and other problems concerning the ideas, but also about the questions raised by Speusippus, who had claimed that dialectic was impossible if the ideas were admitted to exist. I agree with Cherniss⁵⁷ that the appointment of Speusippus, who rejected the existence of the ideas entirely, to the post as head of the Academy may be interpreted as some indication that Plato did not consider this aspect of his philosophy essential to the pursuit of the truth.

We may leave this question unsettled, then, as to whether Plato believed, or how definitely he believed, in the existence of the ideas when he wrote the Philebus. I think we must point out, however, that if the ideas do exist, then the conclusions we have reached are bound to affect in certain ways the kind of existence we attribute to them. Universals may exist, but if they do, they no longer, in the Philebus, have the properties once assigned them by Plato: they are not single models in some mysterious sense indivisible, they

57.

The Riddle of the Early Academy, pp. 82, 83.

are not necessarily the "essence" of good things, and they do not share the characteristics of particulars such as tallness, beauty and goodness, because they are such characteristics.

If the ideas do not account for the value of particulars by being perfect and valuable models, the strangeness of their existence, as pictured in the early dialogues, is mitigated. In those dialogues we were led to picture the world of ideas and the visible world as two worlds of particulars the former being unchanging, perfect, and wonderfully beautiful and good, while the second was changing, and good only so far as it resembled the world of ideas. This concept of the ideas raised two sorts of problems: epistemological problems due to the fact that the ideas and the individuals of the passing world were too much alike; value problems because they were too different. The solution of the Philebus is to make ideas and individuals far more different than before from an epistemological point of view, by holding that ideas and particulars do not resemble one another at all; this simultaneously eliminates the value problem so far as the ideas are concerned by making it meaningless to compare individuals and ideas in value.

I shall resume the epistemological point presently. I now wish to explain the contention that the special kind of existence and value once attributed to the ideas, and which was intended to bolster Plato's value theory, did in fact raise a difficult problem. In the Republic, for instance, the

idea of the good was given special causal powers which seem entirely contradictory in an idea. Yet even in this case, the question arises how individuals can meaningfully be said to be good if goodness is a peculiar property of ideas. For, according to this theory, the good contains no reference to the visible universe; all value is in the changeless and eternal. Aristotle raises this question: "even if the goodness predicated of various things in common really is a unity or something existing separately and absolutely, it clearly will not be practicable or attainable by man."⁵⁸ Nor, according to Aristotle, can we take the Ideal Good to be some sort of pattern, the knowledge of which would assist us to obtain some practical good, for this is not the actual procedure of the sciences: they rather aim at some actual good which they seek to produce, and do not worry about any Ideal Good.⁵⁹ In the Republic and other early dialogues, the idea was neither fish nor fowl, neither abstract enough to solve problems of knowledge, nor concrete enough to be a practical goal for action. The prestige the idea gained from its complete removal from the passing world made it inaccessible to endeavor without making it sufficiently different from particulars to banish the notion that it could be an end in itself.

In the Philebus, this difficulty is overcome by making value inhere in created entities. I do not mean to suggest,

58.

Nicomachean Ethics, 1096b 30 ff.

59.

Ibid., 1097a.

of course, that the ideas have no relation to value theory in the Philebus. But if the ideas have lost the sort of value and existence once attributed to them, their usefulness to ethics changes, and instead of being goals and ends, the ideas become instead the indispensable objects of the dialectic which analyzes, defines and explains how to create the good.⁶⁰ The result of divesting the ideas of their immediate function in value theory is thus to shift value from the general and abstract to the particular and concrete. Where once the good was an unattainable goal, it has become the actual product of intentional art. At the same time that value appears in the created object, one of the chief motives for limiting ideas to ideas of good entities disappears. The reason Socrates hesitated about admitting ideas of mud, hair and dirt (Parmenides 130C), for instance, was that these things are "vile and worthless." But once worth no longer dwells in the idea, there is no reason there cannot be an idea of anything.⁶¹ Once the idea is no longer the source of value, its lure emphasized by its remoteness, eternity and indivisibility,⁶² and value is attributed to accessible states of affairs, it becomes possible to reconstrue the idea in such a way that it is not open to the objections of Speusippus and Aristotle.

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Cf. Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. 67.

⁶¹.

Cf. Stenzel, Ibid., p. 54 ff.

⁶².

Cf. Ibid., p. 41. The desire or longing for the ideal good is a desire for immortality (Symposium 212A), for it cannot be achieved in this world.

(11) The second problem posed in Philebus 15B was how each idea can be one and yet retain its absolute unity since, as the Sophist (244C) pointed out, oneness is an attribute which must be added to the unit. This question was answered in the Sophist at length, and the solution is assumed in the Philebus. There remains, in fact, no problem on this score once the notion of the idea as a superior, indivisible particular is abandoned. As long as ideas were conceived as superior individuals, one point of their superiority was their "indivisibility." But if the idea is a true universal it is meaningless to say that it is indivisible in the sense in which the Atomists called an atom indivisible. The relations of ideas revealed by division do not, as we have seen, really divide; the function of division is rather to make true statements about the unalterable relations of the ideas to each other. The ideas are, to be sure, "one" in the sense that they are just that universal and no other; and they are "many" in that many true statements can be made about them. This is just the solution which worked for particulars; there is no reason to reject it for ideas once it is seen that this does not imply any similarity between ideas and particulars. For the superiority of the ideas as objects of knowledge does not rest upon their "indivisibility," but rather on the fact that their relations to other ideas are indubitable and eternal, while the statements about particulars are not. The inconsistency between the "indivisible" idea and diaeresis which Aristotle⁶³ and Speusippus criticized disappears

63.

Aristotle's criticisms are in Topics, 143b 11-32; Metaphysics Z, 12-14.

when the notion of divisibility no longer applies to the idea; and it does once the idea is divorced from all taint of particularity.

(iii) The third problem about the ideas specifically raised by the Philebus concerns the relation of the ideas to particulars, the so-called problem of "participation." I have remarked before that there is no way to tell if Plato has solved this problem until we know what a solution would be; and on this point there is no general agreement. If, as some have held, Plato never really believed the ideas exist at all, would this solve the problem? Clearly it would not for someone who contended that universals must exist in order to deal with some problems in epistemology. I will not, therefore, hazard any general answer to the question whether the problem of participation is solved.

There are others, however, who have stated without reservation that the Philebus does solve the problem of participation. We have already considered Jackson's theory, which contends that the ideas are mixtures, i. e. perfect, but concrete and particular. We have seen that this theory cannot be supported as an interpretation of the Philebus. But even if it could, how would it solve the problem of participation? It would concentrate the source of value into a true model, and it would explain satisfactorily how other particulars could be good in so far as they resembled the model. And I agree that this is the account of value which

Plato gives in the Philebus. But if we also say that mixtures are ideas, we can then raise all the questions which Plato raises in the Parmenides, and there is no solution at all. The problem of participation requires for solution at least that ideas be universals; and whatever other virtues mixtures may have, they are not universals.

Another attempt to find a solution to the problem of participation in the Philebus has been made by Stenzel. Stenzel points out that in his account of division, Plato speaks of dividing the genus into species, the species into subaltern species, and so on until the infima species are reached. Then, Plato says, we can "let each one of these intermediate forms pass away into the unlimited" (16E). Is it legitimate to include this last step, from infima species to individual, in the process of division? In Stenzel's opinion this is the most important step of all, for it solves the "problem of participation." To him it seems that the jump from idea to example is no different from that from idea to idea. He writes:

The ontological character of Plato's thinking is nowhere plainer than in this expectation that he could make an inference from mere concepts to a reality with a definite content...Division is intended not merely to establish a general form for the judgment, but to prove the truth of particular judgments, having a definite content.⁶⁴

In this way, according to Stenzel, knowledge and opinion approach each other. "The lowest εἶδος is attained by reasoning, λόγος ,

⁶⁴.

Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. 91.

the sensible object by $\delta\acute{o}\zeta\alpha$; but it is only by being related to this that $\delta\acute{o}\zeta\alpha$ can become true."⁶⁵ The dialectical movement thus not only reduces the gap between the ideas and the phenomenal world to a minimum, it closes it.

For this theory, there is neither logical nor textual justification. There is nothing in common between the step from genus to species and that from infima species to particular. Relations between ideas are necessary and a priori, while relations between ideas and particulars are contingent. And Plato can hardly be said to imply anything else. He stresses heavily the fact that the last step, from infima species to particular, differs from all the rest fundamentally. When a form is divided into other forms, the division, if it is properly carried out, always yields a certain number ($\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha \acute{\alpha}\rho.\theta\mu\acute{o}\nu$ 16D, 18A). But when a form is divided into individuals, the number is indefinite ($\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{o}\nu$). Because of this, we must delay the last step as long as possible, for it is this last step which goes beyond the scope of division. False dialectic, or eristic, consists in just this: in going directly from the original unit to the indefinite particulars (17A). For "the unlimited variety that belongs to and is inherent in the particulars leaves one, in each particular case, an unlimited ignoramus, a person of no account, a veritable back number..." (17E). As Cornford says:

65.

Stenzel, Ibid., p. 148.

The method of Division exhibits Forms arranged in systematic classification, spreading downwards from a single genus, through a definite number of specific differences, to the indivisible species at the bottom. Below that there is nothing but the indefinite number of individual things...They are below the horizon of science; the method considers only the One which is divided and the definite Many which are its 'parts.'⁶⁶

We cannot, then, accept the theories of Jackson or Stenzel concerning the 'solution' of the problem of participation in the Philebus. Nor, as I have said, do I think there is any solution of the kind they sought. The solution, so far as it is one, lies in seeing that if the ideas are conceived as universals, then some of the problems simply disappear. That is, if the problem is defined in terms of the third-man difficulty and similar difficulties raised in the Parmenides which arise from considering the ideas as indivisible particular entities, then it seems to me that the problem is solved. As far as I understand it, the third-man and associated problems arise when we think of ideas as models -- as perfect, unchangeable, indivisible particular entities. But if we give up this conception of the idea, where is the problem? There remain real problems, no doubt, as to the nature of the ideas if they are not models; but the problems mentioned here are dispelled once we abandon the notion that we can predicate of ideas, as of particulars, such characteristics as tallness, size, beauty or value.

Of course, Plato had always insisted that ideas were different from the particulars of the created world. But the

⁶⁶.

Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 186. Cornford refers in a footnote to Philebus 16B ff.

difference he stressed in the early dialogues was a difference in perfection; he held the ideas to have a different mode of existence only because they were better. He did not recognize, at that point, the true nature of the difference, or he could not have raised the third-man problems or assigned to the ideas the characteristics of particulars. The real reason the Philebus can solve at least these aspects of the problem of participation is that it provides a new explanation of value which does not depend on the superiority of the ideas to particulars (except in the sense that they can be known in a way in which particulars cannot). By providing a new explanation of value which does not directly involve the ideas, the ideas no longer must be regarded as particular patterns or icons. And ideas can thus take on unambiguously the abstract character of universals, leaving them free to deal with other problems of knowledge more satisfactorily when no objection remains to there being ideas of inferior products, artificial products, and so forth.

This concludes our discussion of the ideas in the Philebus, and our discussion of the fourfold classification.

Philebus had tried to break into the conversation once (18A) to ask the purpose of the long digression on method. Finally he succeeds (18D) and Socrates tells him that all this is preparatory to an analysis of pleasure and mind. The problem is to find out how many kinds of each exist, and what their nature is (ὁπόσα καὶ ὁμοῖα, 19B). For unless we can do

this with every unity and like and same (here Socrates mildly mocks Protarchus' earlier defense of pleasures (12E)) we shall be of no use in any way whatsoever.

CHAPTER V
THE ANALYSIS OF PLEASURE (31B-52C)

1. With the conclusion of the discussion of the principles of combination, there remains now only the application of these principles to the elements of the good life, and the discrimination of these elements. We have already explained the various reasons which prompted Plato to insert this discussion where he did; we may therefore without ado proceed to the task of division and the complex tasks of combination: selection, evaluation, and mixing.

We have assumed knowledge of the ingredients of the good life in the foregoing passages. Yet this knowledge is clearly not sufficient to prepare the way for combination. Collection showed that the good life is a mixture of pleasure and intelligence; it could not and did not tell what pleasures were to be combined in what way with intelligence. To find out, first, what kinds of pleasure and intelligence there are is the clear function of division. To judge and evaluate these kinds is one function of combination. In the sections which follow we may, therefore, consider that the purely analytic task of division has been infused with the evaluational judgments of combination to prepare the way for the final act of selection, rejection and synthesis.

We are about, then, to divide pleasure and mind at the "joints," to learn their natural kinds. These kinds we may call species if we please; and surely they correspond to ideas, for they are universals; but we shall not make the mistake of thinking that all such kinds are norms, or define limits, for we are bound to discover some kinds which are bad. Not just bad in the wrong place or in the wrong proportion, but actually bad by nature, defined by the very characteristics which make them bad. For it is only if division does discover some bad kinds that the art can "separate good from bad" and "cast out," by an act of catharsis, the disruptive and corruptive elements.

To a large degree, the parts of the Philebus which most require comment are those which we have already discussed. In those parts, we learned what Plato has to say about the nature of his method, and the principles upon which his theory of the good is based. In what follows, we observe the application of that method and those principles. This is not to say that what follows is less important than the previous sections; for it is in fact the fruit of those sections. But we can now turn our attention more directly to Plato's words, trying to see whether his practice bears out our interpretation of his theory, and profiting, where we can, from his incidental insights into human nature. The main task of interpretation, however, is now over, and what remains can only fortify or lessen our

confidence in it.

The analysis of pleasure depends on the concept of the mixture not only to fix its place and importance in the good life, but also to provide some of the principles for the division. Because of this duplication, it is necessary to remind ourselves of some of the several ways in which Plato uses the word "mixture."

First, let us note again that in one sense every mixture is good; if it is not good, it does not satisfy the requirements for a mixture. Every mixture, in this sense, is the product of deliberate art. Just as music is the mixture produced by the musician, or a well-proportioned, easy-handling ship is the mixture produced by the shipbuilder, or a well-ordered, self-sufficient community is the mixture created by the statesman, so the good life is the mixture produced by the art of happiness. We recall also that Plato speaks of such a mixture as mixed in two senses. In one usage, a mixture is a mixture of a limit and an unlimited. This, as we have seen, cannot be taken literally. Limit and unlimited are not two ingredients. A mixture results when the creative agent makes something which has a definite relation between its parts. This relation is a limit, which does not exist apart from the mixture. The real ingredients are the parts which are related. We speak of the mixture as mixed in a second sense, then, when we name the different ingredients which can be differentiated

in the compound. In both cases we name the same thing when we speak of the mixture; but in one case we think of the mixture as made up of an unlimited and a limit; in the other, as made up of the elements related by the limit.

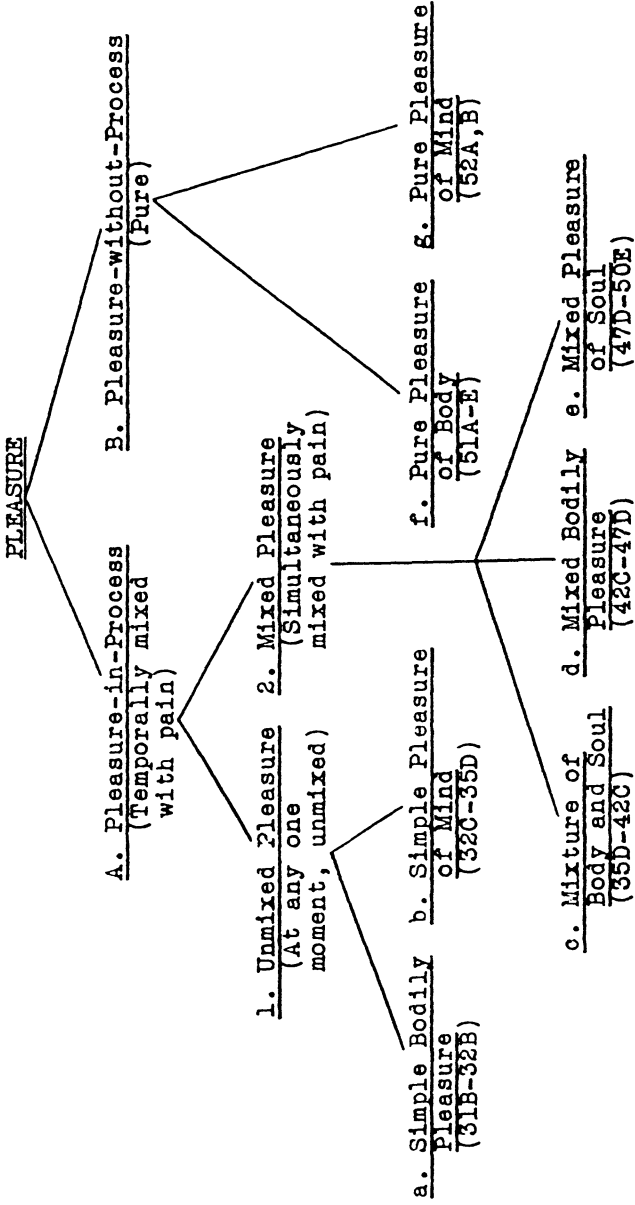
One further (and most confusing) way that Plato speaks of a mixture is this: an unlimited is a mixture in that it contains two opposite elements which are mixed rather than combined. The unlimited of a torrid day is a "mixture" of too much hot and too little cold; the unlimited of a discord is a "mixture" of wrong notes; the unlimited of some pleasures is a "mixture" of pleasure and pain. This is a disturbing use of the word "mixture" because it is almost directly opposed to the technical meaning it has been given in the preceding analysis; yet Socrates uses it in this different and misleading sense through the rest of the Philebus.

To make the discussion that follows clearer, we will anticipate the broad categories into which pleasure will be divided. The body in health is a balance of certain factors. When this balance is disturbed or restored, pleasure or pain results. The first division of pleasures, then, is into those which result from this disturbance or restoration and those which do not; those born of process to or from the mixture which is health are called "mixed" pleasures, while those (if any) which originate without process are "unmixed." The

pleasures which originate in process are "mixed" in the sense that every movement away from health must be duplicated by another back to it (until death) so that every pleasure eventually entails (or is "mixed" with) a corresponding pain.

Of those pleasures which spring from process, some are also simultaneously accompanied, because of their nature, by pains; some are not. This is a further division. Finally, there are pleasures of the mind and pleasures of the body; these divide each of the previous classes into two, with one exception. The exception is the case where the "mixture" is of pain and pleasure simultaneously; here three "mixtures" are possible, namely, of two bodily feelings, of two mental feelings, or of one each. The diagram on page 331 shows how the complete division can be carried out.

This division is not altogether clear in all of its aspects in the Philebus, and it is not always certain how much of the scheme is meant to be covered by the discussion. The attempt to place every section of the text into one of the bottom sections of the diagram is also Procrustean to an extent, since the argument often digresses in such a way as to include larger sectors of the subject within the development of a subsection. But the diagram will serve its purpose if it assists in clarifying these problems as they arise. It should be noted that the word "mixture" nowhere in the diagram means what it meant in the ontological scheme.



2. We know the general class ($\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\sigma$) of pleasure; now our task is to divide it. One way to do this is to inquire into its origin, and find in what ($\epsilon\upsilon\tilde{\omega}$) and by means of what condition ($\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\grave{\iota}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\alpha\varsigma$) pleasure comes into being (31B). We may turn our attention first, then, to the pleasures which arise from alterations in bodily states. Such pleasures cannot be considered apart from pains, for both originate by nature in the combined class (31C). This mixture, as Socrates goes on to explain, is not the good life; it is the mixture of various elements (or "opposites") which constitute, in the right relation, health. Let us consider this condition of harmony or ratio between "opposites" as the natural state or being of a living creature ($\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, 31D, 42D; $\sigma\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$, 32B). We will now say that pain is generated when this harmony is broken up ($\lambda\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\grave{\eta}\varsigma\ \phi\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$, 31D); pleasure is generated as the harmony is restored. Viewing the healthy body as a proportion between opposites, we see that fullness and emptiness constitute alternative abnormal or unlimited conditions (42D). Hunger represents emptying, and is therefore a pain (31E); eating is a restoration of the proper limit or proportion, so eating gives pleasure. Whenever anything breaks up or corrupts the natural harmony we feel pain; any motion toward restoration creates pleasure.¹ Viewing the class of living creatures

1.

