

PLATONIC EPONYMY AND THE LITERARY TRADITION

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ALTHOUGH COMMENTATORS HAVE RECOGNIZED the important role played by eponymy in the context of Plato's thought, they have not analyzed its historical sources in order to clarify what is distinctive about his approach. Appeals to those who are regularly identified as the sources of Plato's middle-period theory of Forms, notably Socrates, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, do not allow one to situate and explain Platonic eponymy. While they are his precursors in numerous respects, they do not play that role in the case of eponymy. This semantic relation is important, not for previous philosophers, but rather for a literary tradition whose origins antedate those of philosophy.¹ An examination of literary eponymy will make it possible to separate inherited presuppositions from those innovations which characterize Plato's philosophical use of the device. The literary tradition's handling of the eponymy relation offers a heretofore unexplored precedent for Plato's own systematic treatment of eponymy, and his use of it to ground judgments of appropriateness (i.e., assessments of whether terms are properly assigned to their referents).² In this article I suggest how one might organize literary uses of eponymy, then turn to a discussion of Plato's new, technical usage as presented in the *Phaedo*.³

¹ The present observations are based on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod's *Theogony*; Pindar's epinician odes; the extant plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and Herodotus' *Histories*.

² For interpretations of the *Phaedo* which neither take account of the literary tradition's importance nor explore, more generally, the historical sources of Platonic eponymy, see, for example, Gallop 1975; Bostock 1986; Bluck 1955; Hackforth 1955; Robin 1926; Burnet 1911; Guthrie 1975: 324–365; Friedländer 1969: 35–62, 471–477; Taylor 1960: 174–208; Jowett 1892: 157–266; and Grote 1867: 152–205. For brief, general remarks about historical background, which do not mention the literary tradition, see Bestor 1978: 196–197.

³ All citations are from the OCT editions (for Plato I have used Burnet's Oxford edition). I concentrate on the *Phaedo* because that is where Plato presents his version of eponymy and indicates most clearly its importance. A full treatment of Plato's use of literary sources in his philosophy of language would also have to take account of the *Cratylus*, which focuses on etymology. The literary tradition makes considerable use of etymology and eponymy without distinguishing between the two in a direct or clear-cut way. Plato distinguishes sharply between them and offers different assessments of their philosophical value: in the *Cratylus* he criticizes literary uses of etymology to treat appropriateness, and denies its philosophical worth; in the *Phaedo* he embraces a revised version of eponymy. Thus, the two dialogues' relation is strongly complementary: though Plato offers limited clues there to his own stance, the *Cratylus* mainly clears the ground for those metaphysical and semantic theories developed in the *Phaedo*. The *Phaedo*'s relation to the *Cratylus*, where the literary tradition's pertinence is more readily apparent, is strong evidence in favor of its relevance with regard to eponymy.

Only brief comments are possible here concerning the relation between etymology and eponymy. Both involve tracing one *ὄνομα* back to, i.e., deriving it from, another which is taken to be its source. In

EPONYMY IN THE LITERARY TRADITION⁴

Writers' use of eponymy breaks down into several categories and subcategories.⁵ The first and most popular category comprises instances in which individuals give their names to a wide range of entities. These might be other individuals, as when Pindar claims that Strepsiades was named for his maternal uncle (μότρωί θ' ὁμωνύμω δέδωκε κοινὸν θάλας, *Isthm.* 7.24), and Aeschylus reports that Phoebus was named after the Titan Phoebe (*Eum.* 8). Other examples of this type are found at Homer *Od.* 18.5–7; Pindar *Ol.* 9.63–64; Eur. *Phoen.* 769, *HF* 31; Hdt. 1.188.1, 3.55.2, 5.65.4, 5.69.1 (cf. 6.131.1), 6.103.4, 6.131.2, and 8.136.1. Often groups of individuals are in the recipient position. For example, Homer says that Erichthonius, son of Dardanus, begat Τρῶα . . . Τρώεσσιν ἄνακτα (*Il.* 20.230), and Aeschylus claims that the Pelasgi were named after their king Pelasgus (*Supp.* 250–253). For other instances of this type one may consult Soph. *OC* 58–65; Eur. *Ion* 1575–78, 1590–94;⁶ Hdt. 2.42.5, 4.6.2, 4.149.1, 5.66.2, 5.68.2, 7.11.4 (a

