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Phaedo 100b3-9

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Abstract

The paper examines a puzzling sequence of verb tenses at *Phaedo* 100b3-9. It rejects the idea, almost universal among commentators, that the puzzle is to be solved by construing the first verbal expression as if it were equivalent to a future. The paper then offers another solution and explores its implications for understanding the broader philosophical context of the passage. What emerges is that the new solution provides a valuable clue to figuring out what precisely Socrates has in mind when he speaks at 100b4 of the 'mode of explanation' with which he is presently engaged. Hence, the tightly focused linguistic discussion at the paper's outset ultimately takes on a good deal of significance for the interpretation of this difficult but important section of the dialogue.

Keywords

Greek philosophy – Plato's *Phaedo* – Socrates – ontology – explanation – verbal auxiliaries

ἔρχομαι γὰρ δὴ ἐπιχειρῶν σοι ἐπιδείξασθαι τῆς αἰτίας τὸ εἶδος ὃ πεπραγμάτευμαι, καὶ εἶμι πάλιν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ πολυθρύλητα καὶ ἄρχομαι ἀπ' ἐκείνων, ὑποθέμενος εἶναι τι καλὸν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ μέγα καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα· ἃ εἴ μοι δίδως τε καὶ συγχωρεῖς εἶναι ταῦτα, ἐλπίζω σοι ἐκ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιδείξειν καὶ ἀνευρήσειν ὡς ἀθάνατον ἢ ψυχῇ.

I. The preceding statement occurs in the context of a famously difficult passage—*Phaedo* 95e-102b—in which Socrates relates the frustrations he encountered in his youthful attempts at *περὶ φύσεως ἱστορία* and then describes

how he came to rely on the Theory of Forms as an alternative way of pursuing ‘the explanation of coming-to-be and passing-away’ (περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς τὴν αἰτίαν, 95e10). Socrates utters the words quoted above just as he is beginning to show how the Forms can help supply αἰτίαι of the sort that now concerns him.

The opening of his statement contains what in context is a puzzling sequence of verb tenses. First, there is the present ἔρχομαι, combined with a present participle and supplementary infinitive (ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδειξασθαι). That is followed by εἶμι—in effect a future—after which there is a return to the present with ἄρχομαι.

In his 1810 commentary on the *Phaedo*, Heindorf tried to bring the first two verbs into line with one another by suggesting that the phrase ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδειξασθαι is “instar futuri ἐπιδειξόμενος” and that the whole expression ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδειξασθαι can therefore be treated as an example of the use of ἔρχομαι with a future participle to express futurity. A similar explanation was offered in the same year by Wyttenbach, who explicitly accounted for the lack of a future participle by declaring that the verb ἐπιχειρεῖν “per se habet vim futuri.”¹

Such an interpretation has the attraction of permitting a neat account of the point Socrates is making. As it would go, Socrates starts by announcing his intention to demonstrate his new mode of explanation and to do so, specifically, by returning to the Forms—the entities to which he has previously made frequent appeal. He then undertakes the promised demonstration with an emphatic, performative ἄρχομαι.

Perhaps because of the straightforwardness of that account, the foregoing interpretation of ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδειξασθαι has been followed widely. It is repeated without attribution by a host of commentators,² while both Archer-Hind and Burnet adopt it and credit it specifically to Heindorf.³ It is likewise

1 See Heindorf 1810, 191-192, and Wyttenbach 1810, 264. At an even earlier date, the expression ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδειξασθαι was considered to present a problem. In his commentary of 1770 (p. 158 and 238), Fischer thus argued that ἐπιχειρῶν is simply the standard Attic form of the future participle. As he contended, such original Attic futures were in many cases later altered by scribes, and the remaining forms have frequently been misinterpreted as vivid presents. Heindorf’s (1810, 28) account of the construction is expressly presented as a response to Fischer’s doctrine.

2 See, e.g., Grosse 1828, 258; Stallbaum 1833, 138; Wohlrab 1879, 115; Geddes 1885², 135.

3 Archer-Hind 1883, *ad loc.*, and Burnet 1911, *ad loc.* See also Stanford 1834, 246. Loriaux (1975, *ad loc.*) adopts the interpretation but credits it to Burnet.

endorsed in the LSJ entry on ἔρχομαι.⁴ Most translators accordingly render the construction as if it were a future, or else they strangely combine the notions of trying and futurity. The translation by Grube is a typical example of the latter tendency: ‘I am going to try to show you the kind of cause with which I have concerned myself.’⁵ So far as I have been able to discover, the sole dissenting voice among interpreters of the dialogue is that of Rowe, who criticizes translations of the sort offered by Grube, though without discussing what may be wrong with the reading underlying them or what recommends the alternative he proposes.⁶

A fuller discussion is much needed. The doctrine underlying the common interpretation is misguided, since the notion of trying does not intrinsically express anything about future time. To say ‘I am now trying to do *x*’ is not equivalent to saying ‘I will do *x*’, ‘I am going to do *x* at some future point’. To be sure, the notion of trying may be said to involve an awareness that the goal one has in mind is as yet unrealized. To that extent, it may likewise be said to involve a future-oriented desire for the realization of that goal. Crucially, however, there is no simple transition from this to the expectation that one *will* eventually realize the goal. In some situations, one may well be confident of success because one considers one’s efforts adequate to the task at hand,

