

Logos of a syllable: towards an interpretation of Socrates' dream

Yasuhiro WAKIJO

[Abstract]

As Socrates himself points out, the exposition of his dream of 201d8-202c6 obviously relies much on the model of letters and syllables. The model can in fact be a rich source of hints and suggestions for anyone who attempts an interpretation of the dream. In this paper the author tries to evaluate exactly how much should be sought from this model. While, on the one hand, the point of this model does not seem to lie in the simple part-whole relation holding between letters and syllables, what is given in the text also tells against the view that this model is to be understood phonetically. From an examination of the way in which “sigma and omega” is treated as the *logos* of the syllable “SO” at 203a-b, the author tries to establish that the model is intended to be phonological. On the phonological model, giving the *logos* of a complex object x involves an implicit appeal to a theory that contains the definition of x . Here, as in the part-whole model, the *logos* enumerates x 's constituent parts, but does so in a way that shows that x does fall under the definition. The author also argues that the phonological model is applicable to cases of complex objects other than syllables.

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1 Socrates' dream

In the last part of the *Theaetetus* (201c-210d) Plato examines the idea that knowledge is true belief accompanied by *logos*¹. The idea is introduced by Theaetetus, Socrates' interlocutor, as something he has heard from a person. He cannot, however, give the details of what he has heard: all he adds is that according to the person, what lacks logos is not knowable (*epistēta*²), whereas what has it is knowable. To match³ this "dream" of Theaetetus, Socrates proposes to tell his own version, which he thinks⁴ to have heard from some people⁵, saying that they both may have heard the same story. Let me translate Socrates' exposition of his dream, which he gives at 201d8-202c6.

... the first, as it were, elements (*stoicheia*), of which we and the other things are composed, do not have *logos*. For each element in and of itself can only be named, and it is not possible to say anything else

¹I leave this crucial word untranslated. Usually it is translated as "account" (Cornford, McDowell, Levett in Burnyeat (1990)). I hope that the meaning of this word, at least in the passage examined in this paper, will become clear in the course of my argument.

²The significance of the fact that the adjective *epistētos* appears nowhere else in Plato, and indeed does not seem to appear nowhere else in extant Greek literature before Aristotle, has been variously estimated by scholars in connection with the controversial hypothesis that the real author of the dream is Antisthenes, whom Plato is quoting here. See eg. Gillespie 34, Hicken 126, 130 and Burnyeat(1970) 106-7.

³Socrates begins the exposition by the phrase "*Akouē de onar anti oneiratos*". "A dream to match a dream" is Hicken's rendering. *anti* can be alternatively translated as "in return/exchange for". See Burnyeat (1970) 102.

⁴Note how, as Burnyeat points out (1990, 165), Socrates is elusive about whether he is reporting or not. In contrast, Theaetetus' wording makes it clear that he is quoting someone.

⁵Socrates uses a plural form *tinōn* at 201e1, in contrast to Theaetetus' singular *tou* at 201c8 (cf. also his *ephē* at c9).

in addition, either that it is or that it is not. That would already add being or non-being to it, but nothing should be added if someone should say that element itself alone. In fact, even “itself”, “that”, “each”, “alone” (actually I have already used these above) or “this” must not be added, nor many other similar things. These are running around all as things to be attached, being different from the things to which they are attached. But if an element itself were possible to be stated (*legesthai*) and had its own proprietary (*oikeion*) *logos*, it should be stated (*legesthai*) without any other thing. As it is, however, none of the first things can be said (*rhêthênai*) with *logos*. For it can only be named — since it has a name alone — whereas as to the things already composed of elements, just as they themselves are woven together, so their names also become *logos* when woven together. In this way elements are without *logos* and unknowable, though they are perceivable, whereas complexes (*syllabai*) are knowable and sayable, and believable with true belief.

When one has true belief of something without *logos*, his soul is correct (*alêtheuein*) about it, but does not know it. For one who cannot give and receive *logos* is a non-knower of it; when he has *logos* he becomes capable of all this and achieves a perfect state concerning knowledge.

2 The model of letters and syllables

This exposition of the dream relies in an important way on one prominent model, viz. the model of letters and syllables. Socrates himself puts his finger on this reliance later, at the beginning of his criticism of the dream:

Socrates ... for we hold, as it were, as hostages from this story the model (*ta paradeigmata*) that it used in saying all of this.

Theaetetus What sort of model?

Socrates The letters (*stoicheia*) of language and syllables (*syllabai*). Or do you think the one who told this story was having something else in view when he said what we reported?

Theaetetus No, he had in view letters and syllables. (202e3-8)

In this model, elements are understood as letters or alphabets, and complexes as syllables composed of letters. Socrates is surely right here in

emphasising the reliance. The exposition of the dream is indeed deeply permeated with ideas derived from this model, as can be seen from the use of the pivotal words “elements (*stoicheia*)” and “complexes (*syllabai*)”, the former appearing at the very beginning of the exposition.

The model of letters and syllables has a few intriguing characteristics in itself, only some of which we shall be able to discuss in this paper, and its repeated appearance in Plato’s later dialogues⁶ is perhaps an indication that the model actually played an important role in more than one area of Plato’s later philosophy. This paper, however, concerns only one of its roles, i.e. the role it plays in the dream passage⁷ of the *Theaetetus*. In fact, even though we are concerned only with the relevance of the model to the dream, the model is so suggestive that we can easily go too far in seeking hints from it. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to explore the potential of the model of letters and syllables in providing us possible interpretations of the dream, and to see exactly how much implication is to be read into it.