the case of etymology, names frequently provide standards against which bearers are judged. Included here are assignments tied to features or aspects of individuals, notably their attitudes and character traits, or skills and capacities; for examples see the analyses of "Ctesippus" (Homer *Od.* 20.288–290), "Philoctetes" (Soph. *Phil.* 1344–47; cf. 1413–33), "Aphrodite" (Eur. *Tro.* 989–990), "Dolon" (Eur. *Rhes.* 215), "Theonoe" (Eur. *Hel.* 8–14), "Demodocus" (Homer *Od.* 8.43–45), "Thoas" (Eur. *IT* 32–33), and "Prometheus" (Hes. *Th.* 510–511, *Op.* 54, Aesch. *PV* 85–87). Names are correctly assigned if they disclose or describe bearers' natures, and determinations of names' appropriateness are based on analyses of their descriptive content. In contrast, in cases of eponymy, which are often treated as commemorative, names do not function as standards to the same extent or in the same way. While in certain instances one may imagine that questions of "nature transfer" are relevant (as when leaders give their names to peoples), this is typically not something that comes to the fore. Moreover, where one entity is said to be appropriately "named after" another, this occurs without the introduction of the issue of semantic constitution. A final point is that in the case of etymology the primary terms themselves are not subject in turn to analysis. Similarly, with regard to eponymy, where the source terms are usually proper names, the derivation of those ὀνόματα is generally not explored. Interestingly, where the primary terms are analyzed, this transpires via etymology; for example, the name "Ion," whose bearer is supposed to have given his name to the Ionians, is subject to etymological analysis at Eur. *Ion* 661–663, 802, and 830–831.

⁴Early in my study of eponymy, I made use of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* on Stanford University's Ibycus computer. This inquiry, however, concentrates on the phenomenon of literary eponymy, by whatever terms it is introduced, rather than simply on writers' use of ἐπώνυμος, ἐπώνυμια, and ἐπωνομάζειν. In the present article I consider how one might organize and describe literary eponymy with particular attention to those aspects of literary praxis on which Plato builds and with which he takes issue. These reflections on eponymy are part of a larger project centering on Plato's treatment of etymology in the *Cratylus* and its literary antecedents: for consideration of these issues, see Levin 1995. For discussions of literary etymology from other points of view, see, for example, Wilson 1968 and Looy 1975. For a discussion of κεκλήσθαι and καλεῖσθαι as used in Greek tragedy and by Plato, see Ruijgh 1976.

⁵These categories do not do justice to the rich and meaningful use of eponymy in literature. They are intended simply to facilitate the organization of this substantial body of material with a view toward the themes under discussion in the present study.

⁶On balance, it seems preferable to place these two passages from the *Ion* here rather than in that subcategory in which parcels of land are the recipient entities.

people and their land named after the conqueror Pelops), and 8.44.2. Dissenting opinions about the origin of the name Πέρσαι are expressed at Aesch. *Pers.* 80,⁷ and Hdt. 7.61.3 conjoined with 7.150.2; Ion is identified as the source of the name “Ionians” at Eur. *Ion* 1581–88, Hdt. 7.94, and 8.44.2.⁸