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- 4 In the context of observing that ἔρχομαι can sometimes function “like an auxiliary Verb” (s.v. IV.2), LSJ offers several Herodotean examples of its use with the future participle and then notes the relative rarity of that construction in Attic. Of the four examples supplied, the only one without a future participle is *Phaedo* 100b, which is glossed ἔρχομαι σοι ἐπιδειξόμενος.
- 5 See J. Cooper 1997, 86. A few translators handle the passage differently, but they do so in a way that obscures the grammatical construction. Dixsaut (1991, 278), for instance, treats it as if the whole sentence were in the present tense and were governed by the initial ἔρχομαι: ‘Car j’en arrive à ceci: j’essaie de montrer l’espèce de cause en vue de laquelle je fais tous ces efforts, et aussitôt voilà que je reviens à ces formules cent fois ressassées et c’est en elles que je trouve mes points de départ...’ Vicaire (1983, *ad loc.*) represents the statement as a conditional: ‘Si je me mets à t’exposer la forme de causalité que j’ai péniblement cherchée, je vais en revenir à ce que j’ai déjà tant rebattu. Je pars de ce principe...’
- 6 In his commentary for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series, Rowe (1993a, *ad loc.*) translates ‘I am setting about trying to show you.’ He remarks: “‘I am going to...’, as [the phrase] is usually translated, suggests an unambiguous reference to the future; but (a) in that case we should expect a future participle, and (b) while one of the two following verbs in the sentence (b₄ εἶμι) probably has to be treated as future, the second (b₅ ἔρχομαι) is indubitably present.” The first point, (a), is an objection to translations like the one above, but not to the linguistic doctrine of Heindorf and Wyttenbach. The second one, (b), could be the beginning of an objection to the latter, but it does not engage the doctrine in a direct fashion. Rowe does not address the passage in either of his two articles on this section of the *Phaedo*. (For a comment on his proposed translation, see n. 19 below.)

and one is aware of no outside forces that are likely to pose serious obstacles. Yet the Greek ἐπιχειρεῖν, like the English 'try', expresses only the present fact of one's efforts and does not suggest as part of its meaning a confidence in the power of one's action to bring about the result desired. Hence in what immediately precedes the passage under discussion, Socrates can use ἐπιχειρεῖν in a context in which he expects failure as the likely outcome: 'I feared that my soul would be altogether blinded if I looked at things with my eyes and tried to lay hold of them (ἐπιχειρῶν ἀπτεσθαι αὐτῶν) with each of my senses' (99e2-4).

Perhaps commentators have had vaguely in mind some idea that a statement like 'I am acting *in an attempt to do x*' may be deemed analogous to a purpose-statement of the form 'I am acting *with the intention of realizing x*'. In that case, they may be thinking of the phrase ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδείξασθαι as a stand-in for a future participle (ἐπιδειξόμενος) that would express the goal of one's striving. Note, however, that on such a reading ἔρχομαι could not be construed as a mere auxiliary verb. It would instead have to function as the sentence's main verb, expressing the action intended to bring about the purpose in question. It is utterly unclear just what the appropriate interpretation of ἔρχομαι might then be, and commentators have routinely been content to treat the verb as an auxiliary. At best, then, their accounts may be said to represent a conflation of some idea of purpose with a periphrastic expression of the future.

If one looks to the standard grammars for a more satisfying explanation of the construction, little help is forthcoming. Kühner-Gerth reasonably declines to follow the trend of assimilating it to a future and instead cites it as one instance of a broad pattern of using finite verbs of coming and going together with participles, which may be in either the present or the future tense. The proposed explanation of such usage is that the finite verbs and participles are combined "um den durch das Partizip ausgedrückten Begriff mit einer gewissen malerischen Vollständigkeit zur sinnlichen Anschauung zu bringen."⁷ That explanation may be helpful for understanding some of the diverse array of cases cited, but it is of questionable relevance to the present sentence. What, after all, would it be to obtain a 'sensory grasp' of the activity of trying to give a demonstration? And what precisely would be the point of such vividness in this case? Perhaps more seriously, the analysis offered by Kühner-Gerth has the effect of making ἔρχομαι more or less incidental to the main idea, which is taken to be expressed by the participle ἐπιχειρῶν (together with ἐπιδείξασθαι). The cost of doing so is that the sequence of verbs in the sentence as a whole remains mysterious. There is no clear reason why Socrates would immediately slip into the future (with εἶμι πάλιν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ πολυθρόλυτα) before returning

7 Kühner and Gerth 1904, vol. 2.2, sec. 482.10 (pp. 60-61).

just as quickly to the present (ἄρχομαι ἀπ' ἐκείνων). If the interpretation of Kühner-Gerth were correct, it would have been simple enough for Socrates to have used the future ἐπιχειρήσω, or perhaps to have reworded his thought slightly so as to avoid the εἶμι-clause altogether.

In his *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, G. Cooper proposes another account, one that effectively defends translations of the sort 'I am going to try to demonstrate . . .'. As Cooper argues, "[p]resents of verbs of motion sometimes have a future sense."⁸ He offers four examples involving verbs other than εἶμι, the present passage being one of them. It is not at all clear that the other three examples supply genuine cases of a future sense; but even ignoring that concern, they are all quite different from the use of ἄρχομαι at issue here. For, each of them involves the idea of physical motion, and none employs a participial construction. Hence their probative value for *Phaedo* 100b is uncertain at best. Cooper does not discuss the proper interpretation of the passage, but he returns to it again later (at 56.10.4), where he provides a somewhat different analysis of the construction. Using the ἄρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν of line b3 as one of his examples (under 'A'), he now suggests that the purported future sense of the phrase is to be located primarily in the participle. He states that a present participle may sometimes be used equivalently to a future one,⁹ and by way of explanation he refers back to his remarks at 56.10.1 (cf. also 53.1.7), where he says: "All moods of the present may to some extent show the conative force of that tense. . . . As the conative force appears in the present participle, this takes on much the same force as the future participle." That analysis seems to turn on a version of the previously discussed conflation between a conative notion and one of futurity. What's more, it leaves unclear how one should make sense of 100b3, where what is at issue is precisely the participle of a conative verb. If the present participle as such had a conative force, one would expect Socrates simply to have said ἄρχομαι ἐπιδεικνύμενος rather than what he does say—ἄρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδείξασθαι.¹⁰

8 See G.L. Cooper III 1998, vol. 1, 53.1.8.

9 He also adds as a link to what was said in 53.1.8: "Most commonly, verbs of motion are used as the main verbs because they suggest a modal or future idea by their very meaning . . ."

10 Stahl (1907, 150) maintains that ἄρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδείξασθαι is a "pleonastic" alternative to ἄρχομαι ἐπιδεικνύμενος. That does no more than label the problem, and it sits awkwardly with Stahl's interpretation of ἄρχεσθαι here as 'sich anschicken zu etwas', which would lead one to expect a real future rather than a pleonastic construction involving the present. (Note the way his explanation of the construction on p. 150 differs from the one he gives on p. 686.)

