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Nawar, Tamer

Published in:
 Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy

DOI:
[10.1163/22134417-00321P11](https://doi.org/10.1163/22134417-00321P11)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
 Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
 2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
 Nawar, T. (2017). The Stoics on Identity, Identification, and Peculiar Qualities. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 32(1), 113-159. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134417-00321P11>

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The Stoics on Identity, Identification, and Peculiar Qualities

Tamer Nawar

University of Groningen

Abstract

In this paper, I clarify some central aspects of Stoic thought concerning identity, identification, and so-called peculiar qualities (qualities which were seemingly meant to ground an individual's identity and enable identification). I offer a precise account of Stoic theses concerning the identity and discernibility of individuals and carefully examine the evidence concerning the function and nature of peculiar qualities. I argue that the leading proposal concerning the nature of peculiar qualities, put forward by Eric Lewis, faces a number of objections, and offer two constructive suggestions which turn upon reconsidering the nature and function(s) of peculiar qualities. Finally, I examine a simple but potent Academic argument against the view that identification requires detecting some attribute(s) unique to the relevant individual. Such an argument is, I argue, largely successful and may have encouraged later Stoics not to think that peculiar qualities enable identification.

Keywords

Stoics – academics – identity – identification – metaphysics

I Introduction

Stoic theorising about identity, discernibility, and identification had implications for questions in ethics, metaphysics, logic, and epistemology. However, reconstructing Stoic thought concerning identity is difficult. Most of our surviving evidence comes from piecemeal and often hostile reports describing metaphysical and epistemic disputes between the Stoics, Academics, and others, or else reports by later philosophers concerned primarily with other matters (such as expounding Aristotle's *Categories*). While the evidence

concerning Stoic thought on identity is vexed, it is usually agreed that the so-called peculiar quality (*ἰδίᾳ ποιότης*) was central to Stoic thinking about identity from Chrysippus onwards and that the Stoics took the peculiar quality of an individual to be: (α) unique; (β) lifelong (that is to say, borne throughout the individual's existence); (γ) of use in epistemically identifying the individual; and (δ) something which grounded an individual's unity and identity. In this paper, I aim to clarify the Stoic account of peculiar qualities and some central aspects of Stoic thought about identity, discernibility, and identification. I carefully examine the textual evidence on these issues with the aim of making more precise our understanding of the Stoics' claims and in so doing challenge a number of existing views concerning the function and nature of peculiar qualities.

In what follows, I first examine the metaphysical background to Stoic thought about issues concerning identity and discernibility (section II) and then turn to consider our evidence concerning the function of peculiar qualities (section III) and the nature of peculiar qualities themselves (section IV). It has been argued, notably by Eric Lewis (1995), that the Stoics took an individual's peculiar quality to be a pneumatological quality and that such an account satisfies desiderata (α)–(δ). I raise several objections to Lewis's account and suggest that the Stoic account of how predications are made true presents us with two principal options. Either peculiar qualities are predicated in a sense such that something is literally posited in the relevant individual—in which case Lewis's proposal may be adapted so as to no longer fall prey to some of the objections I raise, though this leads to other problems—or peculiar qualities are not predicated in this sense, in which case peculiar qualities might more straightforwardly be lifelong and unique but should not be taken to ground an individual's identity. Finally (section V), I reconstruct an Academic argument against the view that identification requires detecting some attribute(s) unique to the relevant individual and argue that the Academic argument is largely successful and may have encouraged later Stoics not to think that peculiar qualities enable identification.¹

II The Metaphysical Background

Much Stoic thought about identity and discernibility seems to have taken place in response to the so-called “Growing Argument” (*αὐξανόμενος λόγος*).²

1 Thanks to: the organisers; Sarah Byers (my respondent); reviewers; an audience at Utrecht; and to Matthew Duncombe for comments.

2 The four so-called “categories” were: (1) *ὑποκείμενον* (“subject” or “substrate”) or *οὐσία* (“substance” or “matter”); (2) *ποιόν* (“qualified”); (3) *πῶς ἔχον* (“somehow disposed”); and (4) *πρός τί*

The argument traces its roots back to the fifth-century playwright Epicharmus and was seemingly often invoked by the Academics (Anonymous, *In Platonis Theaetetum* 60.5–26 = LS 28 B). I will first give a brief account of the argument and some Stoic responses to it, highlighting what I take to be pertinent for understanding Stoic thought about identity and discernibility.

A *The Growing Argument*

Our fullest report of the Growing Argument is as follows:

The argument about growth is an old one, for, as Chrysippus says, it is propounded by Epicharmus. Yet when the Academics hold that the puzzle is not altogether easy or straightforward, these people [namely the Stoics] have laid many charges against them and denounced them as destroying and contravening our conceptions. Yet they themselves not only fail to save our conceptions but also pervert sense-perception. For the argument is a simple one and these people grant its premises: all particular substances are in flux and motion, releasing some things from themselves and receiving others which reach them from elsewhere (τὰς ἐν μέρει πάσας οὐσίας ῥεῖν καὶ φέρεσθαι, τὰ μὲν ἐξ αὐτῶν μεθιείσας τὰ δὲ ποθεν ἐπιόντα προσδεχομένας); the numbers or quantities which these are added to or subtracted from do not remain the same but become different as the aforementioned arrivals and departures cause the substance to be transformed; the prevailing convention is wrong to call these processes of growth and decay: rather they should be called generation and destruction, since they transform the thing from what it is into something else, whereas growing and diminishing are affections of a body which serves as substrate and persists. (Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis* 1083a7–c2 = LS 28 A1–2)

As presented here, the crucial premises may be rather roughly characterized as follows. First, all things are agglomerations or sums of matter (or “substance,” οὐσία).³ Second, for any sum, if one adds to or subtracts away from that sum, then—after the addition or subtraction—the sum is “transformed into some-

πῶς ἔχον (“somehow disposed relative to something”). For an influential reconstruction of the development of Stoic thought on the issue (especially the third and fourth categories), see Menn 1999.

3 That individuals in the world are identical to these agglomerations of matter is not explicitly claimed in the text, but this tacit premise (or one to a similar effect) is required. While I have sometimes adapted the translations, I have followed Long and Sedley in rendering οὐσία as “substance.” However, one should avoid thinking of Aristotelian substance. For the Stoics,

thing else” (and there is no underlying subject which persists throughout the change).⁴ Third, growth and diminution require the addition and subtraction of matter. Fourth, growth or diminution requires an underlying subject which persists throughout the relevant change. Since the growth or diminution of a thing requires both the persistence of an underlying subject and the addition or subtraction of matter, but all things are sums of matter and the addition or subtraction of matter to a thing “transforms a thing into something else” (that is to say, is such that there is no persisting subject), it follows that there is no growth or diminution. Instead, there is generation and destruction (and it is these processes which people incorrectly call “growth” and “diminution”). When one also takes into account the degree of flux in the material world, it turns out that there are no persisting individuals in the material world.

B *Stoic Responses to the Growing Argument and the Appeal to Peculiarly Qualified Individuals*

In broad outline, it seems that the response of Chrysippus to the Growing Argument was to claim that the world is populated by many peculiarly qualified individuals and that peculiarly qualified individuals may not be straightforwardly identified with mere agglomerations or sums of matter. Furthermore, while the agglomeration of matter does not grow, the peculiarly qualified individual does grow. As Plutarch puts it, for the Stoics:

Each of us is a pair of twins, two-natured and double—not in the way the poets think of the Molionidae, joined in some parts and separated in others, but two bodies sharing the same colour, the same shape, the same weight, and the same place, <yet nevertheless double even though> no man previously has seen them. But these men alone [the Stoics] have seen this combination, this duplicity, this ambiguity, that each of us is two substrates (ὑποκείμενα), the one substance (οὐσία), the other <[a peculiarly qualified individual]>;⁵ and that the one is always in flux and motion, neither growing nor diminishing nor remaining as it is at all, while the other remains and grows and diminishes and undergoes all the

οὐσία in the relevant sense here is matter (ἄλη) (cf. Diogenes Laertius, 7.134; Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1085e7, f2–3; Stobaeus, 1.132.27 = LS 28 Q).

- 4 The premise may be made plausible by considering arithmetic addition or subtraction: if one adds to or subtracts away from some number, one no longer has the same number (Sedley 1982, 255–9).
- 5 There is a gap. Wytttenbach supplies ποιότης, but Sedley instead suggests ἰδίως ποιός (1982, 273n26).

opposite affections to the first one—although it is its natural partner, combined and fused with it, and nowhere providing sense-perception with a grasp of the difference ... Yet this difference and distinction in us no one has marked off or discriminated, nor have we perceived that we are born double, always in flux with one part of ourselves, while remaining the same from birth to death with the other. (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083c5–d7, e3–6 = LS 28 A3–5)⁶

On the account offered here, “each of us is a pair of twins” and what is apparently one is in fact in some way two or double (compare Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physica* 48.11–12 = LS 28 E; Dexippus, *In Aristotelis Categoriais* 23.25–6 = SVF 2.374). Although always being added to or subtracted from, the agglomeration of matter neither grows nor diminishes. Instead, it perishes from one moment to the next and is replaced by another agglomeration of a different quantity (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083d2–4 = LS 28 A4). The second thing (named in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus as the *ιδίως ποιόν* but not explicitly named in Plutarch’s report) persists and does undergo growth and diminution (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083d4–5 = LS 28 A4; compare LS 28 D8).⁷ While the agglomeration of matter does not survive but is instead replaced from one moment to another, we “remain the same from birth to death with respect to the second thing [the presumed *ιδίως ποιόν*]” (τῷ μὲν αἰεὶ ῥέοντες μέρει τῷ δ’ ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἄχρι τελευτῆς οἱ αὐτοὶ διαμένοντες, Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083e5–6 = LS 28 A5; compare Simplicius, *In Cat.* 217.36–218.2 = LS 28 I).

Plutarch complains that this flies in the face of common sense and is in fact absurd. After all these purported *two* things each “share the same colour, the same shape, the same weight, and the same place” and not even the keenest

6 ἕκαστον ἡμῶν δίδυμον εἶναι καὶ διφυῆ καὶ διττόν—οὐχ ὡσπερ οἱ ποιηταὶ τοὺς Μολιονίδας οἴονται, τοῖς μὲν ἠνωμένους μέρει τοῖς δ’ ἀποκρινομένους, ἀλλὰ δύο σώματα ταυτὸν ἔχοντα χρῶμα, ταυτὸν δὲ σχῆμα, ταυτὸν δὲ βάρος καὶ τόπον <τὸν αὐτὸν ἅμωσ δὲ διπλᾶ καίπερ> ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἀνθρώπων ὀρώμενα πρότερον· ἀλλ’ οὗτοι μόνοι εἶδον τὴν σύνθεσιν ταύτην καὶ διπλόην καὶ ἀμφιβολίαν, ὡς δύο ἡμῶν ἕκαστός ἐστιν ὑποκείμενα, τὸ μὲν οὐσία τὸ δὲ <...>, καὶ τὸ μὲν αἰεὶ ῥεῖ καὶ φέρεται, μήτ’ αὐξόμενον μήτε μειούμενον μήθ’ ἕλως οἶόν ἐστι διαμένον, τὸ δὲ διαμένει καὶ αὐξάνεται καὶ μειοῦται, καὶ πάντα πάσχει τἀναντία θατέρω, συμπεφυκὸς καὶ συνηρμοσμένον καὶ συγκεχυμένον καὶ τῆς διαφορᾶς τῆ αἰσθήσει μηδαμοῦ παρέχον ἀψασθαί ... ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐν ἡμῖν ἑτερότητα καὶ <δια>φορὰν οὐδεὶς διεῖλεν οὐδὲ διέστησεν, οὐδ’ ἡμεῖς ἠσθόμεθα διττοὶ γεγονότες καὶ τῷ μὲν αἰεὶ ῥέοντες μέρει τῷ δ’ ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἄχρι τελευτῆς οἱ αὐτοὶ διαμένοντες.

7 “In the case of peculiarly qualified individuals they say that there are two receptive parts, the one pertaining to the presence of the substance, the other to that of the qualified individual. For it is the latter, as we have said several times, that is receptive of growth and diminution” (LS 28 D8).

perceivers have been able to discern two distinct things—namely, the peculiarly qualified individual and its matter—where apparently there is only one (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083d8–e4).⁸ A later anonymous treatise expands upon this complaint:

... since the duality which they say belongs to each body is differentiated in a way unrecognizable by sense-perception. For if a peculiarly qualified thing like Plato is a body, and Plato's substance is a body, and there is no apparent difference between these in shape, colour, size and appearance, but both have equal weight and the same place,⁹ by what definition and mark shall we distinguish them and say that now we are grasping Plato himself, now the substance of Plato? For if there is some difference, let it be stated and demonstrated. (Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 3008 = LS 28 C = FDS 843 B)¹⁰

This report also speaks explicitly of the two items in question as being indistinguishable and of their sharing a great number of properties (shape, colour, weight, and spatial location) in common. It attempts to highlight an apparent absurdity by asking which of the two things a perceiver who is looking in someone's direction might be perceiving: are we perceiving Plato, or his matter?

On the basis of these reports, we can see that, in response to the Growing Argument, the Stoics distinguished between a (peculiarly qualified) thing and its matter, but were faced with the challenge of saying precisely what the difference between a (peculiarly qualified) thing and its matter was.¹¹ If the Stoics

8 Plutarch does not, however, mention the fact that Plato was seemingly reproved in a similar manner by Antisthenes (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 208.30–4).

9 There is a hole in the manuscript. Following a recent suggestion by David Sedley (not yet in print), I offer “place” (τόπος) instead of “outline” (τύπος).

10]σαι δ' εἶναι, τῆς περὶ ἕκαστον | λεγομένης τῶν σωμάτων | δυάδος ἀδιάγνωστον αἰσθή|σει τὴν δ[ι]αφορὰν ἐχούσης. | εἰ γὰρ σῶμα μὲν ἰδίως ποιὸν οἶον Πλάτων, σῶμα θ' ἢ | οὐσία τοῦ Πλάτωνος, διαφορὰ | δὲ φαινομένη τούτων οὐκ ἔ|στιν οὔτε σχήματος οὔτε | χρώματος οὔτε μεγέθους οὐ<τε> | μορφῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ βάρους ἴσον | καὶ τ[ό]πος ὁ αὐτὸς ἀμφοτέ|ρων, τίνι διαιροῦντες ὄρω | κ[αί] | χαρακτηρί νῦν μὲν | φήσομεν αὐτοῦ Πλάτωνος | νῦν δὲ τῆς οὐσίας ἀντιλαμ|βάνεσθαι τῆς Πλάτωνος; | εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν τις διαφορὰ, λεγέσθω μετὰ ἀποδεί|[[ξεω]ς.