In addition, individuals give their ὀνόματα to places or parcels of land. A representative example is Castor’s instructing Orestes to found a city which will take its name from him (ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται, Eur. *El.* 1275). With regard to this subcategory, one may also consult Homer *Il.* 20.215–217, 231–232; Pindar *Ol.* 7.73–76; Aesch. *Supp.* 260–261; Soph. *OT* 209–211; Eur. *Ion* 74–75, *Or.* 1646–47, *Andr.* 17–20; Hdt. 2.98.2 and 4.45.2–4 (vis-à-vis the latter, which pertains to the threefold division of the earth into Europe, Asia, and Libya, cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 9.5–8, 55–58, and 68–69). Athena is treated as Athens’ eponym at Soph. *OC* 107–108, and at *Ion* 8–9, 29–30, and 1555–56.⁹ Furthermore, sometimes natural inanimate entities (e.g., bodies of water) are in the recipient position. For instance, Aeschylus foretells that the inlet of the sea to which Io is driven Ἰόνιος κεκλήσεται, / τῆς σῆς πορείας μῆμα τοῖς πᾶσιν βοροῖς (*PV* 840–841). Also relevant here are Pindar *Ol.* 10.49–51, cf. *Ol.* 5.19; Aesch. *Eum.* 689–690 and *PV* 299–300. Elsewhere the recipient entities are human constructions or practices, as when a feast is named for Agamemnon (Soph. *El.* 282–285). Other examples of this type are found at Pindar *Pyth.* 11.5–6; Eur. *Hipp.* 31–33, *Or.* 1008; and Hdt. 1.14.3.

A second category consists of instances in which natural inanimate entities (e.g., ποταμοί) give their ὀνόματα to various types of entities: individuals (*Il.* 4.474–477); peoples (Hdt. 4.184.3–4, 7.75.2); other natural inanimate entities (Hdt. 1.145, 4.52.1, 7.58.3, 9.51.1–2); and places or bodies of land (*Pyth.* 1.30–32, Hdt. 4.198.1). Third, places or parcels of land may be in the primary role: here the *nominata* may themselves be places (Eur. *Hel.* 149–150); they might also be animals (Hdt. 7.40.3) or natural inanimate entities (Hdt. 7.121.1). Moreover, individuals (Hdt. 3.55.2, Hes. *Tb.* 198) and human constructions (Eur. *IT* 1453–54) receive their ὀνόματα from places associated with noteworthy events. Fourth, a parcel of land may be named for a people (Hdt. 4.204). In addition to their use of eponymy *per se*, writers offer eponymy-based assessments of names’ appropriateness. For example, Pelasgus comments on the appropriateness of his

⁷ If line 146, whose authenticity has been challenged, e.g., by Robertson (1924: 110) and Broadhead (1960: 67), were in fact genuine, it would be pertinent here.

⁸ The earlier citation of 8.44.2 pertains to Cecrops as primary ὄνομα-bearer. For additional cases falling in this subcategory, see Hdt. 1.7.3 (cf. 7.74.1), 1.94.5–7, 1.171.5–6, 1.173.3 (cf. 7.92), 7.62.1, and 7.90–91.

⁹ Regarding the connection between these ὀνόματα, Burkert (1985: 139) notes that “whether the goddess is named after the city or the city after the goddess is an ancient dispute. Since *-ene* is a typical place-name suffix . . . the goddess most probably takes her name from the city.” For additional relevant cases see Hdt. 4.148.2–4, 6.47.1, and 7.178.2. Pindar treats several parcels of land as having eponymous nymphs: Thebes (*Isthm.* 3, 7–8); Aegina (*Pyth.* 8, *Nem.* 7–8, *Isthm.* 8); Libya (*Pyth.* 4, 9); and Rhodes (*Ol.* 7).

people's name: τοῦ γηγενοῦς γάρ εἰμ' ἐγὼ Παλαίχθονος / ἴνις Πελασγός, τῆσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέτης, / ἐμοῦ δ' ἀνακτος εὐλόγως ἐπώνυμον / γένος Πελασγῶν τήνδε καρποῦται χθόνα (Aesch. *Supp.* 250–253). Also pertinent here are Homer *Od.* 18.5–7 (which bears similarities to *Eum.* 8) and Hdt. 4.52.1 and 4.45.2. Judgments of desert may be strongly implied, as in the case of Athena–Athens (*OC* 107–108, *Ion* 8–9 with 29–30); with respect to Perseus and the Persians one may consult Aesch. *Pers.* 80.¹⁰