Cf. Symposium 186C ff. Eryximachus holds that the art of medicine is a knowledge of "love-matters" in the body in regard to repletion and evacuation. The physician must

as a "natural union of limit and unlimited" (32A, B), we can say that they suffer pain when the union is destroyed; but the return of all things to their place ($\alpha\nu\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) and "the road back to its own essence" gives pleasure. For Plato the alternative to order is not a different order; it is disorder. The being of a created creature has one nature, and any change from this creates partial chaos, an unlimited.

The question arises, in respect to Plato's explanation of pleasure in terms of the restoration of the harmony of health, whether his doctrine states that pleasure is to be identified with the bodily process of restoration, or whether he holds that the bodily process is only the cause (in some sense) of the pleasure. The question is of some importance to the theme of the Philebus because, if pleasure is to be identified with a change in bodily condition, then it would be possible (whether desirable or not) to live a life of pleasure (accompanied with pain) without having a mind at all. Aristotle criticizes the designation of pain as "the forceful

make happy lovers of the opposites in the body, such as cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and moist. This explanation of pleasure and pain can be found elsewhere in Plato. Cf. Timaeus 64C ff.; Republic 583C ff. On the eve of his death, Socrates rubs his leg when the fetter has been removed and remarks to his companions: "What a strange thing, my friends, that seems to be which men call pleasure! How wonderfully it is related to that which seems to be its opposite, pain, in that they will not both come to a man at the same time, and yet if he pursues the one and captures it, he is generally obliged to take the other also, as if the two were joined together in one head" (Phaedo 60B).

separation of connate parts"² and of health as the "symmetry of hot and cold"³ because such definitions would require that inanimate objects experience pain and have health. These definitions, he says, confuse cause and effect, for separation is the cause of pain, not pain itself. Aristotle, then, would seem to hold quite definitely that Plato's doctrine is that pleasure and pain are to be identified with the bodily changes. The wording in the Philebus at a number of points gives some weight to such an interpretation (e.g. 45A, 46B, 32A, 53C). Nor can I see that if this were Plato's position it would change any of his basic arguments. His attack on the mixed pleasures depends primarily on the fact that they are always attended, at the time or later, by pains. And his denial that the life of pleasure can be the good life depends, not on the claim that even bodily pleasures involve the soul, but on the claim that even the hedonist does not desire the life of pleasure without mind. I would not even agree with Aristotle that this interpretation commits Plato to the absurdity that plants and inanimate objects feel pleasure and pain; for he

2.

Topics 145a 33-b 20. Cf. Timaeus 64D-E, 81D; Philebus 31D.

3.

Cf. Timaeus 82A-B; Philebus 32A and Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato, p. 23. In Topics 139b 19-23 Aristotle calls this definition of health "obscure," since συμμετρία is an ambiguous word. But in the Physics (246b 4-6) he says that health consists of a mixture and symmetry of hot and cold!

could quite well hold that the λύσις τῆς φύσεως is pain (and its reverse pleasure) in the case of animals, but not in other cases.

In spite of all this, I think it is pretty unlikely that Plato really believed that any pleasures or pains are bodily changes. It would strengthen the argument against hedonism, to say the least, to hold that even the bodily pleasures and pains necessarily involve the soul. It would be more in keeping with the doctrine, presently to be developed, that all desire, sensation and memory are of the soul. The majority of passages in the Philebus are ambiguous as to which doctrine is intended, but some quite definitely imply that all pleasures and pains involve the soul (cf. 55B, 35D, 41C). I conclude, therefore, although on somewhat shaky evidence, that Aristotle is wrong in implying that Plato held bodily pleasures to be purely of the body.⁴

A mere state of disorder, could it exist, would not be accompanied by pain. Pain arises from motion, from the change introduced as the organism diverges from its natural harmony. The same is true of pleasure: a continuous state of harmony (if such were possible) would have no process, and therefore no pleasure of this kind. On this score, the hedonist

4. This is also the conclusion of Hackforth, Plato's Examination of Pleasure, p. 61.

could claim that if Socrates is going to decide against the pleasures which result from an original disruption of the mixture, he will have no pleasures at all. Callicles argues this in the Gorgias (493D ff.), and recommends the unsettled life for this very reason:

For the man who has taken his fill can have no pleasure any more; in fact it is what I just now called living like a stone, when one has filled up and no longer feels any joy or pain. But the pleasant life consists rather in the largest possible amount of inflow. (Gorgias 494 A, B)

But we are now told by Socrates (Philebus 32B) that this kind of pleasure and pain is only one kind; perhaps there are others.

3. The purpose of the preceding discussion is to demonstrate that simple bodily pleasures, such as those which originate from eating and drinking, are inevitably linked with pain; the pleasure derives in each case from a return to normalcy, the decline from which was pain. The question now is, are mental pleasures infected in the same way with pain? Here we must partially anticipate a later development because Plato does. It will ultimately develop that some mental pleasures are not related to pains (51A, B). Some are; and it is these which we are ready to consider. But Socrates cannot resist two brief digressions based on the future course of the argument.

Some pleasures, he says, will be found to be pure and unmixed in any sense (32C); their discovery will reveal the "truth about pleasure," for it will show that while some pleasures may be bad, others may be always good. This result will uphold our original contention that the entire class of pleasures is not good (Philebus 13B), but that some pleasures are good and some bad (32D).

The other digression touches on a recurrent theme of the Philebus: if pleasure and pain result from process, what if there is no process? This prospect frightened Callicles, but it is tempting to the philosopher. This reveals a certain cleft between pleasure and mind; a man could live a life without pleasure or pain (33A). The life of the mind would be sufficient, while the life of pleasure has been shown to be insufficient. The trouble with the life of mind is that no human desires it (21E): it is the life of a god, the "most divine life" (33B); for the gods feel neither "joy nor its opposite."⁵ A god would desire such a life: for him it would be good; but for a man it could not be good since no man would ever desire it. The divine neutral life is for Plato apparently pleasureless; the theoretical or contemplative life is not. We should not let Aristotle lead us to confuse this point.

5.

Cf. Republic 540B, C. The guardian who sees the truth and lives by it is to be worshipped as a divinity -- "or at least as a man blest with a godlike spirit."

Aristotle felt that the life of contemplation is "higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him which is divine"; and this something "is superior to his composite nature" (Nicomachean Ethics 1177b-1178a).⁶ Aristotle could contend this because for him God's contemplative life was pleasurable. For Plato there is nothing peculiarly divine about man's contemplation, since it can produce pure pleasure; but for this very reason, contemplation is not "higher than the human level," and it is part of man's composite nature to achieve it. The solution to this problem must wait until we can show how man's neutral life, unlike that of the gods, can contain pleasure.⁷

But to return to the simple pleasures and pains of the mind; most important among them are the pleasures and pains

6.

As Jaeger has shown, Aristotle is here closer to the position of the middle dialogues of Plato than in other parts of the Nicomachean Ethics. The passages quoted above are related to the Aristotle who wrote in the Protreptics that man should strive to live divinely. Later the emphasis shifted: the good is something "within human reach" (Nicomachean Ethics 1096b 30); the good for the gods may be one thing and for man another (Nicomachean Ethics 1101b; cf. W. Jaeger, Aristotle, p. 235). Here, as elsewhere, the Philebus seems closer to the parts of the Nicomachean Ethics written last than to the earlier Platonic dialogues, just as Bk. X of the Nicomachean Ethics seems closer, in many ways, to the middle Platonic dialogues than to the later parts of the Ethics.

7.

Socrates, realizing that this passage is out of place in the argument, recommends that the point be reserved for discussion later (33B, C). It is referred to again three times (42E; 51E; 55A).

of expectation.⁸ These, Socrates remarks, originate entirely in memory (33C). It will therefore be necessary to discuss memory, and before it, sensation, to understand these pleasures and pains of the soul. Sensation is defined as "the union of soul and body in one common experience and motion" (34A). This definition is not clearly stated anywhere else in Plato, although several passages imply it,⁹ and it is not supported by any arguments here. The significance of the phrase "union of soul and body" can hardly (as Bury contends)¹⁰ be that "sensation involves consciousness." Its importance is rather to emphasize the general interdependence of mind and body even on the level of the most matter-of-fact explanation of pleasure; one of the reasons for the analysis of pleasure is to show how completely it relies on the mind at every point, to show that the "simple life of pleasure" which the hedonist advocates is impossible.

8.

The pleasures and pains of expectation are due to the pleasant or unpleasant character of the hope or fear with which we contemplate some future condition. Naturally expectation is pleasant when we expect events which we think will give us pleasure; this is the "sweet and cheering hope of pleasant things to come." But the pleasure or pain which is considered now is present now; the pleasure results from the "sweetness" and "cheerfulness" of the present hope, not the pleasure of the future event.

9.

Timaeus 42A, 43C, 64B ff.; Theaetetus, 186B, C. Aristotle objects to the definition (Topics 125b 15-19) because he says, sensation is a state but motion is an activity; and the genus of a state must be a state.

10.

Bury, The Philebus of Plato, p. 66, note.

Bodily pleasure, we have been told, is a sensation which originates under certain conditions. Now we learn that even it must penetrate to the soul before we can experience it. The motion must permeate both body and soul and cause a vibration in both (33D); if the motion affects only the body, we call it lack of sensation (34A).¹¹

Memory, being a function of the soul, retains only those things which penetrate to it; there is nothing to remember if there is no sensation (33E). Memory may therefore be defined as the "preservation of sensation" (34A). This is immediately distinguished from recollection (ἀνάμνησις): "When the soul has had an experience with the body, and then brings it perfectly back all by itself apart from the body, then we say it recollects" (34B); recovery of a lost memory of a sensation, or piece of information, is also recollection (34B, C). The distinction here between memory and recollection does not seem to be the same as that made in the Meno. Memory here is a simple retention of a sensation, like the seal in the wax tablet.¹² Recollection is recovery of either (1) the sensation itself (although presumably only the noetic aspect)

11.

That sensation results from motion we learn in the Theaetetus (156A ff.). It stresses the fact that there is motion both in the object perceived and in the recipient subject. But we perceive with the mind and only through the senses where the motion takes place (Theaetetus 184D).

12.

Theaetetus 191C.

or (2) of the memory of a sensation. Plato would seem here to subscribe to the Humian doctrine that there is nothing in the mind which has not entered through the senses. The addition of "or piece of knowledge" (μαθήματος) to those things which can be recollected might be considered as admitting the sort of object Plato once held to be the only possible source of knowledge. But it is unlikely he would introduce so important a subject in so trivial a way; this "piece of knowledge" is probably meant to include only such information as the soul has acquired through word of mouth. For some reason the old theory of recollection, like the theory of ideas on which it depends, is being withheld. The reason the ideas were not introduced in another context in the Theaetetus, according to Cornford, is that "the Forms are excluded from the discussion, which is confined to the empiricist claim that all knowledge comes from the external world of sense, either directly or by teaching as commonly conceived."¹³ He specifically notes that Plato "never uses his own word for recollection (anamnesis)" in the discussion of memory in the Theaetetus. But what are we to say of the Philebus, where there is no such limitation on the scope of the discussion, and where Plato does use "his own word"? In partial answer, we may observe that the definition of memory in the Philebus is made for the purpose of showing that pleasure,

13.

Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 135, 136.

even on the hedonist's grounds, must be granted a psychic factor. Plato is going to use memory (as he did in the Theaetetus) to prove the possibility of error when only sensations and their retained (or recovered) images are admitted. The pleasures the hedonist advocated were all of the body, since the hedonist wanted to maintain the possibility of a happy life without mind. Plato, meeting him on his own grounds, is not interested here in introducing the technical doctrine of recollection.

Only the lesser mystery remains: why does Plato use the word once fraught with such special meaning in a context of definition? The answer suggests itself that the theory of ἀνάμνησις set forth in the Meno no longer held a place of importance in Plato's epistemology. As we have seen, what remains of the theory of ideas in the Philebus is a very restricted version of the earlier doctrine, a doctrine from which the Philebus, apparently consciously, has dropped many of the most characteristic but debatable features. It is not altogether unlikely, then, that the unembarrassed use in the Philebus of a word once strangely significant is only one facet of a general shift of emphasis.

Plato now turns to attack the partisans of pleasure in a new way. Philebus had maintained that only the pure life of pleasure could be desired; that pleasure is the true goal of every living creature (60A). Whether or not all desire is

of pleasure then, any inspection of the origins of pleasure must certainly involve an analysis of desire. If desire, like anticipation, turns out to be a function of the soul, one more prop has been cut from under the hedonist's position.

Hunger and thirst are examples of desire; what is the uniting principle which permits us to use one word for all such examples (34E)? Socrates never names such a principle, for all he seeks is the common origin of desires. This origin he finds to be a power of the mind to seize on (ἐφ' ἧς αἰσθάνεται, 35A, B) the bodily condition opposite to that in which a man finds himself.¹⁴ When a man is hungry, he desires food; when he is thirsty, drink. The desire is never of what is possessed, but of something different.¹⁵ A man cannot discover his desire in a present bodily passion.¹⁶ Of course, desire for food is related to present emptiness; but the desire is not of the emptiness, but of fullness. Where does the desire originate then, if not in the present bodily condition? The answer can only be, in the

14.

Cf. Cratylus 419E: ἐπιθυμία is a name given to a power that goes (ἰδύσθαι) into the soul (θύμος).

15.

Cf. Symposium 200A ff. Love is always of what is not possessed. When it is of beauty, love indicates a lack of beauty.

16.

Even Faust's famous line, "would that this moment might last," expresses a desire for what he does not have -- assurance of the permanence of his own feelings.

soul, through the action of memory (35B). Memory preserves (or recollection recovers) past sensations of eating, of drinking. In our present painful condition, the soul presents us with a memory of a past condition which was opposite; desire seizes and fastens on this memory (35C). We have shown conclusively that all the impulse, the desire and the first principle of all living creatures is of the soul (35D). There is no desire of the body.

4. Although both expectations and desires are of the soul, they are not of the same quality.¹⁷ Expectation is passive, while desire is active. Expectation contains an element of prediction; it can be right, or it can be mistaken. Desire cannot be right or wrong; it does not call for verification. Expectation can be either of pleasure or of pain, and the experience of expectation can be pleasant or painful. The object of desire is always pleasant (Charmides 167C-178A); "what a man desires is dear to him" (Lysis 221B). Expectation has no moral character; what is anticipated may be either good or bad, or neither. What is desired is always good, within its own context (although this must be modified before we speak of the good, as we have seen).

17.

Cf. Wild, Plato's Theory of Man, pp. 153-156 for a detailed discussion of the difference between expectation and desire.

Expectation relies on memory for the most accurate possible prediction about the future. Since such a prediction depends entirely on empirical evidence, expectation is always based on opinion. Desire relies on memory as a fund from which it can select a goal. Although desire is always of the soul, it is not always rational. There is a structure to desire which is directly related to the structure of the soul. The appetitive part of the soul desires food, drink and women: the manly part desires to rule and be famous; the rational part desires the truth.¹⁸ This totality of desires is one way of viewing the scope of possibility from which the art of happiness selects and out of which it creates the mixed life.

The discussion has shown that the pleasures of expectation depend on the memory, a function of mind; it has also shown that all desire is of the soul and relies on memory. But if expectation and desire have been shown to have a noetic reference, let us remember that they are still related to bodily pleasures and pains. Desire, of the sort which has been investigated, originates from a bodily pain. We do not desire food unless we are hungry. Desire may not be of the body alone, but it is not of the soul alone either; it is "blended with pleasure and pain."¹⁹

18. Republic 580D ff.

19. Timaeus 42A.

The preceding sections analyzed the characteristics of simple bodily pleasures which arise in the change from disruption to harmony in the body; and of simple mental pleasures, which are based on the pleasant anticipation of things to come. Viewed in abstraction, these pleasures are, at any one moment, "unmixed" in the sense that no pain is necessarily felt at the same time. But viewed within any temporal scope, the bodily pleasures must yield to some pain; and mental pleasure is related to some concomitant physical pain.

Turning from this analysis of the elements of pleasure in abstraction, Socrates points the way to the application of these elements in the "form of life" (βίον εἶδος, 35D). Defining quickly the condition of a mixture of pleasure and pain involving both body and soul (36A), he goes on to speak of the possibility of false pleasure. There is a fairly lengthy discussion of this point (36C-42C) which involves a unique consideration of the function of imagination. A discussion of "still more false" pleasures (42C) follows, based on an analysis of the most violent mixed bodily pleasures, although the doctrine that pleasure is merely absence from pain is wistfully rejected. Toward the end of the passage (46C) an outline of the entire section is given, dividing the mixed pleasures into those concerned with the body alone, those which belong to the soul alone and those which mingle pains and

pleasures of the soul and body. At 47D Socrates remarks that only one of these, the mixture of pain and pleasure in the soul alone, remains, and it is discussed with an elaborate example drawn from comedy and the nature of humor. Again at 50D Socrates outlines the three divisions of mixed pleasures, and then turns to the pure, or unmixed, pleasures (50E).

This brief survey serves to show that in this part of the Philebus particularly the pattern is firm and explicit, the scheme is well worked out, and is kept before the reader. This becomes important when specific problems of interpretation arise, because it is assurance that everything is pertinent and planned. If the significance of a passage seems doubtful or its connection with the argument tenuous, the fault probably lies with us, since for Plato it was not a chance design.

The aim of the analysis of pleasures which now follows is partly to divide pleasures into those which are suitable for the mixed life and those which are not, and partly to discredit hedonism for once and for all by proving that many -- perhaps most -- pleasures are bad in some sense. In some of what follows Plato seems to forget the first aim and concentrate on the second. One is apt to feel that Plato is not satisfied with having shown that pleasure alone cannot be the good life; he is determined to prove that most pleasures are not good, whether or not we accept his definition of the good life. For this reason he would like to show how individual pleasures can be bad quite

apart from the question whether they would fit into the mixed life. I do not believe that the apparent independence of these sections of the Philebus will bear close scrutiny, however. It may be -- this is open to question -- that Plato desired to demonstrate the badness of most pleasures apart from the assumptions of the rest of his argument. But analysis will show, I think, that the sense in which the bad pleasures are bad is dependent, in every case, on their unlimited character. If this is so, then their badness is really of such a sort that it excludes them from the mixture. Badness will reduce to unlimitedness, and the two apparently different aims of the dialogue will coalesce.

The following part of the dialogue can perhaps be best explained by bearing this in mind. The position which Plato is about to maintain is that many pleasures are bad because they are inextricably related to error. He says his thesis is that some pleasures are false; yet all he succeeds in showing is that some pleasures are dependent on, or closely related to error. The failure to prove his thesis, which Plato practically admits, does not seem to shake his conviction that he has shown these pleasures to be bad. It would, therefore, be best to consider from the start that the true thesis is simply that some pleasures are bad because they are closely related to error. The badness which follows from this dependence on error can be related to the concept of the unlimited in this way:

error (as Plato explained in the Sophist, and as he explains again here) consists in believing something to be the case which is not, in fact, the case. Or, as he puts it, we believe something exists which does not. In such a case, reality does not correspond to our opinion. Now, if a pleasure depends on such a false opinion, we may say that the pleasure does not correspond to reality in the sense that if we had a true opinion (i.e. if we knew the thing did not exist) we would have no pleasure. Plato believes such pleasures which depend on erroneous opinions are unlimited in the sense that they are not explained by or measured by the facts. They are not determined by the facts, but rather by an opinion which is falsely related to the facts. If I am right in regarding the unlimited as that aspect of things which cannot be explained by a rational purpose, that is, a purpose based on knowledge of reality, then it is reasonable to say that a pleasure which depends on error is unlimited, since it can only be explained by an error in judgment.