11 One may wonder whether there was a real *difference* between these two apparently coextensive and indistinguishable things or some other kind of difference (e.g., merely a conceptual difference or a difference in description). Most interpreters, adverting to what they take to be the nature and function of the Stoic categories, have assumed that a peculiarly qualified individual and its matter differ in description (or “aspect”) but that there is

could not point to a difference between the two, then their interlocutors would have good grounds for saying that the two were not truly distinct and that the Stoic account of the manifold nature of things was fictitious. A report from Stobaeus seems to preserve a later Stoic reply to such criticisms:

That what concerns the peculiarly qualified is not the same as what concerns the substance, Mnesarchus says is clear. For things which are the same must have the same properties. For if, for the sake of argument, someone were to mould a horse, squash it, then make a dog, it would be reasonable for us on seeing this to say that this previously did not exist but now does exist. So what is said when it comes to the qualified thing is different. So too when it comes to substance, to hold universally that we are the same as our substances seems unconvincing. For it often comes about that the substance exists before something's generation, before Socrates' generation, say, when Socrates does not yet exist, and that after Socrates' destruction the substance remains although he no longer exists. (Stobaeus, 1.20.7.29–40 = LS 28 D10–12)¹²

According to the report, Mnesarchus (a leading figure in the Stoa after the death of Panaetius, c. 110 BC) thought that a peculiarly qualified thing and its matter typically have different histories. Thus, for instance, there are points in time when the agglomeration of matter associated with an individual (for instance, Socrates' body) exists, but the peculiarly qualified individual (Socrates) does not—as, for instance, after Socrates has died. Accordingly, Socrates' matter might have one age, but Socrates himself another. The logic of the Growing Argument and the details of the Stoic response(s) deserve more attention than I can grant them here, but it seems that Mnesarchus is indicating that certain

no real difference and there are not, in fact, two numerically distinct items (e.g., Sedley 1982, 259–260; Brunschwig 2003, 228). However, if that is indeed the case, then it is hard to make sense of the claims being made in our sources about identity and distinctness (for which see below). This issue deserves further attention, but I cannot discuss it in greater detail here.

- 12 τὸ δὲ μὴ εἶναι ταῦτό τὸ τε κατὰ τὸ ἰδίως ποιὸν καὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν, δῆλον εἶναι φησιν ὁ Μνήσαρχος· ἀναγκαῖον γὰρ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ταῦτά συμβεβηκέναι. εἰ γὰρ τις πλάσας ἵππον, λόγου χάριν, συνθλάσειεν, ἔπειτα κύνα ποιήσειεν, εὐλόγως ἂν ἡμᾶς ἰδόντας εἰπεῖν ὅτι τοῦτ' οὐκ ἦν πάλαι, νῦν δ' ἔστιν· ὥσθ' ἕτερον εἶναι τὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ ποιοῦ λεγόμενον. τὸ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς οὐσίας καθόλου νομίζειν τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς εἶναι ταῖς οὐσίαις ἀπίθανον εἶναι φαίνεται· πολλάκις γὰρ συμβαίνει τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν ὑπάρχειν πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως, εἰ τύχοι, τῆς Σωκράτους, τὸν δὲ Σωκράτην μηδέπω ὑπάρχειν, καὶ μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Σωκράτους ἀναίρεσιν ὑπομένειν μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ μηκέτ' εἶναι.

things can be said of the peculiarly qualified thing that cannot be said of its matter.

C *Stoic Views concerning Identity and Discernibility*

In attempting to show that a peculiarly qualified thing and its matter are in some sense distinct, Mnesarchus appealed to their different properties or predicates while claiming that “things which are the same must have the same properties” (Stobaeus, 1.177.21–179.17 = LS 28 D9–10). Putting aside the precise relation between a peculiarly qualified thing and its matter (which is not my focus here),¹³ we may observe that Mnesarchus appeals to a general thesis—which presumably would have been widely agreed upon—concerning the indiscernibility (that is to say, perfect qualitative identity)¹⁴ of numerically identical individuals.¹⁵ Supposing that indiscernibility or perfect resemblance (that is to say, x “being just like” y) may be construed in terms of individual subjects sharing all their attributes (by “attributes” I mean properties or predicates), we may put the claim thus:

Indiscernibility of Identicals (INDISC): $\forall x \forall y ([x = y] \supset \forall F [Fx \equiv Fy])$.
That is to say: for any x , for any y , if x is numerically identical to y , then for any attribute F , x is F iff y is F .

Thus construed, (INDISC) claims that (numerically) identical things are perfectly similar. If a and b are numerically identical, then any attribute a has, b has. We saw how Mnesarchus attempted to distinguish between the agglomeration of matter and the peculiarly qualified individual by pointing to

13 Just before the quoted passage, there is a discussion of the relation between a thing and its matter—which seems to be the sort of relation that is instantiated between a whole and (one of) its (proper) parts. In addition to (numerical) identity and non-identity, the Stoics discussed other relations, notably *not being other than* (οὐχ ἕτερον), which was taken to be the relation between a part and the whole of which it was a part (Stobaeus, 1.77.21ff = LS 28 D; *M.* 9.336, 11.24 [= LS 60 G3]; cf. Plato, *Parmenides* 146b2–5; *Sophist* 257b3–4). For discussion, see Barnes 1988, Lewis 1995, 101–106.

14 I should emphasise that I use the term “indiscernibility” to denote perfect qualitative identity—and “discernibility” to denote the lack thereof—regardless of whether it is discoverable by epistemic subjects or not. Accordingly, “indiscernibility” and “discernibility” are not epistemic terms.

15 I say “presumably” because if the thesis were controversial there would seem to be little dialectical point in Mnesarchus appealing to it (cf. Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 3008 = LS 28 C).

attributes which held of one but not of the other.¹⁶ This, presumably, would show that there is not numerical identity between a peculiarly qualified thing and the relevant agglomeration of matter.

In our sources, we also find reported a related view, namely that:

Everything has its own kind, nothing is identical with something else, you say. It's certainly the Stoic view, and not a particularly credible one, that no strand of hair in the world is just like another, nor any grain of sand. (Cicero, *Academica* 2.85, trans. Brittain)¹⁷

The view attributed to the Stoics (no particular Stoic is named) by Cicero (and by Plutarch elsewhere; compare Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c; 1083f; cited below) is that among distinct things, there is always some difference to be found.¹⁸ This claim seems to reflect a general thesis concerning the discernibility of numerically distinct individuals. Supposing that discernibility should be construed as the lack of perfect resemblance, we may suppose that the Stoics were committed to something like the following view:

Discernibility of Non-Identicals (DISC): $\forall x \forall y (x \neq y) \supset \exists F [Fx \wedge \neg Fy]$.
That is to say: for any x , for any y , if x is numerically distinct from y , then there is some attribute F such that x is F and y is not F .

(DISC) offers a necessary condition for one individual being numerically distinct to another. It claims that, for any two (numerically) distinct individuals, there is some attribute or other such that one individual has it while the other does not.¹⁹

While (INDISC) seems to have been treated as obviously true or else assumed without comment, (DISC) was contested by the Academics (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.85

16 To be clear, I am not claiming that the attribute in question (which a peculiarly qualified thing has and its matter lacks or vice versa) is a peculiar quality (on peculiar qualities see below). The attribute in question is merely some predicate or property which holds of one but not of the other.

17 *Omnia dicis sui generis esse, nihil esse idem quod sit aliud. Stoicum est istuc quidem nec admodum credibile, nullum esse pilum omnibus rebus talem qualis sit pilus alius, nullum granum.*

18 Compare Leibniz: "it is not true that two substances can resemble each other completely and differ only in number [*solo numero*]" (*Discours de Métaphysique* §9, trans. Ariew and Garber).

19 It is possible that a stronger claim is in fact being presented: (DISC*) $\forall x \forall y (x \neq y) \equiv \exists F [Fx \wedge \neg Fy]$. However, the points I go on to make about (DISC) apply equally to (DISC*).

[cited above]; compare Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c [cited below]). The plausibility of (DISC) depends upon how precisely it is understood; in particular, much depends, in our (modern) terms, upon which individuals one takes to be within the domain of discourse of (DISC), and upon which attributes (or sorts of attributes) one takes quantifications of the predicate variable “*F*” to quantify over.²⁰

As regards the former question, the reports indicate that humans, doves, bees, figs, hairs, grains of wheat, and grains of sand were thought to fall under the scope of (DISC) (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.84–6; Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c; compare 1083f). Accordingly, we may plausibly suppose that any naturally formed, organic unit—even minute ones (such as grains of sand)—falls under its scope (compare Galen, *De Causis Contentivus* 1.1–2.4 = LS 55 F).

As regards the latter question—concerning which attributes (or sorts of attributes) one takes quantifications of the predicate variable “*F*” to quantify over—our sources are less clear, but it is generally thought that, for the Stoics, what I have termed “(DISC)” should be interpreted in one of the more substantive (and least plausible) ways possible, so as to quantify over what we would regard as intrinsic attributes of objects.²¹ Accordingly, no two distinct grains of sand are perfectly similar insofar as they will differ in some intrinsic attribute or other (such as mass, shape, or so forth). Understood this way, (DISC) seems implausible. That (DISC) was indeed understood this way by at least some ancients seems clear from Plutarch, who complains: “And yet there is nobody who does not think this and consider that on the contrary it is extraordinary and paradoxical if one dove has not, in the whole of time, been indiscernible

20 If (DISC) is understood to quantify over what we would regard as only intrinsic properties, then (DISC) is substantive but does not seem especially plausible (especially for smaller individuals). Broadening (DISC) to include extrinsic properties within its scope gains it plausibility, but even here one might raise worries concerning duplicates which—according to some—instantiate even the same extrinsic properties (cf. Black 1952). However, it does seem that the committed defender of (DISC) will always have one fairly secure avenue of defence should they seek to take it—appealing to impure properties (these are or include relations to a particular individual, e.g., the property expressed by “being a student of Socrates”), or else to non-qualitative identity properties (think, for instance, of Scotus’s notion of *haecceitas*, a purported non-qualitative property of a thing). For instance, if *a* and *b* are numerically distinct but instantiate all the same *pure* properties, nonetheless, upon pain of tautology, only *a* will instantiate the property of being (numerically) identical to *a*. This last option secures a defence of (DISC) but at the cost of rendering it trivial. Taking (DISC) to be true in such a way, the principle will merely assert that numerically distinct things are numerically distinct by way of not instantiating the property of being numerically identical to each other.

21 E.g., Sedley 1982, 262–3; 1999, 406–410; Long and Sedley 1987, i.174.

from another dove, and bee from bee, wheat-grain from wheat-grain, or fig from proverbial fig" (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c = LS 28 O2).²²

From our surviving evidence, it is not entirely clear what the Stoic motivations for maintaining (DISC) were or what support they offered in its defence.²³ So far as I can tell, it seems that the Stoics sought to defend (DISC) by pointing to the facility of qualified experts to tell apart even *seemingly* exact duplicates (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.20, 56–7, 84–6; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 7.409–10) and perhaps they might have appealed to the difficulty of finding empirical evidence which falsifies (DISC).²⁴ However, whereas later thinkers attracted to such notions could appeal to precise instrumentation to discern differences between seeming duplicates (for instance, "Two drops of water or milk, viewed with a microscope, will appear distinguishable from each other," Leibniz, *Fourth Letter to Clark* §4), the ancients lacked such precise instrumentation. Accordingly, it is hard to see how the Stoics might have provided warrant for their claims with regard to more minute individuals or with regard to large numbers of highly similar individuals (more on which in section v).

22 As I understand Plutarch here, he is *not* claiming that there are exceptions to (DISC) across time so that there exists some x -at- t_1 (e.g., a grain of sand many years ago) which shares all the same properties as y -at- t_2 (e.g., a grain of sand today). Instead, he is claiming that surely at some point in time, there have—at that point in time—been two individuals who shared all their properties, so that there exists some time t such that x -at- t shares all the same properties as y -at- t .

23 While Plutarch seems to understand (DISC) in the way described above, this seems to require taking quantifications of the predicate variable " F " to quantify over what the Stoics regarded as qualities in the more specific sense (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 213.24–37 = LS 28 M; *In Cat.* 212.12–213.1 = LS 28 N; for discussion of which see below). If (DISC) can be taken to concern what we would regard as impure properties (e.g., being-the-son-of-Sophoniscus) (compare my suggestion concerning peculiar qualities below in section IV) one might more plausibly defend (DISC).

24 Compare Leibniz: "An ingenious gentleman of my acquaintance, discoursing with me in the presence of Her Electoral Highness, the Princess Sophia, in the garden of Herrenhausen, thought he could find two leaves perfectly alike. The princess defied him to do it, and he ran all over the garden a long time to look for some; but it was to no purpose" (Leibniz, *Fourth Letter to Clark* §4, trans. Ariew and Garber). Note that Leibniz also thought that the identity of indiscernibles could be inferred from the principle of sufficient reason (e.g., Leibniz, *Fifth Letter to Clark* §21), for discussion of which see Rodriguez-Pereyra (2014). However, I know of no evidence indicating that the Stoics made such moves.

III The Function and Requirements of Peculiar Qualities

I have so far attempted to clarify some general theses concerning identity and discernibility put forward or otherwise assumed by the Stoics. I now turn to the Stoic thought that each peculiarly qualified individual (*ιδίως ποιόν*) has a *peculiar quality* (*ιδία ποιότης*).²⁵ It is usually agreed that the Stoics took a peculiar quality to be a quality which was: (α) unique;²⁶ (β) lifelong;²⁷ (γ) of epistemic use in identification;²⁸ and (δ) a ground of the unity and identity of the peculiarly qualified individual. In what follows I will examine the evidence in favour of these claims while also attempting to clarify and make more precise these claims where possible.

(α) *Uniqueness*

The first strand of thought I will discuss concerns the *uniqueness* of each peculiarly qualified individual's peculiar quality. Plutarch reports that the thought of a peculiarly qualified individual (*ιδίως ποιόν*) occupying two distinct and

25 Notice two points. First, the claim is restricted to peculiarly qualified individuals. I am not claiming that, for the Stoics, *everything* has a peculiar quality. Thus, even if the matter of a peculiarly qualified thing and the peculiarly qualified thing are distinct, I am not claiming that the matter of a thing has a peculiar quality (assuming that the matter of a peculiarly qualified thing is not itself a peculiarly qualified thing). Secondly, in what follows a number of related terms shall appear including: “peculiarity” (*ιδιωμα*); “peculiar characteristic” (*ιδιον*); “peculiar nature” (*ιδιότης*, e.g., Porphyry, *In Cat.* 129.8–10 = FDS 848); “individual peculiarity” (*ιδιουσσυγκρασία*, e.g., Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 1.80); and “individuating [feature]” (*ιδιάζον*, e.g., Simplicius, *In Cat.* 229.16–18 = FDS 848).

26 “*Every individual object is qualitatively unique*. I shall call this the Uniqueness Thesis. It is, to be precise, the thesis that every individual has its own peculiar quality” (Sedley 1982, 264).

27 E.g., “they picked out the peculiar quality as alone capable of providing living things with continuity of identity. And they were adamant that a peculiar quality must last throughout a lifetime” (Sedley 1982, 261–2); “peculiar qualities must be lifelong, in order to make Dion the same person from birth to death” (Sedley 1982, 262); “only by possessing a fixed peculiar quality, they held, can a living individual retain an identity through time” (Sedley 1982, 265).