In view of those difficulties, I submit that a better course of interpretation is to treat ἔρχομαι as the main verb, rather than an auxiliary of some sort, and to preserve the (here metaphorical) sense of movement that is central to its meaning. One might then translate the expression ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν σοι ἐπιδείξασθαι as ‘I am proceeding onward in my attempt to demonstrate to you. . . .’ An instructive parallel for that reading of the construction may be found in Herodotus, in a passage in which Cyrus is described as relating the story of his upbringing (1.122.3): τραφήναι δὲ ἔλεγε ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ βουκόλου γυναικός, ἥτις τε ταύτην αἰνέων διὰ παντός, ἦν τέ οἱ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τὰ πάντα ἢ Κυνώ (‘He said that he had been raised by a cowherd’s wife, and he went on in praise of her throughout everything he related, and he was constantly speaking of ‘Cyno.’’).

Such an interpretation of *Phaedo* 100b finds support in a valuable study by F. Létoublon concerning the supposed use of verbs of movement as auxiliaries in Greek. In a broad review of relevant cases, Létoublon argues that a pure auxiliary use is either non-existent or at best extremely limited in frequency and in the type of verbal construction in which it occurs.¹¹ Most of the passages in which verbs of movement have been construed as auxiliaries may straightforwardly be understood as involving an idea of motion, whether literal or metaphorical; and the ease with which that analysis can be applied to a broad range of verbal expressions creates a powerful reason for thinking that the bulk of the more ambiguous cases should likewise be so interpreted. In the context of her discussion, Létoublon argues that the passages from Herodotus and Plato should be regarded as instances of a metaphorical use.¹² Given the scarcity of further examples involving a present participle,¹³ let me situate those

11 See Létoublon 1982, which is in part a criticism of the earlier, systematic treatment of verbal auxiliaries in Dietrich 1973. As Létoublon goes on to argue in a related study (Létoublon 1983), the pure auxiliary function emerges clearly only in Latin.

12 As will become evident in what follows, I do not think that Létoublon’s own translation/explanation of *Phaedo* 100b fully succeeds in capturing the point of the statement: “Voici que je me déplace—duratif-constatif + participe apposé—essayant de te montrer . . . et que j’en reviens à . . . et que je commence par là” (1982, 182). Létoublon also cites with approval Robin’s translation of the passage. Yet although it does not directly represent ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν σοι ἐπιδείξασθαι as a future, it still has the unfortunate effect of giving the phrase a future significance: ‘Dès que j’en viens à essayer de t’exposer quelle est l’espèce de causalité pour laquelle je me donnais toute cette peine, voici en effet que derechef je vais retrouver ce que, vous le savez, j’ai cent fois ressassé.’

13 Létoublon (1982, 181) provides just one more instance, Pindar *Nem.* 7.68-69: μαθῶν δέ τις ἀνερεῖ / εἰ πᾶρ μέλος ἔρχομαι ψάγιον ὄραρον ἐννέπων. Here I am not persuaded that the meanings of the finite verb and the participle are as tightly linked as they are in the prose cases; and I have been unable to locate any further instances of the construction.

passages within a broader pattern of usage by remarking briefly on the way Létoublon analyzes the occurrence of verbs of movement with a future participle in contexts where the finite verb cannot be given its literal meaning. Such cases are especially relevant to the present argument, since both Heindorf and Wyttenbach relied on them as a model for interpreting *Phaedo* 100b.

Non-literal uses of the relevant sort are first found in Herodotus, where they occur with some frequency. Strikingly, all of them are in the first person, and all involve combination with the participle of a verb of saying. In other words, they uniformly consist of comments by Herodotus, or by one of his characters, on the course of his own narrative. They are used to signal what is about to be discussed or, in the case of the imperfect, what was about to be discussed before the narrative was broken off for a digression.¹⁴ Given the highly specific nature of such constructions, the finite verb is unlikely to have been felt as a pure auxiliary, however convenient it may be to translate it that way.¹⁵ Létoublon instead characterizes the constructions as reflecting an original metaphor of motion to an end point or goal, a metaphor that may already have become for Herodotus “une habitude de langage”. She plausibly connects them with a host of other Herodotean uses of verbs of movement to describe acts of speaking—for instance, the use of ἀνειμι for a return to a point made earlier, or of καταβαίνω to indicate an advance in the course of speech.¹⁶

After Herodotus, one finds several instances of the same locution involving the future participle in Plato, Xenophon and Lucian. In Plato, there is also a further set of cases that do not involve the first person or that make use of

14 To cite an example: in the famous debate about forms of government in Book 3, Otañes caps his denunciation of monarchy by mentioning in the following terms the greatest ills wrought by the corrupt ruler (3.80.5): τὰ δὲ δὴ μέγιστα ἔρχομαι ἐρέων· νόμαιά τε κινεῖ πατέρα καὶ βιᾶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀσπίτους. In total, there are fourteen such instances of a construction involving the future participle (ignoring a questionable passage at 2.11.3). Twelve of them involve ἔρχομαι, and all but one of those are used to identify something about to be related. The remaining one, 1.5.3, is in the negative, and it refers to something Herodotus might now be expected to relate but will not. The two further instances of the construction make use of the imperfect ἦν, and they occur in contexts where Herodotus is resuming something he was previously about to say. For the full list, see Létoublon 1982, 184.

15 As Létoublon (1985, 186) emphasizes, “dans les syntagmes du type ἔρχομαι φράσων, le verbe ‘aller’ a la fonction auxiliaire (statut syntaxique comparable à celui de aller en français dans *il va venir*), mais on ne peut pas définir ἔρχομαι comme un verbe auxiliaire du grec tant qu’il ne s’est pas lexicalisé comme tel, et que l’on ne peut l’employer avec n’importe quel participe futur et n’importe quel sujet syntaxique comme on l’emploie avec la première personne et avec le participe futur d’un verbe ‘dire.’”