Let us now turn to Plato's analysis of the relation between judgment or opinion and certain pleasures and pains. Of the three sorts of pleasures and pains which occur simultaneously with other pleasures or pains, our first task is to consider those which our analysis of desire and expectation revealed to combine passions of the soul with those of the body. Let us consider, for instance, the condition of a man who is empty, and feels bodily pain, but at the same time remembers

the state of fullness, which would give him pleasure. We may speak of him as being "between the affections" (ἐν μέσῳ τῶν παθημάτων, 36A). The bodily state is certainly painful, but there is an ambivalence about the mental state. If the man has an expectation of attaining the state he remembers of fullness, then his memory is pleasant; if the man despairs of attaining fullness, his memory of that condition is painful (36B). The feelings with which we view the same memory can differ enormously, then. The fact that a memory is of a pleasant experience does not make the memory pleasant. But it also is not the present bodily circumstances which determine whether a memory is pleasant or not. It is the nature of the anticipation. It is the future, or what we expect of the future, which makes the difference. We find the memory of a pleasant past experience painful now if we do not expect the future to reproduce the past. Clearly we can be wrong about the future, however. Perhaps, in spite of our direful expectation, we shall (unexpectedly) have the pleasant experience which we painfully remember. In this case we were mistaken. What is it that was mistaken? Not the memory of the past experience, for we remember it properly, and it was pleasant. It is rather the anticipation which is at fault; we expected something different than the facts warranted. As a result, the pain which we feel now (because we do not expect the future to be pleasant) is unwarranted because the opinion is wrong. Perhaps we may speak of such a pain (or a pleasure which attaches to a

wrong expectation) as false (36C). That is the first problem concerning the mixed pains and pleasures of the body and soul.

Secrates introduces the question by pointing out that it is possible to be mistaken about whether we are experiencing a pleasure or not. A man who is sick or sleeping or insane may think he feels pleasure when he does not, or pain when he does not (36E). This is clearly true of the bodily pleasures if they are defined as the restoration of harmony between parts; for a man could easily be wrong as to whether or not a certain process was taking place in his own body. Even if these pleasures are only caused by the restoration of bodily harmony, we might still judge whether or not we had a pleasant experience according to our opinion about the bodily change; and so again we might err. But would this make the pleasure itself false? Certainly we really do feel the pleasure, whether we know it or not. We must reconsider whether or not the qualities true and false can be predicated of pleasures.

The problem is now put in a different way. What we are really interested in is not whether we are right in thinking we feel pleasure; what we want to ask is whether we can predicate truth and falsehood of pleasures. Let us consider two statements:

1. There is a man under yonder tree.
2. I believe 1.

Either of these may be true or false. To verify the first, we find out if there is a man under yonder tree. To

verify the second, we find out if I believe there is a man under yonder tree. One statement is about the man; one is about me. Neither statement is an opinion. An opinion exists when a statement is asserted, or believed. If I believe either 1 or 2 I have an opinion. If I believe 1, I have an opinion about the man. If I believe 2, I have an opinion about myself; and in this case, since the statement is about an opinion, I have an opinion about an opinion.

There can be no doubt that we can substitute

3. I feel a pleasure.

for "1" in 2, and that this further statement is either true or false, and that it is about me. We may write it thus:

4. I believe 3.

We can verify 4 in the same way we do 2; and we can verify 3, although not in quite the same way as 1. But in no case can we speak of the pleasure being true or false. The truth of 4 does not depend on the truth of 3 any more than the truth of 2 depends on the truth of 1. If 4 is true, then I believe 3; this does not require that 3 be true. If 3 is true, I must feel a pleasure. But this is not the same as saying the pleasure is true, but that the pleasure exists. These two statements cannot come to the same thing, or we could not say that false pleasures exist, which it is our purpose to prove. The reality of believing and feeling pleasure is not enough in itself to show that both opinions and pleasures may be true or false.

Let us ask once more "how it is that opinion is both true and false and pleasure only true, though the holding of opinion and the feeling of pleasure are equally real" (37B). We may start by looking again at opinion. When we say an opinion is true, we do not (as we found) mean that we really do have an opinion. What we mean is that what we assert or believe to be the case, is the case. Opinion adds the element of assertion or belief to the statement itself. It is only by extension that we speak of the belief or assertion as being true; what we really mean is that the statement asserted is true. We may think of the matter in this way: it is possible merely to entertain a statement without believing it. But suppose I see something in the distance, and I wish to distinguish what it is (38C). It is this desire or wish to know or decide what it is that we see which gives rise to an opinion. Unless there is an emotion (παθήματα, 39A), there is no opinion. The mere proposition that there is a man under yonder tree could be entertained without belief. When, however, my dim sensation of distant-something is coupled with an emotion of fear, hope, desire or curiosity about that distant-something, then I form an opinion about it, which may be true or false. If I form an opinion, I may signalize this fact by making an assertion: "There is a man under yonder tree." If no one is present, I may still believe that this statement is true; Plato compares such silent assertion or belief to writing down the asserted

proposition. I record the statement in my soul as if it were a book (39A).²⁰ It does not matter whether or not the statement is really formed in words. It may be spoken (in which case we call it a λόγος, 38E) or it may be silent.²¹ It may be a picture or image which is produced in the soul, rather than a verbal expression (39B, 40A).²² The important thing is the feeling with which the picture or statement is registered, and which makes us form an opinion. Now we see the only sense in which a feeling can be said to be false; if the feeling causes us to record a false statement, we call it false (39A). In no case do we question the existence of the feeling; but

20.

When we compare the book of Philebus 38E with the wax tablet of Theaetetus 194C, or Locke's tabula rasa, we must be alive to this difference; that the wax is entirely passive while the sensations leave their marks. But the book of the Philebus needs more than sensations; an emotion is involved which makes what is written an opinion or assertion instead of merely a memory.

21.

Cf. Theaetetus 190A where δβξα is identified with a statement (λόγος) "spoken, not aloud to another, but silently to oneself." Sophist 263E repeats that "thought and speech are the same" and speaks of "the inner dialogue of the soul with itself, which takes place without vocal utterance." Cf. also Timaeus 37B.

22.

There is a worker (δημιουργός) in the soul who paints images (εἰκόνες). Later, these images are called φαντάσματα (40E). Note that the possibility of the existence of false images, which was the major problem of the Sophist, is taken for granted here. Stenzel (Plato's Method of Dialectic, p. 116) points out that these pictures are not necessarily visual and calls attention to Philebus 39B where ὄραν is used by Zeugma to denote a general faculty of forming images."

we have found a pragmatic reason for designating the feelings true and false.

What is the nature of this feeling which, when connected with sensations and memories makes us form opinions? One test of such feelings is the willingness to act upon them. If we believe something, we will base our performance on it. An opinion is in the nature of a prediction, which events may prove to be either true or false. Opinions are based on present and past experience, but their reference is to the future (39D, E). In distinguishing between the mere entertainment of a proposition and its assertion, Plato is surely drawing our attention to a very important difference. And he is certainly right as well in saying that a proposition does not need to be asserted out loud, or in words, in order to be believed. The problem is, just how we are to conceive Plato's opinion about what it is that makes the difference. One difference he is clear about; so long as we merely entertain a proposition, the truth or falsity of the proposition can involve us in no error. Error (or rightness) attaches only to opinions or assertions. If we believe a false statement to be true, then we err. But what is the nature of the "feeling" which combines with memory and sensation to produce opinion? The only kinds of feeling mentioned in this section are the pleasures and pains of anticipation, i.e. (pleasant) expectation and fear. These, however, are the feelings which result from opinions; they are not something which, added to an entertained proposition, turns

it into an opinion. We fear or anticipate the future because we expect it to have a certain character; but we can hardly say that the pleasure or pain we feel in contemplating the expected future gives us our opinion about that future. It seems to me that Plato is saying something obviously true when he remarks that there is a difference in how we feel if we merely think about a certain possibility, how we feel if we expect that possibility to be a reality, and how we feel if we expect that possibility not to be realized. But these differences do not serve to explain the difference between thinking about a possibility and believing it will happen, even though the second difference follows from the first. I conclude, therefore, that Plato here gives no full account of what it is that characterizes an opinion or belief; nor is it necessary for what follows.

For in what follows, the important thing is merely to have shown the dependence of certain pleasures and pains on opinions, and this has been demonstrated. We have seen how opinion can be said to "write a statement" or "paint a picture" in the soul. It is perhaps easiest to think of the present pleasure or pain as attaching to such an image. When we have an image ($\phi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\alpha$) in our minds of an object, act, event or circumstance, there is often a certain pleasure or pain attached to the image. We may imagine ourselves becoming wealthy; we may even imagine ourselves enjoying ourselves (40A). Such images give us present pleasure. This pleasure is based

upon two separate aspects of the image; part of our feeling about it is due to what we imagine the event to be like, and part of our feeling is due to whether we consider that the event exists (or did exist or will exist). Consider a man who, day-dreaming, thinks of what it would be like to have a vacation. The prospect, which he neither expects nor rejects as a possibility, gives him a reflective pleasure. Now suppose his boss says to him, "I am sorry, but you cannot have a vacation this year or next"; in this case a new feeling attaches to the image which is painful. If, on the other hand, his boss says, "Well, I think you should take off a couple of weeks with pay," the prospect is viewed with a new and active pleasure because it is anticipated as an actuality. All degrees of present feeling can obviously be attached to the image in this way. This feeling which attaches to the image because of our opinion as to whether the event exists (in past, present or future) is the one with which Plato is primarily concerned. And while this feeling can hardly be said to be false in itself, except if we speak quite loosely, this feeling can be said to be unfounded when the opinion on which it is based is false. It is easy enough to see why Plato feels it is not straining language too far to say such a pleasure is false; we say an opinion is false if it is not warrented by the facts; why not also say the pleasure is false if it is not warrented by the facts?

This is indeed only an apparent parallel in usage. To have an opinion means to believe that something is the case; to have a pleasure (of the sort mentioned) only results from believing that something is the case. If we believed something else to be the case, then necessarily we would hold a different opinion. But if we believe something else to be the case, it is only very likely that our feeling would be different; this does not follow necessarily. In the end, it is perhaps a matter of terminology whether we want to call a feeling which is unwarranted by the facts false. But it would be a terminology which would commit us to strange usages. Every action which we take based on a wrong opinion would have to be called false. Occasionally, however, we do speak this way; we speak of a "false move" for instance when we do something based on an erroneous opinion. Yet in philosophic discussion it would seem worth while to restrict the terms "truth" and "falsity" to whatever can be formulated as a proposition. An opinion can be so formulated, at least in part, while a pleasure cannot, even in part, be so formulated.

While Plato does not show how the emotions of pleasure and pain which accompany opinions inhere in them qua opinions, he does indicate one subtle way in which the present emotion may partly determine what we think of an imagined event. When we imagine something which we believe to have happened, or to be happening, or which we expect to happen, we feel a certain pleasure or pain in the contemplation of the event. We may

very well, in such a situation, think that we did, or would, or shall, feel a similar pleasure or pain when actually experiencing the event. In this case, the present pleasure can account for error rather more directly than in the previous cases, because it causes us to believe that a certain event did (or does, or will) have a certain hedonic character. The error results here not from the possibility that the event does not happen, but from the possibility that the event is not as pleasant or unpleasant as it is believed to be. Where the event lies in the future, the error is in thinking our future pleasure in the event will resemble our present pleasure in anticipation. Such a present pleasure is "a rather ridiculous imitation of a true pleasure" (40C). Yet although such a present pleasure might cause us to form a wrong opinion, it would still, strictly speaking, be the opinion which was false, and not the pleasure. However, we could, rather metaphorically, speak of the present pleasure as a "bad copy" of the future pleasure, and hence, by extension, as a "false copy."

In the Theaetetus, it was necessary to show that false judgments can be made (we can "speak what is not"²³) in order to prove that knowledge is not perception. In the Sophist

23.

167A states the problem as an opinion of Protagoras. It is expanded at 188C ff. Memory offers a partial explanation of the possibility of false judgments in the Theaetetus as it does here; cf. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 127. But the Sophist offers the only real solution to the problem of false judgments, a solution which is assumed in the Philebus.

it was necessary to prove that false images can exist in order to define the sophist. In the Philebus it is necessary to prove that pleasures exist which are not based on fact in order to defeat the hedonist. For the hedonist argued that all pleasures are simply pleasures (12D, E) and that therefore none could be debarred from the good life. We have shown that although it is true that all pleasures really are pleasures, some are based on false opinions and some are based on true.

Before we can bar these pleasures from the good life, we must show that they are bad as well as unfounded. But this is easy, even on the hedonist's own grounds. For just as a false opinion is bad because it will lead us into error, and will defeat our purpose, the unfounded pleasure may lead the hedonist away from pleasure. He may imagine with pleasure an object or event from which he expects pleasure; but the present pleasure misleads him if the imagined event or object fails to yield the anticipated pleasure (40E, 41A).²⁴ Hedonism fails because that of which we have a pleasant idea may not in fact be pleasant. Present pleasure is not an accurate clue to future pleasure. The pleasure I feel now on imagining a past, present, or future event may be only an imitation, or caricature, of the feeling that actually accompanies the event (40C). In that case, it is not based on fact (40C, D), and we may say

24.

Protagoras is forced to admit this about the pleasures of drink, food and sex; they can be bad if they lead to greater pains afterwards (Protagoras 353D-354A).

that the present pleasure was part of the reason we wrongly estimated the future pleasure.

The badness of these pleasures results from the fact that they contribute to or cause a wrong opinion about the nature of an imagined event. But how about the other pleasures which themselves cause no opinion, but which we feel because we have a wrong opinion about the existence of an event? How are these pleasures bad? This question never receives a direct answer in the Philebus. My own interpretation of Plato's reasoning has already been hinted. I shall discuss it somewhat further at the end of the next section.

This marks the end of the second attempt to show that pleasures can be false. The first turned on the notion that we can be mistaken about whether or not we feel pleasures, but this was temporarily discarded because the hedonist would not admit that the falsity of the opinion made the pleasure false. The second has made a point which the hedonist must heed, for it shows, in part, that present pleasures can swerve him from future pleasures. Having made this point, Socrates is not satisfied. He has shown that some pleasures are misleading because they make us predict wrongly about future values; but the present pleasure, considered by itself, is still just as real, and considered apart from opinion, it is not clear what right we have to call it bad (41A). The present discussion (36C-41A) has been pertinent to our problem (as Socrates promised, 36D) because it has undermined the hedonist's

position on his own grounds, and because it has resulted in an enlightening analysis of the nature of value judgments. But it remains to show, in a more general sense, how the other mixed pleasures are bad in themselves. So far, our argument has been fought on the opponent's territory, and has vanquished only a few pleasures. Now the scope of the discussion widens; "of the false pleasures we must prove in another way that they exist and come into existence in us often and in great numbers" (41A, B).

The "other way" will consist in showing that pleasures are bad, not only because they are related to wrong opinion in the sense we have been trying to establish, but also because they "partake in another and multiform evil" (41A). This multiform evil is the unlimited (41D). The widest sense in which pleasures can be said to be bad is the degree to which they cannot be included in the mixture of the good life.

5. Now we turn to a sort of pleasure "still more false" (42C). Once more it turns out that the falsity depends on a wrong judgment; but this time with a difference. This time the error consists in thinking we feel a pleasure when in fact we feel none. This is a false pleasure in the sense that it is no pleasure at all; it does not exist. In this it is unlike the other false pleasures which, as Plato insisted, were real, but in some sense false or bad.

Only certain theorists are accused of this error, but we may suspect, as usual, that Plato intends his argument to

apply more widely. These theorists²⁵ make the error, Plato says, of holding that pleasure is freedom from pain. They base this opinion partly on the doctrine of Heraclitus that everything is always in motion; from this they conclude that the bodily changes which create the pleasures and pains of the body are continuous. Their argument seems to be (Plato omits this step) that therefore we always feel either the pain of the destruction of bodily harmony or the pleasure of its restoration. Thus we may say correctly that when we feel no pain we do feel pleasure. This is not quite the same as saying that pleasure is the absence of pain; perhaps the theorists in question also argued (although Plato does not tell us this either) that pleasure is really only a return to a less painful state, and that therefore what we call pleasure is really just the absence of pain.

In any case, Plato refutes the view that pleasure is absence of pain by referring once again to the "neutral life." At 32E ff. Socrates mentioned the neutral life in which neither destruction nor restoration was going on in the body, and remarked then that there was nothing to hinder a man from living such a life (33A). He asked his audience to remember this point because "it will make a great difference in our judgment of pleasure." Now we see that if we accept Heraclitus' dictum, there can be no such neutral condition.

25.

It seems impossible to identify them. Speusippus ~~can~~ not be meant because he recognized the neutral life and ~~called~~ it good, not pleasant.

There is a solution, however. Socrates grants that change does constantly take place in the human body. But just as some movements in the body are too slight to cause sensation (Philebus 33D), so some are too slight to cause pleasures and pains.²⁶ Growth, for instance, is so gradual we never feel it; but it is a real change. Thus we can say that the "great changes cause pains and pleasures, but the moderate and small ones cause no pleasures or pains at all" (43C). In this case, the neutral life is quite possible.

If the neutral life is a real possibility, then the opposition of pleasure and pain is not complete. It is not the case that absence of pleasure is pain, or of pain, pleasure. There is a further condition, the neutral position, which is absence of both. Freedom from pain is not to be identified with pleasure (43D). Freedom from pain may be (temporarily) pleasure or (indefinitely) the neutral state.

26.

The Timaeus explains the physiology of these experiences more fully. An affection which disturbs a normal state is painful if it is sudden; if it suddenly restores the normal state, it is pleasant. Slower changes are imperceptible. But even rapid changes may not cause pain or pleasure. Only if the change meets with resistance in the body do we feel pleasure or pain; if the change is readily accepted by the body, it results in perceptions only. An example of this is a cut from a sharp knife; there is little friction, so no pain is felt. A further possibility arises from the fact that disturbance of the bodily state may be slow, but the return rapid. In this case we feel only the pleasure, but not the pain (smells are of this nature). In the reverse situation (painful wounds are an example) we feel only the pain; the restoration is too slow to give pleasure (Timaeus 64A-D).

In the course of this discussion of the relation of pleasure and pain, we have hit upon an amusing example of "false" pleasure. For apparently these misguided men who say pleasure is absence of pain actually think they feel pleasure whenever they do not feel pain (44A). We have shown that there is an essential difference between feeling pleasure and not feeling pain; we can only conclude that we have discovered another case of the deceptiveness of pleasure.²⁷

There is a paradox in Plato's argument here which I am powerless to explain away. The gist of the present section (42C-44A) is to argue against those who say "that the pleasantest of all things is to live one's whole life long without pain," on the ground that absence of pain may be the neutral life and hence pleasureless as well. The argument against this position serves to show that there is another way one can be mistaken about pleasure; some people apparently think they feel a pleasure when there is, in fact, no pleasure at all. But to make this point, Plato seems to overlook two arguments, drawn from his own thesis, which imply that the man who argues for the absence of pain is right. The first is simply that, as Plato has just explained, a slow change can be painless. Why cannot a man live his life so that all destruction of bodily harmony is so slow that it is painless, while the restorations are

27.

Republic 583C ff. voices the same criticism: if pleasures and pains are "motions of the soul," the cessation of one will not be the other. The stationary state will be neither.

rapid enough to be pleasures? The second argument in favor of this position is more important. A large part of the Philebus is devoted to showing that some pleasures are pure -- unmixed with pain -- and the life which Plato recommends includes only such pleasures as far as possible. Therefore, not only would the life of no pain be capable of containing pleasures, namely the pure pleasures, but this would seem to be just the life which Plato is going to endorse as the good life! It is true that we are told that to live a really neutral life is impractical; nevertheless, this could be the aim of life, and it comes pretty close to the aim Plato endorses. If we now say that this is Plato's good life, but it cannot be that of those who deny the neutral life even in theory, then we may ask how it is that these theorists think it possible to "live one's whole life long without pain." The bodily changes have obvious limits before they reverse; on their theory, the proponents of avoiding pain would need to progress always towards greater bodily harmony, and this would seem impossible. At present, I see no way to explain these difficulties in this passage. Part, but only part, of the trouble may stem from the fact that throughout large sections of the Philebus Plato seems to forget that in his opinion some pleasures do not result from bodily change; yet he later points out quite clearly, with respect to the very theory under consideration here, that he cannot agree with "those who maintain that all pleasures are a cessation of pains" because he holds some pleasures to be real and pure (51A).

Plato now turns directly to a very important class of pleasures, a class which, we feel, he considered to be most typical of the pleasures advocated by the uncritical and unphilosophical hedonist. These are the pleasures which arise from bodily alteration and yet are simultaneously accompanied with pains which also arise from bodily alterations. This might seem at first impossible, but Plato shows that it is not.