28 “What features must peculiar properties have? They need to have three features, each of which is related to a task which these qualities perform. 1. they must persist for as long as the individual they qualify persists (in the case of living things they must be lifelong) 2. they must be unique 3. they must be perceptible (under ideal conditions at least)” (Lewis 1995, 91). “The Stoics [required] for each individual, or at least for each living individual, a single lifelong individuating quality, which would (a) preserve its identity throughout its lifetime, and (b) make it recognisable as the individual it was” (Sedley 1982, 266–7).

presumably spatially separated agglomerations of matter (*at the same time*, we must add) was dismissed by the Stoics as absurd (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c = LS 28 O1). Accordingly, no two distinct, non-contiguous agglomerations of matter could share the same peculiar quality (ἰδία ποιότης).²⁹ In addition, a report of a Stoic discussion of the meaning and reference of the proper name or proper noun (ὄνομα κύριον) offers the following:

According to Diogenes [of Babylon], an appellative (προσηγορία) is a part of language which signifies a common quality (σημαίνον κοινήν ποιότητα), for instance, *man*, *horse*; a name (ὄνομα) is a part of language which indicates a peculiar quality (δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα), for instance, *Diogenes*, *Socrates*. (Diogenes Laertius, 7.58 = LS 33 M)³⁰

On this account, which reports the views of Diogenes of Babylon (a successor of Chrysippus and part of the famous philosophical embassy to Rome in 155 BC), a common noun (for instance, “man”) signifies (σημαίνειν) a common quality (κοινή ποιότης), such as *being human*. In contrast, a proper noun (for instance, “Socrates”) indicates (δηλοῦν) a peculiar quality (ἰδία ποιότης).³¹ What precisely this peculiar quality might be is not immediately clear, but it is strongly implied (even if not explicitly stated) that the peculiar quality is unique. In light of these pieces of evidence we may, I think, suppose that for the Stoics every peculiarly qualified individual has a unique peculiar quality. The thesis may be put thus:

- 29 There are complications concerning how, precisely, one should understand the notion of distinct and spatially separated agglomerations of matter and two difficulties are worth mentioning here. First, the famous discussion of Dion and Theon seems to concern the sort of case wherein two peculiarly qualified individuals occupy the same matter (Philo of Alexandria, *De Aeternitate Mundi* 47–51 = LS 28 P). Interpretation of the puzzle is difficult and the issue merits its own detailed treatment. For discussion, see Sedley 1982, 267–70; Irwin 1996, 467–70, 74–5; Bowin 2003. Secondly, if it is a problem that a proper part of a peculiarly qualified individual is *also* a peculiarly qualified individual (a worry *possibly* present in the discussion of Dion and Theon), then there are significant additional difficulties. This is because, according to the Stoics, all the observable peculiarly qualified individuals are proper parts of the cosmos which is itself a peculiarly qualified individual (Diogenes Laertius, 7.137–8 = LS 44 F). Again, this issue merits its own separate discussion.
- 30 Ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου σημαίνον κοινήν ποιότητα, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· ὄνομα δὲ ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, ὡς Διογένης, Σωκράτης·
- 31 For discussion of the fact that what is indicated is the peculiar quality (ἰδία ποιότης), rather than the peculiarly qualified individual (ἰδίως ποιόν), see Brunschwig 1984, 7ff.

Distinct Peculiarly Qualified Individuals have Unique Peculiar Qualities (UNIQ): $\forall x \exists F(Fx \wedge \forall y[(x \neq y) \supset \neg Fy])$. That is to say: for any x , there is some attribute F such that only x is F .

Whereas (DISC) (see above) claims that for any two distinct individuals there is always some attribute or other by which they differ (and seems to apply to all individuals), (UNIQ)—which takes as its domain of discourse peculiarly qualified individuals—claims that every peculiarly qualified individual instantiates some particular attribute which it, and no other individual, has.

(β) *Permanence (or Being Lifelong)*

The most relevant pieces of evidence concerning peculiar qualities being lifelong (that is to say, instantiated by a peculiarly qualified individual throughout its existence) are as follows:

The substance neither grows nor diminishes through addition or subtraction, but simply alters, just as in the case of numbers and measure. And it follows that it is in the case of peculiarly qualified individuals, such as Dion and Theon, that processes of growth and diminution arise. Therefore each individual's quality (ποιότης) actually remains from its generation to its destruction, in the case of destructible animals, plants and the like. (Stobaeus, 1.177.21–179.17 = LS 28 D5–7)³²

... if in the case of compound entities there exists individual form—with reference to which the Stoics speak of something peculiarly qualified, which both is gained, and lost again, all together, and remains the same throughout the compound entity's life even though its constituent parts come to be and are destroyed at different times. (Simplicius, *In Libros Aristotelis De Anima* 217.36–218.2 = LS 28 I; compare Plutarch, *Comm. not.* e3–6 = LS 28 A5)³³

32 τὴν γὰρ οὐσίαν οὐτ' αὐξεσθαι οὐτε μειοῦσθαι κατὰ πρόσθεσιν ἢ ἀφαιρέσιν, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἀλλοιοῦσθαι, καθάπερ ἐπ' ἀριθμῶν καὶ μέτρων. καὶ συμβαίνειν ἐπὶ τῶν ἰδίως ποιῶν, ὅσον Δίωνος καὶ Θέωνος, καὶ αὐξήσεις καὶ μειώσεις γίνεσθαι. διὸ καὶ παραμένειν τὴν ἐκάστου ποιότητα [τα] ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως μέχρι τῆς ἀναιρέσεως, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναιρέσιν ἐπιδεχομένων ζώων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ τῶν τούτοις παραπλησίω.

33 εἴ γε καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν συνθέτων τὸ ἀτομωθὲν ὑπάρχει εἶδος, καθ' ὃ ἰδίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς Στοᾶς λέγεται ποιόν, ὃ καὶ ἀθρόως ἐπιγίνεται καὶ αὐτὸ ἀπογίνεται καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐν παντὶ τῷ τοῦ συνθέτου βίῳ διαμένει, καίτοι τῶν μορίων ἄλλων ἄλλοτε γινομένων τε καὶ φθειρομένων.

According to the report from Stobaeus, each individual's quality (ποιότης)—(presumably) their peculiar quality (ἰδία ποιότης)—remains (παραμένειν) throughout that individual's existence. The report from Simplicius claims that the peculiarly qualified thing (ἰδίως ποιόν) persists (διαμένειν) *the same* throughout the relevant entity's existence (compare Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083e3–6 = LS 28 A5).³⁴

The evidence that peculiar qualities are lifelong seems fairly clear but two cautionary points should be observed. First, while it is suggested that we retain the same peculiar quality what is actually said in Simplicius is that we retain or remain the same peculiarly qualified individual. This *might* allow for an individual (for instance, Socrates) remaining the same peculiarly qualified individual throughout his existence even if his peculiar quality does not remain the same throughout his existence. Secondly, even if we suppose that the peculiar quality does remain the same throughout the relevant peculiarly qualified individual's existence (as Stobaeus's report claims), due to certain idiosyncrasies concerning the Stoic account of qualities, it is not entirely clear whether the peculiarly qualified individual's peculiar quality remains qualitatively the same diachronically or numerically the same diachronically. This last point will sound highly odd to modern ears, but turns upon the corporealist account of qualities according to which qualities, in the more specific sense, are quite literally *bodies*. I return to this issue below in section IV.

(γ) *Identification*

As far as the purported role peculiar qualities play in allowing us to identify individuals is concerned, matters are slightly more complicated. Little in the way of explicit textual evidence has been invoked by those scholars who think that peculiar qualities played a role in helping epistemic agents identify individuals. Instead, scholars have typically reasoned that peculiar qualities must play this role due to their construal of Stoic epistemology and their reasoning typically runs thus. First, a form of infallible cognition was central to Stoic epistemology. Secondly, the relevant infallible cognition required identifying

34 “Yet this difference and distinction in us no one has marked off or discriminated, nor have we perceived that we are born double, always in flux with one part of ourselves, while remaining the same from birth to death with the other” (... ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐν ἡμῖν ἑτερότητα καὶ <δια>φορὰν οὐδεὶς διεῖλεν οὐδὲ διέστησεν, οὐδ' ἡμεῖς ἡσθόμεθα διττοὶ γεγονότες καὶ τῷ μὲν αἰεὶ ῥέοντες μέρει τῷ δ' ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἄχρι τελευτῆς οἱ αὐτοὶ διαμένοντες. Plutarch, *Comm. not.* e3–6 = LS 28 A5). As we saw above, the report from Plutarch does not here name the ἰδίως ποιόν explicitly, but it seems to be discussing it and what it says seems to closely resemble what we find in the (slightly more detailed) report by Simplicius. Here too the ἰδίως ποιόν is treated as a part of a compound entity, and it is said to remain the same in spite of flux.

individuals as the precise individuals they were. Thirdly, the need to identify individuals encouraged the Stoics to posit the existence of peculiar qualities.³⁵ However, it is not clear that this reasoning is entirely sound.

That the Stoics, in their discussions of apprehension (*κατάληψις*)—a form of cognition which occurs as the result of giving assent to a kataleptic appearance (*φαντασία καταληπτική*, Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.151; 8.397)—were interested in a form of infallible cognition seems reasonably clear (though several features of the Stoic account and the precise nature of this infallibility are controversial).³⁶ However, it is not at all clear (contra, for instance, Lewis 1995, 90–1) why one should think that infallible cognition requires identifying particular individuals. Consider, for instance, infallibly cognising only something like “This is white.” Such items of apprehension seem far more secure than items with content like “This is Socrates” (or, perhaps more securely, “This *seems* white to me”; compare Cicero, *Acad.* 2.21; Augustine, *C. Acad.* 3.11.26).³⁷ Indeed, it is

35 “First, the epistemological motivation. In order to ensure the possibility of infallible knowledge, and so preserve the possibility of the existence of a sage, the Stoics needed to preclude the possibility of two qualitatively indistinguishable individuals” (Lewis 1995, 90). “The Stoics had an epistemological motive for rejecting a criterion of identity that might not remain unchanged throughout an individual’s lifetime” (Sedley 1982, 263). “[According to the Stoics] there is never any need to misidentify an external object, because every individual object is qualitatively unique. I shall call this the Uniqueness Thesis. It is, to be precise, the thesis that every individual has its own peculiar quality” (Sedley 1982, 264). “On the epistemological front, the criterion required was one by which individuals could be infallibly recognised” (Sedley 1982, 266).

36 For the Stoics, an appearance is kataleptic *iff* it: (i) *ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος* (“arises from what is”); (ii) *κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεγαμμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη* (“is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is”); and (iii) *ὅποια οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος* (“is of such a kind as could not arise from what is not”) (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.248; 11.183; *PH* 2.4; Diogenes Laertius, 7.46, 50). Precisely how to understand this—especially (iii) (which, presumably, is the clause which reveals apprehension to be *infallible* in some suitable sense)—is contentious. I have elsewhere defended an account according to which in order to apprehend an agent must stand in an appropriate causal relation to the object apprehended and the agent’s appearance of the object must be *clear* (and I understand this in an internalist manner according to which the clarity of the appearance is accessible to the epistemic agent). For detailed discussion, see Nawar 2014.

37 Sedley appeals to one’s conceptions needing to be built upon appearances free from error: “it was not until Chrysippus appeared on the scene that a full scale defence of infallible perception was launched. A lot was at stake. Our very rationality, the Stoics held, depended on our development of a set of universal conceptions, and these they took to depend on numerous recollected sensory perceptions during the first years of life, the conception of “horse,” for example, being constructed out of a series of individual perceptions of horses. If those sensory perceptions might after all be erroneous, our universal

plausible that infallible cognition requires *not* identifying individuals for the cognition in question (see section V).

While it should not simply be assumed (as some do), that infallible cognition requires identification of individuals, the textual evidence from discussions of Stoic epistemology does in my eyes strongly suggest that—whatever the reasons behind this might have been—the Stoics do indeed often seem to have envisioned the identification of a particular individual as the salient content of kataleptic appearances.³⁸ Not all of our evidence fits this pattern (sometimes it seems that the so-called “identification” occurs at the level of species rather than at the level of the individual),³⁹ but the preoccupation in many of our

conceptions, and hence our very rationality, could prove to be vacuous. No understanding of the world could rest on so shaky a foundation” (Sedley 1982, 263–4). However, *even if* that is right, it is not clear why developing a concept (e.g., the concept HORSE) requires (infallibly) identifying individual horses as the particular horses they are (e.g., Bucephalus, Brunellus, etc.).

38 Thus, for instance, when confronted with twins, it seems that the salient content of a kataleptic appearance was expected to have been something like “this is twin *a*” (e.g., “this is Quintus Servilius Geminus,” Cicero, *Acad.* 2.84; “this is Polydeuces,” Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.410) as opposed to “this is one of the twins” or “this is twin *a* or *b*.” Similarly, in discussing Menelaus having a kataleptic appearance of Helen upon seeing her on the isle of Pharos, the relevant content of the kataleptic appearance (one which Menelaus, due to his mistaken beliefs, did *not* assent to) must surely have been something like “this is Helen” or “you are Helen” (*M.* 7.180, 255). Something similar applies to the examples of Admetus (e.g., “this is Alcestis,” *M.* 7.254), Orestes (who mistakenly gives assent to “you are one of my furies,” *M.* 7.249 [cf. Euripides, *Orestes* 264]), and Heracles (*M.* 7.249). The thought was not confined to apprehending human beings (e.g., “this is snake *a*,” Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.410; “this is egg *a*,” Cicero, *Acad.* 2.56–8).

39 Thus, for instance, it seems that when confronted with a Sorites the relevant content of a purported kataleptic appearance should have been something like “this is a heap” or “ten are few” (e.g., Cicero, *Acad.* 2.92–4; cf. Diogenes Laertius, 7.82). One might also adduce certain other cases where the pertinent content would seem to be “this is a horse” (*Acad.* 2.21), “this is a snake” (*M.* 7.187–8; *PH* 1.227–228; cf. *M.* 7.409–410), or “that is white” (*Acad.* 2.21). However, these may not be examples of (potential) kataleptic appearances as they are of Academic rather than Stoic provenance (though *Acad.* 2.21, which is Antiochean, is less clear cut) and are seemingly examples of *persuasive* appearances. Furthermore, if these are indeed meant to be kataleptic appearances, one might still see these as being concerned with identification but see the identification as occurring at the level of types (e.g., “this is a cat”) rather than that of individuals (e.g., “this is Tibbles”). The Stoics may have been interested in both types of identification (or failed to clearly distinguish between the two). I here speak of identification primarily as identifying an individual qua individual.

sources with identifying the individual one is perceiving is striking.⁴⁰ However, *even if* one thought that particular individuals should be identified in apprehension, it is not entirely clear that the Stoics thought that peculiar qualities (as opposed to something else) were the means by which individuals might be identified.

The most explicit direct textual evidence of which I am aware which speaks in favour of the role of peculiar qualities in enabling identification of an individual comes from Sextus's discussion of Stoic epistemology:

Not to mention its being stamped and impressed, so that all the peculiarities of the things that appear are skilfully stamped on (πάντα τεχνικῶς τὰ ιδιώματα τῶν φανταστῶν ἀναμάττηται). For just as carvers tackle all the parts of the things they are completing, and in the same way as seals on signet rings always stamp all their markings exactly on the wax, so too those who get an apprehension of the underlying things ought to focus on all their peculiarities ... For the Stoics say that the person who has the kataleptic appearance skilfully gets in touch with the hidden difference in the objects, since this kind of appearance has a certain peculiarity, compared with other appearances, like what horned snakes have compared with other snakes. But the Academics say, on the contrary, that it would be possible for a falsehood that was indistinguishable from the kataleptic appearance to be found. (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.250–2, trans. Bett)⁴¹

40 This is compounded by the fact that when the sceptic appealed to duplicates, the Stoic might have responded by saying: “well, this may not be Socrates, but it is certainly a man” (identification at the level of species) *or* “well, while this may not be *x*, it certainly looks like *x*” *or* “it appears to me that it is *x*.” Given that such responses are straightforward enough and other ancients seem to have made them without much fuss (e.g., Augustine, *C. Acad.* 3.10.23ff; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.191 [which discusses the Cyrenaics]), it is surprising that, with as far as I am aware only one possible exception (the idiosyncratic case of Sphaerus, *Ath.* 8 354e = SVF 1.624; Diogenes Laertius, 7.177 = SVF 1.625), there is little evidence the Stoics made such moves in response to the Academic arguments.