The framework of eponymy is potentially useful to Plato because it parallels, in general terms, the structure of his metaphysics; that is, it accommodates two referents in a relation of primary to secondary. In order to make it philosophically viable, however, Plato must institute key revisions of the literary tradition's approach. In the unsystematic usage of literary eponymy, there is wide variation in the identity of the primary and recipient entities, which include mortal individuals and groups, natural inanimate entities like rivers, and human constructions like temples. Although, with rare exceptions, the primary referent is singular, the primary and secondary referents can be singular or plural. In addition, there are no determinate criteria governing which types of entities can serve in each capacity, and which sorts may be paired with one another. The same type of entity, for instance a mortal individual or group of such individuals, can serve in different contexts in either a primary or recipient capacity.¹¹ Although the literary tradition often uses eponymy to make identifications of source, it chooses as source that element which appears salient in a given context, and is not concerned to achieve a scientific understanding of the natures of the entities in question.¹²

PLATONIC EPONYMY: NEW USES FOR AN OLD TOOL

In contrast to the literary tradition, Plato offers a systematic treatment of eponymy within a more restricted field of application. Since Plato's use of the device is based on his conception of reality, one must first comment briefly on the latter. The metaphysics of Plato's middle dialogues features a dichotomy between reality and appearance (with the former as *explanans*) and the notion of participation, which relates appearance to what is real (for key passages see *Phaedo* 78d–e, 79c–d, 74d–e, 100c, and 101c). The notion of “naturalness” plays an essential role in Plato's theory. In his view, what is natural is a certain articulation

¹⁰ Regarding *Pers.* 146, see above, n. 7. Strictly speaking, the implied judgment of desert pertains not to the Persians as a group, but to an individual Persian; nevertheless, Xerxes is no ordinary Persian, but his people's supreme leader and representative.

¹¹ For example, groups are often named after individuals (the Ionians after Ion, the Persians after Perseus, and so on); however, a group may also be in the primary role, as when it gives its name to a parcel of land (Hdt. 4.204).

¹² Greek writers' focus on identifications of source in their use of eponymy fits in, generally speaking, with attempts by poets like Homer and Hesiod to offer explanations of important phenomena and states of affairs in terms of their origins. Julius Moravcsik labels this approach the “productive model”; for discussion of this and other explanatory patterns in Greek thought, see Moravcsik 1991.

of reality into objective and theoretically important unities, which are granted the status of Forms; the key is to identify elements whose interrelations yield that order and harmony which Plato construes as paradigmatic (notable cases of this being entities in the realm of mathematics and of values).¹³ In contrast, articulations of the spatiotemporal realm are natural only in a derivative sense, based on the relations its constituent entities bear to the Forms in question.

Plato's metaphysical picture raises a new and important semantic question: what is the connection between the use of a term (e.g., "equal") with reference to a Form and its use as an ingredient in a series of complex predicates (e.g., "equal in length," "equal to one person but not to another")? Put slightly differently, how is one to represent the semantics of the Form-participant relation? For this purpose neither synonymy nor homonymy will do. Synonymy, according to which the term "equal," for example, would apply in the same sense both to the Form and to pairs of sticks in the spatiotemporal realm, is inadequate because it provides no way to represent the derivative nature of the second application of the term. Homonymy, in turn, would involve equivocation, and leave one with no way to represent any relation at all between the two usages. A third device is required to show that the usages are related, but that the second application of the term is not identical with the first. For this purpose Plato selects a device intermediate between synonymy and homonymy, namely, eponymy.¹⁴