In considering this group of pleasures, Plato says we may turn for guidance to those who hate pleasure the most. These are men who "divine the truth, not by acquired skill, but by some innate and not despicable repugnance which makes them hate the power of pleasure" (44C). These are the "true enemies of Philebus" (44B)²⁸ because they hold that since all pleasures are mixed with pain, no pleasure is real at all. This theory can neither be that of Plato himself, nor of Speusippus, but Plato obviously likes it. It is not Plato's theory because he holds bodily pleasures to be real, even if deceptive, bad, and "false"; and also because he thinks there is an entirely different kind of pleasure. It is not Speusippus' theory because Speusippus also believed that pleasures are real, although evil.²⁹ This theory is, however, very close in many respects to that of Speusippus, and would have the same moral consequences

28.

They are the "true enemies" because they would banish all real pleasure, since they deny its existence. Socrates is not an enemy, but a friend, of Philebus because he is willing, while arguing against a simple hedonism, to conserve as many pleasures as possible. He will not reject all pleasures.

29.

Cf. Hackforth, Plato's Examination of Pleasure, p. 87.

with respect to the kind of life a man should lead provided it admitted the possibility of a neutral life.

We may use these men to show that some pleasures are bad or false; but, as it will turn out, their arguments cannot prove all pleasures bad or false. Our rejection of their position is important, because it reveals the possibility of pleasures which are not mixed with pain. Nevertheless, we can learn a great deal from those who "hate the power of pleasure and think it so utterly unsound that its very attractiveness is mere trickery, not pleasure" (44C, D). These men, in their extreme distaste for pleasure, bid us regard the pleasures usually considered the most intense.³⁰ Such pleasures certainly originate in the body, and since bodily pleasures arise from a return to normal from an abnormal state, the greatest pleasures will result when the disruption has been most complete. We will be capable of more violent pleasures when we are ill, and the harmony of the body is upset, than when we are well (45A, B).³¹ We must not be misled by the fact that the pain also

30. The method of analysing the most characteristic or extreme case is used many times in the Philebus as one technique of the art of division. Cf. 20E, 53A, 55C, 60C.

31.

Cf. Republic 585C: "the more numerous and violent pleasures which reach the soul through the body are generally of this kind -- they are relief from pain." This passage from the Republic serves to remind us that even the most violent bodily pleasures only arise in the body; eventually they "reach the soul."

will be greatest; we are only interested in studying the greatest pleasures. By the same reasoning, we discover that pleasures are more intense in the life of excess (ὑβρις) than the life of self-restraint (45D). In general, the greatest pleasures attend the most thoughtless and dissolute; they arise in some depravity of the soul (ἐν τινὶ πονηρίᾳ ψυχῇ) and not in virtue (45E).

Let us take an extreme example -- the itch (τρίβη). This is, by itself, a pain which disrupts the harmony of the body. When we scratch, we feel an immense pleasure. But the itch may be partly internal, so that the scratching is only partial relief; in this case we feel both pain and pleasure at once. This is a mixture (46A), but not in the sense that the good life is a mixture. It is a mixture only in the sense that two extremes are experienced simultaneously. Such pleasures and pains may be about equal, or may contain more pleasure or more pain (46D); but in any case the effect is near to madness. The man in such a condition goes from utter wretchedness to inexpressible pleasure when the pleasure overcomes the pain (46E), he leaps with silly glee, shouts and gesticulates (47A); he is "pleased to death." This sort of man is urged on by excess to greater and greater pleasures, hardly noticing the pain. His sense of value and judgment is warped, his enjoyment perverted. He thinks he is happy. This is the condition of most people (47B):

The picture painted here reveals Plato attacking the things he hates most; in this he is entirely in agreement with the enemies of pleasure. It is just this irrational, animal life which is a "living death" to the thinking man. The body can be the tomb of the soul if it results in completely submerging the rational faculties. We are strongly reminded of the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines of the earlier dialogues where Plato apparently felt that the body was in all cases an impediment to happiness. Here he lets this view be told by others; he is now willing to let the body serve its function in the good life. But it must not usurp the reason and become the guide to action. Against this the fight must be strengthened. Here the earlier and later views merge. We recall how Socrates led Callicles to admit that by his standards, the life of the catamite is pleasant and happy.³² We remember how the old man Cephalus at the outset of the Republic says he is glad he is too old to enjoy the pleasures of love for "it is like escaping from bondage to a raving madman."³³

The effect of this passage is (and is meant) to discredit the mixed pleasures of the body utterly. They spring from disgusting conditions, they are due to depravity of the soul, and they issue in repulsive actions. The man who seeks them is foolish and ridiculous. But we must remember that

32. Gorgias 494C ff.

33. Republic 329E; cf. 403A; also Phaedrus 238C and 241D.

strictly, this is only one part of the analysis of pleasure. In the true dialectical procedure, judgment should be postponed until all the divisions have been revealed. In his anxiety to make these pleasures as unattractive as possible, Socrates has weighted the argument heavily.

6. One last mixture is left, the mixture of pleasure and pain in the soul. It is easy enough to show that such mixtures exist; anger, fear, yearning, mourning, love, jealousy and envy are all pains of the soul, and yet in each of them we also find pleasure at times (47E).³⁴ The emotions we feel when we see a tragedy are similar; we weep, and yet we derive pleasure from the very weeping (48A).³⁵ This may be argued against tragedy, for it is an invitation to enjoy vicariously emotions of which we would otherwise be ashamed. We take pleasure in feelings which might much better be permitted to

34.

Here Socrates quotes from Homer a line which says that wrath is "sweeter than honey from the comb." It is interesting to note that this passage (*Iliad* xviii. 109) is immediately preceded by a line which reads "Would that strife might perish from the gods and from men." (1.107). This line is quoted by Heraclitus with disapproval (frag. 43, I. Bywater, *Heracliti Ephesii Reliquiae*) for Heraclitus held that strife is essential to existence. This is the very point which Plato has just debated (*Philebus* 43A), referring to Heraclitus. If all pleasures are in strife, none are true in the sense of being fit to enter into the good life. This is as much the case with the pleasures of the soul as with those of the body.

35.

The rhapsode who delivers a poem enjoys a rather different mixture: he sees his audience weeping, but wants to laugh himself because of the money he'll take in! (*Ion* 535E)

wither away; even men of high character are corrupted
(Republic 605C-608B). It is evil to feel many of these
emotions at all; it is perverted to take pleasure in them. 36

Now Socrates proposes to prove that there is a mixture of pleasure and pain in comedy. The proof of a mixture is easy with the case of love and fear and the rest, but the example of comedy is so difficult that if he can prove it, he can prove any (50C, D). It is all the more interesting because of its obscurity (48B). Introduced as a tour de force, the main point made in advance, the discussion of the nature of the ridiculous is set as a relaxing and brilliant interlude in the otherwise dense and labored text of the Philebus. Assured explicitly that this entr'acte will be as intricate as possible, yet that it is making an easy point, we are permitted to ease the pressure of detailed commentary. This is the one part of the Philebus that is meant to be read primarily for amusement, not for deep reflection.

Here we shall give, then, only a brief summary: the spring of humor is error. We consider a man ridiculous when he is mistaken about himself. He may be mistaken in any num-

36.

It is an interesting speculation that the juxtaposition in the Philebus of this attack on tragedy as impure, and of the section following on the pure (καθαρὸν) pleasures may have suggested to Aristotle his defense of tragedy as a καθάρσις, or purification. Aristotle suggests that the mixture of emotions we feel at a drama purges us harmlessly of the evil ones.

ber of ways: about his wealth, his physical condition, his physical appearance, or his virtue (48D, E).³⁷ We find this error about himself amusing, even when we find it in friends, provided it is not accompanied by power. Ignorance implemented by power is not funny, it is dangerous (49B, C). The amusement we find in the harmless cases is certainly a pleasure. But where (asks Protarchus) is the mixture? Let us examine our emotion more closely. After all, ignorance is an evil (48B, 49E). If we laugh at our friend for being ignorant, we are laughing at his misfortune. The cause for this can only be envy (48B, 50A); this is the only excuse for taking pleasure in our friend's mishaps. Certainly this is wrong of us, but we do do it sometimes (49D). (There is nothing wrong, and perhaps we would not even call it envy, when we rejoice in the misfortunes of our enemies; that is perfectly natural, 49D). The mixture comes in this: when we witness the ridiculous spectacle of a friend who is mistaken about himself, we laugh. This laughter is a pleasure; but at the same time, this laughter proves that we are envious, for otherwise we would not take delight in a friend's ill plight. But envy is a painful emotion. Hence we feel pleasure and pain at once (50A). And this, we are

37.

This corresponds to the fourfold division of goods a man may have: health, beauty, strength and wealth (Laws 661A). A somewhat similar division is given in Nicomachean Ethics 1098b which states that this grouping is of "long standing" and "generally accepted by students of philosophy."

left to surmise, is the basic experience we have at a comedy.³⁸

Thus we have shown, as we set out to do, that in "mournings and tragedies and comedies, not only on the stage, but in all the tragedy and comedy of life, and in many other ways, pain is mixed with pleasure" (50B). With the discussion of mixtures of pains and pleasures of the soul, we have completed our division of mixed pleasures.

7. We must remember that our division of pleasures proceeded according to three principles; we considered first those pleasures which were mixed with pain temporally, because they were born of process; these we divided into the simple and the complex. The complex were mixed in another way, since simultaneous pleasures and pains were found to be common. Lastly, we divided all these subdivisions into those pleasures and pains which are of the body, those which are of the soul, and combinations of these two. Now we return to the highest division, and ask whether there may not be some pleasures which are completely unmixed with pain because they are not connected with bodily alteration. If there are such, we may divide them into those which originate in the body and those which are of the soul; but no further division is possible, since they cannot be mixed simultaneously with pains. These are the pleasures for which the loophole has been so laboriously left open; the

38.

The serious aspect of this virtuoso display of the dialectic technique is of course that even seemingly innocent pleasures of amusement may be mixed not only with pain, but with evil. For envy is a debased and childish emotion (49A).

pleasures which can be enjoyed without any corresponding or accompanying pain. They can exist in the neutral state in which no perceptible change takes place; they disprove the thesis that pleasure is merely absence of pain (51A).

These pleasures we call "unmixed" because, since they do not result from a restoration of bodily harmony, they do not necessarily involve a reciprocal pain; nor do they, like the pleasures of anticipation or desire, result from the painful lack of something; nor do they, like the pleasures of comedy, involve some simultaneous and debased pain. And since these unmixed pleasures (whatever they may be) contain no element of the painful, we may say they are most truly pleasant. Or we may use another word to refer to this character of the unmixed pleasures: we may speak of them as "pure" (καθαρός, 51D, 52C), in the way in which we call any unadulterated thing pure (52D). The unmixed pleasures differ from the mixed in another sense also; we are not so apt to judge them incorrectly because they do not (like the mixed pleasures) occur only in a context with pain. It is not by virtue of any mere contrast that the pure pleasures are pleasant, since there is nothing to contrast them with. While mixed pleasures and pains may deceive us by a momentary contrast into thinking we feel more pain or more pleasure than we actually do, or into thinking a pain is actually a pleasure, so that we may say the pleasure or pain is only an appearance, not the reality, this sort of error cannot arise with reference to the pure pleasures (51A). The pure

pleasures are what they seem to be, for there is no element in them which makes for deceit. Allowing the same sort of extension of a characteristic from the accompanying judgment to the pleasure or pain judged as we made in the case of "true" and "false" pleasures, we may say that the pure pleasures are intrinsically pleasant, and not just relatively (51C, D).³⁹ We may express this conclusion in a different way. The pure pleasures are not deceptive, either in the sense of being capable of causing us to make false predictions (like the pleasures of anticipation), or in the sense of presenting an appearance which does not correspond to the reality. But these were the characteristics which led us to call some of the mixed pleasures "false." Since the unmixed pleasures are incapable of deceiving us, we may call them "true" (51A, B).

The unmixed, pure, real, true pleasures are of three sorts, two of the body, and one of the mind. Those of the body which Socrates now mentions are certain pleasures of sight, sound, and smell. The first two are grouped together as pleasures of the first kind.

a. Aesthetic pleasures of the first kind. Among the pleasures of the first kind are those which we experience when

39.

This is not so simple in the case of the mixed pleasures which are not really pleasant at all, but are judged pleasant because the pain has diminished. In such a case, the pleasure may be said, loosely, to be only relatively pleasant; actually, however, there is no pleasure at all, so that it is the judgment which is relative, not the pleasure.

contemplating beautiful colors and forms ($\sigma\chi\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$, 51B). We can test the fact that these are pure pleasures by seeing if the lack of them is a pain. By this, all we can mean to ask is whether the pleasure of seeing colors and shapes results from a restoration of a disturbed bodily condition. The aesthetic pleasures do not seem to result from any change in the bodily condition. We may desire them deeply; but our desire will not (like the desire for food) spring from an unbalanced bodily state. It is true that we may even feel pain at not experiencing some aesthetic pleasure, but this pain would result from reflecting on the absence of circumstances which might enable us to enjoy the pleasure, and not in any sense from the pleasure itself.

Two possible misapprehensions about the nature of the objects which yield this kind of pleasure are cleared up. The forms which yield pure pleasure must exist as objects of sensation. They are geometric shapes produced by the imposition of pure forms (lines and circles) on some material by the artisan's tools, such as the compass ($\tau\acute{o}\pi\rho\varsigma$), ruler ($\kappa\alpha\upsilon\acute{\omega}\nu$) and square ($\gamma\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$, 51C). These productions can be either two or three dimensional, plane or solid. We must not make the error (committed⁴⁰ by Wilamowitz-Möllendorf⁴⁰) of

40.

"Die Formen, die ihn erfreuen, sind die abstrakten reinen Formen von Kreisen, Linien, und Winkeln....Es sind zwar nicht die Sinnlich realen Kugeln, Körper, uns., sondern ihre Vorbilder im Reiche der Ideen" (Platon, p. 633).

The Greeks frequently failed to make a distinction between abstract and realized geometric shapes. Euclid, for

thinking of these forms as ideal or abstract. They are the objects of sensation ($\alpha\sigma\Theta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, 51B), not of thought.

On the other hand, Socrates states that he does not mean to include "animals or paintings" among the objects which produce pure pleasures. The reason is not difficult to guess. The pleasures we feel at tragedy and comedy are impure, mixed, because certain non-aesthetic emotions arise from non-aesthetic aspects of the spectacle, and adulterate any pleasures which might be pure. To a lesser degree, this is true of pictures and the beauties of nature. We are distracted by the emotive and symbolic contents which pollute our reactions. As an aesthetician, Plato favors non-objective art; he would enjoy the work of Mondrian or Bauer.

Among the pleasures of the first kind are also those sounds which "are smooth and clear and send forth a single pure note" (51D).⁴¹ These notes, while objects of sensation, are devoid of any of the emotional overtones which attach to

instance, defined a sphere as follows: "When, the diameter of a semi-circle remaining fixed, the semi-circle is carried round and restored again to the same position from which it began to be moved, the figure so comprehended is a sphere" (Euclid, xi, def. 14). But Plato did make just this distinction which the geometricians failed to make, for we hear of him berating his geometer friends for describing shapes in terms of operations rather than concepts (Plutarch, Quaestiones Conviviales 718E-F), and we know that he can produce the abstract definition of a sphere (unlike the one quoted from Euclid) when he desires (Timaeus 33B).

41.

Cf. Republic 617C: the Sirens in the myth of Er sing a "single sound on one note."

harmonies, intervals, scales, and the more complex combinations to which Plato objects in the Republic (398C ff.).

b. Aesthetic pleasures of the second kind. The aesthetic pleasures, while all pure, constitute a hierarchy. In the Philebus Plato does not suggest any superiority of sight to sound, but elsewhere we learn that sight is the most valuable possession we have because it is the source of all philosophy (Timaeus 47A, B), and sound follows next; sight is to the visible universe what dialectic is to the intelligible universe (Republic 532B). There is a clear step down to the pleasures of smell; they belong to a less "divine class" than those of sight and sound (Philebus 51E). But the pleasures of smell are not mixed with pain, and so it must be admitted that they are pure. Their inferiority may spring from several sources. The pleasures of smell are less distinct, less measurable, than those of sight and sound. The objects we appreciate with our sense of smell are not so definite or crisp. Moreover, there is some doubt whether the pleasure of smell may not be the result of gradual restoration of a bodily state which was deranged so slowly we were unable to perceive or be pained by the disruptive movement (Timaeus 65A).⁴²

42.

Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1176a on the superiority of sight to touch because it does not have to come in contact with its object; of hearing and smell to taste for the same reason.

8. The existence of the pure pleasures of the body has shown that the neutral life, in which no appreciable change in body condition takes place, can still be pleasant. A man could lead such a life, and even enjoy it. When we originally concluded that no man would desire the neutral life because every man desires some pleasure, we spoke too soon. The neutral life without pleasure is for the gods only; but there may be a neutral life for man which contains pure pleasure. Now we see that this is (theoretically) possible even apart from the body, for there are the pure pleasures of the third kind, the pleasures of knowledge (52A). Early in the dialogue (12D) we were prepared for these pleasures, for we spoke there of the pleasure the wise man takes in his wisdom.

Although ignorance is an evil (48C) we cannot say that the pleasures of knowledge result from or are directly related to pains. The evil of ignorance is not generally a pain at all, for it is a lack rather than a positive disproportion. Like the lack of aesthetic pleasure, we may feel pain if we are full of knowledge, and then lose it. But the pain results, not directly from the loss (as it does in the loss of harmony in the body), but from reflecting on the loss (52A, B). We can speak only metaphorically of knowledge "filling" the ignorant as food fills the hungry (Republic 584B, C).

This short section of the Philebus plays an enormous role in the logical development of the dialogue, for on the existence of the pure pleasures depends the entire possibility

of effecting a compromise between the partisans of pleasure and the partisans of mind. This is the case because the pure pleasures are apparently the only ones Plato is willing to admit to the final mixture,⁴³ all others being rejected because they are "mixed" in the negative sense (i.e., they partake incurably of the unlimited.)

Here there follows a section (52C-55C) the purpose of which is to evaluate pleasure as a potential ingredient in the good life and to examine anew its claim to be the end of life. It seems most convenient to postpone this part of the argument until the other ingredients, the forms of knowledge, have been classified. This section will therefore be considered in the final chapter.

43.

With the possible exception of the "necessary" pleasures (Philebus 62E).

CHAPTER VI

THE ANALYSIS OF MIND (55C-59D)

1. We have already seen to what degree pleasure depends on functions of the mind: on memory, desire, perception, judgment, opinion, and the pleasures of knowledge. Now we turn to an analysis, or division, of mind, viewed in direct relation to the good life. Mind, we remember, is doubly related to the final mixture; as cause, and as part. Mind's claim to be part is based on its practical ability to maintain, or constantly recreate, the good life. This ability may be expressed in one word: art ($\tau\epsilon\chi\eta$). This is the creative manifestation of mind, which imposes limit, renders intelligible, arranges, judges, rejects. Its final act in producing a "work of art" or mixture is synthetic and practical; but the synthesis depends on the theoretic or analytic function in turn, both to define and picture the goal, and to analyze the potential parts. We can say neither that art is exclusively practical nor that it is exclusively theoretical; the two parts are interdependent. The goal itself, the mixture, the happy life or health or the good community or whatever it may be, is not set by the art which exists for it, but is defined and produced by that art. In this sense, the art (with both its practical and theoretical aspects) is still only a device or tool; it serves some end

beyond itself. Most arts do not include themselves as part of the mixture they produce; this is a characteristic of the art of happiness. As the condition and creator of the good life, mind stands outside the end it serves; viewed as contained wholly in the mixture, mind partakes of the end and becomes part of the goal, the valuable, the good.

Mind is now to be analyzed in the same way in which pleasure was (55C). Taking art in the broadest sense to cover all creative functions of mind,¹ we can apply diaeresis to art itself. Since as with pleasure, our aim is to find which parts of the whole to be divided (mind or art in this case) are suitable or necessary to the mixture, our principle of division must separate those parts which are most pure, unmixed, measured and true from the parts which are less so (55C; 57A, B).