41 οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑναπομεμαγμένην καὶ ἑναπεσφραγισμένην τυγχάνειν, ἵνα πάντα τεχνικῶς τὰ ιδιώματα τῶν φανταστῶν ἀναμάττηται. ὡς γὰρ οἱ γλυφεῖς πᾶσι τοῖς μέρεσι συμβάλλουσι τῶν τελομένων, καὶ ὃν τρόπον αἱ διὰ τῶν δακτυλίων σφραγίδες αἰεὶ πάντας ἐπ’ ἀκριβῆς τοὺς χαρακτήρας ἑναπομάττονται τῷ κηρῷ, οὕτω καὶ οἱ κατάληψιν ποιούμενοι τῶν ὑποκειμένων πᾶσιν ὀφείλουσιν αὐτῶν τοῖς ιδιώμασιν ἐπιβάλλειν.... γὰρ φασιν ὅτι ὁ ἔχων τὴν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν τεχνικῶς προσβάλλει τῇ ὑπόψει τῶν πραγμάτων διαφορᾶ, ἐπεὶ περ καὶ εἶχέ τι τοιοῦτον ἰδίωμα ἢ τοιαύτη φαντασία παρὰ τὰς ἄλλας φαντασίας καθάπερ οἱ κερᾶσαι παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ὄφεις· οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας τούναντίον φασὶ δύνασθαι τῇ καταληπτικῇ φαντασίᾳ ἀπαράλλακτον εὐρεθῆσθαι ψεύδος.

Sextus is here attempting to elucidate the second and third conditions necessary for an appearance to be kataleptic. He claims that just as a signet ring impresses all its markings into the indentation it makes upon a piece of wax, so too when one has a kataleptic appearance of an object, *all* (*M.* 7.248, 250–1)⁴² the object's "peculiarities" (ιδιώματα)—which have presumably been faithfully represented in the kataleptic appearance—ought to be grasped by the epistemic subject having the kataleptic appearance.⁴³ However, it is not clear that this piece of evidence shows that the Stoics thought that peculiar qualities served to identify individuals.

Scholars have expressed puzzlement over how to render ιδιώμα.⁴⁴ Given the Stoic interest in identifying individuals, one *might* think that ιδιώματα serve to identify the individual and they express some unique feature of the object in question. One might further suppose that, since a peculiar quality (ιδία ποιότης) is also meant to be unique, Sextus is here speaking of peculiar qualities albeit by means of a different term. However, so far as I can tell, in our principal sources (such as Sextus and Simplicius) ιδιώματα are usually spoken of as features of *kinds* of objects or classes of thing rather than as features of particular individuals (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 1.156; 6.44; 7.408, 411; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 22.6–

42 That a kataleptic appearance should capture *all* the object's peculiarities is repeated up to three times in *M.* 7.250–1 (and was also previously asserted at *M.* 7.248). This, it has been complained, places unreasonable demands upon the Stoic theory (e.g., Frede 1999, 305) and some scholars (e.g., LS 2, 255; Annas 1990, 191) take it to conflict with Cicero's parallel account (Cicero, *Acad.* 1.42). Cicero offers that: "[Zeno] thought that an apprehension caused by the senses was true and reliable—not because it apprehended all the features of its object, but on the ground[s] that it omitted nothing detectable by it" (*comprehensio facta sensibus et vera esse illi et fidelis videbatur, non quod omnia quae essent in re comprehenderet, sed quia nihil quod cadere in eam posset relinqueret*; *Acad.* 1.42, trans. Brittain). However, it is not clear that one need see a conflict here. According to the first part of Cicero's report, a kataleptic appearance does not have to capture "all the features of its object" (*omnia quae essent in re*), but this does not conflict with Sextus's account. Having to capture all of *x*'s peculiarities (as per Sextus) is perfectly compatible with not having to capture all of *x*'s features (as per Cicero). A more difficult question concerns whether there is a conflict between the second part of Cicero's report and what we find in Sextus. This is unclear because it is not entirely perspicuous (at least to me) precisely what *sed quia nihil quod cadere in eam posset relinqueret* means. Cf. Frede 1983, 76; 1999, 307–8.

43 In the latter part of the passage, Sextus claims that not only must kataleptic appearances capture all the *peculiarities* (ιδιώματα) of their object, but also that kataleptic appearances, as a class, have their own *peculiarity* (ιδιώμα): being clear/evident (*M.* 7.252, 408–11). For discussion, see Nawar (2014).

44 For instance, see Frede 1999, 307–8. It has also been rendered simply as "feature" or "property" (Frede 1983, 77; Annas 1990).

9; 121.29–122.1; 143.1–5).⁴⁵ More concretely, peculiarities (ιδιώματα) seem to be *purportedly* unique attributes of the class of object in question. Thus, for instance, one might talk of plants having the common peculiarity (τὸ κοινὸν ἰδίωμα, Simplicius, *In Cat.* 238.14) of being rooted to the earth. Accordingly, we may suppose that *F* is a peculiarity (ιδίωμα) of *G* iff *G* is *F* and nothing else is *F*.⁴⁶

If such remarks are any guide, then Sextus is probably not here saying either: (i) that in order to have a kataleptic appearance of some plant one has to grasp the peculiar quality of the individual plant; or (ii) that in order to have a kataleptic appearance of some plant one must grasp the unique attribute(s) of the individual plant; but merely (iii) that in order to have a kataleptic appearance of some plant, one must grasp the peculiarities of plants (for instance, that plants have the attribute of being rooted in the earth).

In sum, the evidence considered reveals that the Stoics do seem to have been interested in the identification of individuals qua individuals and of individuals qua members of species, but insofar as I can tell it is not clear that they thought peculiar qualities were the means by which epistemic agents identified individuals.

(δ) *Unity and Grounding*

The point that peculiar qualities ground an individual's unity and identity (or otherwise perform some important metaphysical role) in some strong sense is not—as far as I am aware—explicitly stressed in our ancient sources in any detail (compare Irwin 1996, 479n24). However, the Stoics do attribute such a role to qualities when spoken of in the more specific sense. Thus, the Stoics maintain that when (accurate) predications are made in the most specific (εἰδικός) sense the subject is qualified by the qualities quite literally within (or coextensive with) the relevant subject (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 213.24–37 = LS 28 M; *In Cat.* 212.12–213.1 = LS 28 N; see below). For instance, when one says “Socrates is prudent,” it seems that the presence of the relevant quality *in* the individuals is what makes such claims true. “Socrates is prudent” is true because there is, quite literally, some prudence in him. This prudence is a corporeal item within a prudent person and is such that it makes that person act prudently (compare Plato, *Charmides* 160d5–e1, 161a8–9). Equally, the soul affects the body in such

45 Do notice however that the late evidence I consider below in section IV from Basil of Caesarea speaks of the ιδιώματα of an individual.

46 It may be that this claim is too strong and ιδιώματα are merely important features of the class of objection in question. Epicurus, who seems to be the originator of the term (LSJ s.v., I; cf. Diogenes Laertius, 10.72) seems to use ἰδίωμα almost interchangeably with ἴδιον (Diogenes Laertius, 10.72–3; cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 102a19–22).

a way that it makes it alive and causes the predicate “alive” to hold of it (Stobaeus, 1.138.14–139.14 = LS 55 A; Tertullian, *De Anima* 5; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.211).

In general then, when things are qualified in the more specific sense, qualities cause objects to be qualified in the way that they are. As Plutarch attests:

Yet they maintain that matter, which is of itself inert and motionless, is everywhere the substrate for qualities, and that qualities are breaths and aeriform tensions which give form and shape to the parts of matter in which they come to be. (Plutarch, *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* 1054a9–b2 = LS 47 M2)⁴⁷

Qualities (ποιότητες)—when spoken of in the relevant sense—are thus corporeal items or bodies inside (or coextensive with) the objects relevantly qualified (Galen, *Quod Qualitates Incorporeae Sint* 19.464.1–3).⁴⁸ More concretely, qualities are portions of πνεύμα—seemingly taken by most of the Stoics to be some sort of mixture of air and fire (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima* 26.13–17 = SVF 2.786; Galen, *Quod Animi Mores Corporis Temperamenta Sequuntur* 4.783–4 = SVF 2.787; *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5.3.8 = LS 47 H; compare Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.19 = SVF 1.134)—which give form to the things in which they inhere (Galen, *CC* 1.1–2.4 = LS 55 F).⁴⁹ Qualities are active while the matter, in which they inhere and which they act upon, is passive.⁵⁰ Through its so-

47 καίτοι πανταχοῦ τὴν ὕλην ἀργὸν ἐξ ἑαυτῆς καὶ ἀκίνητον ὑποκεῖσθαι ταῖς ποιότησιν ἀποφαίνουσι, τὰς δὲ ποιότητας πνεύματ' οὐσας καὶ τόνους ἀερώδεις, οἷς ἂν ἐγγέωνται μέρεσι τῆς ὕλης, εἰδοποιεῖν ἕκαστα καὶ σχηματίζειν.

48 ὁ περὶ | τῶν ποιότητων λόγος καὶ τῶν συμβεβηκότων ἀπάντων, <ᾗ> φασιν εἶναι Στωϊκῶν παῖδες σώματα. For the Stoics, the incorporeal neither acts nor is acted upon (Cicero, *Acad.* 1.39 = LS 45 A; *M.* 8.263 = LS 45 B; Nemesius, 78.7–79.2 = LS 45 C). Accordingly, given its causal influence, and the fact that the Stoics apparently took the qualities of bodies themselves to be corporeal, it is unsurprising that πνεύμα was thought to be corporeal (σωματικός), or, indeed, a body (σῶμα) (Seneca, *Ep.* 117.2; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 217.32–3 = LS 28 L; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 15.14.1 = LS 45 G).

49 I say “seemingly” because the evidence concerning the Stoic elements and composition of πνεύμα is complex and there seem to have been disagreements within the Stoa on the issue. It seems that some Stoics, such as Cleanthes, took πνεύμα to be heat or fire (cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.23–30 = LS 47 C); however, Chrysippus, perhaps in attempting to account for the contrary motions and actions of πνεύμα, may have taken πνεύμα to be composed of air and fire (Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5.3.8 = LS 47 H; *CC* 1.1–2.4 = LS 55 F).

50 As Plutarch's account indicates, for the Stoics, matter (οὐσία, ὕλη) was a passive principle (ἀρχή), fit to be acted upon but itself devoid of form, features, or causal power (cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.75; Calcidius, 292 = LS 44 D) (seemingly akin to the quality-less account of

called “tension” (τόνος) or “tensility” (εὐτονία), the relevant πνεῦμα acts upon matter and provides structure, unity, form, and stability to the matter which it informs (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Mixtione* 216, 14–17 = LS 48 C1; Galen, *De Plenitudine* 7.525.9–14 = LS 47 F).⁵¹ In addition, we also find that qualities (again, presumably when spoken of in the most specific sense) are credited with a role in *individuating* individuals:

The Stoics say that what is common to the quality which pertains to bodies is to be that which differentiates substance, not separable *per se*, but delimited by a concept and a peculiar nature (ιδιότης), and not specified by its duration or strength but by the intrinsic “suchness” (τοιουτότης) in accordance with which a qualified thing is generated. (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 222.30–3 = LS 28 H)⁵²

However, given their preoccupation with ambiguity (famously, Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 11.12.1 = LS 37 N1), it is not surprising to find the Stoics drawing attention to the fact that the term “qualified” (ποιόν) is not univocal and that there are different ways in which predications are made true (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 212.12–213.1 = LS 28 N; for negative predications, compare Simplicius, *In Cat.* 396.3–27).⁵³ Things are not always qualified in the more specific sense and not every veridical predication is made true by the presence of the quality—some πνεῦμα—expressed or signified by the predicate being “inside” the subject. Something might satisfy a predicate without having the relevant quality (ποιότης) and thereby being the relevant qualified thing (ποιόν) in the

so-called “prime matter” which some readers find in Aristotle). Matter—the passive principle—is acted upon by the active principle taken to be the λόγος in it, which is identified with God (Diogenes Laertius, 7.134) and seemingly taken to be self-moving (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.76 = LS 44 C) and deemed to be coextensive with and mixed in with matter (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mixt.* 225.1–2 = LS 45 H). While matter is without qualities *per se*, it is always found connected with some quality or other and serves as the substrate of these qualities (Calcidius, 292 = LS 44 D).

- 51 “The chief proponents of the sustaining power, such as the Stoics, make what sustains one thing, and what is sustained something different: the breathy substance is what sustains, and the material substance what is sustained. And so they say that air and fire sustain, and earth and water are sustained” (Galen, *Plen.* 7.525.9–14 = LS 47 F; cf. Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1053f2–a1 = LS 47 M1).
- 52 Οἱ δὲ Στωικοὶ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς ποιότητος τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων λέγουσιν διαφορὰν εἶναι οὐσίας οὐκ ἀποδιαληπτὴν καθ’ ἑαυτήν, ἀλλ’ εἰς ἐννόημα καὶ ιδιότητα ἀπολήγουσαν, οὔτε χρόνῳ οὔτε ἰσχύι εἰδοποιουμένην, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐξ αὐτῆς τοιουτότητι, καθ’ ἣν ποιῶ ὑφίσταται γέनेσις.
- 53 Cf. Long and Sedley 1987, i.172; Irwin 1996, 469.

relevant sense. Such things are *ποιόν* only in a less specific sense (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 212.12–213.1 = LS 28 N).

Thus, if the statement “Socrates is running” is true, Socrates may be said to be qualified (in some sense). However, while the predicate “running” holds of Socrates, there is presumably no quality (or qualified thing)—no corporeal item—*running* which needs to be posited in him (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 213.24–37 = LS 28 M4–5; Seneca, *Epistles* 117.7–8; compare Menn 1999, 220–1). Something similar would seem to apply to various other predicates; thus, for instance, when “large” is veridically predicated of Ajax there is presumably no quality of largeness—no portion of *πνεύμα* suitably informing the relevant matter—in him. Equally, when a hand is arranged into a fist there is no need to posit a corporeal item expressed by “fist” within the hand which makes it so; a fist just is the hand disposed or arranged in a certain way (compare Galen, *Qual. Incorp.* 19. 466.17–467.13, 471.16–472.6, 480.6–481.3 = SVF 2.382–4).⁵⁴ Insofar as a peculiar quality qualifies a peculiarly qualified individual in the more specific sense of “qualified,” there is reason to think that the peculiar quality is (a portion of) *πνεύμα* which plays the relevant unifying, grounding, and individuating role. That, for so-called “orthodox” Stoics, peculiar qualities should be understood as qualities in the more specific sense is highly likely but is something I shall return to below.

IV The Nature of Peculiar Qualities

A The Account of Dexippus

Having seen the roles the Stoics seem to have expected peculiar qualities to fulfil, what then did the Stoics think might serve as an example of a peculiar quality? Direct evidence on this issue is extremely scarce. Dexippus in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Categories* offers us the following:

But if form is that which is predicated in the category of essence of a plurality of numerically different, in what does single individual differ from single individual, seeing that each is numerically single? Those who solve this difficulty on the basis of the peculiarly qualified (*κατὰ τὸ ἰδίως ποιόν*)—that one individual is distinguished, say, by hookedness of the nose, by blondness, or by some other combination of qualities (*συνδρομή*)

54 It is usually thought that it is for this reason that the Stoics were motivated to develop the third category (*πως ἔχον*, “somehow disposed”) and fourth category (*πρὸς τί πως ἔχον*, “somehow disposed relative to something”). For detailed discussion, see Menn 1999.