Literary and Platonic eponymy both involve two *relata*, with priority given to that entity which is viewed as primary. Plato's conception of reality, however, leads him to institute strict requirements on the identity of primary and secondary entities; these requirements are different from those of the literary tradition and different for entities in each of the two Platonic roles. The two types of entities must be on separate planes of existence, and there is an absolute prohibition on those in one class serving in the alternate capacity. Moreover, the primary entity must always be singular, and those entities named after it at least potentially a plurality. In a departure from the literary tradition, Plato specifies and discusses the kinds of priority enjoyed by the primary entity or Form—viz., ontological, natural, explanatory, and logical; its primacy rests above all on ontological grounds. These specifications, in turn, yield a set of conditions under which one may properly apply that entity's *ὄνομα* to a certain class of recipients. The framework of

¹³ In the *Phaedo*, Plato offers direct linguistic testament to the centrality of naturalness when he stresses that the opposite itself can never become opposite to itself, οὐτε τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν οὐτε τὸ ἐν τῇ φύσει (103b5); the opposite ἐν τῇ φύσει is none other than the Form itself. (Cf. 104a1–b1, where Plato uses φύειν when speaking of necessary relations between Forms, the idea being that some Forms necessarily have other Forms as attributes.) In addition, Plato invokes ἡ γῆ αὐτῇ (i.e., "the true earth"), plus the superior quality of what issues from and belongs to it, as an allegory for the realm of Forms and the qualitatively higher status of its constituent entities (109a–114c); for occurrences of the terms φύσις and φύειν in this section of the dialogue, see 109e6, 110a4, d4, 111a1, c4, e5, and 113d1.

¹⁴ Aristotle inherits this semantic relation from Plato, and modifies it to suit his own philosophical purposes. The two devices in Aristotle which approach eponymy most closely are paronymy and πρὸς ἐν λέγεσθαι, or "focal meaning," following Owen 1986b.

eponymy lends an optimal structure to Plato's reflections because it allows him to speak of naming a primary entity—one that is itself a nature—and of naming derivatively other entities that share the nature of the primary entity, but only partially.¹⁵ In its basic structure, Plato's approach most closely resembles those cases of literary eponymy in which a single individual gives his name to a group of individuals. However, this type of case, like the others, is ultimately unacceptable to Plato as a model for philosophical usage because both the primary and recipient entities are native to or wrongly aligned with a single plane of existence, namely, the empirical world; since the primary entity is misidentified, one cannot assign it the requisite priority.¹⁶ In addition, the recipient entities in question are groups of mortals, specifically, peoples, hence merely a subset of particulars in Plato's sense.

In contrast to literary praxis, Platonic eponymy rests on an explicit and fundamental ontological asymmetry between the two *relata*. *Phaedo* 103e3–7 illustrates Plato's view of appropriateness when Forms themselves are at issue: αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον. . . . τὸ . . . περιττὸν αἰεῖ που δεῖ τοῦτου τοῦ ὀνόματος τυγχάνειν ὅπερ νῦν λέγομεν. ("It is always appropriate for the Form itself to have its own *onoma* applied to it, without regard to time. It must surely always be fitting for Oddness to be in possession of the *onoma* which we are now employing to designate it.")¹⁷ It is always appropriate to call the Form, τὸ περιττὸν or "the odd," "odd" in an unqualified sense since it just *is* the nature of Oddness. In other words, the term "'odd' is applicable to the Form itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος), to Oddness, not in virtue of its Having the character of the odd, but in virtue of its Being ὅπερ τὸ περιττὸν (i.e. in virtue of what it Is)."¹⁸ Properly generalized, the idea is that it is always appropriate to call a given Form by the ὄνομα in question because it is a full-fledged nature (i.e., following Malcolm's formulation, it *is* what it is to be F).

¹⁵When identifying the Form as a nature I follow the interpretation of Malcolm (1991: 75), according to which "the F itself *is* what it is to be F." In the present context, discussion of the controversial issues involving the self-predication of Forms and the Third Man Argument would take one far afield. For a sample of views on these questions, see Vlastos 1965a, 1965b, 1969, and 1981; Malcolm 1981, 1985, and 1991; Moravcsik 1963 and 1992; Nehamas 1979; and Bestor 1978. For additional references see the bibliography of Malcolm 1991.