16 See Létoublon 1982, 185-186.

participles from verbs other than those of speaking. Despite the more general way in which the linguistic construction is here employed, the finite verbs are still combined with personal subjects, and the metaphor of a journey may well continue to color what is being said.¹⁷

Be that as it may, the occurrence of *ἔρχομαι* with the present participle at *Phaedo* 100b can readily be understood as belonging to the same broad family of metaphor as the common Herodotean use of *ἔρχομαι/ἴγια* with a future participle. The mistaken idea that the construction of 100b should be treated as a kind of future was the creation of commentators who presumed that *ἔρχομαι* must function as an auxiliary here.¹⁸ Yet once one grasps clearly the metaphorical background of the construction, it becomes much more compelling to interpret the combination of *ἔρχομαι* and the present participle as describing an ongoing course of speech. Such an interpretation would fit neatly with Herodotus 1.122.3, where the imperfect *ἦτε* is used with the present participle

17 Létoublon does not discuss the way in which these Platonic examples might be said to fit with the previous cases. On balance, she is inclined to regard them as approaching a pure auxiliary use of the verb of movement. (See especially her later summary of her results: Létoublon 1985, 210, 240, n. 36.) Note, however, that the further examples all involve cases where a course of action is considered as being laid out before the mind of a person concerned to render judgment about it, as if it were a path the pursuit of which demands further reflection or evaluation. Thus at *Prt.* 315e5-6, Socrates remarks to his young friend: *ὡς σοφιστῆ ἄρα ἐρχόμεθα τελούντες τὰ χρήματα;* ('Then it is as a sophist that we are going to give him payment?') Shortly afterward, at 313a1-2, Socrates adds: *οἴσθα ἐς οἷόν τινα κίνδυνον ἔρχη ὑποθήσων τὴν ψυχὴν;* ('Do you see what sort of danger you are about to place your soul in?') At *Tht.* 198e1-5, Socrates says: *τοῦτο δὲ ἄρτι ἠρώτων, ὅπως χρὴ τοῖς ὀνόμασι χρώμενον λέγειν περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅταν ἀριθμήσων ἢ ὁ ἀριθμητικός ἢ τι ἀναγνωσόμενος ὁ γραμματικός, ὡς ἐπιστάμενος ἄρα ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ πάλιν ἔρχεται μαθησόμενος παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ἀπίσταται;* ('This is what I was just now asking about. With what terms should we speak about what the arithmetician does when he proceeds to count, or the well-educated person when he proceeds to read? In such cases, is it that a person who *knows* something proceeds to learn once again from himself what he knows?') Finally, at *Ti.* 17d3-4, Socrates discusses how the guardians of his imagined city should react *εἴτε τις ἔξωθεν ἢ καὶ τῶν ἐνδοθεν ἴοι κακουργήσων* ('if someone from without or even from within should move to cause trouble'). (For discussion of the superficially similar *Euthphr.* 2c7-8, *ἔρχεται κατηγορήσων μου ὡς περὶ πρὸς μητέρα πρὸς τὴν πόλιν*, see Létoublon 1985, 187-188.)

18 The assumption persists in Kölligan 2007, 167, where the *ἔρχομαι* of 100b is identified as a case of a "Hilfsverb mit futurischer Bedeutung". In support (see his n. 464), Kölligan adduces two passages, one of them Herodotus 1.5.3 (which uses *οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων*) and the other Plato's *Ion* 533c9-d1, which he cites as *ἔρχομαι γέ σοι ἀποφανόμενος ὁ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτο εἶναι*. That text derives from a questionable emendation by Cobet of *ἔρχομαι γέ σοι ἀποφανόμενος*, the unanimous reading of all the major manuscripts. For discussion and defense of the manuscript reading, see Rijksbaron 2007, 164-165.

to indicate progress through a narration. It would also establish a suitable contrast with the cases in which ἔρχομαι is joined with a future participle in order to signal something about to be discussed.

As previously suggested, one might appropriately translate the phrase ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν σοι ἐπιδειξασθαι as 'I am proceeding onward in my attempt to demonstrate to you.'¹⁹ A translation along those lines would express that Socrates is *already in the midst* of his proposed ἐπίδειξις. His immediate recourse to the future, with εἶμι πάλιν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ πολυθρόβλητα, might then be understood to indicate that he is about to begin a new stage of it. Such a reading would offer a cogent account of the alternation of tenses, and it would have the further advantage of making the subsequent present, ἄρχομαι, immediately intelligible as a sign of the commencement of that new stage.²⁰ The full remark might then be rendered smoothly as follows: 'I am proceeding onward in my attempt to demonstrate to you the mode of explanation with which I am engaged, and I am going to return to those oft-mentioned things, and I make a start from them by setting it down that there is a Beautiful just by itself, and a Good, and a Large, and all the rest.' In the second half of the sentence, Socrates goes on to express his hope that on this basis he will be able to provide the demonstration he has been attempting and will then be in a position to establish the immortality of the soul: ἐλπίζω σοι ἐκ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιδείξειν καὶ ἀνευρήσειν ὡς ἀθάνατον ἢ ψυχὴν.²¹

19 That is more natural than Rowe's proposal, 'I am setting about trying to show you' (1993a, *ad loc.*), which would involve a much less common sense of ἔρχομαι (as 'set out', 'depart on a journey'; see LSJ s.v. 1.1). Indeed, such a translation would not even make particularly good metaphorical use of that sense, since the only association thereby preserved would be the general idea of a beginning. See further n. 32 below, and compare the translation in Apelt 1923³, *ad loc.* ('Denn ich gehe jetzt daran, dir den Begriff der Ursache klar zu machen, wie ich ihn aufgefaßt habe...'), with substantially similar translation by Dirlmeier (1949, *ad loc.*).

20 The verb ἄρχομαι should be taken closely with the subsequent ὑποθέμενος, since ὑποτίθεσθαι (along with its associated noun ὑπόθεσις) is frequently used in fourth century literature for the fundamental principle or guiding idea of a process of thought or a course of action. Socrates' use of ὑποθέμενος here clearly follows that pattern, since it picks up on his earlier remark at 100a3-4: ὑποθέμενος ἐκάστοτε λόγον ὃν ἂν κρίνω ἐρρωμενέστατον εἶναι... For further discussion of the function of the word in such theoretical contexts, see Robinson 1953², 95 ff.; J. Cooper 2004, 19-23; and Schiefsky 2005, 111-115 and 120-126.