ποιοτήτων), another by snubness, baldness, or greyness of the eyes, and again another by other qualities—do not seem to me to solve it well. (Dexippus, *In Cat.* 30.21–6 = LS 28 J)⁵⁵

Due to the presence of the idiosyncratic term “peculiarly qualified,” it used to be thought that the “they” in question are the Stoics and that Dexippus gives us the most explicit account of what the Stoics thought might serve as an example of a peculiar quality. According to Dexippus, a peculiar quality is a certain combination of qualities (συνδρομή ποιοτήτων). For instance, a particular human individual’s peculiar quality will be his having-a-hooked-nose-and-blondness-and-so-on. This suggests that a human individual’s peculiar quality will be some complex, epistemically accessible, physiological attribute unique to that individual. Dexippus’s report is not without echoes in other sources (compare Porphyry, *In Aristotelis Categoriais* 129.8–10 = FDS 848).⁵⁶

The account described by Dexippus finds some (perhaps loose) parallels in medical literature (compare Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoneae Hypotyposes* 1.79–80),⁵⁷ and is probably ultimately traceable to Plato’s *Theaetetus* (a text which

55 Ἄλλ’ εἰ εἰδός ἐστι τὸ κατὰ πλείονων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον, τίνι διαφέρει ὁ ἄτομος καὶ εἰς τοῦ ἀτόμου καὶ ἑνός· ἐν γὰρ ἀριθμῷ ἐστὶ καὶ οὗτος κάκεινος. Οἱ μὲν οὖν λύοντες τὴν ἀπορίαν ταύτην κατὰ τὸ ἰδίως ποιόν, τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν ὅτι ὁ μὲν φέρε γρυπότητι ἢ ξανθότητι ἢ ἄλλῃ συνδρομῇ ποιοτήτων ἀφώρισται, ἄλλος δὲ σιμότητι ἢ φαλακρότητι ἢ γλαυκότητι, καὶ πάλιν ἕτερος ἑτέραις, οὐ καλῶς μοι δοκοῦσι λύειν·

56 “However, they [a tenor (ἕξις) and a condition (διάθεσις)] differ from each other numerically, just as—for instance—Socrates differs from Plato. For Socrates does not differ from Plato by means of specific differences, but through a peculiar nature of combined qualities (ιδιότης συνδρομῆς ποιοτήτων), it is according to this specificity that Plato differs from Socrates” (Porphyry, *In Cat.* 129.8–10 = FDS 848). This account does not explicitly name the Stoics and I myself am doubtful about it, but it has sometimes been taken, albeit with reservations (e.g., Sedley 1982, 273n27), as further evidence for the Stoic view of peculiar qualities sketched in Dexippus. One *might* find some corroborating evidence in other sources (e.g., Simplicius, *In Cat.* 229.16–18 = FDS 848; cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis Analyticorum Priorum Librum Primum Commentarium* 181.12–19).

57 “There are two things from which humans are said to be composed, soul and body, and in both these we differ from one another. For example, in body we differ in our shapes and our individual peculiarities (κατ’ ἄμφω ταῦτα διαφέρομεν ἀλλήλων, ὅσον κατὰ σῶμα ταῖς τε μορφαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἰδιοσυγκρισίαις. Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 1.80). “What I omitted to say is that what is truly the art of medicine is to make an estimation of the nature of the patient. I believe many doctors call this ‘an individual peculiarity’ and all agree that it is incomprehensible” (ὅπερ δὲ λέγων ἀπέλιπον, ἢ ὄντως ἰατρικῆ τῆς τοῦ κάμνοντος ἐστόχασται φύσεως· ὀνομάζουσι δέ, οἶμαι, τοῦτο πολλοὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν ἰδιοσυγκρασίαν, καὶ πάντες ἀκατάληπτον ὀμολογοῦσιν ὑπάρχειν· Galen, *De Methodo Medendi* 10.209 K; cf. *MM* 10.169 K). Notice that

there is reason to think the Stoics engaged with). It relies upon the intuitive thought that while many individuals might instantiate the simpler attribute of possessing a snubbed nose, or that of possessing bulging eyes, far fewer will instantiate the more complex attribute of having-a-hooked-nose-and-having-bulging-eyes.⁵⁸ With a sufficiently large conjunction of sufficiently detailed predicates, we come closer to expressing a complex attribute which (conceivably) would be instantiated by only one individual.

However, the account described by Dexippus is exceedingly problematic. While this account seems to fulfil one of the purported requirements—(γ), that the peculiar quality should be of use in identifying an individual—quite well, the other requirements (that is to say, being (α) unique; (β) lifelong; and (δ) grounding the unity and identity of the peculiarly qualified individual) are met only rather poorly or not at all. *Even if* a sufficiently complex combination of physiological attributes of the sort Dexippus describes might be found so as to satisfy the uniqueness requirement (and *even if* this could be done, it would be a highly contingent fact), it seems silly to suppose that the same complex combination would be lifelong and even more absurd to suppose that it might serve to unify an individual and ground their identity. It is difficult to believe that such problems would not have been obvious to the Stoics—indeed it is possible that at least some Stoics were committed to *not* holding

the term *συνδρομή* (cf. *Th.* 157b9) was used by empiric doctors to denote the combination of symptoms through which one might identify a disease (Galen *Meth. Med.* 10.100–101; cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.179). (The term “*συνδρομή*” is repeated at *M.* 7.180, 182 but there Sextus is not discussing a combination of properties, but a combination of appearances). Cf. *ἄθροισμα* (Porphyry, *Isagoge* 7.19–8.3; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.277).

58 In the *Theaetetus* it is proposed that in order to have a thought about *x*, one must think of *x* under some description which in fact applies only to *x*. The thinker, we are told, must have some *mark* (*σημεῖον*, *Th.* 208c7) by which to distinguish the object of thought from everything else. What is required is some suitably informative predicate (e.g., “having such-and-such a nose *and* such-and-such eyes”) which applies *only* to the individual being thought about (209c5–10). If the description attributes to *x* a feature which is not unique to *x*, but is instead a common feature or quality (*κοινότης*, *Th.* 208d9 [cf. the Stoic *κοινή ποιότης*]), one will not (the thought goes) be able to distinguish *x* from everything else (and Plato thinks that this means that one’s thought will not be about *x*). Philological parallels between the *Theaetetus* (particularly in regard to discussion of the wax tablet) and what we find in the Stoic account of appearances have been noticed by Ioppolo (1990) and Long (2002) and the term *ποιότης*, which is ubiquitous in our Stoic sources, was coined by an apologetic Plato in the *Theaetetus* (*Th.* 182a8–9).

such account⁵⁹—and the obvious inadequacy of the proposal in meeting the relevant requirements has led recent scholarship to doubt whether Dexippus's report is in fact at all faithful or otherwise useful in reconstructing the Stoic account of peculiar qualities (for instance, Lewis 1995, 93–7; Irwin 1996, 474–5, 480n33; Chiaradonna 2000).

B *Alternative Accounts of the Peculiar Quality*

As a result of the inadequacy of the account described in Dexippus, scholars have dismissed Dexippus's remarks and sought alternatives.⁶⁰ The leading proposal, offered independently by Eric Lewis 1995 and Terry Irwin 1996, is that the Stoics took an individual's peculiar quality to be persistence of soul or *πνεῦμα*. Lewis dismisses the evidence from Dexippus and proposes that an individual's peculiar quality is simply the individual's *πνεῦμα* in a certain state or disposed in a certain way. In inanimate things, *πνεῦμα* is a *ἔξις* (“tenor”); in animate but non-perceptive things, such as plants, it is *φύσις* (“physique”); and in animate perceptive things, it is *ψυχή* (“soul”).⁶¹ Accordingly, Lewis proposes that:

Having a particular “kind” of H–P–P [*hexis, physis, psyche*] fixes the natural kind one is a member of..., while having the particular H–P–P one has fixes *which* individual one is ... it is soul, or the persistence of an individual soul, which is responsible for, and *is*, the peculiar quality of ensouled beings, and in particular that it satisfies the ... features peculiar qualities must have. (Lewis 1995, 99–100; compare Irwin 1996, 470)

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- 59 In discussing eternal recurrence the Stoics explicitly recognized that a man “does not become another man if he previously had moles on his face but no longer has them” (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In An. Pr.* 180.33–6, 181.25–31 = LS 52 F3). This is not decisive evidence (perhaps the person's peculiar quality was some complex physiological attribute which didn't include their moles), but it is suggestive.
- 60 David Sedley seems agnostic on what the Stoics themselves might have offered, but suggests that perhaps something akin to fingerprints or genetic code (which he takes fingerprints to be a manifestation of) might have fit the Stoic requirements (e.g., Sedley 1982, 266; cf. 1999, 404). However, even these friendly suggestions do not seem to entirely satisfy the requirements placed on peculiar qualities. Distinct individuals, such as clones, may have the same genetic code and if Socrates' genetic code is damaged by radiation, he may get ill but he still remains Socrates.
- 61 The difference between these states of *πνεῦμα* seems to reside in the amount of “tension” (*τόνος*) or “tensility” (*εὐτονία*). For discussion, see Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.4; Galen, *Introductory Treatises* 14.726.7–11 = LS 47 N; Philo of Alexandria, *Legum Allegoriae* 2.22–3 = LS 47 P; *Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* 35–6 = LS 47 Q; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 237.25–238.20 = LS 47 S.

Lewis thus takes an individual's peculiar quality to be its $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ or $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ disposed in a certain way. This, he thinks, successfully meets the requirements the Stoics impose upon peculiar qualities (Lewis 1995, 93). While Lewis's account is promising, it seems problematic for several reasons.

First, it is troubling that Lewis disregards Dexippus's report on purely philosophical grounds (this applies also to Irwin 1996). Even if the position Dexippus describes is obviously flawed and it is not absolutely certain that the position is being attributed to the Stoics, unless the case can be made that it is an outright invention or the position described by Dexippus can be convincingly ascribed to some other thinkers, then any interpretation of the Stoic view of peculiar qualities needs to say something about this evidence.

Secondly, while such an account does allow the peculiar quality to fulfil its purported unifying role (as per (δ)), there seems to be something amiss with arguing that it is precisely because $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ fulfils role (δ) that one should think the Stoics took peculiar qualities to be $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ disposed in a certain way. As we have seen above, all qualities, when spoken of in the more specific sense, refer to $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (compare Stobaeus, 1.49.33 = SVF 2.826) and this provides form, unity, and so forth to the matter in which it inheres. However, as far as I am aware there does not seem to be any independent evidence that peculiar qualities are meant to fulfil this role apart from the assumption that they are qualities in what the Stoics regarded as "the more specific sense." To say that peculiar qualities ought to fulfil the metaphysical role described because they are qualities in the more specific sense, and then to claim that peculiar qualities should be understood as $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (that is to say, qualities in the more specific sense) precisely because they fulfil this role seems to present a slightly problematic circularity. While it seems to me likely that so-called "orthodox" Stoics took peculiar qualities to be qualities in the more specific sense, and that those who took peculiar qualities to be qualities in the more specific sense took peculiar qualities to perform a unifying function, it is not clear to me that there was an independent requirement that peculiar qualities needed to fulfil a unifying function.

Thirdly, it is not clear how taking an individual's peculiar quality to be $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ disposed in a certain way satisfies the purported epistemic requirement regarding the identifying of individuals (as per (γ)). Lewis argues that for the Stoics $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is perceivable (1995, 91n7) and in support he cites evidence from Philo (*Quaestiones Et Solutiones In Genesis* 2.4 = SVF 2.802 [= LS 47 R3]);⁶²

62 "Now our body, which is composed of many parts, is united externally and internally, and it holds firm by its own tenor. And the higher tenor of these parts is the soul: being at the centre, it moves everywhere, right to the surface and from the surface it returns to the

Simplicius (*In Cat.* 237.25–238.20 = LS 47 S);⁶³ and Seneca (*Ep.* 120.3).⁶⁴ However, these reports do not, I think, suggest that πνεῦμα can fulfil the epistemic role in the manner that Lewis hopes.

Philo's report speaks of the unifying function of πνεῦμα and says that the soul moves everywhere "right to the surface and from the surface it returns to the centre."⁶⁵ However, even though πνεῦμα is corporeal (see above), there is nothing here to suggest that the soul is directly perceivable by agents such as ourselves (let alone that it is regularly perceived). Equally, Lewis says: "Tenors, we know from Simplicius (*In Cat.* 237.25 and following) are perceptible, since

centre. The result is that a single animate nature is enveloped by a double bond, thus being fitted to a stronger tenor and union" (*Corpus autem nostrum, ex multis compositum, extrinsecus et intrinsecus unitum est atque propria habitudine constat; superior autem habitudo conexionis istorum anima est, quae in medio consistens ubique permeat usque ad superficiem deque superficie in medium vertitur, ut unica natura spiritualis duplici convolvatur ligamine in firmiorem soliditatem unionemque coaptata; Philo, Quaest et Sol. In Gen.* 2.4 = SVF 2.802 = LS 47 R3 [Aucher's Latin translation of the Armenian, printed in SVF]).

63 "There is a further question of whether perhaps state (σχέσις), for the Stoics, is the same as condition (διάθεσις) is for Aristotle, differing from tenor (ἔξις) by reference to ease or difficulty of its destruction. But they do not agree on this either. Aristotle says that unreliable health is a condition (διάθεσις); but the Stoics do not admit that health of any kind is a state (σχέσις). In their view it has the peculiarity of a tenor (φέρειν γὰρ τὸ τῆς ἕξεως ἰδίωμα). For they take states to be characterized by acquired conditions, tenors by their intrinsic activities (τὰς μὲν γὰρ σχέσεις ταῖς ἐπικτήτοις καταστάσεσιν χαρακτηρίζεσθαι, τὰς δὲ ἕξεις ταῖς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐνεργείαις). So tenors (ἕξεις), for them, are not specified by their duration or strength, but by a certain peculiar nature (ιδιότης) and particular feature (χαρακτήρ). Just as things with roots are rooted in different degrees but have the single common peculiarity (τὸ κοινὸν ἰδίωμα) of holding to the earth, so tenor has the same meaning in things which change with difficulty and in those which change easily. It is a general truth that many things which are qualified generically are defective in the peculiarity (ιδίωμα) by which they are specified, such as sour wine, bitter almonds, Molossian and Maltese dogs. These all carry the particular feature (χαρακτήρ) of their genus, though to a slight and relaxed extent, and their tenor persists in a single settled way so far as its actual defining terms are concerned; but frequently it is easy to change for some other reason" (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 238.5–20 = LS 47 S4–5).

64 "Certain people say that we just happened on the concept (*notitia*); but it is implausible that anyone should have come upon the form of virtue by chance. We believe that it has been inferred by the observation and comparison of actions done repeatedly. Our school holds that the honourable and the good are understood by analogy" (Seneca, *Ep.* 120.4, trans. Inwood).