¹⁶A distinction between non-technical and philosophical usage is necessary here. Plato is not saying that the city of Athens, for example, really gets that name based on an ontological relation it bears to a Form rather than, say, from the goddess Athena. He is simply not interested in providing revised standards for or eliminating such non-philosophical uses of eponymy. Support for this view is provided by the fact that Plato never criticizes non-technical usage, and by his employment of it even after his introduction of a revised version of eponymy (as, e.g., at *Leg.* 626d3–5, where he presents the familiar derivation of "Athens" from "Athena"). Plato's efforts at the revision of conventional usage are directed solely toward that range of cases in which a term's primary referent must be separate from the spatiotemporal realm; for *those* cases no literary precedent may serve directly as a model.

¹⁷Translations of Plato are my own.

¹⁸Code 1986: 427.

Questions of appropriateness also arise with regard to a Form's participants. As Code (1986: 426–427) notes, using the term καλόν as an example, “since only one thing, the beautiful itself, really *Is* beautiful, and ‘beautiful’ is the name of that very thing, Plato must explain how it is that Helen can quite correctly be called ‘beautiful.’” From a metaphysical perspective, entities of the latter type are not self-sufficient, and for Plato semantic relations must reflect metaphysical ones;¹⁹ hence, he maintains that individual sensibles—which are ontologically posterior—are named derivatively or “after” the relevant Form (cf. Code 1986: 427).

Plato first discusses the naming of particulars in the Affinity Argument, when he refers to each class of individual sensibles as ὁμώνυμον with the relevant Form (78e2). As has been recognized, though Plato here uses ὁμώνυμος rather than ἐπώνυμος or a related term (i.e., ἐπωνυμία or ἐπονομάζειν), he has the phenomenon of eponymy in view.²⁰ Notably, the literary tradition also uses ὁμώνυμος with reference to the phenomenon of eponymy, as when Pindar mentions that Strepsiadēs the Isthmian victor got his name from his maternal uncle (*Isthm.* 7.24).²¹ In such cases, whether or not individuals are ὁμώνυμοι is a matter of choice or agency. While Plato accords with the literary tradition at

¹⁹ That individual sensibles depend ultimately on Forms for their having the properties they do (e.g., beauty and equality) emerges with particular clarity in *Resp.* 5–7.

²⁰ See, for example, Gallop 1975: *ad loc.* and the contention of Cherniss 1962: 178 that the particular “is ὁμώνυμον τῷ εἶδει . . . because it has its name and nature *derivatively* from the idea.” For relevant instances of ὁμώνυμος in later dialogues, see *Tim.* 52a4–5 (τὸ ὁμώνυμον ὁμοῖόν τε ἐκείνῳ) and *Prm.* 133d2–3 (τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν ταῦτα ὁμώνυμα ὄντα ἐκείνοισ). Cf. Aristotle’s use of this adjective in describing Plato’s theory at *Metaph.* 987b7–10 (adopting Jaeger’s text); his comments reaffirm that, according to Plato, it is due to their participation in Forms that αἰσθητά share their appellations, are in fact named after them.

Conversely, it is also worth noting that Plato uses ἐπώνυμος, ἐπωνυμία, and ἐπονομάζειν in multiple contexts. With regard to non-technical usage see above, n. 16. In addition, in numerous cases Plato follows the literary tradition in employing this terminology in connection with etymologies: see, e.g., *Cra.* 395b5, c5, 397d4, 398c1, 400b2, 401d3, 403a5, 404b2, 406a5, 409c7, 412c5, 413c2, 415b5, d3, 416b10, d8, 417c9; *Phdr.* 238c3, 244c8; and *Leg.* 821b9. Moreover, he employs it in connection with δαίτσεις (see, e.g., *Soph.* 225c3, d4, 229d6, 267b1, *Pol.* 263d1), and with regard to the virtue-virtues relationship (*Leg.* 963c5–d7, with ἐπονομάσμεν at d6). Such uses are not pertinent to the argument of this paper, which concentrates on the semantics of the Form-participant relation, where the term’s primary referent exists apart from the spatiotemporal world and all of its secondary referents are native to that realm.