21 Riddell (1867, 237 ['Digest of Platonic Idioms', sec. 308]) characterizes the sequence ἐπιδείξειν καὶ ἀνευρήσειν as a *hysteron proteron*, on the grounds that "the order of expression, following that of thought, reverses the order of occurrence of facts." In interpreting thus, he is perhaps thinking of both verbs as having a common object, namely τὴν αἰτίαν... ὡς ἀθάνατον ἢ ψυχὴν. That is the approach adopted by a number of

II. What right away calls for discussion is the sense in which Socrates could already have begun his ἐπίδειξις and yet be proposing to make a new start of the sort he describes. To address that issue, we need to examine the surrounding context in order to see where the ἐπίδειξις begins and to consider how Socrates' return to the theory of Forms at 100b is related to what he said previously. In this section and the next, I argue that we can thereby come to a convincing interpretation, one that has the advantage of helping us understand the point of Socrates' reference at 100b4 to a new εἶδος τῆς αἰτίας. What might initially have seemed like a narrow linguistic problem will therefore turn out to provide a valuable clue to figuring out the nature of Socrates' concerns in this section of the dialogue.

If one looks earlier in the text to find the start of Socrates' ἐπίδειξις, there is a clear candidate for the role. At 99c9-d2, Socrates first mentions the idea of demonstrating his new mode of explanation: τὸν δεύτερον πλοῦν ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς αἰτίας ζήτησιν ἢ πεπραγμάτευμαι βούλει σοι . . . ἐπίδειξιν ποιήσωμαι, ὦ Κέβηης;²² In view of the clear linguistic parallels with what Socrates goes on to say in the lines we have been considering, it becomes attractive to regard the ἐπίδειξις as beginning in the passage immediately following its initial mention—namely, 99d4-100a3. There Socrates famously describes his fear that his soul will be blinded by inquiries of the sort he previously pursued, and he proposes as an alternative a flight εἰς τοὺς λόγους (99e5). What he says is typically interpreted as if it were not at all part of his ἐπίδειξις but somehow preliminary to it. In

translators and commentators; see for instance Loriaux 1975, 95, with further references. Burnet (1911, *ad loc.*) reads the phrase otherwise: describing it as an instance of an 'a b a b' word order, he takes τὴν αἰτίαν with ἀνευρήσειν and ἐπίδειξιν with the ὡς-clause. LSJ follows one or another such interpretation in its entry for ἀνευρίσκω, citing *Phd.* 100b as ἄ. τὴν αἰτίαν. However, neither proposal seems all that likely given the fact that earlier in the same sentence, as well as at 99d1-2, Socrates uses ἐπιδείκνυμι in discussing his new εἶδος τῆς αἰτίας. Indeed, the construal I have attributed to Riddell obscures the fact that before proceeding with his proof of the soul's immortality Socrates will offer an independent account of his conception of explanation. And despite what Burnet suggests, Socrates does not 'discover' the new mode of explanation in what follows (100c-102b). He instead provides a demonstration of the approach that he has already been pursuing for some time. (Compare here 97b6-7.)

- 22 The precise meaning of the expression δεύτερος πλοῦς has proven somewhat controversial. For an account of the evidence, see the relatively full discussion in Kanayama 2000, 88-90. I take it that with his use of the phrase, Socrates is contrasting the εἶδος τῆς αἰτίας he is about to elaborate with the more desirable teleological form of explanation that has proven unattainable. (See 99c6-8, and compare Sharma 2009, 142-143, as well as Sedley 1995, 7.)

fact, most interpreters have understood the imagery that Socrates uses as if it went closely with his immediately following and much disputed statement concerning the need for one's theorizing to be governed by a *ὑπόθεσις* (100a3-7, with further elaboration later at 101d1-102a1).²³ That statement is purely methodological in character and is not specifically tied to the content of Socrates' new *εἶδος τῆς αἰτίας*. For as Socrates himself notes, his point there is intended to apply not just to the present treatment of *αἰτία* but also to discussions of any other sort, *καὶ περὶ αἰτίας καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων* (100a6). Accordingly, the imagery of 99d4-100a3 is usually regarded as being likewise methodological in its import. Yet that cannot be the case if indeed it is correct to say that Socrates refers shortly thereafter, at 100b3-4, to an *ἐπίδειξις* that is already ongoing. What our discussion so far would rather suggest is that his remarks at 99d4-100a3 have a point quite distinct from what is said at 100a3-7. While the latter passage is intended to facilitate Socrates' elaboration of his new *αἰτία*, it is incidental to the content of the *αἰτία* and therefore only loosely tied to what has gone before.²⁴

One interpreter, Rowe, has suggested reading 100a3-7 in a manner that denies Socrates' methodological recommendation is incidental in the sense just described. If that were right, it would potentially undermine the proposal that 99d4-100a3 is the passage in which to locate the start of Socrates' *ἐπίδειξις*. Before continuing, it is therefore worth pausing over what Rowe says in order to consider why it is unlikely given the broader context of Socrates' remarks.

Rowe contends that in the phrase quoted above from 100a6 (*καὶ περὶ αἰτίας καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων*), Socrates is speaking only about a *single ὑπόθεσις*,

23 For such an interpretation, see for instance Hackforth 1955, 133 and 138; Bostock 1986, 157-162; and Rowe 1993a, 240. Given the lack of scholarly consensus as to how one should understand the remarks about the use of a *ὑπόθεσις*, I shall not venture to treat them here.