65 Other reports also speak of πνεῦμα extending to various parts of the body (e.g., Stobaeus, 1.49.33 = SVF 2.826; Seneca, *Ep.* 113.23 = SVF 2.836; Calcidius, *In Tim.* 220 = SVF 2.879) though it is not clear that in these particular cases πνεῦμα reaches the surface.

sour wine, and Maltese dogs all ‘carry the mark’ of their genus” (Lewis 1996, 92n7). However, the passage from Simplicius only claims that certain sub-par members of a species still carry the “peculiarity” (ιδίωμα) (that is to say, a seemingly unique or distinctive attribute [see above]) of that species, even though this might be in attenuated form. The report is not explicitly discussing peculiar qualities and even though the “peculiarities” spoken of in the examples cited are indeed presumably perceptible, this does *not* indicate that the πνεύμα itself is perceptible. For instance, I may be able to identify a Dalmatian from its spots, and the Dalmatian may indeed be the way it is (including having its spots) due to its πνεύμα structuring the relevant agglomeration of matter. However, in seeing the spots, I am not thereby seeing the πνεύμα, but merely something that has come about as a result of πνεύμα’s activity. The evidence adduced by Lewis from Seneca is problematic in much in the same way.⁶⁶

This is not to say that for the Stoics πνεύμα is *not* at all perceivable.⁶⁷ Indeed, given the corporeal nature of πνεύμα we would expect it to be perceivable in some sense since all corporeal things, due to their capacity to enter into causal interactions with other bodies, are presumably such that they can potentially be perceived (whether directly or indirectly) (compare Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita* 902f11–903a8).⁶⁸ That is to say, πνεύμα can enter into contact, impose pressure, and so forth (Hierocles, 3.56–4.3, 4.38–49 = LS 53 B5–7). However, the

66 The evidence from Seneca does not claim, for instance, that things like virtues may be directly perceived. Instead, Seneca says that it is “through analogy” (per analogian, Seneca, *Ep.* 120.4) that we grasp things we cannot perceive, such as a person’s character or goodness. That is to say, we reflect upon our perceptual experience and *infer* (rather than perceive) the nature of the relevant feature. Lewis seems to recognise this (“One can perceive the soul through its effects” 1995, 92n7) but does not, as far as I can tell, recognise the manner in which it curtails the prospect of positing πνεύμα as fulfilling the relevant epistemic functions.

67 There is other evidence (not cited by Lewis) that virtues and vices are perceivable. Thus, for instance, in *De Natura Deorum*, Balbus, the Stoic spokesman, defends the value of the senses and says of the eyes “you see, they also recognize virtues and vices, the angry and the well-disposed, the joyful and the sad, the brave and the cowardly, the bold and the timid” (*nam et virtutes et vitia cognoscunt, iratum propitium, laetantem dolentem, fortem ignavum, audacem timidumque*; Cicero, *Nat. Deo.*, 2.145–6). However, it is not clear that even this securely indicates direct perceivability. Other evidence speaks of goods and evils being perceivable (SVF 3.85) but the same points apply.

68 By “perceived indirectly,” I have in mind situations such as the following. The naked human eye cannot typically perceive the pores on one’s skin or the rings of Saturn but the pores and rings are, nonetheless, perceivable in some sense insofar as with sufficiently good eyesight (as another animal species might have) or technical aid (such as a telescope), they may be perceived.

problem is that much depends upon how one construes “perceivable” and—as would befit its nature of being a compound of fire and air—if $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ is perceivable, then it seems to be perceivable in much the same way that something like the wind is. That is to say, it may be felt, and its effects may be perceived, but it is not typically seen or tasted and it is usually not *directly* perceivable by our more acute senses.

If one proposes instead that $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ is detectable through its effects then there is a problem insofar as it is not clear how—on the accounts proposed by Lewis and Irwin— $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ or its effects could manifest themselves in a recognizable, unique way or be perceived sufficiently precisely so as to be used to identify individuals. Even if one adverts to some form of $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ which would be especially prone to manifesting itself in action, such as an individual person’s virtue (compare Irwin 1996, 471), it seems very difficult to make a case for being able to distinguish Plato from Socrates on the basis of—for instance—their different, unique ways of being virtuous.⁶⁹ As a result of these worries, it is hard to see how—according to Lewis and Irwin—peculiar qualities (construed as $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$) might be deemed to satisfy their purported epistemic function (as per (γ)). If peculiar qualities are indeed meant to serve an epistemic function, significantly more would have to be said on the matter (see below).

69 “If Socrates’ individual soul is distinguished from others by its virtuous characteristics, then these characteristics belong to the peculiar quality that is the source of Socrates’ difference from other human beings at a time and of his persistence as the same human being through time” (Irwin 1996, 471). It has been put to me that I dismiss this notion too quickly. Just as someone experienced on matters of handwriting can distinguish individuals on the basis of their handwriting (i.e. their ways of forming letters), so too—the thought goes—someone experienced on matters concerning virtue *could* distinguish individuals on the basis of their way(s) of being virtuous. Here I can only note the following points which would seem to me to merit further discussion. First, the Stoics thought that there were few if any virtuous human individuals in history (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato* 199.14–22 = LS 61 N; cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 42.1; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 9.133 = LS 54 D). Secondly, presumably only sages can identify individuals by their virtue and this means that, among other things, there are few people who would know enough about virtue (or vice) to perform the relevant identifications—a bit like attempting to identify people by their handwriting in an illiterate society. Thirdly, if virtue is an individual’s peculiar quality, then becoming virtuous would not be a change (the sources seem to describe it as a change but it must be admitted that the evidence on this matter is rather difficult to understand; cf. Plutarch, *De Profectibus In Virtute* 75c = LS 61 S; Clement, *Stromateis* 4.6.28.1 = SVF 3.221; Brouwer 2007), but seemingly an instance of generation (of a new, virtuous individual) and destruction (of an old, non-virtuous individual).

Fourthly, there are also significant additional problems when it comes to considering whether $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ or $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ disposed in a certain way could fulfil the uniqueness and permanence requirements (that is to say, (α) and (β)). Lewis proposes, on behalf of the Stoics, that the uniqueness requirement would be satisfied because of the complexity of our mental lives. Supposing mental content to be highly fine-grained, Lewis argues that for two persons to have *precisely* the same beliefs, desires, and so forth, they would have to have been in exactly the same place (for instance, someone else would have to be in the *precise* location where my own body is located) at all points in time. However, this is impossible (Lewis 1995, 107–8).⁷⁰

The problem with this line of thought is that it simply seems like a dressed up, psychological (or pneumatological) version of what Dexippus offers and suffers from the same flaws. Even if a fine-grained specification of an individual's peculiar pneumatological profile or disposition could fulfil the uniqueness requirement, this will almost certainly guarantee that it will not be true of an individual throughout its existence. Just as it is silly to suppose that Theaetetus need always instantiate a certain fine-grained physiological profile, it seems equally silly to suppose that he should always instantiate a certain fine-grained psychological profile and so it is hard to see how an individual's peculiar quality, thus construed, could remain *the same* throughout its existence (compare Simplicius, *In De An.* 217.36–218.2 = LS 28 I; Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083e3–6 = LS 28 A5; cited above).

This is especially apparent when one keeps in mind that the Stoics, from very early on,⁷¹ took $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ to be highly dynamic. Parts of the soul, such as those involved in bodily perception, are described as flowing (for instance, *manare*, Calcidius, *In Platonis Timaeum* 220 = SVF 2.879) and $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ seems to be constantly changing in tension. Thus, for instance, in the very act of receiving appearances, the configuration of the soul is altered (for instance, Aetius,

70 "If two putatively distinct souls were to be indistinguishable, they would each have to [have] indistinguishable beliefs, desires, memories, concepts, etc.... Although two people may assent to what seems to be the same *lekton* when they both view a sunset, their appearances will necessarily include how the sunset appears from their necessarily distinct spatial perspectives ... no other individual can occupy the same place as I do, and so have my perspective on things" (Lewis 1995, 107–8).

71 The influence of the study of Heraclitus (Diogenes Laertius, 7.174 = SVF 1.481), including the well-known rivers fragment(s) (DK 22 B12), upon the early Stoics conceptions of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ seems to have been pronounced (Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 15.20.2 = SVF 1.141, 519 = LS 53 W) and manifested itself in Stoic conceptions of the fiery and dynamic (i.e. ever-changing) nature of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (SVF 1.134, 135). For later discussions, cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 58.22–3.

4.12.1–5 = LS 39B),⁷² and it seems that within a short period of time even deep-seated psychological attributes, such as our moral character, may undergo profound changes (compare Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* 559b–c). Furthermore, given the relevant causal interactions and that the $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ identified as a human's soul is in or coextensive with the matter of the body, it seems that changes in the body would correspond with changes in the tension and other attributes of the soul (Hierocles, 1.5–33, 4.38–53 = LS 53 B5–9).⁷³ That is to say, when the conditions of the body vary, the conditions of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ vary and vice versa (Hierocles, 4.11–13; Tertullian, *De Anim.* 5; Nemesius, *De Natura Homini* 2, 32 = SVF 1.518) and when the physiological attributes of an individual change, so does the individual's pneumatological attributes. Accordingly, it does not seem that pneumatological attributes are significantly more stable than physiological attributes and even if certain pneumatological or psychological attributes were to remain stable across a typical individual's life, they will certainly not be those with respect to which the individual is unique. Furthermore, *even if* $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ could somehow be accurately perceived, it is unclear how it could be used to identify and re-identify individuals.

Finally, I should mention that Irwin's proposal (1996) concerning the peculiar quality is similar to that of Lewis but, in contrast to Lewis, Irwin recognises that it is hard to see how, on such an account, peculiar qualities could be taken to be lifelong (as per (β)) (for instance, Irwin 1996, 471–2). He suggests that a peculiar quality which included “historical or developmental characteristics” might do the job of satisfying both the uniqueness and permanence requirements (as per (α) and (β)).⁷⁴ Thus, “Socrates, for instance, will be the one who

72 Cleanthes (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.228, 372; 8.400; *PH* 2.70 = SVF 1.484) and Chrysippus (Diogenes Laertius, 7.45 = SVF 2.53, 50 = SVF 2.55; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.228–232) disagreed on the nature of these alterations in the soul, but both thought the configuration of the soul was changed.

73 “For by stretching out and relaxing, the soul makes an impression on all the body's parts, since it is blended with them all, and in making an impression it receives an impression in response. For the body, just like the soul, reacts to pressure; and the outcome is a state of their joint pressure upon, and resistance to, each other” (Hierocles, 1.5–33, 4.38–53 = LS 53 B5–9).

74 “If Socrates has his own peculiar quality ... his peculiar quality must be some more specific determination of his humanity ... Socrates' individual soul distinguishes him from all other human beings, because it includes the traits and characteristics that are distinctive of him and his way of life, but not because it includes any of the purely spatio-temporal properties of Socrates” (Irwin 1996, 470–1). Cf. “The soul of an individual persists for the life of the individual (as composite), and individuates the individual. It is the peculiar quality of the individual whose soul it is. Persistence of soul is both necessary and sufficient for persistence of the individual” (Lewis 1995, 104).

develops his bravery and self-knowledge in this specific way” (Irwin 1996, 472).⁷⁵ Precisely how to construe this is, Irwin recognises, problematic.⁷⁶ But even if, in attempting to develop the accounts of Lewis and Irwin, we propose that for the Stoics a peculiar quality was a certain sort of pattern of *πεεϋμα* (not a static snapshot of its attributes, but rather some pattern of change it exhibited over time) it seems that the same criticisms as before apply and, again, even if such developmental characteristics were posited, it is not easy to see how they might meet the epistemic requirements seemingly imposed upon peculiar qualities.

C *A Modest Proposal*

The Stoics, we have seen, are thought to impose what I regarded as four sorts of requirements upon peculiar qualities. Peculiar qualities were to be: (α) unique; (β) lifelong; (γ) of use in identifying individuals; and (δ) something which

75 “If Socrates has his own peculiar quality, he does not differ from other human beings simply in so far as he has a different date of birth and is composed of a different piece of matter ... His peculiar quality must be some more specific determination of his humanity ... Socrates’ individual soul distinguishes him from all other human beings, because it includes the traits and characteristics that are distinctive of him and his way of life, but not because it includes any of the purely spatio-temporal properties of Socrates” (Irwin 1996, 470–1).

76 “We might try to meet this objection by understanding ‘Socrates’ character’ broadly enough to allow for the sorts of changes that would allow Socrates to persist while he gets wiser and more temperate ... In that case, however, our conception of an individual’s character may well appear too broad to constitute anything peculiar to Socrates” (Irwin 1996, 472). Such difficulties are incidental because Irwin takes a passage from Simplicius, (*In. Cat.* 222.32–3 = LS 28 H) to rule out any appeal to temporal or developmental characteristics of such a sort because qualities (in, one must add, the specific sense) do not have such temporal or developmental aspects. According to the report in Simplicius, the Stoics think that the quality which differentiates matter is “not specified by its duration or strength but by the intrinsic ‘suchness’” (οϋτε χρόνω οϋτε ισχύι ειδοποιουμένην, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐξ αὐτῆς τοιουτότητι, Simplicius, *In. Cat.* 222.32–3 = LS 28 H). Irwin takes this to stipulate that the relevant (peculiar) quality must distinguish its bearers from other beings “in non-material and non spatio-temporal terms” (Irwin 1996, 473). However, a passage from slightly later on in Simplicius’s commentary offers similar phrasing and may provide a better clue as to what is meant. In speaking of the difference between a tenor (ἔξις), state (σχέσις), and condition (διάθεσις), Simplicius says: “For they take states to be characterized by acquired conditions, tenors by their intrinsic activities. So tenors, for them, are not specified by their duration or strength, but by a certain peculiar nature (ιδιότης) and particular feature (χαρακτήρ)” (τάς μὲν γὰρ σχέσεις ταῖς ἐπικτήτοις καταστάσεσιν χαρακτηρίζεσθαι, τὰς δὲ ἔξεις ταῖς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν ἐνεργείαις. ὅθεν οὐδὲ χρόνου μήκει ἢ ισχύι εἰδοποιοῦνται αἱ ἔξεις κατ’ αὐτούς, ιδιότητι δὲ τινι καὶ χαρακτήρι; LS 238.10–14 = LS 47 S4–5).

grounded an individual's unity and identity. It is difficult to see how any quality of a thing could meet requirements (γ) and (δ) as these seem to pull in different directions. (γ) encourages a view of peculiar qualities as easily detectable attributes, while (δ) encourages a view of peculiar qualities as deep, recondite attributes which do significant work at a fundamental physical (and perhaps metaphysical) level. These are significant difficulties, but it is especially disappointing that the accounts so far examined struggle to meet even the requirements of being unique and lifelong—(α) and (β)—in a satisfying manner, let alone of simultaneously fulfilling all the purported requirements mentioned.

Where then does this leave us? Putting aside the dispiriting possibility that Stoic thought concerning peculiar qualities was simply incoherent and the Stoics never addressed this fact, it seems likely that the standard scholarly account concerning the requirements imposed upon peculiar qualities requires some modification or the account of the nature of peculiar qualities requires some modification. While a number of reasonable suggestions might here be made, my own proposal—which is both modest and speculative—is twofold. Simply put, it seems to me possible to discern between at least two plausible views concerning peculiar qualities which I will label as follows:

(ORTHODOX) a peculiar quality qualifies something in the more specific sense, in which case the Stoics took a peculiar quality to be a portion of $\piνεῦμα$ and seemingly privileged the unifying and individuating role of peculiar qualities.

(LATER) a peculiar quality qualifies something qualified in the less specific sense, in which case the relevant thinkers seemingly privileged the requirements of being unique and life-long and may have not made the relevant epistemic or metaphysical demands of peculiar qualities.

With regard to (ORTHODOX)—which seems likely have been an earlier and so-called “Orthodox” Stoic view (associated especially with Chrysippus)—we have seen that there are problems in taking an individual to have a pneumatological attribute (or combination thereof) which is (α) unique, (β) lifelong, and (γ) of use in identifying individuals. If we construe the peculiar quality as a pneumatological quality, then we should—I think—adapt the account proposed by Lewis in such a way as to: recognise more emphatically the corporeal nature of peculiar qualities and what this implies for questions concerning qualitative and numerical identity; either discard the requirement concerning identification or else avoid relying upon the thought that $\piνεῦμα$ is directly

perceivable; incorporate the evidence from Dexippus; and (this marks a significant departure from Lewis) recognise the shortcomings of such an account.