²¹ I cannot agree with Owen (1986a: 171), who criticizes Cherniss’s claim (1962; see above, n. 20) by observing that ὁμώνυμος may be used, as at *Resp.* 330b (ὁ πάππος τε καὶ ὁμώνυμος), “of an ancestor *from* whom the name is derived.” Even where this happens in literary and Platonic instances of ordinary eponymy, the relevant non-semantic dependency is never in doubt; in such cases, the term’s grammatical function is of secondary importance, and ὁμώνυμος must be interpreted in light of this dependency. Moreover, appeals to ordinary practice cannot serve, in themselves, as evidence against a particular view of Plato’s use of the relevant terminology and concept of eponymy in connection with the theory of Forms.

78e2 in his use of terminology, he differs fundamentally from it in the reason given for the designation, i.e., in his insistence that the selection of those entities designated as ὁμώνυμα with a given Form never depends on individual choice, whether mortal or divine, but solely on whether the secondary referents stand in the ontologically proper relation to that Form.

In all cases of eponymy, both literary and Platonic, the semantic relation between the primary and secondary referents presupposes, and is based on, a non-semantic, independently specifiable link between them. In literary eponymy the identity of that relation varies widely, and depends solely on the context (i.e., it may be familial, spatial or geographical, political, or protective). In contrast, Plato uses one basic non-semantic relation, that of participation, to undergird eponymy. Since that ontological relation provides the foundation for eponymy, it is not surprising that he takes up the eponymy relation most directly in connection with his treatment of participation.²² Plato moves from the participation relation to that of eponymy with the agreement of those present that the Forms exist and that τούτων ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν (*Phd.* 102b1–2: “the other things, participating in them, are named after the Forms themselves”). This passage highlights the fact that it is due to their participation in Forms that individual sensibles are named after them (note the participle’s causal force). (For this same use of the participle see *Prm.* 130e5–6: δοκεῖ σοι, ὡς φῆς, εἶναι εἶδη ἅττα, ὧν τὰδε τὰ ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῶν ἴσχειν.)²³ Plato returns to these issues a little later. Speaking generally, he sums up the contrast as one between things that have opposites, which are named after those opposites, and “those opposites themselves from whose inherence in them the things named receive their appellations”; that is, he emphasizes that while the earlier discussion was about τῶν ἐχόντων τὰ ἐναντία . . . ἐπονομάζοντες

²² By speaking of participation Plato wants to convey the idea that entities in the spatiotemporal realm have the properties in question (e.g., equality and justice), but always with some qualification. In the *Phaedo*, he introduces participation by insisting that “if anything else is beautiful besides the Form of Beauty, there is no ground on which it can be beautiful save by participating in that Form. And the same principle applies in all other such cases. Do you agree to a ground of this kind?” (100c4–7: εἰ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι’ ἐν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ· καὶ πάντα δι’ οὕτως λέγω. τῇ τοιάδε αἰτία συγχωρεῖς;). Here Plato provides as the ground (αἰτία) of any other entity’s being beautiful its participation in the Form of Beauty, and states that one can treat all other relevant cases on this model. Following remarks on the Large and Small (100c–101b), Plato turns to arithmetic operations, and considers what the proper explanation would be of why the result is two when one and one are added. He advocates resolution of this and related questions by appeal to the general principle that there is no other way in which each thing comes to be “than by sharing in that specific nature in which it participates” (101c3–4: ἢ μετασχόν τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἐκάστου οὗ ἐν μετάσχη). Although Plato uses the unmodified participle γιγνόμενον (c3), context shows that the appropriate qualification is assumed; that is, here—and more generally—he is not asking how something comes to be from nothing at all, but how each thing comes to assume a certain range of attributes.

²³ Cf. 133d1–2 (on the assumption that the passage does not deal with immanent characteristics): ὧν ἡμεῖς μετέχοντες εἶναι ἕκαστα ἐπονομαζόμεθα.