24 In conformity with what I am suggesting, I would interpret the phrase *ἄλλ' οὖν δὴ ταύτη γε ὤρμησα* at 100a3 as a way of stressing the main idea of what has been said previously in preparation for the aside that follows. The expression *ἄλλ' οὖν δὴ* breaks off the previously-mentioned comment about the limitation of comparing *λόγοι* to reflecting media (cf. Denniston 1954², 443), while the emphatic *ταύτη γε ὤρμησα* underscores the fundamental point of the comparison, namely that Socrates has in fact adopted a new approach to investigating *τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν*. Given such an interpretation of the structure of Socrates' remarks, I find unpersuasive Rowe's judgment that the use of the word *λόγος* at 100a4 must mean exactly what it did at 100a2 and earlier. (The same assumption is made implicitly by a number of other interpreters and has been endorsed explicitly by Kanayama (2000, 51) on the grounds of "the close relationship between the *logoi* method and the method of hypothesis.")

the Theory of Forms, which can supposedly address questions on any topic.²⁵ However, such an interpretation must be considered doubtful. Even putting aside the issue of how precisely one might understand the odd notion of a theory's enabling one to pronounce on any question whatsoever, the fact that Socrates is willing to entertain *different* ὑποθέσεις on different occasions is suggested at 100a4-5 by his description of his usual procedure: ὑποθέμενος ἐκάστοτε λόγον ὃν ἂν κρίνω ἐρρωμενέστατον εἶναι . . . Rowe handles the difficulty by proposing that Socrates here has in mind a choice not so much between different ὑποθέσεις as between different versions of a single 'Form-participation hypothesis' that will vary "according to the particular description of the Form-particular relationship which is chosen."²⁶ In support, he points to 100d4-8, where Socrates hesitates about how to explain the participation-relation between objects and Forms: 'I cling simply and artlessly and perhaps simple-mindedly to this, that nothing else makes a thing beautiful other than the presence of that Beautiful, or association with it, or however precisely one should put the matter. I don't go so far as to insist on this, but only that it is in virtue of the Beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful' (100d3-8).²⁷ Here, though, Socrates does not suggest that the proper account of the participation-relation can change depending on the sort of concern at issue, and it is difficult to know what to make of such a proposal. When the relation comes up for extended discussion elsewhere in the Platonic corpus, at *Prm.* 130e ff., the concern is simply with finding a viable analysis of it rather than with selecting the analysis best suited to a given occasion. Indeed, at *Phaedo* 100d Socrates altogether avoids the issue of its proper analysis. He does not even hint that one answer might somehow facilitate his present purpose better than others. (Compare here Aristotle *Metaph.* 987b13-14.)

Rowe maintains that Socrates' refusal to specify an analysis is easily explained once one recognizes that he is operating at 100d only with a "truncated form of the original hypothesis", which omits any reference to transcendent Forms and, therefore, any need to be precise about the participation-relation.²⁸ Yet that reading must be deemed implausible in view of the fact that the

25 See Rowe 1993b, 52.

26 Rowe 1993b, 59.

27 τοῦτο δὲ ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀτέχνως καὶ ἴσως εὐήθως ἔχω παρ' ἑμαυτῶ, ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλο τι ποιεῖ αὐτὸ καλὸν ἢ ἡ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ εἶτε παρουσία εἶτε κοινωνία εἶτε ὅπη δὴ καὶ ὅπως προσαγορευομένη· οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοῦτο διισχυρίζομαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι τῷ καλῷ πάντα τὰ καλὰ καλὰ. The text is that of Duke et al. 1997, which accepts Wyttenbach's conjecture προσαγορευομένη over the readings of the manuscripts (προσγενομένη or one of several similar alternatives).

28 See Rowe 1993b, 58, along with the preceding remarks on 57.

backward reference of ‘that Beautiful’ in the quotation above (ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ, at 100d5) is to what was spoken of at 100c4-6 (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ), which is clearly the transcendent Form first mentioned at 100b6 (καλὸν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό). What’s more, Rowe’s reading of 100d conflicts with his own proposal for interpreting 100a3-7. As he understands the latter passage, Socrates declares explicitly that he will start with whatever account of participation he finds the most compelling. If, as Socrates allegedly later suggests, no such λόγος actually seems ‘strongest’ in the present context, then the methodological comment would be entirely without purpose. Rowe sees the difficulty and concedes at one point that Socrates “could be said not to be using the method as he describes it.”²⁹ However, Socrates clearly implies otherwise at 100b5-7, where he presents himself as employing a ὑπόθεσις of exactly the sort he has just described.

As Rowe explains, his interpretation is motivated by the conviction that at 100b1 ff. Socrates must be explicating what immediately precedes at 100a3-7:

[I]n 100 B Socrates explains what he has said in A 4-7 by reference to a single determinate hypothesis . . . Either he simply fails to signal with sufficient clarity that he is moving from a general description of his method to a particular application of it, or—as I proposed—100 A 3-4 is more determinate than it appears at first sight to be, and in fact already refers to the particular hypothesis introduced in B 1 ff., with the indefiniteness of the relative clause pointing forward to the different versions suggested in 100 D . . .³⁰

The dichotomy on which Rowe here relies is a false one. As has been proposed above, 100b1 ff. can readily be understood to take up what is said slightly earlier, at 99d4-100a3. (The precise sense in which this is so will be discussed shortly.) In that case, the methodological statement of 100a3-7 is relevant *only* for facilitating the development of the basic idea contained in the earlier passage, and not for motivating the content of what will follow. Rowe does not entertain any such possibility because he seems to regard 99d-100a as being nothing more than a way of introducing what is said at 100a3-7. However, he offers no argument for taking the passage that way, and in fact does not explicitly discuss

²⁹ Rowe 1993b, 62.

³⁰ Rowe 1996, 237. The statement is a summary of the position Rowe develops earlier: Rowe 1993b, 52 and 59-60.

99d-100a at all.³¹ The interpretation suggested here is far more likely insofar as it leaves one free to construe 100a3-7 as what it straightforwardly appears to be—a piece of methodological advice that is not exclusively tied to the theory of Forms.³²

III. It remains to consider how the imagery of 99d-100a can be said to fit with what Socrates goes on to say at 100b3-9. As I shall argue, the first passage conveys generally the character of his new approach to matters of explanation. The second fills out the approach by illustrating it in terms of the Theory of Forms.

The most difficult question regarding 99d-100a involves the explanation of what Socrates means by the expression οἱ λόγοι when he says at 99e4-6, ἔδοξε δὴ μοι χρῆναι εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Translations vary widely, with λόγος commonly being rendered as ‘concept’, ‘definition’, ‘account’, ‘discourse’, ‘proposition’, ‘argument’, or ‘theory’. The problem is that none of those translations seems to establish the desired contrast with the activities of Socrates’ materialist predecessors, who were discussed earlier at 96a-97b and whose views lie in the background of what Socrates says here.³³ His predecessors were certainly concerned in some fashion with concepts and propositions; and it would be utterly misleading for Socrates to declare that he is the first person ever to have considered mounting an argument for a view he holds, or the first ever to have detached himself from sense-experience long enough to develop a broad-ranging theory.³⁴

31 He is silent about the passage in both of his articles on Socrates’ methodology; and in his commentary on the dialogue (1993a, 240) he simply affirms that the λόγοι mentioned at 99e5 are identical with the sort discussed at 100a4. On the latter point, see above, n. 24.