In this vein, we should begin by emphatically recognising the corporeal nature of *πνεῦμα*. In an earlier work, Chrysippus seems to have maintained that the virtues (and perhaps other attributes that we would be inclined to regard as qualities) are *ποιά* (Diogenes Laertius, 7.202 = SVF 2.17), construed as discrete bodies.⁷⁷ This allows more easily for talk of the peculiar quality persisting throughout the individual's existence (for instance, Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1083e3–6 = LS 28 A5 [cited and discussed above]) insofar as the relevant portions of *πνεῦμα* do not always remain the same qualitatively (that is to say, they undergo real change) but do remain the same *numerically*.⁷⁸ Thus, for instance, a person's prudence or knowledge—a corporeal entity within the relevant human—would persist even in the face of qualitative change (for instance, as the person develops their prudence) in a manner similar to that in which a blank book which is written in, and even has pages added or removed (or its binding changed) might remain the same book. The same could be said for *πνεῦμα* more generally.

As regards the purported epistemic requirement, discarding or disregarding it would free the Stoics from the objections that it is not clear how the relevant *πνεῦμα*, being somewhat recondite, is not easily or especially accurately perceivable *and* that a quality which changed would not serve as a good basis for identification (for instance, if I am meant to identify Socrates on the basis of his height but his height frequently and unpredictably changes, this reduces the feasibility of my identifying him). Insofar as the evidence in favour of

77 If we follow Menn 1999, Chrysippus initially thought that the virtues were *ποιά* (Diogenes Laertius, 7.202 = SVF 2.17) but then abandoned this view and saw virtues as being the *ἡγεμονικόν* disposed in a certain way (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 11.22–6 = LS 60 G). For spirited resistance to this developmental account, see Collette-Dučić 2009.

78 Sometimes it seems that Lewis should be understood in this way and that he thinks an individual maintains identity with itself by means of maintaining *numerically* the same peculiar quality (e.g., 1995, 97; cf. 94n15, 104; cited below). However, several of Lewis's remarks also tell against this (e.g., "one would be clearly begging the question concerning identity, for one would be attempting to ground the identity of an individual; in the persistence of a quality whose very identity is itself grounded in being the quality *of* the very individual whose identity it grounds," Lewis 1995, 95–6), as does his argument concerning qualitative distinctness of subjects (1995, 107–8; cited above). On balance, it seems that Lewis is proposing that an individual maintains identity with itself by means of maintaining *qualitatively* the same peculiar quality, which is *πνεῦμα* disposed in a certain way (e.g., "they ground the identity of individuals in the persistence of qualities (in the case of ensouled entities, the persistence of soul as quality)" 1995, 90; cf. 1995, 107–8; partially cited below).

identification is not certain, this is a possible interpretation of the orthodox Stoic account.

On the other hand, *if* peculiar qualities are indeed meant to fulfil an epistemic function (the Stoic interest in identification gives some—but only some—support to such a view), then the account proposed by Lewis should be adapted in a number of ways. First, even if an individual's peculiar quality is $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ somehow disposed, we should not suppose that the $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is directly used in identifying an individual (for the reasons given above).

Secondly, given the co-variance between pneumatological and physiological attributes (Hierocles, 4.11–13; Tertullian, *De Anim.* 5; Nemesius, *De Natura Homini* 2, 32 = SVF 1.518), it should be recognised that the account of Dexippus (which is usually dismissed by scholars as not faithfully reporting a Stoic view) may in fact be fairly reliable insofar as it describes how one identifies an individual by perceiving the *effects* of a peculiar quality (rather than perceiving the peculiar quality directly). That is to say, in perceiving an individual's physiological attributes, one perceives the effects of an individual's peculiar quality.

Thirdly, that an individual's peculiar quality, a portion of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, might be perceived through a person's physiological attributes is supported by Stoic interest in physiognomy—which was significant from early on (Diogenes Laertius, 7.173; SVF 3.84–5) and yet seems to have been largely neglected in the relevant literature on peculiar qualities. Despite the ignominy of the pseudo-discipline, one would have to hold one's nose and further investigate Stoic views of physiognomy in order to tell precisely how the Stoics thought physiological attributes might correlate with pneumatological or psychological attributes (for instance, certain kinds of beauty seem to have been regarded as indicating a virtuous inclination, Diogenes Laertius, 7.129).⁷⁹

Finally, and crucially, the orthodox account still faces significant objections (which modern commentators such as Lewis seem to have neglected) in that the shortcomings that have been noticed with regard to the account Dexippus describes seem to recur *and* in that questions concerning how it is that individuals might persist in the face of change recur once again with regard to the bodily item—the relevant $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ —in question. This is especially apparent given that an individual's $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is added to (and probably subtracted from)—receiving influx from blood and air—in much the same manner as an individual's body is sustained by food (Galen, *In Hippocratis Epidemiarum Libri* 270.26–8 = LS 53 E). That is to say, on the pneumatological view of peculiar qualities, the problems raised by the Growing Argument thus seem to remain unresolved and such an account seems little different (and also little better)

79 For a useful discussion of Stoic views of physiognomy, see Boys-Stones 2007, 78–93.

than saying a person's body (by "body" here I mean the observable item with a head, limbs, and so forth) serves as the person's peculiar quality. Saying that Socrates remains the same (numerically identical) across time in virtue of instantiating the same (numerically identical) soul (or virtue, or knowledge, etc.) across time is little better than saying Socrates remains the same (numerically identical) across time in virtue of instantiating the same (numerically identical) body across time. In both cases, we have merely introduced an additional explanandum—how it is that a body (or one's soul) can remain the same (numerically identical) across time while (qualitatively) changing—and it is not clear that we have done much in the way of explaining. Furthermore, we do not seem to have a good basis for qualitatively distinguishing numerically distinct individuals and we may well have introduced further bothersome questions as well as certain recursive worries about qualities having qualities.

That at least some Stoics, most notably Chrysippus (at *some* stage in his thought), opted for an account of this nature seems very likely and criticisms in the vicinity of those I raised—especially concerning the perceivability of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ and various worries concerning regresses (for instance, about qualities having qualities, or about $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, which is a body grounding the unity of another body, itself needing some grounds of unity)—were seemingly made by opponents of the Stoics (Nemesius, 70.6–71.4 = LS 47 J; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mantissa* 113.29–114.4, 24–26, 36–115.1; Galen, *CC* 6.1–7.3; Seneca, *Ep.* 113.3; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 276.30–33).⁸⁰ It is crucial, I think, to appreciate (in a manner that the existing literature has not) that the proposal that a peculiar quality is some portion of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ (or $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ somehow disposed) does not felicitously fulfil the functions the Stoics desired. That is to say, such an account should *not* be judged as being successful.⁸¹

80 Some worried that if all corporeal entities required some external cause to grant them cohesion and $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ was itself corporeal, this would lead to an objectionable regress (Nemesius, 70.6–71.4 = LS 47 J). Other worries in this vicinity were also raised. E.g., "He objects: 'If virtue is an animal, then virtue itself has virtue.' Why shouldn't it have itself? Just as the wise person does everything through his virtue, so virtue does everything through itself..." ('*Si animal est inquit virtus, habet ipsa virtutem. Quidni habeat se ipsam? quomodo sapiens omnia per virtutem gerit, sic virtus per se.* Seneca, *Ep.* 113.3; cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Mant.* 114.4–6). There is also evidence in Plutarch (*De Virtute Morali* 440e–441d = LS 61 B) which talks of the virtues, construed there as $\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\alpha}$ (qualified items), having peculiar qualities. For discussion of Alexander's criticisms of the Stoic view that qualities are bodies, see Kupreeva 2003, 311–325.

81 In addition, pace Sedley (1982, 266; 1999, 404), it should not be thought that the Stoic account requires only a little tinkering in order to be successful in its aims.

The second option described above—(LATER)—proposes that peculiar qualities do not qualify something in the more specific sense. It seems to me unlikely that so-called “orthodox” Stoics would have taken this option, but I would suggest that some later Stoics (that is to say, Stoics after Chrysippus and probably after Panaetius) or thinkers heavily influenced by the Stoics appealed to impure properties to fulfil at least some of the functions attributed to peculiar qualities.

Impure properties are or include relations to particulars individuals. For instance, “being the student of Aristotle” expresses an impure relational property of Alexander. These would have been regarded as qualities in the less specific sense. The suggestion that a relational property of any kind might serve as peculiar quality faces some objections. In particular, David Sedley considers but dismisses such a possibility for two reasons (1982, 262–3; compare Long and Sedley 1987, i.174). First, he takes such relational properties to belong to the fourth category (πρός τί πως ἔχον) and thinks that these are not eligible to be peculiar qualities. Secondly, he thinks that relational properties are not in fact permanent and thus unsatisfactory peculiar qualities (and moreover, they are often vulnerable to so-called “mere Cambridge change,” compare Irwin 1996, 467). For instance, being-the-husband-of-Xanthippe cannot be a peculiar quality of Socrates as it is not possessed by Socrates throughout his existence.

With regard to the first objection, this seems to be based on the assumption that something peculiarly qualified must be qualified in the most specific sense of “qualified.” However, we have seen that the Stoics recognised that things could be “qualified” in a looser sense, so as to denote something within the third category (πως ἔχον, “somehow disposed”) which did *not* require positing a distinct corporeal item within the relevant subject as the referent and it is not clear to me (as I signalled above) that peculiar qualities *have* to be qualities in the more specific sense or that there should be an independent reason for claiming that relational properties cannot serve as peculiar qualities.⁸² With regard to the second objection, even if this were grounds for denying that relational properties could serve as peculiar qualities (and we have already seen the difficulties presented in finding unique, lifelong peculiar qualities when qualities are spoken of in the more specific sense), it should be noticed

82 The Stoics regarded entities having certain relational properties or entities being somehow directed at other things as being among “the things relative” or “relatives” (τὰ πρὸς τι). Note however that relatives were not exclusively within the fourth category (πρὸς τί πως ἔχον). For instance, knowledge and sense-perception were taken to be relatives and thought to fall either into the second category (ποιόν, “qualified”) or the third (πως ἔχον, “somehow disposed”) (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 166.15–19 = LS 29 C).

that not all relational or impure properties are of this nature. Thus, while Socrates may cease to be the husband of Xanthippe, it seems that there are other impure properties, such as being-the-first-born-son-of-Sophroniscus (compare Plato *Laches* 180e8–181a1), which he will never lose. One need, then, only find the right impure properties.

There is, I think, some limited textual evidence which suggests that some later Stoics or thinkers heavily influenced by the Stoics may indeed have taken peculiar qualities *not* to be qualities in the more specific sense but rather relational properties of a particular sort (more concretely, impure relational properties) or else hoped that qualities in the less specific sense could perform some of the functions expected of peculiar qualities. In particular, some Christian thinkers who borrow heavily from the Stoics describe an account along such lines. Thus, Basil of Caesarea, like some other Christian thinkers (for instance, Origen, *De Oratone* 24.2.1–7),⁸³ draws heavily upon Stoic thought concerning peculiar qualities (associated in our evidence with the post-Chrysippean Stoic Diogenes of Babylon; compare Diogenes Laertius, 7.58) when discussing the meaning and reference of proper names. In a discussion of peculiar natures and peculiarities (which does not explicitly name peculiar qualities, though the account of Origen, which is similar, does name them), Basil draws upon explicitly and distinctively Stoic notions (such as their usage of the term οὐσία) and offers the following remarks:

For this reason [that we are all men] in most respects we are the same as one another, but each of us differs from the others solely by virtue of a peculiarities which are observed concerning each individual (τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνους τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἑτέρου διενηνόχουμεν). Hence the names are not signifiers of substances, but of the peculiar natures (ἰδιότητες) which characterise the individual. So when we hear “Peter,” we do not from the name think of his substance (οὐσία)—by “substance” I mean now the material substrate (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον), which the name in no way signifies—but we are imprinted with the notion of the peculiarities (ἰδιώματα) which are observed concerning him. For

83 “A [proper] name is a summarising appellative that displays the peculiar qualities of what is named. For instance, there is a peculiar quality (ἰδία ποιότης) of the Apostle Paul—one for his soul, by which it is the way it is; one for his intellect, by which it is contemplative of its object, one for his body, by which it is the way it is. The peculiar characteristic (ἴδιον) which is incompatible relative to another—for there is no one else in existence indistinguishable (ἀπαράλλακτος) from Paul—is indicated (δηλοῦν) by the naming of Paul” (Origen, *De Oratone* 24.2.1–7). Cf. Diogenes Laertius, 7.58 (cited above). I largely follow the translation offered by Sorabji 2005, 227.

immediately from the utterance we think of the son of Jonah, the man from Bethsaida, the brother of Andrew, the man called forth from the fishermen into the service of the Apostolate, the man pre-eminent through faith who received upon himself the edifice of the Church. (Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* 29.577.35–580.4)⁸⁴

If this is not an innovation of Basil's and does indeed reflect some later, unnamed Stoics' thinking on the topic (or the thinking of so-called "Stoics"),⁸⁵ it supplements the report concerning Diogenes of Babylon (cited above in full, see section III), which claims that a proper name "is a part of language which indicates a peculiar quality" (δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, Diogenes Laertius, 7.58 = LS 33 M), and offers a loose parallel to Dexippus's report in that it proposes that what satisfies (at least some of) the functions expected of peculiar qualities is in fact a *combination* of attributes or a complex attribute. However, unlike the account of Dexippus (which adverted to a complex physiological attribute of combination of physiological attributes), the account here described appeals to certain impure properties—which concern an individual's relation to other individuals (being-the-son-of-Jonah, being-from-Bethsaida, being-the-brother-of-Andrew, etc.)—of the relevant individual.

The combination described by Basil is such that it is (at least ideally and in theory) possessed only by one individual (in this case the Apostle Peter). The relevant combination of attributes is a much stronger (and arguably successful) candidate for being unique *and* a number of these attributes are such that they are plausibly lifelong (such as being-the-son-of-Jonah, being-from-

84 Διόπερ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐσμέν· τοῖς δὲ ἰδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἐτέρου διετηνόμεθα. Ὅθεν καὶ αἱ προσηγοῦνται οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικαὶ, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιοτήτων, αἱ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν. Ὅταν οὖν ἀκούωμεν Πέτρον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος (οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκειμενον, ὅπερ οὐδαμῶς σημαίνει τοῦνομα), ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἃ περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα. Εὐθύς γὰρ ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης νοοῦμεν τὸν τοῦ Ἰωάνη, τὸν ἐκ τῆς Βηθσαιδᾶ, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἀνδρέου, τὸν ἀπὸ ἀλιέων εἰς τὴν διακονίαν τῆς ἀποστολῆς προσκληθέντα, τὸν διὰ πίστεως ὑπεροχὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δεξάμενον. As with Origen, I largely follow the translation offered by Sorabji (2005, 227).

85 I say so-called Stoics because of the state of the textual evidence, the decline of the traditional Athenian schools of philosophy from the first-century BC onwards, and the advent of (what is nowadays typically regarded as) eclecticism. As regards this last, there was a certain seemingly self-described eclectic school, associated with Potamo of Alexandria (Diogenes Laertius, 1.21), but I use the term "eclecticism" in the slightly more old-fashioned "mix-and-match" sense (though it is not intended to be derogatory).