2. There are varying degrees of preciseness in the methods used by the arts. The degree may be determined by observing the extent to which an art employs operations which use number, such as weighing, counting, measuring (55E). Our first division of the arts will be on this basis, then: we shall divide them into those which make a large and essential use of number, and those which make less. In general, this is the distinction between the arts which produce concrete objects and those which deal with education, society, and the support

1. This is an extension of the use of the term even for the Greeks, as Socrates notes (55E, 56A). Cf. Wild, Plato's Theory of Man, p. 45 ff.

of society (55D). In the first kind of art, tools of precision are used: compasses, lathes, the chalk-line (56B). In the second kind, experience is the chief guide; the methods are more flexible, the result less tangible; skill rather than accuracy counts (55E, 56A).

Into the more precise group we can put the arts of building, ship-building, house-building and carpentry, for they use measures and accurate instruments (56B).² The less exact arts include music, medicine, agriculture, piloting and generalship (56A, B). In one sense, mathematics and geometry can be considered as independent arts; then we may classify them as the purest (56C). But in another sense, arithmetic and geometry are used by all the other arts; for measuring, counting and weighing are just applied mathematics and geometry. It is to the degree to which it uses mathematics that any art rises above mere acquired skill and produces accurate, precise, certain results (55E, 56A). And no art can be completely free of this element; if arithmetic, measuring and weighing were taken from any art, it would be about useless (55E).³

2.

We are reminded that the objects which produce the pure pleasures were made in the same way (51C).

3.

Cf. Republic 525B ff. which points out that even the arts of military strategy and statesmanship, which are among the less accurate arts, require applied mathematics. The art of piloting depends on navigation, which is applied mathematics and geometry.

These considerations enable us to say that the results of some arts are "truer" than others, for their methods are objective and precise rather than subjective and vague, just as we were able to say that some pleasures were "truer" because we could judge them more accurately (55C). But this must not mislead us into thinking that because measure and number is the "ruling element" (55D) of every art, therefore the accurate arts are placed in some ultimate hierarchy above the less accurate. In the hierarchy of precision, they are above; but in the hierarchy of ends, they may be above or they may not. The accurate art of ship-building exists as a means for the less accurate art of commerce; the less accurate art of commerce is a means for the even less accurate art of statesmanship. On the other hand, the less accurate art of tree-husbandry (a branch of agriculture) is a means for the more accurate art of carpentry. In the hierarchy of ends, two arts stand at the top, twin aspects of the philosopher's task, and all arts serve them: the art of statesmanship, which produces the good state; and the art of happiness, which produces the good life.

3. It is clear that the first broad division of arts into more and less accurate is concerned with each art in its entirety, considering its methods, its materials, and its manifestations. Only in such a context would Plato speak of music as a "less accurate" art (56C). He is thinking here of

the actual production of music, based on practice, on ear; he speaks of the flautist feeling for the pitch of a note (58A). But music, we have learned already in the Philebus, embodies also a core of mathematical rigor; the intervals are measured by numbers (17D), and harmony as a limit sets a ratio or proportion into the unlimited of pitch and time to establish "music in all its perfection." In earlier dialogues, music is compared to philosophy (Phaedo 61A); to love (Symposium 187B); to astronomy (Republic 530C ff.); it is recommended for leading the soul to inner harmony (Republic 399E; 401D; 441E); we are told that philosophy, tempered with music, is the only savior of virtue throughout life (Republic 549B). But despite the therapeutic value of music, the purity of its intervals, the pattern which it sets for all ratios and harmonies, it is a threat to the balance of the state (Republic 424C); it is dangerous;⁴ it is full of imitation (Philebus 62B, C).

The solution of this paradox is a distinction. We may view music in two ways. On the one hand, there is musical theory, based on the mathematical ratios which represent the various intervals and modes and harmonies, and the mathematical proportions which govern meter and rhythm. On the other hand, there is making music, the actual production of notes on some specific instrument. The first part of the art of music is pure because it is theoretical; the other part is impure because it deals with the stubborn world of fact. The development

4.

Cf. Demos, The Philosophy of Plato, p. 217.

of the theory of music by the Pythagoreans had always interested Plato;⁵ in the Republic (530C-531C) he says the pythagoreans are "just like the astronomers -- intent upon the numerical properties embodied in the audible consonances." He contrasts their methods with those who "attempt to settle problems by the ear alone," who "tease and torture the strings, racking them on the pegs." Even the art of astronomy has its empirical as well as its theoretical side: the heavens can be studied as models, like the diagrams of geometry; but the perfect ratios are not to be observed (Republic 529E, 530A).

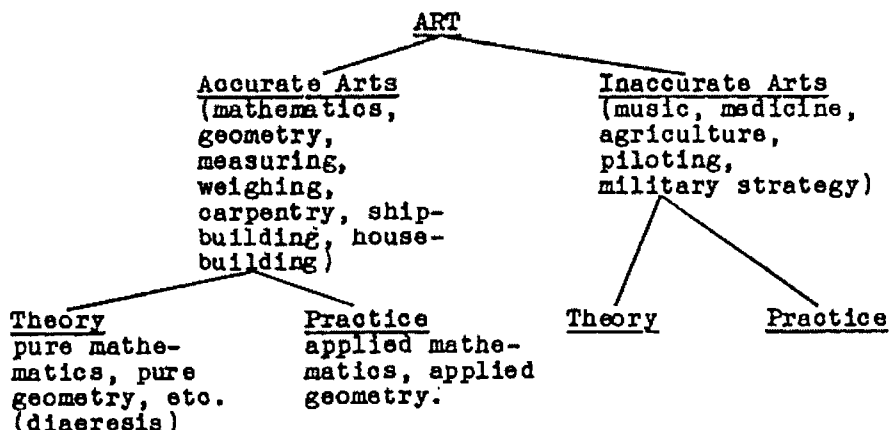
This, then, is a further principle of division: we may divide the arts into the analytic and synthetic, the theoretical and practical, the pure and applied (56D). It is an error, however, to think that this division doubles the number of arts. There are not really two arts of arithmetic, two of piloting, two of measuring. Instead, the analytic and practical are two aspects of the same art (57C); each art is twofold, although we group these parts under one common name (57D).

While this new division is closely related to the first, it can be distinguished. The first dichotomy separated the more precise from the less precise arts. The second separates the theory from the practice. One way of distinguishing the precise arts was to observe to what degree they used mathematics. Now we see that mathematics itself has two aspects.

5.

A study of the fragments of Philolaus (whether they are genuine or not) shows how close Plato and Pythagorean musical doctrine come, not only in technical detail, but also in philosophic implication.

There is applied mathematics, with which we add and subtract the unequal units of the phenomenal world; there is pure mathematics which deals with abstract, uniform monads (56D, E).⁶ The first division, as we observed, was made on the basis of the practical precision of the art. The judgment was entirely in terms of technique. Carpentry was accurate because its tools and methods were accurate. The second division separates technique, whether accurate or not, from the theory which supports and directs it. This separation can be carried out for every art. We have already seen that it can be done for mathematics, astronomy and music; we may also separate the practical art of calculation (λογιστική) from pure (analytic) geometry (56E, 57A);⁷ and likewise for all the other arts. This double division may be represented by the following diagram:



6.
Cf. Republic 524D-526C.

7. Cf. Gorgias 450D ff.; also Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1098a: "a carpenter and a geometer both seek after a right angle, but in different ways; the former is content with that approximation to it which satisfies the purpose of his work; the latter, being a student of truth, looks for its essence."

It is possible to define the second dichotomy in terms of the subject-matter: the theory of any art is expressed in formulae, equations, statements of relations between terms, definitions. The theoretical part of an art is about classes, ideas, signs, eternal truths; the statements which constitute the theory are certain and absolute, and no matter of fact can refute them. The practical part of an art deals with the visible world; it is made up of techniques and experiments, and its statements are opinions, its products approximations. Either aspect of an art can be pursued alone. The theory may be studied for its own sake (Politicus 259E, 260A). This yields a characteristic pleasure (12D), it is good for the soul, it has the greatest regard for clearness, exactness and truth. But in itself, it is relatively useless (58B, C); it is laughable to have only pure knowledge and not be able to use it (62A, B). The purest art must serve some purpose (Euthydemus 291A-292E), and wisdom must lead to achievement. It is not enough merely to possess knowledge; we must use it (Euthydemus 280 ff.).

Practice of an art may degenerate into meaningless technique if theory is neglected, on the other hand (55E).⁸ The theoretical must support, assist and direct the practical. The practical applies and makes available the theoretical. The two parts of an art are needed each by the other, and both must

8.

Cf. Wild, Plato's Theory of Man, p. 55.

be present or the art will suffer. This point will be made again in the final chapter (Philebus 62B, C).

Searching through our classification, it is perfectly clear which arts contain the greatest degree of accuracy. The arts which we called more exact, arithmetic, measuring, carpentry and the rest, are by definition the more accurate. And in each of these, the theoretic elements are absolute, pure and precise (57C, D). Perhaps as a general sort of definition, we may call the absolute truths the interest of the philosopher, for it is the philosopher who is interested in the eternal and true, while most people are interested only in the visible world and the practical products (56D; 57C, D). This does not mean, however, that the philosopher and dialectician has no practical interest in the world. For, as we have tried to demonstrate at length, while the truths of combination are certain -- as certain as any, according to Plato -- they are not of merely theoretical interest. For not only do they tell us what is good, thus setting the ends of practical endeavor, but they tell us also (at least in outline) how these ends can be achieved; how, that is, the good product is to be made, and out of what ingredients. Part of the dialectical method uses mind in its creative function, the function which is to man what the creative cause of the good is to the universe. Dialectic, if I am right, is neither wholly passive, nor wholly theoretical; like other arts, it has its practical, creative aspect. Plato's

admission that Gorgias' art of persuasion may be more practical than the art of dialectic (58A, B),⁹ therefore seems to me to be no more than an ironic, and possibly wistful, reference to the fact that persuasion more often moves men than reason. I cannot imagine that Plato seriously intends us to believe that dialectic has no practical application; on the contrary, if we are to take the Philebus seriously at all, we are bound to see that no art can be more serious nor more truly productive than dialectic.

Nor, I think, can we count it against an art or science that it studies the visible universe. Plato's objection is rather against those arts which study nothing more, which see in the universe no good cause, no created pattern. To see nothing but the visible universe is to study the shifting facts of opinion indeed; but this is not to contend that there are no permanent truths to be learned from observation of the world. For, as we have seen, it is preeminently through study of the created world that we learn the basic truths of combination and learn the true ends of creation.

We have already considered the question whether the things in which dialectic is interested are the ideas alone. It remains, then, only to sum up. Socrates goes on to glorify the philosophic pursuit: he points out that most men who study

9.

In the Gorgias (452D ff.; 448C) Socrates is not so reserved in his opinion of the art of persuasion.

nature study only its visible and passing manifestations (59A); that their toil has as its goal knowledge of appearances and transient productions only, while the philosopher discovers the eternal verities (59A); that only dialectic studies a truth which cannot change (59B). Since the subject matter of dialectic is everything which is fixed, pure, true and unmixed, we should give the fairest names to those parts of the soul which use dialectic (59C, D). Mind and wisdom (*νοῦς καὶ φρόνησις*) certainly are the philosophic elements in the soul; and these are the very names Socrates called his candidates at the beginning (59D; cf. 11B, 13E).

CHAPTER VII - THE FINAL SYNTHESIS

(52C-55C; 59D-67B)

1. Analysis is complete, the potential ingredients have been segregated, measured and classified; we may say the materials are at hand out of which (ἐξ ὧν) mind, like an artisan (δημιουργός), is to create the mixture (59E). It is time to turn, therefore, to the final act of the art of happiness, the creation of the good life for man. We learn now how the principles of combination apply, in one important case, to the ordering of a mixture; we see how the fruits of division can be employed by the mind when it is guided by the right purpose. That part of the art which separates "like from like" has done its job; now we must separate "good from bad." And having selected the appropriate elements, we must assign them their relative functions and blend them together skillfully, forming the harmonious whole. The mind whose functions have been so carefully discriminated must now act as cause to fashion the very mixture of which it is a part. When the mixture has been synthesized, the art of happiness will have completed its task.

In the present section, interest is focussed again on the good life for man. The previous discussions of division, collection and the principles of combination, of the types of pleasure and the functions of mind are here made to pay their

way directly by the light they throw on the central issue. One important passage (59C-61C) does, to be sure, consider the characteristics of any mixture; but it is introduced for the purpose of establishing the true place and function of the human mind in the good life. Although it is the "dwelling place" and "threshold" of "the good" (61A; 64B) to which we breathlessly approach, all we learn about the good is how we are to "hunt it down" (56A) in "rough outline" (61A) by inspecting the nature and qualities of the good life itself. And when, at the end, the results of the dialogue are announced ceremoniously "to the world at large", these results are contained in a list of "possessions" which describe the good life for man (66A).

Grand and conclusive as this promises to be, at least with respect to the good life for man, it is necessary to say that in fact the parts of the Philebus to which we are now turning our attention are probably the most confused, and the hardest to decipher in the dialogue. In general, logic gives way here to rhetoric and the bold announcement of results, the most distant sort of connection is accepted as proof or evidence, and the many ambiguities of language and of thesis which we have already noted combine to create an atmosphere of incomprehensible profundity. As a result, students of Plato from the days of Alexander to the present have found a blissful haven in this part of the Philebus, for here they have discovered, hidden, but clear and mighty (to them) -- whatever it was they were looking for. Interpreters of the Philebus, too, have frequently

turned their eyes first to the positive-sounding "hierarchy of the good" at the end of the dialogue and have interpreted, or tried to interpret, the rest of the dialogue in terms of what they thought they found there.

These errors I shall avoid because I have not based my interpretations upon these final and obscure passages. The "list of goods" at 66A ff. is clearly, to my way of thinking, a summary of what goes before, and cannot be expected to add anything to the more detailed passages which it summarizes. By the same token, the selection and mixing of the ingredients of the good life may tell us something more of Plato's prejudices, but it cannot tell us much more about the principles of the selection and combination which have already been discussed at length. If the results do not follow the principles, then they are irrelevant or contradictory; while if they do, they can only confirm what we have already been told. I do not expect, therefore, to uncover any new or startling truths in these last pages.

This is not, unfortunately, to say that no difficulties of interpretation remain. On the contrary, the various alternative definitions, interpretations and theories which we have with more or less success so far presented in relative isolation, now offer almost insuperable problems in their application. I doubt that it is possible to unravel, with any hope of achieving real clarity, the various interwoven meanings, theories and definitions, some of them contradictory, which

come together in the last pages of the Philebus. If this confession of defeat shows that I have failed to find the "true meaning" of the Philebus, then I am bound to admit my failure. In what follows, therefore, I shall do little more than try to show how the concluding passages of the Philebus, so far as I understand them, bear on the results which we have already reached. Since those results are highly inconclusive, so our treatment of these passages will be equally inconclusive.

In introducing the aspect of dialectic which deals with combination (Chapter II, Section 9) I suggested, tentatively, that combination could be considered as comprising three parts, evaluation, selection and mixing. These parts are by no means clearly discriminable in the dialogue; they are merely abstractions which are somewhat helpful in organizing the discussion. I shall use them here again in their application to the good life. It should be clearly understood, however, that this division is not meant as part of the interpretation of the Philebus. Even as a plan for organizing the discussion it has its obvious shortcomings; but it will, I believe, serve as some sort of guide in what follows.

2. I intend, in this section, to consider the way in which and, so far as I can, the grounds on which Plato evaluates the various forms of pleasure and of mind preparatory to making the mixture of the good life. In doing this it is necessary to review ground already covered, for the "divisions" of pleasure

and mind were performed for the purpose of revealing the relative worth of the ingredients discriminated. Nevertheless, there are several points which remain to be discussed, and the opportunity of correlating the judgments already delivered or implied will serve to introduce the other functions of combination. I shall consider first the evaluation of mind, and then that of pleasure.

a. The evaluation of mind, taken in the widest sense, is a concern of the entire Philebus. The questions of how mind is related to pleasure, what its function in the good life is, how it operates in the universe and how it should operate in man; these questions form, in one way or another, the subject of almost every passage. Those commentators who have held that the "analysis of pleasure" is the central topic of the Philebus seem never to have considered that as good a case, or better, could be made out that the evaluation of mind is the central topic; for it would be easy to show that the analysis of pleasure is subservient to the demonstration of the superiority of mind. It is not my present intention, however, to review the entire treatment of mind, but rather to relate certain of the points already discussed to a very special problem concerning mind in the Philebus. The problem is this: in what sense has Plato shown that mind is "akin" to the good? We have considered how the purposes of the cosmic mind define the good essences of everything in the world, including man, how man's mind acts as cause to create the mixture in man, and we have learned why no one would prefer a life

of pleasure to a life of pleasure mixed with mind. But we have not considered how the results of these discussions prove man's mind to be "akin" to the good. Yet this is surely a conclusion very near the heart of Plato's argument, and one which he is extremely exercised to establish.

It may be suggested that all Plato intends to establish is that man's mind must create the good life, and that it is therefore an indispensable means to the good life, and an indispensable ingredient in the self-sufficient life. And it may be added that this is all that his arguments tend to prove. I agree that Plato does not, in fact, prove in any ordinary sense of "prove" that man's mind is in some further way related to the good; but that he believes it and intends to establish it seems to me quite evident. This can be seen, I think, from the following considerations. The original three "conditions" or criteria of the good showed no more than that the good life must contain both mind and pleasure; they made no pretense at proving one of the two elements superior to the other. The argument which was to award the "second prize" to mind was introduced subsequently (22C ff.), after admitting that the first prize went to the mixed life. At that point, Socrates stated he would try to show that mind is the "cause" (*αἰτία*, 22D) of the mixed life, so that while neither pleasure or mind would constitute the good life, mind would be "that which makes the good what it is" (22D).

This then is the point for which I will contend with Philebus even more warmly than before: that whatever it is which, by its inclusion in this mixed life, makes that life both desirable and good, it is something to which mind is nearer and more akin than pleasure (22D).

These remarks share ambiguities and confusions already noted: the word "cause" is ambiguous, for we cannot tell whether Plato means that mind is the creative agent which is the efficient cause of the mixture, or that mind is the ingredient which, by its mere inclusion in the good life, necessarily implies that the mixture is good, or that mind is an ingredient such that, unless it were included, we could not say that the mixture had the property of being good. The word "makes" shares the same ambiguity: does mind "make" the mixture good as a causal agent, or does its presence in the mixture logically imply the property of goodness? The longer passage quoted above seems to say that mind is one ingredient in the good life, and that there is another ingredient which "makes" it good, and that mind resembles, or is otherwise connected with, this other ingredient. Yet this is surely not Plato's meaning; there are never any other ingredients named besides mind and pleasures. There are two other meanings which appear possible. One is that the thing to which mind (meaning man's mind) is akin is the cosmic mind, that it is the cosmic mind which "makes the good life both desirable and good." This suggestion is certainly possible, and it would be logical because the part of the Philebus which follows deals with the relation of the cosmic mind to the human mind, and it tries to show that the human mind wins "second prize"

just because of its resemblance to or relation to the cosmic mind. Yet even in this case, the ambiguity of the "makes" haunts us. Does the cosmic mind act as efficient cause to make the mixed life good? Then how is man's mind to receive any credit at all? If man's mind is caused to cause the good life, it has no more than instrumental value, and could no more be said to be akin to the cosmic cause than the hammer to the carpenter. Does the cosmic mind cause the mixed life to be good in the sense that it is its purpose which defines the goodness of all things? Then man's mind is not likewise good, for man's mind conceives other and less valuable purposes. And in any case, it would not be man's mind which made the good life good in this sense, as we have already pointed out.

The second meaning we can give this passage, and the one which seems the most plausible, is that there is some property, or group of properties, which constitutes the goodness of the mixed life, and that mind is "akin" to it. The problem in this case is what it can mean to say that mind is "akin" to a property. The words for "kinship" and "similarity" are used by Plato very loosely; and I wish to examine what they may mean in this context.

Immediately after Socrates has announced his intention of showing how mind is the cause of the goodness of the mixed life, he says that "if my objective is to secure the second prize for mind I must have weapons different from those of my previous arguments" (23B); and what follows is the fourfold

classification of the limit, unlimited, mixture and cause. This sequence does, I admit, imply that mind is akin to "whatever it is which makes the mixed life good" for the reasons which emerge in the fourfold classification. Yet these reasons, as I have tried to show, merely prove mind to be an indispensable means to the good, whereas Plato's point, as I understand it, requires that mind be intrinsically good, in some sense an end. We cannot, therefore, consider that Plato has shown, up to the present section of the dialogue, that man's mind is intrinsically good, or like an intrinsic good, or even better than some pleasures.