32 Because Rowe understands 99d-100a as being concerned with the general issue of how to select the ὑποθέσεις appropriate to a given inquiry, he seems to agree with other commentators in supposing that it is only afterward, at 100b3-7, that one finds the beginning of Socrates’ ἐπίδειξις of his new approach to explanation. Therefore, although he diverges from others regarding the interpretation of ἔρχομαι ἐπιχειρῶν ἐπιδείξασθαι at 100b3 (cf. n. 6 above), he too translates the phrase in a way that would suggest a new beginning. See further n. 19.

33 The point will be discussed further, but note the way in which the present passage develops the metaphor of blinding that was first used in Socrates’ discussion of his materialistic inquiries (96c5-7).

34 Kanayama (2000, 49) has attempted to explain the unique character of Socrates’ theory by saying that Socrates relies on the intellect, rather than the senses, as the ‘standard’ and ‘final arbiter’ of what account or proposition to adopt. However precisely that may best be understood, Kanayama surely goes too far in subsequently suggesting that the natural

The translation ‘definition’ might therefore seem appealing, especially if one assumes that this whole section of the dialogue offers a *résumé* of Socrates’ intellectual career as we know it from the pages of Plato’s other works.³⁵ It should be noted, however, that although *Phd.* 95e-102b is often called the ‘autobiography’ of Socrates, what Socrates himself says about the scope of his concerns is decidedly more modest. At 95e10-96a2, he offers only to relate his experiences in seeking αἰτία, and in the lengthy narration that follows he gives no hint that he has definitions even distantly in mind.³⁶ To be sure, when he reintroduces the Theory of Forms at 100b, he reminds his interlocutors of its importance earlier in the dialogue. In a crucial phase of the earlier ‘argument from recollection’ (73c-77a), Socrates explicitly connected the Forms with his definitional interests by noting that he is speaking ‘about everything on which we place the seal ‘what it is’, both in asking our questions and in giving our answers’ (περὶ πάντων οἷς ἐπισφραγιζόμεθα τούτο, τὸ ὃ ἔστι, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐρωτήσεσιν ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν ἀποκρινόμενοι, 75d2-4; cf. 78c10-d7). Strikingly, however, Socrates now makes no appeal to the role played by the Forms in definitional inquiry. At 100c-101c, he outlines with high rhetorical drama the ‘safe, artless and perhaps simple-minded’ mode of answering questions on which he now relies. It consists *solely* in the idea that a thing ‘is large’, say, by participating in Largeness. There is not even a hint in what Socrates says that the αἰτία needs to be filled out by some account of the ‘nature’ of the Form.³⁷

philosophers do no more than generalize from perceptual reports. Statements like ‘Putrefaction is the source of life’ or ‘Blood is that with which we think’ (see 96b) cannot be viewed as simple reports of observation or even as straightforward generalizations from it. As for any further suggestion that Socrates is hinting at the possibility of a purely *a priori* kind of theorizing or argument, it would be unsupported by anything in the text. The judgments that occasion the appeal to Forms—judgments like ‘Helen is beautiful’ (cf. 100c4-6) or ‘This kettle is hot’ (cf. 105b8-c1)—are clearly matters of experience, and without them there would be nothing for the Forms to explain.

35 For that assumption, see for instance Bluck 1955, 165.

36 I might add here that it is open to doubt whether the expression τοὺς λόγους at 99e5 can mean ‘definitions’ without some accompanying genitive of the thing defined, or without some context in which the sense of λόγος is explained more fully.

37 Compare Gallop 1975, 178-179. Similar considerations tell against the translation ‘discourse’, if that be thought to refer to a conversational method involving testing and refutation. One might be tempted to suppose that the idea of such a method finds support in an oft-noted parallel between 99c8-d2 and an earlier passage, 85c7-d2. At 99c-d, Socrates introduces his ‘second voyage’ by saying with regard to his earlier pursuit of teleological explanation, ταύτης ἐστερήθην καὶ οὐτ’ αὐτὸς εὐρεῖν οὔτε παρ’ ἄλλου μαθεῖν οἷός τε ἐγενόμην. Earlier, at 85c-d, Simmias declared concerning the matters under discussion: δεῖν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὰ ἔν γέ τι τούτων διαπράξασθαι, ἢ μαθεῖν ὅπη ἔχει ἢ εὐρεῖν ἢ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατον, τὸν γοῦν

Fortunately, there is another and much more satisfying way of understanding what Socrates says at 99d4-100a3. In elaborating it, let me refer to a view I have defended at length in a recent study of 95e-102b. It is that the new mode of explanation described from 100b onward should be deemed a *metaphysical* or *ontological* one, in the sense of being concerned with the ‘truth-grounds’ or ‘truth-makers’ for certain true statements of the language. In other words, Socrates turns at 100b to a mode of investigation that involves considering the ontological basis for the truth of certain descriptive statements, like ‘Helen is beautiful’ or ‘Simmias is tall’. As regards 99d-100a, my suggestion is accordingly that when he speaks of the need to take refuge in the λόγοι and to examine in terms of them ‘the truth about what exists’, Socrates has in mind the use of *true descriptive statements* as a medium through which to gain insight into the composition of states of affairs.³⁸ He motivates the turn to that new approach in brilliantly vivid fashion, by way of an analogy with those who foolishly suppose they can behold the sun during an eclipse. Just as some of them end up ruining their sight, Socrates is worried that his soul will be completely blinded if he continues ‘looking at things with my eyes and trying to grasp them with each of the senses’ (99e3-4). As noted earlier, Socrates seems to have in mind here the theoretical activities of his materialist predecessors, whom he considers to derive their basic explanatory categories from experience of the world around them—i.e., from the processes and stuffs that may be encountered in sense perception.³⁹ Socrates believes that he will lose any capacity for constructive

βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων λαβόντα καὶ δυσεξελεγκτότατον, ἐπὶ τούτου ὀχούμενον ὡσπερ ἐπὶ σχεδίας κινδυνεύοντα διαπλευσαι τὸν βίον. Here, however, there is no need to take the term *δυσεξελεγκτότατον* (or the immediately preceding use of *ἐλέγχειν*, 85c5) as involving any specific reference to the ‘Socratic *elenchus*’. (For an interpretation of that sort, see for instance Kanayama 2000, 93.) A further caution against too closely associating the two passages is given in Sedley 1995, 19.