Bethsaida).⁸⁶ Such attributes are, of course, not intrinsic to the individual and will not serve a metaphysical role in unifying the individual or grounding its identity but—as noted above—this is not a problem so long as we do not take peculiar qualities to be predicated in the more specific sense. Equally, this particular combination of impure properties is not directly perceivable, but that need not be a problem if the purported epistemic requirement is disregarded (we have seen the evidence in its favour is not certain) *or* if the Stoics should have dropped the requirement (more on this possibility in section V). Even later Stoics would presumably not have discussed the case of the Apostle Peter, but Basil's remarks may advert to the fact that some later Stoics or thinkers heavily influenced by the Stoics (perhaps Basil himself) were attracted to an account of the sort just described and that they adapted the earlier Stoic account of peculiar qualities in the manner described or else thought that some other attributes (such as those just mentioned) might better fulfil some of the functions ascribed to peculiar qualities. If that is right, then it suggests that at least some later Stoics or thinkers heavily influenced by the Stoics were sensitive to the problematic nature of the orthodox Stoic account of peculiar qualities and attempted to revise the account accordingly.

V An Academic Indiscernibility Argument

A *An Academic Argument*

In the discussion above, I have suggested that, for orthodox Stoics, either the purported epistemic function of peculiar qualities in identifying individuals should be discarded or that it should be recognised that a peculiar quality was not directly perceived but detected through examining its effects, that is to say

86 Supposing that the properties are not temporal, then not all the individual attributes mentioned by Basil hold of Peter throughout his existence (I thank Albert Jooze for this objection). For instance, there exists a time such that Andrew was not always pre-eminent in his faith at that time. If that is right, then it may be admitted that Basil's example—which is surely his own—is infelicitous in that respect while it should also be recognised that at least some of the attributes *are* such that they hold of Peter throughout his existence (e.g., being from Bethsaida, being the son of Jonah). Equally (though this strikes me as less likely), it might be the case that Basil (*perhaps* like Mnesarchus, for whom see above) aims to advert to some form of temporal attributes. If that is right, then the relevant attributes could hold of Peter throughout his existence. That is to say, Peter would not, at t_1 , gain the property (which he did not have before) of being pre-eminent in his faith. Instead, Peter always has the property of being-pre-eminent-in-his-faith-at- t_1 . Leibniz, as I read him, proposes something similar (e.g., *Discours de Métaphysique* §8).

by examining an individual's physiological attributes. I shall conclude by indicating some difficulties in supposing that a peculiar quality might fulfil an epistemic role. I shall do so by reconstructing a simple but potent Academic argument against the notion that in order to identify an individual securely, one needs to discern a (perceivable) attribute or combination thereof which is unique to that individual. The argument is best illustrated by targeting an account akin to that described by Dexippus (which appeals to an individual's physiological attributes) but will function similarly for other relevant sorts of account (notably, pneumatological accounts). This argument would, I think, have given the Stoics good reason to revise the notion that peculiar qualities served an epistemic purpose in identifying individuals (if indeed this was ever a requirement of peculiar qualities).

The argument in question takes the form of an Academic exploitation of "indiscernibilities" (*ἀπαρἀλλαξίας*, Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077c6–7). As usually understood, the Academics invoked the indiscernibility of true and false appearances to argue that there were no kataleptic appearances (for instance, Sedley 1982, 263; Perin 2005). For instance, the (supposed) phenomenological indiscernibility of dreaming and waking appearances was meant to show that there was no mark or peculiarity exclusive to kataleptic appearances and to impugn the reliability of perceptual appearances by showing that for any true perceptual-type appearance, there is or could be a *false* perceptual-type appearance, experienced while the agent is asleep or otherwise cognitively impaired, such that the epistemic agent may not tell them apart (for instance, Cicero, *Acad.* 2.52; compare Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.252).

However, I am here suggesting that the Academics also had available to them (and indeed seemingly employed) a second, different kind of indiscernibility argument (which, as far as I can tell, has received little in the way of attention).⁸⁷ The argument concerns *not* our distinguishing between veridical and non-veridical *appearances* (as the dreaming argument does), but our distinguishing the *objects* of our appearances on the basis of our (presumably veridical) appearances of them:

Are you saying that Lysippus couldn't have made a hundred Alexanders just like one another, if he used the same bronze, the same process, the same tool, etc.? Tell me what marking (*notio*) you would have used to differentiate (*discernere*) them! How about if I stamp a hundred seals into wax of the same type with this ring? Are you really going to be able to find

87 Striker 1990, 153–4 seems to also notice this form of the argument but does not discuss it in any detail. As far I am aware, it has not received detailed discussion elsewhere either.

a means of distinguishing them? Or will you need to find a ring-maker like that Delian chicken-farmer you found who could recognize eggs? (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.85–6)⁸⁸

The same sort of Academic complaint against the Stoics is reported (albeit not terribly clearly) by Sextus:

For example, if there are two eggs exactly alike, and I give them to the Stoic one after the other, will the wise person, after fastening upon them, have the capacity to say infallibly whether the egg he is being shown is a single one, or the one and then the other? ... When a snake has poked its head out, if we want to give our attention to the underlying object, we will fall into a great deal of impasse, and will not be able to say whether it is *the same snake* that poked its head out before or another one (ὁ αὐτός ἐστι δράκων τῷ πρότερον προκύψαντι ἢ ἕτερος), since many snakes are coiled up in the same hole. (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.409–410)⁸⁹

As I understand these accounts, the Academic complaint centres on our (in)ability to distinguish between highly similar objects on the basis of our appearances of them *even if our appearances are veridical* (and thus it differs from more familiar form of the indiscernibility argument). The problems may be put quite simply and are as follows.

First, *even if* we suppose that individuals do have unique attributes, and *even if* we suppose that the relevant content of our appearances is true, nonetheless our appearances may not enable us to grasp the difference between similar individuals. Thus, suppose that we grant that there are some numerically distinct individuals and that, as per (DISC) (which claims that for any two numerically distinct individuals there is an attribute one of them has which the other lacks), some individual *a* instantiates some attribute that its apparent duplicate (which is nonetheless a numerically distinct individual) *b* does

88 *Dic mihi, Lysippus eodem aere, eadem temperatione, eodem caelo atque ceteris omnibus centum Alexandros eiusdem modi facere non posset? qua igitur notione discerneres? Quid si in eiusdem modi cera centum sigilla hoc anulo impressero, ecquae poterit in agnoscendo esse distinctio? an tibi erit quaerendus anularius aliqui, quoniam gallinarium invenisti Deliacum illum qui ova cognosceret?*

89 οἷον δυεῖν ὧν ἄκρωσ ἀλλήλοισ ὁμοίων ἐναλλάξ τῷ Στωικῷ δίδωμι πρὸς διάκρισιν, εἰ ἐπιβαλὼν ὁ σοφὸς ἰσχύσει λέγειν ἀδιαπτῶτως, πότερον ἓν ἐστὶ τὸ δεικνύμενον ὧν ἢ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο.... ἐάν γάρ προκύψαντος δράκοντος θέλωμεν τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ἐπιστῆναι, εἰς πολλήν ἀπορίαν ἐμπεσοῦμεθα, καὶ οὐχ ἔξομεν λέγειν, πότερον ὁ αὐτός ἐστὶ δράκων τῷ πρότερον προκύψαντι ἢ ἕτερος, πολλῶν ἐνσπειραμένων τῷ αὐτῷ φωλεῷ δρακόντων.

not. This does *not* mean that an accurate appearance of *a* cannot represent its object in exactly the same way that an accurate appearance of *b* represents its object. For instance, Tweedledee and Tweedledum might be (intrinsically) the same but for one minor difference. Tweedledee has seven moles on his back; Tweedledum does not. Even though Tweedledee and Tweedledum do differ in their intrinsic attributes, perfectly accurate photographs of them taken from the front (in the same light, position, etc.), or of them wearing their clothes, etc. will not differ in their representational content because typical photographs of typical objects—like appearances—do not capture all the attributes of their object.

If such an argument was indeed employed by the Academics against the Stoics, what then would the Stoics say in reply? In light of their response to the Sorites and other cases, it seems the Stoics would respond by saying that in such cases one should not assent to something like “this is Tweedledee” but hold off until one can distinguish between *a* and *b* (compare Cicero, *Acad.* 2.92; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.416; *PH* 2.253). If, for instance, you cannot distinguish between Tweedledee and Tweedledum from the front, then you should get closer and get a good look at them from the back and sides (compare Cicero, *Acad.* 2.19, 57; Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.258). When one sees that Tweedledee has seven moles and that Tweedledum does not, *then* one may assent to identity claims regarding the two individuals. Thus, for one to distinguish Tweedledee from Tweedledum, one need have some rough account of their general appearances and be aware that one (Tweedledee) has seven moles on his back while the other (Tweedledum) does not.

This seems reasonable as far it goes, but it brings us to a second problem. While awareness or detection of some attribute which two duplicates do not share will help a subject distinguish one individual from the second, it will not suffice for detecting the attribute unique to each individual and so to appropriately identify (and re-identify) that individual in a range of situations, especially if there are (or there is a salient possibility of there being) many other highly similar individuals.

Thus, suppose that when confronted with apparent duplicates *a* and *b* one refrains from assenting to identity statements until one finds an attribute which *a* and *b* do not share and by which one distinguishes *a* and *b*. This attribute (which *a* has and *b* lacks or vice versa) will likely be of little help in discovering the unique attribute of *a* or of *b*. This is because the attribute which *a* and *b* do not share need not be the same attribute that *a* and *c* (another “duplicate”) do not share. In fact, if there are sufficient “duplicates” and the “duplicates” are sufficiently similar (which is easily imaginable in the case of eggs which the Stoics hoped a Delian farmer might distinguish), then there will

most likely be no single more-or-less simple attribute possessed by a such that it distinguishes a from the others (*b*, *c*, ...). More pressingly, there is no way—short of omniscience about the relevant individuals—of finding out what each individual's unique attribute is.

In this vein, imagine that we are confronted with a very large number of eggs (or chickens, or snakes, etc.). They all seem, to a non-expert, indistinguishable. However, close acquaintance and an expert eye allows one to distinguish between *a* and *b* on the basis of their diameter. *a*'s diameter to six significant figures is 10.7014cm, whereas *b*'s diameter to six significant figures is 10.7012cm. This might lead us to think that *a*'s precise diameter, along with some rough characterisation of *a*'s other attributes, can be used to identify them. However, this would be too hasty. While diameter may allow one to distinguish *a* and *b*, it will not enable one to distinguish a from another “duplicate,” namely *c*, whose diameter to six significant figures is also 10.7014cm. Instead, in order to distinguish *a* from *c*, one will need to appeal to some other attribute, for instance weight. Yet while that might distinguish *a* from *c* (and, let us presume, *b*), it will not distinguish *a* from *d*. And so on. Given a sufficiently large number of sufficiently similar duplicates (or the possibility of there being such) the demand for greater precision and comprehensiveness is ever increasing and identifying a unique attribute of an object requires omniscience about that object and its duplicates! The problem is, of course, only exacerbated when one takes into account the fact that an individual's attributes change over time and the problem seems to remain the same regardless of which sorts of attributes (physiological, psychological, etc.) one appeals to.

B *A Lesson from the Academic Argument?*

The Academic argument seems to raise significant obstacles for the hope that peculiar qualities or their manifestations might act as something akin to number plates and that humans might securely identify similar individuals by means of detecting some unique attribute(s) of the individuals in question. Even though the Stoics did not seem to be committed to the view that an ideal epistemic agent can identify an individual in any conceivable case, nonetheless if the Academics could make salient the possibility that for any given individual there are other highly similar individuals (even if one does not already know of them), then it seems that the problem described extends beyond the case of the Delian farmer confronted with a large number of highly similar eggs. To make the possibility of highly similar but previously unknown duplicates less remote, the Academics could presumably appeal to historic (or semi-historic) cases, such as the trick that Persaeus apparently played upon Aristo of Chios wherein Persaeus arranged for one twin to leave a deposit of

some money with Aristo and then for the other twin (whose existence Aristo presumably did not know of) to collect that deposit (Diogenes Laertius, 7.162 = SVF 1.347).⁹⁰ Given the Stoic interest in identification and hopes for infallibility (such that the sage, even if he were merely an ideal figure, could attain the infallibility in question), the Academic argument described seems to strike a significant blow. Even the sage who was well acquainted with a particular individual would be impelled to refrain from assenting to identity statements about that individual if such statements require discovering an individual's unique attribute. Accordingly, the sage should, it seems, refrain from putting too much trust in the abilities of Delian farmers and either not attempt to infallibly identify individuals (if they wish to remain secure) or else perhaps adopt an approach which does not require detecting a unique attribute of an individual in order to identify that individual.

Supposing the argument I have described here was indeed employed by the Academics, then it seems that if the Stoics ever thought the peculiar quality (or some unique attribute) should play an epistemic role in identifying individuals, then the Academic argument would have revealed a number of difficulties with such a view. Accordingly, if the Stoics did think that peculiar qualities might play an epistemic role, they would have been given good reason to abandon the notion and perhaps sought some other means by which to identify individuals. As regards this last, the Stoics would have done well to follow an approach which Sextus describes and attributes to the Academy. The approach in question is more modest in neither seeking to vindicate the pretensions of Delian farmers nor aiming at infallibility. Crucially, it is also more holistic in not seeming to require the detection of some more or less permanent unique, intrinsic attribute(s) of the individual but instead appeals to some combination of context-sensitive features and relational attributes:

For example, someone who catches an appearance of a human being necessarily also grasps an appearance of features that attach to him and of external features: features that attach to him, such as colour, size, shape, movement, talk, clothing, footwear, and external features, such as atmosphere, light, day, sky, earth, friends, and all the rest. Whenever none

90 "Diocles of Magnesia says that, after meeting Polemo, while Zeno was suffering from a protracted illness, Aristo recanted his views. The Stoic doctrine to which he attached most importance was the wise man's refusal to hold mere opinions. And against this doctrine Persaeus was contending when he induced one of a pair of twins to deposit a certain sum with Ariston and afterwards got the other to reclaim it. Ariston being thus reduced to perplexity was refuted" (Diogenes Laertius, 7.162 = SVF 1.347, trans. Hicks).

of these appearances distracts us by appearing false, but all of them in unison appear true, our trust is great. For we trust that this is Socrates from the fact that he has all his usual features too: colour, size, shape, opinion, ragged cloak, and his being in a place where there is no one indistinguishable from him. (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.176–8)⁹¹

91 οἷον ὁ ἀνθρώπου σπῶν φαντασίαν ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν λαμβάνει φαντασίαν καὶ τῶν ἐκτός, τῶν μὲν περὶ αὐτὸν <ὡς> χροῶς μεγέθους σχήματος κινήσεως λαλιᾶς ἐσθήτος ὑποδέσεως, τῶν δὲ ἐκτός ὡς ἀέρος φωτός ἡμέρας οὐρανοῦ γῆς φίλων, τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων. ὅταν οὖν μηδεμία τούτων τῶν φαντασιῶν περιέλκη ἡμᾶς τῷ φαίνεσθαι ψευδῆς, ἀλλὰ πάσαι συμφῶνως φαίνονται ἀληθεῖς, μᾶλλον πιστεύομεν. ὅτι γὰρ οὗτός ἐστι Σωκράτης, πιστεύομεν ἐκ τοῦ πάντα αὐτῷ προσεῖναι τὰ εἰωθότα, χρώμα μέγεθος σχῆμα διάληψιν τρίβωνα, τὸ ἐνθάδε εἶναι ὅπου οὐθεὶς ἐστὶν αὐτῷ ἀπαράλλακτος.