Plato's answer is contained, I believe, in the passages beginning at 64B, some of which we have already discussed. Consider, for instance, the following remark, which follows upon a description of how the mixed life is constituted: "And what...shall we regard as the most valuable thing in our mixture...? If we discover that, we can go on to consider whether this factor in the whole scheme of things is closer and more akin to pleasure, or to mind" (64C). The words here clearly recall those at 22D; and in the sequel, the kinship of mind with the properties which are said to indicate, at least, the property of goodness is examined. It is here then, and not in the fourfold classification, that the true superiority of mind is to be established. A curious point, however, is raised by the words "in the whole scheme of things." This is most easily taken as meaning that it is the cosmic cause which is

most akin to reason, for it is the cause which has, above all, been shown to be a factor "in the whole scheme of things."¹ And if this were the meaning of the words, then the whole answer would be contained in the fourfold classification after all, for it was already shown there just what the relation between the cosmic cause and man's mind is. Yet in the pages which follow, the cosmic cause is not mentioned, and the "most valuable thing" is rather the property of goodness, roughly defined by three other properties. Of course, these are properties which belong to all good things, to all mixtures; and hence they are a factor in the whole scheme of things also. We must assume, then, that the phrase does not refer to the cosmic cause at all, and that it points ahead to the properties of a mixture which make it good.

The properties of the mixture which make it good are, as we have seen, beauty, proportion and truth. The problem is to show how each of these is more akin to mind than to pleasure (65B). It is true that these properties, if they are equivalent to goodness, are likewise equivalent to the property of corresponding to the purpose of the cosmic cause; so that this is one connection between mind and these properties. And it is also true that these properties belong to a mixture because some mind made the mixture that way; so this is another connection. But such connections cannot, except very loosely,

¹. This is, I take it, Hackforth's interpretation (op. cit., p. 135, n.3).

be called "kinship"; what is required is some sort of similarity or resemblance.²

In the discussion which follows, we observe a certain ambiguity about the kind of thing we are to compare with mind. Plato speaks, as we have seen, as if he were comparing mind with properties. And this impression is maintained, to some degree, in the sequel: at 65B Socrates proposes to compare beauty, truth and proportion, one at a time, with mind and pleasure; at 65C reason, truth and pleasure are examined for their "kinship"; at 65E we are asked whether "mind or the class of pleasures partakes more of beauty." These remarks may suggest in several ways the older theory of ideas which I have contended was abandoned in the Philebus; they suggest that the ideas designated by the words "beauty," "proportion" and so forth have the properties of being beautiful, proportionate, etc., so that the ideas may be compared with mind and pleasure. It is not at all certain, from the last quotation, that mind and pleasure are not also here conceived as ideas which can be compared, in point of the properties mentioned, with those properties themselves. I shall admit, therefore, that these intimations of the earlier theory of ideas are quite possibly in this passage; there is

2.

Kinship can include the relation of parent to child, so that we might say that mind "begets" the mixture if it is thought of as efficient cause; but the word Plato uses is *συγγενής* and its derivatives (*συγγενεστέρον* at 22D, 65B and 65C, *συγγενές* at 65B) which means "of the same stock," "of the same sort"; and at 22D it is combined with the usual word for similarity.

surely no definitive way to prove that they are not. It is also possible, however, that this is only a manner of speaking with Plato, and that instead of comparing minds and pleasures with properties, or the ideas of mind and of pleasure with the ideas of beauty, proportion and so forth, what he really wishes to do is to ask whether minds and pleasures have the properties of being true, beautiful or proportionate.

It may be suggested now that if Plato is asking whether minds and pleasures have these properties, there is no comparison being made at all. Plato, it may be said, promised to show that mind was more akin to the properties which make a thing good than pleasure, but now he is simply asking if mind has these properties to a greater extent than pleasure. I agree that this is the case. But it makes sense; for, if my interpretation is right, it is particular entities which alone can properly be called good, so that what Plato should try to do is show that minds are more like these entities than pleasures. The comparison, therefore, is actually between those entities already shown to be good (mixtures) and minds and pleasures, where the comparison is with respect to those properties which constitute the goodness of an entity. And this comparison is performed in two steps: first by deciding what the properties are which constitute the goodness of a mixture, and second by asking whether minds (or pleasures) have those properties.

Before going on to consider Plato's conclusions, there are two remarks which must be made. The first concerns the

basis of the comparison about to be performed. The discussion began, we remember, by the construction of the mixed life (61D ff); it was then proposed to investigate the product to discover what it was about it which constituted its goodness; and the purpose of this, in turn, was to help decide whether mind or pleasure was most akin to whatever it was that made the mixture good (or, as we have now interpreted it, most akin to the mixture with respect to those properties that make it good). The trick in this reasoning, which is intended, of course, to demonstrate the superiority of mind in every way, is that the mixture itself was just constituted on the assumption that mind must be the leading element. It will be no surprise, then, if the mixture, on examination, is found to have just those characteristics which a product of a mind must, according to Plato, have. This kind of circularity in reasoning, which we have already noted in the section on mind in Chapter IV, undermines the validity of Plato's argument. But it does not show that the position is false, or even that there is no evidence for it; it merely shows that Plato has not proven his point. It is a moot question, here as always in Plato, whether Plato considers his arguments logically valid, or only more or less convincing indications of the truth.

The second remark concerns how it is that the properties assigned to mixtures can meaningfully be predicated of minds or pleasures. Plato tells us that a mixture is a mixture (i.e., is good) because it has proportion and symmetry. From everything

that has gone before, this obviously refers to the relation between the parts of the mixture: just such parts as mind and pleasures. How then can minds and pleasures be compared to the mixtures which contain them with respect to the relations between parts? One possible answer, the obvious one, is that minds and pleasures are also mixtures. Pleasures, or many of them at any rate, have been judged by their relation to the mixture of health. And, it was pointed out earlier, if the relation between parts of a mixture is to be conceived as a numerical proportion, then perhaps all the parts must be assigned numerical values by being considered as mixtures of opposites. Yet despite these considerations, it is hard to see how the good pleasures can be considered as mixtures. They arise, to be sure, while the body is in the state of mixture called health. But how are such pleasures mixtures?³ It is even more difficult to imagine how a mind could be a mixture; there is nothing in the Philebus to suggest this in any way. Yet we are now asked to believe that the very properties which make a mixture a good mixture (61B) apply, above all, to minds!

It is tempting to assume that the doctrine here is so obscure that we must abandon all attempt to find a clear

3.

I disregard the fact that Plato calls the pure pleasures "unmixed," for unmixed there means unmixed with pain: it is a virtue, not a fault, to be unmixed in that sense.

meaning.⁴ But the temptation is a wrong one; there may well be some meaning in the present passage which even if it is not unambiguous and logical, will throw light upon the rest of the dialogue. There are, therefore, two ways we might alleviate the difficulty we are discussing. One is to admit that the properties which make a mixture good are not peculiar to a mixture at all, and that in fact other things besides mixtures may be good. The other is to find some sense, however remote, in which a mind could be considered as a mixture. And it will be conceded, I think, that a case can be made out for both these views. For the first, it may be argued that even an ingredient of a mixture which is not itself a mixture may be said to have a sort of derivative value if it is capable of entering into a mixture, and as such to be superior to something which is not. In particular, the property of being measurable is, in a sense, applicable both to ingredients and mixtures, and it is only if the ingredients are measurable that the mixture is. For the second view, it may be said that if the notion of a mixture is sufficiently generalized, then whatever is measurable is a mixture; for to be measurable, a thing must have discriminable parts. Considerations like

4.

It is this passage which led even Shorey, who has nothing but contempt for those who cannot "understand" Plato, to remark "The chief value of this argument...resides rather in the ethical and psychological analyses that lead to the conclusion than in the conclusion itself" (What Plato Said, p. 326).

these, vague and unsatisfactory as they may be, serve to give some meaning to this part of the Philebus.

Now let us turn to the passages in which Plato tries to show that mind has the properties which make something good -- in other words, that mind is good. The examination is of both pleasures and mind, and takes up, in succession, the properties of truth, measuredness and beauty. The aim, in each case, is to show that the property may be predicated more truly or completely of minds than of pleasures.

Truth is discussed first; pleasures, Plato remarks, are the "worst of all impostors" (65C) while mind is "either identical with truth, or is of all things the most like it, and the truest" (65D). This quotation shows clearly that when Plato speaks of mind as being identical with or similar to truth, he means only that mind has the property of being true, either fully or partially; otherwise he would not say that mind is the "truest" (ἀληθέστατον).

With respect to "measuredness" (μετρίότης, which is now substituted for μέτρον, ὁρμυμέτρον and μετρίότης), we are told that mind has more of it than pleasure; for there is "nothing more unmeasured than pleasure and intense enjoyment, nor anything more measured than reason and knowledge" (65D). Again we note that in the end the test is whether minds (or pleasures) have the property in question. Let us also notice that, for the first time, knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is added, as

if it were the same thing, to mind (νοῦς).⁵

Finally, Plato asks, "Has mind more part in beauty than pleasure, that is, is mind more beautiful than pleasure, or is the opposite the case?" (65E). The answer, of course, is that mind is never ugly, while the sight of anyone enjoying pleasures, "especially the greatest pleasures," is one of "extreme ugliness" (65E-66A).

Now we must consider how it is that, in Plato's opinion, mind may be said to be true, measured and beautiful. In the case of pleasures, we see that it is not always the pleasures as such, but rather the life of pleasure which is examined. This is perfectly clear in the case of beauty. But also in the case of truth we are told that "even perjury is forgiven the gods" when they are in love; in other words, the person who lives the life of pleasure is not truthful. And of course the life of pleasure is not the good life; it is an unlimited, and cannot have the properties which make a mixture good. Does Plato mean us to take his remarks about mind in the same way, as applying to the life of mind? This is, I think, one of his meanings. The life of mind, while impossible for a mortal, is "divine" (where "divine" applies

5.

Νοῦς is the term for mind through almost all of this passage. Yet at 65B φρόνησις served as a synonym, and at 65E φρόνησις is added to νοῦς as ἐπιστήμη was at 65D. One can only conclude that, at this point, Plato draws no distinction between these terms. Yet a page later (66B), νοῦς and φρόνησις are clearly separated from ἐπιστήμη. One can hope to prove very little from Plato's use of such words.

to gods morally superior, presumably, to those who perjure themselves in love); no doubt Plato did still believe, as in the earlier dialogues, that the pure life of mind was the "best" in many ways. But this meaning is not consistent with most of the Philebus. The life of the mind is not the good life, and it has been specifically rejected in favor of the mixed life. The good life contains both mind and pleasures. This argument cannot serve, therefore, to prove mind alone better than pleasures. In what sense, then, is mind true, measured and beautiful?

Is it that mind is superior to pleasure judged as an ingredient in the good life? On this score, though, we recall that the pure pleasures have been shown to be "true," measured and pure, and that they spring from the contemplation of pure beauty. Plato's arguments might show mind to be superior to many pleasures -- all those which were demonstrated "false," impure, and ugly -- but not superior to the pure pleasures. Is Plato, as often, "forgetting" the pure pleasures in order to prove the superiority of mind? Or does he mean that mind is superior because all functions of mind are relatively true, and so forth, while only some pleasures are so? This would certainly be a weak conclusion; for there would be no reason at all to judge the pure pleasures inferior to mind.

If there are answers to those questions, then they must lie elsewhere. I will now enter my own suggestion as to the kind of consideration which I believe lies behind

plato's position, a suggestion made in full knowledge of the fact that it is impossible to prove, and easy to show inconsistent with some aspects of Platonism. The objections have, in one way or another, already been discussed; I will therefore conclude this section by stating briefly my own interpretation.

We must, in the first place, concentrate our attention on the attribute of truth. Beauty is from the first explained only in terms of the other two properties of mixtures, and we are not told enough about it to use it as an additional clue. Plato's meaning seems to be simply that aesthetic considerations alone would lead the fastidious away from pleasure and towards the staid dignity of the intellectual life. Measure also appears to be closely related to truth; that only those things which can be measured can be truly judged is one of the main themes of the dialogue. In any case, we are not told anything which would enable us to say, in any other sense, that mind was measured. Truth, however, is the attribute which, as Plato says, is most directly related to mind. But there is no sense in holding that mind is true (although, needless to say, Plato could probably "prove" this in the same way he proved pleasures true and false); what is true is rather knowledge. It takes no straining of the text to transfer the argument from mind to knowledge for, as we have seen, *νοῦς* *φρόνησις* and *ἐπιστήμη* are all loosely conflated in the

present section. This much, as far as it goes, is, I think, obvious: it is the function of mind to have knowledge, and knowledge is by definition true. This connection between mind and truth is almost certainly what Plato means when he says that reason is "identical" with truth or is at least the "truest thing in the world" (65C).

We see here again how inconclusive the discussion of the cause of the mixture was. For it is not mind as creative agent which is judged good because true; it is knowledge. The evidence which tended to show that man's mind might be cause of the good life was no evidence at all, if this is right, that man's mind is good; if it is good, it is because man knows the truth. But, as we have seen, there is nothing in the discussion of the cause of the mixture to prove that man knows the truth. It is only if he does that mind is good; yet it is on the assumption that this has been proven that man's mind is shown to be the "cause of the goodness" of the mixed life. Possibly the true connection between truth and the good life is contained in a brief hint at 40B where we are told that the gods will not permit a good man to be deceived; in other words, we must simply take it on faith that truth and goodness go together!

What we must do, I think, is abandon all hope that the connection can be explained through the notion of mind as the cause of the mixture, and revert to our earlier discussion of the first definition of the good. In that discussion, it

will be remembered, it was proposed that many passages in the Philebus, and the present passage in particular, can best be understood as based on a definition of the good which identifies it with permanence of some sort. At that time we fastened our attention on the property of symmetry or proportion. Now we especially notice truth. But in both cases it is, in the end, permanence in which Plato is interested.

The connections between mind and knowledge and permanence are, in Plato's philosophy, so manifold as to defy brief discussion. We may merely mention, then, that in the Philebus these connections focus on the permanence of the good life itself. Knowledge is, for Plato, that which has for its subject matter unalterable truths. Some of these truths concern, of course, the nature of the good life itself, so that mind is thus shown indispensable to the man who wants to live the good life. And we can also say that it is only the man who has knowledge of these permanent truths that will have a true and permanent end, which is to create a mixture. For we recall that only ends "exist" without becoming; that we can "never get a permanent grasp on anything that is devoid of permanence" (59B), and that the good differs from all else in that "a creature that possesses it permanently...has never need of anything else" (60C). Of all possible lives, therefore, the good life is the only one which is a permanent object of knowledge, for only it remains unchanging; and only the man who has the good life as the object of his mind can live the good life. At this point, epistemological and ontological permanence merge, for the actual good and the ideal

good are alike permanent, and permanent objects of knowledge.⁶

This argument, or one like it, seems to me to lie beneath Plato's contention that mind is like the good. For this argument not only shows why mind is necessary to the good life -- that was easy enough to prove -- but also why it (or rather its knowledge) is like the good life. Whatever may be said in favor of the view that permanence is what makes the good life good may be said in favor of the view that knowledge is good, for it is surely permanent. This general interpretation is also supported, in certain ways, by the attack upon the "mixed" pleasures, for they are judged "false" partly because they are constantly altering; they are impermanent themselves, and hence are not objects of true knowledge. We shall consider this aspect of the attack on pleasures presently.

This concludes our discussion of how mind (or knowledge) can be said to be good, which was the main subject to be considered in the evaluation of mind. Before turning to the evaluation of pleasures however I wish to touch on a problem subsidiary to the one with which we have just dealt. This problem concerns the relation of dialectic to the other forms of knowledge.

In the last chapter we outlined Plato's division of the forms of knowledge, noting that the test of the purity and

6.

The objections to this view, as well as the reasons for it, have already been stated at length. I intend it to have neither more, nor less, force here than was awarded it in previous portions of this thesis.

truth of any art was the degree to which it used measure and mathematics. There was also a division into the theoretic and practical aspects of each art, and it was pointed out that theory can be more precise than practice. The theoretical aspect of art -- or some arts, at least -- was said to be the concern of the philosopher. Those arts, we were told, which "involve the effort of the true philosopher are, in their use of measure and number, immensely superior in point of exactness and truth" (57D; cf. 56D, E).

These remarks serve to throw some light on our previous discussion for they indicate, in a general way, the connection between measure and truth. To Plato's way of thinking, only what can be precisely stated can be certainly true, and only an art which uses measure can make precise judgments. It is difficult to say, however, just what Plato means by measure. In the section on the division of forms of knowledge, measure seems to be identified with mathematical determination of some sort. We learn that those arts which use instruments which give numerical readings are more precise than those which do not, and that such an art as mathematics is more precise when it deals with number in the abstract than when it is applied in particular cases. But in any case, the "truest" and "purest" element in every art, the element which makes it capable of precision and truth, is "numbering, measuring, weighing" (55E). Nor can the numerical aspect of measure be considered unimportant in the scheme of the Philebus as a whole, for it undoubtedly explains why Plato

wants to define goodness in numerical terms. If the art of happiness, the science of value, is to yield true judgments by Plato's standards, then it above all must use measure and number.

I do not mean to enter again into the question how goodness can be defined mathematically; on that point I have said what I could.⁷ The problem I wish to discuss here is the relation of dialectic to the other arts. At the conclusion of the section on the various arts, Plato separately mentions dialectic, without indicating its place in the scheme of division with any clarity. Dialectic, of course, is more precise than any of the other arts, and its statements are absolutely certain and true. The problem is, is dialectic a separate art with a separate subject matter, or is it, like exact mathematics, one aspect of every art? And if dialectic is more precise even than theoretic mathematics, why does the good need to be defined in mathematical terms? And does this mean that dialectic, being only the most theoretical aspect of an art, has no practical aspect?

I cannot pretend to give entirely satisfactory answers to these questions. I cannot, for instance, explain in what way Plato thinks dialectic both uses mathematics (in defining the good) and yet is more precise still. The suggestion made before still seems to me the best possible, namely that mathematics is clearly a priori and Plato wishes us to think that the philosophic method is also a priori, and, if possible, even more precise.

7.

Cf. particularly Chapter II, Section 9 and Chapter IV, Section 6.

But if there are a priori truths which are not mathematical, but are at least as certain, then I cannot explain why goodness must be defined in mathematical terms. I can only suggest that since Plato never does succeed in giving a really mathematical form to his definition of goodness (except perhaps in the case of a few particular goods) it may be that he never intends a strictly mathematical account of goodness. It may be, as we have previously implied, that the concept of "measure" is meant to be capable of the kind of semi-mathematical determination which is just as precise as mathematics.

What are we to say about the relation between dialectic and the other arts? Here we must, I think, distinguish the various functions of dialectic. Division and collection are, it seems to me, part of every art, or every precise art. This was shown by the use of division and collection in the specific arts of music and letters. There these parts of dialectic functioned, apparently, as necessary devices for "learning, discovering and teaching" in those fields. In those cases, at least, dialectic would seem to have no special subject matter of its own. It would be true, in a sense, that the dialectical part of the art was concerned with ideas and the relations between ideas while the practical part of the art was concerned with application to particulars; but the ideas involved would be just those relevant to the special art, and could hardly be said to form a special subject matter.

Combination is different, however. It concerns itself

with the description of valuable things, of ends. It is theoretical, for it deals with permanent truths, but it is essential to every art if that art is to pursue valuable ends. Should it then be taken as part of every art, or should it be taken as standing outside every art and setting goals for it? Combination evaluates the elements which go into every good thing, and tells how, and on what principles, these elements should be mixed. And the artisan working in any field should surely have this knowledge. Yet Plato just as certainly thinks an artisan can, and usually does, work without any knowledge of dialectic. If such an artisan works for good ends, this can only be because they are set for him by someone who does know what the good ends are. Yet how could an artisan ever produce a good product unless he himself knew the proper ingredients and how to mix them? In other words, how can any art succeed at all unless it incorporates the knowledge yielded only by dialectic?