αὐτὰ τῇ ἐκείνων ἐπωνυμία, now it concerns ἐκείνων αὐτῶν ὧν ἐνόντων ἔχει τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὰ ὀνομαζόμενα (*Phd.* 103b6–8). Here Plato raises the same metaphysical and linguistic questions as he had in the earlier passage; b8 contains language of inherence rather than that of participation because there he considers the Form-particular relation from the point of view of Forms rather than that of individual sensibles.

In the *Phaedo* eponymy is important because it provides a framework within which Plato can present his theory of terms' proper employment, which is based on his metaphysics and involves fundamental revision of conventional usage of the ὀνόματα in question.²⁴ That eponymy remains an important notion for Plato is evidenced by its presence, not only in the *Phaedo*, but also in later dialogues, namely the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, when he wishes to characterize the different ways in which terms apply to Forms and participants. Indeed, the issue of how one may characterize the semantic relation between, e.g., "two" as the name of a number and "two" as it appears as an ingredient in complex predicates has continued to occupy philosophers, notable among them Gottlob Frege.²⁵

CONCLUSION

Eponymy as discussed by Plato applies solely to relations involving Forms and their participants in the spatiotemporal realm. When Plato attempts in later dialogues to address key objections to his middle-period metaphysics, especially the Third Man Argument of the *Parmenides*, he shifts the focus of his technical discussions to mutual connections between Forms. To describe these ties he introduces another notion of partaking. The semantics of that relation is a topic for another paper.²⁶

²⁴ One should emphasize that Plato does not use eponymy to ground a general theory of predication. In any case, in the *Phaedo* he concentrates on terms whose referents are entities in the realm of mathematics and of values. Regarding conventional usage, human beings are seriously deceived if, when hearing the term καλόν, they are unable to distinguish between qualified and unqualified applications of it, an incapacity exhibited strikingly by "the lovers of sights and sounds" of *Resp.* 5. On this confusion with regard to καλόν, cf. Hippias' response to Socrates' query (τί ἐστι τοῦτο τὸ καλόν;) and the ensuing discussion between them in the *Hippias Major* (287d ff.).

²⁵ On the secondary use of terms in Frege, see for example Frege 1950: 59. The more general concern of Frege 1950 is to identify numbers as objects so that one can talk about them without having to add any common noun (aside from "number") to supply a principle of individuation. Hence, notwithstanding the existence of important differences in their views, both Plato and Frege clearly distinguish primary and secondary uses of a key range of terms.

²⁶ Plato does not use eponymy to provide the semantics of relations between abstract entities. One who wished to claim that the ingredients of this extension are present in his writings might focus on considerations such as the following: 1) Plato's introduction of a notion of partaking to cover links between abstract entities (see *Soph.* 251d ff.); 2) comments like those at *Phd.* 100c4–7 (quoted above, n. 22), where the words τι ἄλλο (c4) arguably encompass not only τὰ καλά, but also any Forms besides αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν that are suitably related to it; and 3) Plato's use of ἐπονομάζειν in the *Laws* in a discussion of the connection between virtue and individual virtues (963c5–d7). Further exploration of this issue must be reserved for a subsequent occasion.

Here I have suggested that when developing his own view of how correctly to apply terms to entities Plato singles out a device used by the literary tradition, namely, eponymy, and adapts it to suit his metaphysics centering on Forms and participants. Eponymy is a central semantic notion for Plato; however, literary uses of it antedate Plato specifically and the philosophical tradition generally. While in numerous cases we may understand Platonic doctrines against the backdrop of earlier philosophical and sophistic inquiries, we can best appreciate what is distinctive about Platonic eponymy by reflecting on its literary antecedents.²⁷

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²⁷ My thanks go to Julius Moravcsik, Alan Code, Charles Young, Gail Fine, and John Malcolm for their valuable feedback on my thinking about eponymy. I am also grateful to Justina Gregory and two anonymous readers for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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