- 38 Compare Sharma 2009, esp. secs. II, IV. The present interpretation of 99d-100a also accords with that of J. van Eck (1994, 30 and 1996, 225-226), who similarly speaks of Socrates’ remarks as being ontological in character. Van Eck holds that such an interpretation licenses a characterization of the *ὑπόθεσις* Socrates adopts at 100b as being confined solely to the thesis that Forms exist, without extending to cover talk of a participation-relation between objects and Forms. (See especially Van Eck 1996, 215-216, 220.) But if indeed Socrates is concerned with the truth-grounds for statements, some general conception of the Form-object relation would have to be a part of his analysis.
- 39 It would be a mistake to suppose that Socrates is here referring to teleology of the sort he had initially hoped to find from Anaxagoras (97b ff.). Such a theory could not plausibly be characterized as a case of *βλέπων πρὸς τὰ πράγματα τοῖς ὄμμασι*. Indeed, as Socrates clearly confesses at 99c6-9, he presently has no way of pursuing teleologically-based explanations, and he is therefore in no danger of being blinded by their further study.

theorizing if he persists in his earlier attempts to formulate accounts of such a sort. For him, the notion of analyzing true statements holds so great an appeal precisely because it represents a radically different kind of procedure, one that frees him from the limitations imposed by his sense-experience. As he will underscore shortly, certain non-sensible realities—the Forms—are a crucial component in his analysis of the truth grounds for statements, and to that extent his new approach to αἰτία will differ starkly from his earlier efforts.⁴⁰

Socrates of course does not consider his new approach to be at all deficient when compared with the earlier one, and that is why he adds the qualification at 100a1-3: οὐ γὰρ πάνυ συγχωρῶ τὸν ἐν λόγοις σκοπούμενον τὰ ὄντα ἐν εἰκόσι μᾶλλον σκοπεῖν ἢ τὸν ἐν ἔργοις. What is intriguing about that remark is the bold suggestion that even his earlier, materialistic investigations somehow relied on the use of images. Socrates thereby hints at the revision of familiar ways of thinking that will ultimately be demanded by his new εἶδος τῆς αἰτίας; and although what he says fits readily with the epistemological and metaphysical doctrines of the *Phaedo*, it will acquire even greater significance in the context of the *Republic*, with its sustained reliance on themes of image and reality.⁴¹ Socrates' description of his flight into the λόγοι is therefore doubly significant: besides marking one of the most decisive methodological turns in the history of ancient philosophy, it is at once suggestive of the further developments in Platonic thought that will famously be set forth in the Sun-Line-Cave triptych of *Republic* 6-7.

On the basis of that reading of 99d-100a, let us now consider once more the way in which Socrates invokes the Forms at 100b1 ff. of the *Phaedo*. After using the imagery just discussed to mark the way in which his αἰτία differs from those he formerly pursued, and after making the methodological remark about confining his theorizing to a governing ὑπόθεσις, Socrates offers to clarify what he is proposing. He begins by announcing a return to the Theory of Forms, which he has already discussed in other contexts. Then, in the sentence with which we began, he elaborates by saying that in *continuing his attempt to demonstrate*

40 For discussion of the kind of explanation Socrates here has in mind, see Sharma 2007, 188 ff., and compare Sharma 2006, 27-32.

41 I find this way of reading the image more plausible than an interpretation whereby Socrates is saying that the person who proceeds ἐν λόγοις is not at all reliant on images, just as is the case for the one who proceeds ἐν ἔργοις. (For that reading, see for instance Stanford 1834, 245-246; Geddes 1885², *ad loc.*; and Kanayama 2000, 47.) Socrates' point is not that neither person relies on images but, rather, that both do so to an equal degree. (Compare here Gallop 1975, 178.)

his new mode of explanation he will make use of the Forms.⁴² What he will do, specifically, is illustrate the idea of an ontological explanation, which has so far been sketched only in the broadest of terms. The Forms will figure centrally in the illustration as the crucial feature of his analysis of the truth-grounds for simple subject-predicate statements.⁴³ In keeping with his earlier methodological observation, Socrates begins by positing the existence of Forms as the core aspect of a *ὑπόθεσις* that will govern explanations of his new sort. He then goes on to provide an example and to use it as a basis for rejecting explanatory proposals that might be said to compete with it (100c4-d8).

The idea that Socrates here employs the Forms in a new philosophical role helps us to understand a feature of the passage that commentators have sometimes found obscure, which is that the doctrine of Forms is presented at 100b as if it were both long familiar *and* part of an approach to explanation that demands elaborate preface and careful orchestration. Once it becomes clear that Socrates is in fact using his established theory in an entirely new way, any appearance of contradiction is dispelled. Indeed, what he says at 100b3-9 is not at all awkward, and we do not need to rely for its interpretation on shaky doctrines about the underlying grammatical construction. Instead, his remark conveys with precision the connections of thought that inform his broader discussion and that are ultimately crucial for understanding what is by all accounts one of the central documents of Plato's mature thought.⁴⁴

42 The combination of particles that begins the sentence, γάρ δή, neatly signals that Socrates will now explain the sense in which a familiar theory can help clarify what he has just said. Burnet proposed deleting γάρ (following ms. T), presumably because he did not see any significant sense in which the sentence was explanatory of what had already been discussed.

43 For the idea that Forms are posited in connection with a pattern of thinking that has a linguistic component, see the summary comment made by Phaedo at 102b1-3: ὡμολογεῖτο εἶναι τι ἕκαστον τῶν εἰδῶν καὶ τούτων τᾶλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν. See further Sharma 2009, 158-160 and 172-175.

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