This is, to my way of thinking, a serious problem in the Philebus. And I confess that my own view of the nature of combination is no solution to the problem at all; it helps to say that division and collection are really just aspects of specific arts, for that takes care of them. But combination, which is the part of dialectic which makes it truly valuable and necessary to the good life, the part which in fact proves that mind is superior to pleasure, remains in an ambiguous position. I am inclined to say that Plato thinks of combination

as an autonomous science, the science of final ends, and that it stands outside and above the other arts. I am inclined to the view that in the Philebus as elsewhere, Plato considers that combination has its own subject matter, which is the determination of the nature of intrinsically good things. But I see that this view has great difficulties, and I cannot advance it with confidence. It seems to me that this attitude of Plato's (if it is his attitude) gains credibility chiefly from the fact that Plato never quite makes clear whether combination does set the ends for arts like music and grammar, or whether it sets ends for other arts as music and grammar set their own ends. Part of the ambiguity springs from the question what the ends of such arts as music really are. For in the end, the only arts upon which Plato ever turns the full power of dialectic are those concerned with the good life, either individually or corporately. It may be that the real solution lies somewhere in this direction: that the only final ends are those revealed by the arts of happiness and politics, and that by setting these, dialectic sets the ends for all other arts. And in these highest arts, it may be that dialectic finds its only unique subject matter, a subject matter not shared by any other art. It is a peculiarity of dialectic, according to Plato, that it is "the faculty in our souls naturally directed to loving the truth and doing everything for the sake of truth" (58D). The truth of which Plato is thinking is the true end of life, for we only do things for the sake of ends (54C). Dialectic thus takes on, in a special

way, a causal nature, for knowledge of truth and love of good ends are, finally, indistinguishable.

b. We turn now to the evaluation of pleasure in the Philebus. We have considered in detail the classification of pleasures, which included most of the pertinent passages dealing with questions of the worth of the various kinds of pleasures. It remains now only to review these passages and the arguments in them in an attempt to find the basic assumptions on which the final decisions with regard to the value of the kinds of pleasures are based.

We note first a definite ambivalence in the treatment of pleasure which runs throughout the dialogue. One of the main lines of thought in the Philebus is that all pleasures are not alike with respect to their value, and that some are intrinsically bad while others are not. Yet in many passages of the dialogue, Plato speaks as if all pleasures were evil, or at least only to be tolerated in as reduced a scale as possible. On the one hand, Plato wants to prove that the good life contains both mind and pleasures; on the other hand, he is anxious to exhalt mind at the expense of pleasure by making pleasure as unimportant as possible. These two aims quite obviously collide in the Philebus to the detriment of the argument. And the confusion which result from this duality of aims is heightened, it seems to me, by certain ambiguities of terminology and theory which have already been noted. The chief of these derives, I think, from the ambiguity concerning the function of man's mind in the mixture. This

ambiguity resulted from the double meanings of the phrases "cause of the mixture" and "what makes the mixture good." This led, we remember, not only to the uncertainty as to whether it was the cosmic mind or man's mind which "makes the good life good," but also the associated uncertainty as to whether man's mind should be viewed primarily as an ingredient in the mixture of the good life (which it certainly would be from the point of view of the divine purpose) or as the cause of the mixture (which it would be if it were really man's mind that creates the mixture in man). These confusions carry over, in more than one way, into the treatment of pleasure. The way in which these confusions influence the treatment of pleasure which is pertinent to our present discussion is this: if we think of man's mind primarily as causal agent, and therefore assume the point of view which would place man's mind outside the mixture it creates, then the mixture itself would be composed entirely of pleasures. If, on the other hand, we view man's mind as part of the mixture, and as part, in fact, of any real life whatsoever, then pleasure can only be one part of such a life. According to the second attitude, it is not hard to see that some pleasures may be bad, but others may be good, in the mixture with mind. On the first view, however, it is easy to think of the possibility of a life made up entirely of pleasures, to which mind may be added as an ordering cause, or from which it may be subtracted to leave an "unlimited" life. It is this theoretic possibility (which Plato denies as possible

in fact) of a "pure" life of pleasure (i.e., a life made up entirely of pleasures without guidance of mind or inclusion of any noetic functions whatsoever) which leads to confusions in the evaluation of pleasures. For, on Plato's theory, a life made up entirely of pleasures, no matter what those pleasures were, would be unlimited, and hence bad (or at least no mixture). And this argument leads Plato, sometimes, to think he has proven all pleasures to be inferior. All he has proven, as he is anxious to point out at other times, is that the life of pleasures only (if it were possible) is not the good life; but this does not show that some pleasures may not be good if they are incorporated in the mixture with mind. It does not even prove that what "makes the good life good" may not be the inclusion of pleasure; for mind may be necessary only in order to balance and select the appropriate pleasures. The demonstration that pleasure without mind is not the good life does not prove anything about the value of pleasure except that it is not identical with the good; yet, because of the confusions noted above, Plato sometimes seems to feel that it proves very much more.

These considerations serve as some explanation, I think, of one of the mysteries of the Philebus, namely the scant treatment awarded the "pure" pleasures. It seems a mystery because so much of the main argument of the dialogue depends upon their existence; if it were not for the pure pleasures, the "mixed" life would not be mixed at all, and the demonstration that pleasure is "many" rather than "one" would fall to the ground.

yet not only does Plato give very little space to his treatment of the pure pleasures, but he also ignores their existence at crucial points in the argument. The partial explanation, derived from the considerations above, is that Plato is afraid the hedonist, seizing upon these pleasures, and interpreting mind as a mere instrument for attaining them, would reduce mind to a means, and judge pleasure ("pure" pleasure) the true end. And, as we have seen, this is a theory which, while it would be a real modification of naive hedonism, would fall very short of Plato's intentions. For Plato wishes to prove, of course, not only that mind is cause of the mixture, but also that it is the most valuable ingredient in the mixture, and, in some sense, like the mixture in value. This, I think, is why Plato accepts the second interpretation, in which mind is considered as an ingredient in the mixed life, and in which the whole scope of pleasures, instead of being treated as the field of potential elements to which mind could set a limit, is rather pared down to the minimum. Although I believe we can make sense out of this second interpretation (the one which Plato, for the most part, espouses), I doubt that Plato served his own conclusions very well by using the scheme of analysis of the good that he did. I think Plato would have done better if, from the start, he had not tried to prove that mind (or its functions of knowing and remembering, etc.) is an end, but that it is indispensable in knowing and attaining the end. But since Plato would never agree to this, he would have bolstered his arguments better by using a scheme

of analysis which (unlike the scheme of the Philebus) did not suggest such an interpretation. Many of the difficulties of the dialogue result from Plato's attempt to escape the apparent implications of his own scheme of analysis.

In any case, that the pleasures which salvage what is possible of the hedonist's position should receive such slight attention in the text in spite of the importance which they play in the structure of the whole, is typical of the moral tone of the Philebus. While the dialogue stands as a partial defense of pleasure, and insists repeatedly on the fact that some pleasures are good, yet the vigour with which the evil pleasures are attacked, the ease with which the whole class of pleasures is lumped with the bodily pleasures, and the lukewarm praise awarded the pure pleasures all show clearly that Plato never intended a real compromise between hedonism and the anti-hedonism of Socrates and the early dialogues. This is not, it might be suggested, a necessary outcome of the analysis of becoming, the criteria of the good, and of the technique of the art of happiness outlined in the Philebus.

These considerations are by way of introduction to the main point; what we wish chiefly to discuss are the grounds on which, in general, Plato judges all pleasures inferior to mind and most pleasures as incapable of limit. And while the points we have just touched upon bear on these matters, they do not indicate the major arguments which Plato levels against pleasure.

Let us first review the remarks Plato makes in the section in which he compares mind and pleasures with respect to the characteristics which make something good. In that section, we remember, he says, with respect to truth, that "pleasure is the worst of all impostors," and that the experience of pleasure excuses perjury, even for the gods (65C). Concerning measuredness, we are told that there is "nothing in the world more unmeasured in its character than pleasures and intense enjoyment" (65D). And finally, we detect in people enjoying pleasures -- especially the greatest pleasures -- "an element either of the ridiculous or of extreme ugliness" (65E, 66A).

On what grounds, now, is pleasure judged to be untrue, unmeasured, and ugly? The last criterion, that of ugliness, we may, I think, again disregard, not because it is unimportant, but because it is not independent, but follows from the others. Let us consider, then, the statement that pleasure is unmeasured. This means the same thing as to say that pleasure is unlimited. We have already considered the sense in which a life of pleasure is unlimited since it provides no limit by itself and without mind. This is the only sense in which the pure pleasures can be said to be unlimited. How are individual pleasures, regarded as potential ingredients in the good life, unlimited? One way in which most individual pleasures (we shall for the time being exclude from discussion the pure pleasures) are unlimited is this: they result from a bodily condition which is not a mixture. Since health is a mixture, and most pleasures result

from a change in bodily condition toward health, it is clear that these pleasures are a certain sign or indication that the body is not a mixture. Thus if health is one aspect of the good life, many pleasures are incompatible with the good life.

This is, to be sure, only a connection, although an infallible one, between unlimitedness and these pleasures. It does not directly show these pleasures to be unlimited. This can be shown, however, according to Plato, by the following consideration. Pleasures which result from bodily alteration are, of necessity, always changing themselves. They must terminate. And furthermore, they are always, and inextricably, connected with pain, for reasons already explained at length. Thus such pleasures are themselves unlimited, in one primary sense of "unlimited" which means "impermanent" and "always going on," in this case to a condition of greater pleasure or of less pleasure or of pain.

If the mixed life were really definable as a numerical ratio or proportion, then it seems likely that the unlimited character of some pleasures would, in itself, exclude them from the good life. For unless some numerical value can be set on each pleasure, it is impossible to see how such a pleasure could be a term in a ratio. But because Plato does not show how the good life is a numerical ratio, he must rely upon arguments which broaden the meaning of the term "measure." Just as in the case of mind, the exactitude upon which its knowledge was based turned out to be like mathematics because

of the certainty with which its objects could be judged, so in the case of pleasures, Plato turns to arguments which show, in his opinion, that most pleasures are not capable of being accurately judged. Thus the unlimited aspect of pleasure becomes dependent, in the end, on its relation to mind. It does not satisfy Plato to prove that individual pleasures are unlimited because they are always changing; he wants as well to show that they are unlimited because they are incapable of being measured. Thinking again of the cause of the mixture as external to it, we are meant to see that whatever cannot be truly judged cannot become part of the stable and rational pattern of the good life. If it now be said that the attack upon pleasure is not independent, but rests upon the assumption, first, that the good life must be, in some sense, permanent, and, second, that such permanence can only be achieved by a mind working with elements capable of being "measured" truly, then I shall agree. The attack upon pleasure does, in the main, assume the very points which it set out to prove.

The considerations above, if they are accurate, show why it is that Plato concentrates so much of his argument on proving that pleasure is "false." They show also that the evaluation of pleasure, like that of mind, rests first upon the characteristic of truth, and that both, therefore, rest finally upon the criterion of permanence. But the connection is vague and difficult. Mind is good because its knowledge is permanent, and because this knowledge is the only knowledge

on which the permanent good life can be based. Pleasure is inferior because it is not a permanent object of judgment, and because, for this reason, it cannot be part of the permanent good life. Mind and pleasure are alike judged with respect to "truth," but mind is true because what it knows is true, while pleasure is false because it cannot be truly known. Yet truth itself is a convincing criterion of value only because it is, according to Plato, essential to the permanence of the good life.

The results of this discussion are, as predicted, highly inconclusive. While I would hold, as before, that the chief criterion of value which Plato advances is that of actual physical survival or permanence, and that elements in the good life are judged, more than by any other one criterion, by their contributions to this end, yet it is clear that this is too simple a view to account for all that Plato says. It is true that the second general basis of value which we have discussed, the teleological view, helps to fill in some of the gaps by giving to mind and its purposes a special importance. But neither of these interpretations alone, nor the two together, can logically explain the relation between physical permanence and truth which Plato relies upon to prove, in one way, the superiority of mind and, in another, the inferiority of pleasures.

3. We may now consider the selection of the ingredients for the final mixture. Theoretically, we have been

discussing, in the previous section, how the potential ingredients are evaluated; using this information, the task now is to decide which ingredients should be rejected and which retained in the good life. But of course the discussions actually overlap, for much of the evaluation was on the basis of whether or not a potential ingredient would make a good ingredient; pleasures were largely considered on this basis, and mind was partly judged on its ability to create and maintain the good life.

There is one passage, however, in which Plato directly states which ingredients are to be chosen for the mixture (61D-64A). Let us, then, summarize this passage, so that we may see, if possible, the basis on which the selections are made.

Starting with mind, and with the purest part, we must first consider what we called the theoretical aspect of art (61D, E). This kind of knowledge cannot be a cause of disproportion or alteration; there is no reason to exclude it. Further, such knowledge, which is of unalterable truth, is pleasant and desirable in itself (63B, C). Therefore there is reason to include it. But of course much more can be said for pure knowledge than this. It is pure knowledge which, as we found, supplies the formal structure of every art. As such, it provides one necessary part of many arts upon which the good life depends, arts of husbandry, health and politics. Above all, it includes combination, which defines and describes good ends, and the good life.

But such pure knowledge is not sufficient (62A). The man who cannot apply his wisdom, who is "master of the divine circle and sphere, but is ignorant of our human sphere and circle" cannot build a house; indeed, he cannot even find his own way home (62B).⁸ This would be a "laughable" state, to be interested only in pure knowledge. We must then admit the practical arts, or the practical aspect of each art; "otherwise our life will not really be a life" (62C). Living implies doing, and doing requires technique as well as theory. It is necessary to cope with the empirical world despite the fact that we may never reach perfection when we do; opinion and approximation are less elevated than pure theory, but just as necessary. For the practical arts supply the material conditions of the mixture "throughout life" (63A). On the other hand, we cannot omit the theory, as the analysis of the arts showed, or the practice will become misdirected. The lower forms of art are safe only if we have the highest (62D).

Now we may consider pleasure. Our analysis of pleasure revealed that some pleasures are not mixed; they do not result from a related pain. These pleasures can be judged precisely, and can enter into a proportion or ratio for this reason. They are harmless, and desired; therefore they should be admitted

8.

Cf. Wild, Plato's Theory of Man, p. 30: "The theoretical understanding is by its nature abstract, and incapable of the broadest synthetic sweep. Contrary to a widespread misconception, it is only with a view to practice that theory achieves its most inclusive integration..."

to the mixture (62E). Some of these pleasures spring from the exercise of reason itself; these are most closely related to mind (63E). Others also, while bodily in origin, are not related to pain; such are the aesthetic pleasures (51B ff.), which are capable of limit (52C), and therefore eligible for the mixture. The pure pleasures correspond to this extent with pure knowledge: both originate in a passive bodily state. Pure knowledge springs from speculation on changeless verities; pure pleasure springs from observation of simple forms and colors. In both cases the subject plays the role of observer.

Is there a practical or necessary form of pleasure which corresponds to the practical aspects of the arts (62E)? Of this possibility we have not spoken before. Such might be the pleasure of creation (as opposed to the pleasure taken in the created object), the satisfaction of the builder, the pilot, or the doctor in his craft. These necessary pleasures must surely be included. In addition to these, there may be others which are necessary in another sense: the pleasures which accompany the functions necessary to preserve life. The pleasure of eating to restore health is related to the pain in which we lost it; but eating enough plain food to maintain health may fairly be called a necessary pleasure (63E).⁹

9.

Cf. Republic 558D ff.: Among pleasures "there are those of which we cannot get rid, and those the satisfaction of which is a benefit to us. Our nature cannot help seeking to satisfy these, so they may fairly be called necessary." Luxurious eating is unnecessary; eating enough to maintain health is necessary. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1147b, says "The necessary sources of pleasure are those connected with the body: I mean such as the functions of nutrition and sex."

Finally, there are the pleasures which "consort with health and temperance," and which "attend upon virtue in general" (63E). Typically, these are mentioned almost as an afterthought, and never receive notice, one way or another, in the rest of the dialogue; they are not even included in the final list of goods.

How about all the other pleasures, which have been called "mixed" and "false" and "unlimited" for one reason or another? Socrates makes the test dramatic by "asking" the other parts of the mixture whether they can cooperate with these pleasures (63A, B). But the question is asked, strangely, only about the violent bodily pleasures, those which our analysis of pleasure classified as mixtures of two bodily passions.¹⁰ These pleasures are rejected by the mixture, for they clearly are disruptive forces. They disturb the soul, preventing the arts from coming into being at all, or destroying the productions of the arts (63D, E).¹¹ Here then the art of happiness must imitate the "kingly art" of politics by "casting out by death or exile" the parts which disrupt the harmony of the whole (Politicus 308E).

10.

At 63D these pleasures are called "intense," "greatest," "maddening"; these words were used only of one division of mixed pleasures (cf. 45A, "greatest," "intense"; 45E, "maddening").

11.

Cf. Timaeus 86B ff.: "Among the gravest disorders of the soul we must rank excessive pleasures and pains," for a man in this condition "can neither see nor hear aright; he is in a frenzy and his capacity for reasoning is then at its lowest."

A serious question remains. What of the less violent mixed pleasures, the pleasures of anticipation, of laughter, of bodily restoration? These, which in the analysis of pleasure were not called violent pleasures, constitute the great majority of all pleasures. By the strictest standards, they are impure; they can be false; they are unlimited. Many of these pleasures are nevertheless desired and Plato does not here show that their inclusion would be harmful to the mixture. Plato's reticence in treating this great residue of impure but relatively harmless pleasures calls attention once again to the moral prejudice of the Philebus. Instead of showing carefully why the less intense "mixed" pleasures must be omitted from the good life, Plato instead skips this very interesting point, and lumps all the unlimited and unmeasured pleasures together with the most violent pleasures. He thus makes his case very easy to prove, but in doing so he fails to enlighten us on just the most ticklish point. The "necessary" pleasures may be intended, of course, to cover the pleasures of eating, exercise, sex and so forth; yet if they do, this would seem to admit through the back door some of the very pleasures against which Plato has leveled his strongest attacks; while if they do not, there would be some question whether the good life were practicable or, above all, sufficient. There is apparently a conflict between the criterion of sufficiency and the exclusion of all the "mixed" pleasures which Plato never discusses. If some mixed pleasures must be included in order to satisfy the

criterion, then we would like to know which ones, and on what basis, and to what degree.

Looking now at our summary of the present passage, we must try and decide on what grounds Plato has based his decisions. The basis which is proposed, and actually used to a certain extent, is the purity and truth of the potential ingredients. In previous passages, both forms of knowledge and pleasures have been divided roughly into two main categories, the true and the less true (or false). Plato suggests, then, that only the true kinds be included (61D, E). And indeed, the true forms of knowledge and the true pleasures are admitted chiefly on the basis of their truth (61D; 62E; 63E). This much of the selection, as far as it goes, may be said to be in line with the main results of the dialogue. The "true" elements are those which for one reason or another make for permanence and can enter into a measured and symmetrical whole.

Curiously enough, however, the rest of the selection does not follow closely the criteria and evaluations already set forth. We would expect, at this point, that the functions of mind would be selected partly on the grounds of their creative power in making and maintaining the mixture, partly on the grounds of their ability to seize and hold to good ends. The mixed pleasures we would expect to find excluded on the basis of the fact that they cannot be part of a proportionate whole because they cannot be truly judged. But instead of

using the more detailed and precise criteria derived from his discussions of mind and pleasure, Plato turns back to the vaguer conditions of the good life which were originally used to decide in favor of some mixture of pleasure and mind. These were, we remember, that the good must be complete, sufficient and desirable. It is surprising that Plato turns back to these conditions because they were used merely to select the mixed life above the pure life of pleasure and the pure life of mind; but they did not suffice for the more complete analyses of the good mixture which followed. These conditions were suggested as requirements which any satisfactory life would have to satisfy, but they were not taken as a full description or definition of the good life. One is tempted to feel that if these conditions would, after all, have sufficed to indicate how the good life was to be constructed, then very much of the Philebus was adventitious. But of course this is to put altogether too much stress on the present passage. It would be better simply to confess that the present passage is not meant to summarize the full results of the dialogue, and that Plato expects the wise reader to see how the analyses and principles of the earlier sections can be applied in detail.

The tacit use of the three conditions of the good can be seen in the employment of such criteria as "need," "necessity", "usefulness," "advantageousness" and "harmlessness" in the present passage. The notion of need or necessity occurs twice, once in the discussion of the "impure" forms of knowledge (62A),

once in the discussion of the necessary pleasures (62E). The argument, of course, is that these are needed if our life is to be any life at all (62C). This is the argument from sufficiency; the good life will not be sufficient to life if it does not include the practical arts and the necessary pleasures. It will, perhaps, be said that this result can be derived from the concept of the mixture, for the goodness of the mixture depends, on one interpretation, upon the inclusion of elements which make it tend, as far as possible, to maintain itself. This is perfectly true; Plato might have used this argument in the present discussion. But to have used this argument as the basis of selection would have required a detailed examination of the parts of the mixture as they stand in relation to one another, and then a judgment of each possible mixture with respect to its ability to remain just that mixture. This Plato does not do; instead he relies upon the more general and common-sense attitude based upon the notion of "sufficiency." Sufficiency implies permanence and proper relations between parts for Plato, so that the more detailed criteria are suggested by the present discussion; but they are not employed.

It is logical that any ingredients which actually inhibit or destroy others should be eliminated. For this reason, the notion of harmfulness is applied to each potential ingredient. The inexact forms of knowledge are found to be harmless (63D); so also are the pure pleasures (62E; 63A; 63E).

But the violent pleasures "put countless obstacles in the way" of knowledge, "disturb with frenzy" the souls in which knowledge dwells, "prevent" knowledge from ever coming into being, and "utterly ruin" the other functions of mind (63E, E). It might equally well be argued, on these grounds alone, that it is mind which inhibits the gross pleasures, so that while both mind and these pleasures cannot be included, perhaps it is mind which should be eliminated. But of course Plato intends us to remember many of the results he has reached elsewhere; not only are the functions of mind better than the bodily pleasures, but they are necessary to the existence of the good life in a way in which these pleasures are not. And finally, the gross pleasures inhibit each other, and make for violent pain.

What is interesting about the use of the notion of "harmfulness" in selecting pleasures and functions of mind is not that it is so much cruder than the criteria which have been worked out in the dialogue, but its suggestion that, after all, if something is not harmful, and is desired, then it should be included. This principle, the principle of plenitude, is suggested, at least, by the conditions of completeness and desirability. Desirability, to be sure, is not equivalent with the property of being desired; nevertheless there is a hint in Plato's use of the word that implies that there is something good about what is desired provided it is harmless. The condition of completeness seems to bear this out; it

requires that the good include everything which will make it more desirable: the good life cannot be improved; no addition will make it better. Of course there is a logical hitch here; "desirable" strictly means "good," and "good" means "permanent" or "the purpose of the cosmic agent." And there is no proof, on either definition of goodness, that plenitude must be a principle of the good life. Yet Plato quite clearly does apply the conditions of desirability and completeness in such a way as to suggest that the principle of plenitude should operate. By the principle of plenitude I mean only that of those potential ingredients of the good life which give satisfaction to men, as many should be included as possible within the bounds set by the other conditions. In other dialogues, Plato stated the doctrine quite clearly. "There should be no secret corner of illiberality; nothing can be more antagonistic than niggardliness to a soul which is ever longing after the whole of things both divine and human" (Republic 486A).¹² The creator of the good should not be jealous of the existence of any part which is not destructive of harmony (cf. Timaeus 29E).

Can we say that Plato has observed the principle of plenitude in the Philebus? It is difficult to tell, because, as we have seen, the very pleasures to which the principle

12.

Cf. Republic 586 D ff.: The justice of mind is not to stunt the pleasures, but to lend them the purity and truth it can: it should see that each harmless pleasure receives the gratification appropriate to it, that each function enjoys the pleasures proper to it and the "best and truest of which it is capable."

might pertinently be applied are never discussed at all in the final passages of the Philebus. The question whether the vast mass of "mixed" but non-violent pleasures are "harmful" is never raised. Not all of them are excluded, because some are necessary; we must assume that the rest are excluded, but we are never told why. The simple conditions on which the present passage depends give no clear answer about these pleasures; this may explain why Plato does not bring them forward for scrutiny. On the basis of the full discussion of pleasure, there would be reasons to exclude all mixed pleasures from the good life, as we have seen; but the actual rejection, on the basis of these detailed considerations, is never explained nor even explicitly performed. We must, therefore, remain unconvinced whether there was not some "secret corner of illiberality" in Plato's judgment of pleasure.

4. There is, in the Philebus, a hierarchy of elements of the good life which is only partly made explicit. I am thinking now not of the hierarchy of value, but of the hierarchy of control (upon which, partly, the hierarchy of value is based). What is shown is that mind organizes and directs the proportioning of the good life, and may, therefore, take credit for it. But just how mind controls the pleasures which are included and gives them the limit needed to relate them to the rest of the mixture, is never shown. Even the intricate relation between mind and pleasure revealed by the discussion of opinion and "false" pleasures is never utilized to help describe how, in the good life, pleasure and mind may work

together.

Anyone familiar with the Republic is bound to be surprised, I think, that the hierarchical structure of control and of functional relationships which plays such a dominant role in that dialogue is never directly discussed in the Philebus. Such a hierarchy is, of course, assumed in the Philebus; it lies behind the proof of the superiority of mind; it lies behind the proof of the unlimited character of the mixed pleasures. Yet what largely emerges is the judgment of relative worth of the potential ingredients, with no direct statement as to their functional interrelations.

I do not mean that we cannot infer, with some degree of success, what these functional relations are, and what, therefore, the hierarchy of control should be. What is surprising is that these relations and this hierarchy are not, in the last part of the dialogue, made absolutely clear. The reason they are not is, I think, due largely to the use of the figure of the "mixture" and the related notion that the connections between the "ingredients" may be expressed as a mathematical ratio or proportion. The simple analogy of "mixing" wine and water in the right proportions (61C) tends to obscure the fact of functional relations between parts which is so important in the good life or the good state. The notion of ingredients which differ in no respect but relative value may have been useful to Plato in proving mind superior to pleasure; but it tended to obscure what might have been a

valuable account of the true and proper functions of each. And in the end, it made for more difficulty than clarity for it is on the difference of function that the difference of value is finally based. As we have seen, the attempt to evaluate mind and pleasure on the basis of the same criteria was never really successful; it required the labored attempt to show how pleasures can be "false," and resulted in the confusions concerning the function of mind in the good life. It is difficult not to feel that here Plato served his own ends poorly by choosing, in his anxiety to prove with a moralist's finality the sinfulness of pleasure and the divinity of reason, a scheme which threw into shadow the true nature of the difference between them.

The process which we have called "mixing," using Plato's term, is really, then, far more than a mere matter of bringing together the right elements in the right proportions: it is in fact a matter of deciding the proper functional relations of these parts to one another. That these relations should constitute a hierarchical structure is not, of course, necessary. But it is typical of Plato's philosophy that he should so think of them, and in fact much of the Philebus, as we have seen, depends upon the assumption of a hierarchy of functions. It may be of some value here to assemble some of the passages in the Philebus which yield hints as to how Plato conceives the relations between the parts of the mixture. Such an assembly cannot be expected to reveal

any novelties, but it may serve to summarize this aspect of the art of combination.

Foremost in the hierarchy of relationships is mind, and among the functions of mind, foremost is the theoretical science of dialectic. It may be that dialectic alone would be useless, and that the "pure" philosopher would be laughable; but no other art, pleasure or activity is of any worth unless it is directed to valuable ends, and it is dialectic which knows and describes such ends. It is dialectic which knows the eternal truths, not only of division, but also of combination, so that it knows what the good is really like. Since its object is the real, what does not change (58A), it may be said to know ends, for it is ends which exist (54C), and for the sake of which everything is done. Nor is the end an abstraction of some sort; it is real, and can come into being (65A, B; 26D). Thus the highest function of mind stands in many relations to the mixture of the good life: it describes the "incorporeal ordered system for the rightful control of a corporeal subject" (65B); it "governs" and "regulates" the elements of the mixture (28D); it is directed towards "doing all for the sake of truth" (58D); and finally it may be said to create the mixture itself (30B).

In its manifold tasks, the highest function of mind must judge accurately the value of each of the other elements; this is why they must have "measure" and "truth." Mind must, first of all, not be deceived about itself: ignorance is an evil (49D), but the worst sort of ignorance is to be deceived

about one's own wisdom (48E-49A). We have already described how theory must direct practice in each of the arts if they are not to degenerate into mere unthinking technique; but the practical arts, or the practical aspects of the arts can "do no harm" if one has the theoretical and pure parts to direct (62D). Pleasures, even the pure pleasures, cannot direct or limit themselves: they are, "like children, completely destitute of reason" (65C). Some pleasures may become limited by the action of mind, but "pleasure is, in itself, unlimited, and belongs to the kind that does not and never will contain within itself and derived from itself either beginning, middle, or end" (31A). This is why pleasures are "not in themselves good, though some of them sometimes and somehow ^cacquire the character of good things" (32D). This character they ^aquire, of course, through the limiting and ordering action of mind.

It does not tell the whole story to say that mind must direct and limit pleasure; for the pleasures need various functions of mind in order to realize their appropriate character. Even the hedonist needs mind in order to know that he is enjoying himself (21B), to remember past pleasures, to calculate the degree of his enjoyment, or to estimate future joys (21C; 60D, E). But more than this, the pleasures themselves find it "disadvantageous" to be without mind; they "cannot do better than have the family of knowledge to live with us, knowledge of all things in general and of each of

ourselves in particular to the fullest extent possible" (63B, C). Mind does not "spoil" the pleasures, as the hedonist contends; on the contrary, it "preserves them" by establishing among the pleasures a "law and order" and a limit (26B, C). As Plato says in the Laws (653A, B), goodness consists not only in having the right pleasures, but also in consenting to the rational account of their value.

5. The final section of the Philebus (66A-67B) summarizes the main results of the dialogue, and emphasizes the victory of mind at the expense of pleasure. Aside from a recapitulation of the salient aspects of the debate, the chief interest of this section lies in a fivefold list of "goods" which is obviously intended to serve as the coup de gr ce for the hedonist as well as to provide a handy outline of the outcome of the argument. Into this brief section, as we have mentioned before, the scholars have poured their grandest interpretations. Fortunately, the deflation of these schemes has been accomplished by other scholars who have had their own, but different, schemes to propound. We will consider that the score is even, and not enter the debate.¹³

13.

There is a rather full summary of the various views which have been held on the "fivefold classification" in Bury, The Philebus of Plato, pp. 169-178. Bury gives a moderately restrained interpretation himself. Hackforth states that "the passage is perhaps not so difficult or mysterious as has been usually supposed" (Plato's Examination of Pleasure, p. 137), although he has a rather fanciful explanation of the exclusion of "truth" from the list (pp. 138, 139). Shorey concludes that "The main purpose of the scale in the Philebus is to satisfy

Actually, considering the vast controversies which have raged over it, the passage is surprisingly clear and free from difficulties. It is introduced as the outcome of the previous discussion in which pleasure and mind were weighed against the three properties which constituted goodness, measure, truth and beauty. In a semi-humorous vein, Socrates proposes that the results be broadcast by messengers. The statement of the list contains a number of phrases intended to guard against too literal an interpretation.¹⁴

The list constitutes a description, from no one fixed viewpoint, of the good life for man. It is, Socrates says, a list of "possessions" (66A), arranged in the order of their value. The order is not to be confused with the "hierarchy of control" which we discussed in the last section; the matter of the functional relations of the parts is not specifically mentioned here, although the principle of functional relation is named. Of course, when it comes to the "ingredients" of the good life, the order of value corresponds to the hierarchical order of control. But this is, in one sense,

Plato's feelings by removing pleasure to the fifth or sixth place...The scale may suggest other metaphysical meanings, but they are not to be pressed or taken too seriously or erected into a system. There is no real obscurity in the passage..." (What Plato Said, p. 327).

14.

The first place is "somewhere near" measure, etc.; and even then, the term is given tentatively. Second place is also "near" whatever is denoted by the terms given. Third place ("if I divine rightly," says Socrates) is occupied by mind -- at least "this isn't far from the truth." It is even slightly uncertain whether or not there is a sixth place, for Plato lightly ends with a quotation.

accidental: here we are, as in the previous passage of the Philebus, merely evaluating the various elements. And this list is no new evaluation, but is merely meant to enumerate the results of the forgoing evaluation.

The last three items on the list give no real difficulty. They constitute all the ingredients in the good life. First among the ingredients is, of course, the pure, theoretical aspect of mind; second come the practical arts; third, the pure pleasures. A minor question arises over the precise terminology used to name the two sorts of knowledge, to which the answer can only be that Plato is not here, any more than elsewhere in the dialogue, using words with technical precision, and he has said as much in the present passage. Another minor difficulty is the apparent absence of the "necessary" pleasures and the pleasures of virtue and health mentioned at 62E and 63E. But these were simply inserted without previous mention there, so that their omission here is no special mystery. They may be mentioned, somewhat ambiguously, in the "sixth choice" of the present passage (66C). But the point has been made, in any case, that all pleasures come in the fifth or lower place (if they are included at all), and this is really all Plato is interested in showing. A summary cannot be expected to enter into the detail of the passages it summarizes.

The first two items on the list provide the only problem at all, and even here the difficulty is a mild one.

The ingredients of the good life have been exhausted with the last three; the first two items are clearly properties of the mixture. Nor are any of the properties named new; they merely repeat the properties previously used to characterize the mixture of the good life.

The "first of all possessions," according to the list, is "in the region of" measure, the measured and the appropriate (μέτρον, τὸ μέτριον, τὸ καίρον). The second is "in the region of" the symmetrical, the beautiful, the complete and the sufficient (τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ καλὸν καὶ τὸ τέλειον καὶ ἱκανόν). Obviously the properties named here are derived from two prior lists, the one immediately preceding this section, with its three "marks" of the good, and the earlier one which gave the three criteria or conditions of the good. Now let us consider the present fivefold classification with this in mind.

It is quite impossible to try to make a distinction between μέτρον and μέτριον ; the "first possession" is merely in their "region" in any case. And looking back at the previous section, we notice again that Plato there draws no distinction between μέτρον and the derivatives of μέτριος (64D; 64E; 65B, etc.). Symmetry (or proportion) was likewise on that list, but it was also considered a synonym of measure. Beauty of course was another of the three marks of the good; it was hardly distinguished from symmetry.

It is now clear that a very good part of the "list of goods" in 66A ff. can be derived directly, and as we should

expect, from the discussion which immediately precedes it. As a matter of fact, every one of the five possessions is to be found there. And some hint, even, of the order of the possessions is to be found there: for measure was named first, and special emphasis was placed upon it. After it were named beauty and truth. Then among the ingredients, mind was, of course, placed before pleasure. The two aspects of mind were not separated; but their order can be derived from the discussion at 62A ff. Finally, we notice that two more of the properties mentioned in the final list are derived from the "three criteria" of 20C, D: these are completeness and sufficiency.

The only property which is mentioned for the first time in the final list, then, is τὸ καίρον. And it cannot provide a problem if we take the list at all seriously; for each position on the list is, in effect, one position. The "region" of measure, the measured and the appropriate is one region, so that Plato thinks he is adding nothing new by this "new" word. The fact is, we are meant to take these three as one, just as we are meant to take the four in the second position as one, or as we were specifically told to take the three marks of the good in the previous discussion as one (65A).

There is thus only one problem of any interest at all which we can raise about the list, and that is what the distinction between the first place and the second place is. This is a problem because measure and proportion, which were

lumped together as one property in the previous discussion, are here placed on separate levels; while beauty and proportion, which were there at least nominally separated, are here placed on the same level. How, then, are we to evaluate the difference?

I think, in the first place, that it is entirely possible that Plato did not intend us to find any great significance in the order of the first two positions. It seems extremely unlikely that he could have attached great importance to the matter, since, as we have just seen, there is an obvious conflict in terminology between the list and the classification which it is meant to summarize. And, as we found on examination of the previous section, all of the characteristics tend, on Plato's vague usage, to merge into one another; everything is in one way or another "akin" to everything else, and kinship soon comes to be treated as identity (cf. 65D). To attempt to draw any conclusions of importance from the order of the first two positions seems to me, therefore, altogether absurd. The same remark applies precisely to the exclusion of the property of truth from the list. Truth, as we have seen, is said by Plato to be practically identical with reason (a pun in 66B implies that truth may be included in the third rank); and measure is the characteristic which makes true judgments possible. Truth runs through the top three layers of the list by a series of associations which are definitely, if not clearly, set forth

again and again in the Philebus. And of course truth applies also to the practical arts and the pure pleasures, although to a lesser degree. These remarks, it should be understood, are not intended to explain the precise nature of the list of goods, but to indicate why it is useless to try to discover any deep and mysterious explanation.

Probably the most plausible, and certainly the most generally accepted, theory about the order of the first two "possessions" is that the first names the properties which the ingredients of the good life must have while the second names properties particularly applicable to the whole mixture.¹⁵ Thus, it is said, measure is a characteristic which each part of the mixture must have (for reasons explained at length); it corresponds, in many contexts, to truth. Appropriateness particularly, it is held on this theory, refers to the fact that each ingredient performs its proper or appropriate function. Symmetry, beauty, completeness and sufficiency, on the other hand, are said to be properties of the complex whole, the entire good life. It is maintained, and with some reason, that these are properties which could not apply meaningfully to individual ingredients, while they are properties which have been applied, in earlier parts of the dialogue, to the mixed life.

15.

So Hackforth, op. cit., p. 138. Hackforth adds, "as between the first and second, the order is, I think, not really ethical but logical." Cf. Bury, op. cit., p. 178.

This theory cannot but gain credibility when we compare the scheme it would establish with that of the Republic. It does not seem to require much interpretation to recognize in the last three items of the list in the Philebus the three aspects of the good man, wisdom, courageous performance, and desire. In the second place we find, in the Republic, temperance, which is the "friendly harmony" of the parts (Republic 442C); this may correspond to proportion in the Philebus. And, at the top, in the Republic as in the Philebus, (if this interpretation is valid), we find the virtue which assures that each part performs its proper function. For this virtue, which applies to each ingredient in turn, establishes also the right relations between the ingredients, and thus is the condition and the cause of the proper mixture. The following passage from the Republic may, therefore, be a summary of the meaning of the characteristics placed at the top of the list in the Philebus, and indicate as well their relation to the others:

...the just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of others, -- he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and at peace with himself; and when he has bound together the three principles within him, which may be compared to the higher, lower, and middle notes of the scale, and the intermediate intervals -- when he has bound all these together, and is no longer many, but has become one entirely temperate and perfectly adjusted nature, then he proceeds to act....always thinking and calling that which preserves and cooperates with this harmonious condition, just and good action, and the knowledge which presides over it, wisdom, and that which at any time impairs this condition, he will call unjust action and the opinion

which presides over it ignorance.¹⁶

Comparison with the Republic, as well as other considerations, thus lend credence to the view that the highest property of the good is for each of the parts to occupy its proper place and to perform its appropriate functions, while the second highest property is for the whole formed of these parts to be harmonious and proportionate and complete. And as long as nothing of importance is deduced from this order, I see no harm in accepting it tentatively. But it should, I think, be made clear that only the most arbitrary interpretation can pretend to prove some metaphysical superiority of one of these properties to the other. For in fact each implies the other; it is only if the parts are right that the whole is right, and only if the whole is right that the parts are properly related. And, to further cast in doubt any very precise determination of the difference between first and second place, the property of measuredness, which stands first on both the final list and on the list of properties which characterize the good, is, in Philebus 64C, unambiguously said to be a property of the mixture as a whole. It is introduced only after the blending of the parts has been accomplished, and it is then asked "what...shall we regard as the most valuable thing in our mixture, that which makes an arrangement of this sort commend itself to us all?" The answer is, that

16.

Republic 443D-444A. Jowett translation.

it is measure which is "the cause which makes any mixture... possess high value" (64D), for "any compound...that does not by some means or other exhibit measure and proportion, is the ruin both of its ingredients and, first and foremost, of itself" (64D, E). In the face of this, who can maintain with confidence that measure, the "first of all possessions," is surely meant to characterize each of the ingredients of the mixture, but not the mixture as a whole? Perhaps we should conclude, rather, that the properties of the good are, in Plato's estimation, too hard to grasp and too inaccessible to the fastened meanings of words, to state in categorical form: about the things that are good, he can tell us the relative value, but around the good itself, the mystery remains wrapped like a shroud.

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Note: Most of the translations of passages from the Philebus in the text of this thesis were independently prepared; the rest are based upon the new translation by R. Hackforth.

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