3 The part-whole model

We might think that what is essential about the model of letters and syllables is simply the part-whole relation that holds between some letters and the syllable that is composed of them. After all, is not a syllable, say, “SO” composed of letters “S” and “O”, just as, say, a knife is composed of a blade and a handle? They are both things, concrete, abstract or whatever, that have parts. It might, then, be thought that Plato could have made exactly the same point as he actually does in the text, using, say, a knife instead of a syllable as his example. One might thus be inclined to the view that the relevant relation that is supposed to hold between elements and

⁶The *Cratylus*, a dialogue about names, naturally contains a lot about letters and syllables. Apart from this and the *Theaetetus*, the passages in which apparently important use is made of the model include the following: the *Sophist* 253a, where possible combination of Forms is compared with that of letters; the *Statesman* 277e-278d, where the usefulness, in teaching elements common to both small and large cases, of exhibiting the former side by side with the latter is explained by the case of learning letters common to both easy and difficult syllables; the *Philebus* 18b-c (cf.17b), where phonetic classification of sounds into vowels, consonants etc. is mentioned as the paradigm case of grasping the numbers between one and infinity. In this paper, however, I do not discuss these passages, but confine my attention to the last part of the *Theaetetus*.

⁷What I mean by “the dream passage” includes not only the exposition, but also the subsequent criticism of the dream.

complexes in the dream is nothing but the part-whole relation. Let us call this interpretation of the model of letters and syllables “the part-whole model”.

There are some *prima facie* reasons for thinking that Plato has in mind the part-whole model, and nothing more, in the dream passage. First, complexes in the dream are, or at least include, ordinary (physical or abstract) things. Remember that “we and the other things” are said to be composed of elements (201e1-2). Second, in the rest of the last part of the dialogue, not only the model of letters and syllables, but also a few other models or examples are used, and they can all be regarded as part-whole models: numbers (204b-e) and the number six in particular (204b-c); musical notes as elements (206a-b); a wagon, of which one hundred parts are mentioned in Hesiod (207a,b-c); Theaetetus’ name (207a-b). Third, in the criticism of the dream that immediately follows its exposition (202d-206b), attention seems focused on the part-whole relation quite generally. The alleged asymmetry in the knowability of elements and complexes is attacked with an argument supposed to show that such asymmetry does not exist in any part-whole relation whatsoever.

I think we should take the model of letters and syllables as making a point, whatever it is, which is applicable to other cases of part-whole relations. This does not mean, however, that the point itself must simply be the part-whole relation, and I am indeed going to argue later that it is not. My view is, therefore, that the real point of the model of letters and syllables is, though not the simple part-whole relation, still applicable to other cases involving the part-whole relation. Even so, it seems reasonable to suppose that this particular model of letters and syllables has, in Plato’s eyes, certain advantage over others: Plato is likely to have thought that it makes us see the intended point more clearly than other models or examples. What kind of appeal did Plato find in it?

4 The phonetic model

There is actually a very attractive reading of the model of letters and syllables, which we may call “the phonetic model”. In this reading, letters and syllables are not to be understood in terms of written characters, but in terms of the sound we make when we speak a language *viva voce*. Thus understood, the model fits some notable features of the dream. First of all, it is syllables themselves, not something *about* them, that we say or

pronounce. This fits well the puzzling fact that the dream's claim concerns, at least on the literal reading, the possibility of saying an element *itself* or a complex *itself*, not the possibility of saying something *about* them. We might take the view that what Plato puts as "saying *x* with *logos*" is simply equivalent to "saying something about *x* with *logos*", thus giving up the literal reading. This is indeed the view taken by many interpreters of the dream. However, if the puzzling phrase "to say *x* itself with *logos*" in the dream is something that is represented as "to pronounce *x* itself" in the model of letters and syllables, there arises some chance of retaining the literal reading. For the latter clearly makes sense, and this may give us some hint of a way to interpret the puzzling phrase of the dream literally as well.

Second, we can pronounce a syllable on its own, but we can pronounce a letter only as a part of a syllable. Socrates and Theaetetus talk about the first syllable of Socrates' name, "SO" at 203a-b. As Theaetetus points out there, although this particular syllable happens to be composed of two letters both of which has some sound of its own, capable of being produced separately (perhaps with more difficulty in the case of "S" than in the case of "O") apart from the syllable, many letters do not have this characteristic: he points out that a letter like "B" cannot be pronounced separately. Thus, in the phonetic model, there is a good sense in saying that an element is impossible to be said with *logos*: a letter can only be pronounced as a component part of a syllable. As Ryle put it, on the phonetic model, elements can be described as "distinguishables, not detachables; abstractables, not extractables"⁸

Third, the phonetic model seems to provide us with a clear understanding of the dream's obviously crucial contrast between name and *logos*. We might think that the contrast is reflected in the phonetic model in the following way. In the phonetic model, "*logos*" is to be understood as "pronunciation", and "*legein*", the verbal form of "*logos*", as "to pronounce". Now if we are to understand, as usual, "*onoma*" as "name", and the verb "onomazein" as "to name", we can see that it makes good sense to say that an element can have an *onoma*, we can *onomazein* it, though it cannot have *logos*, we cannot *legein* it. For, while a letter cannot be pronounced, it can be named. For example, the two letters that compose the first syllable of Socrates' name are named "sigma" and "omega" respectively.

⁸Ryle (1960), 436.

This gives us a very sharp contrast between “*onoma*” and “*logos*”, and may seem to match the dream’s emphasis on the contrast between them. Unfortunately, however, it has some undesirable implications that are difficult to reconcile with what is given in the text of the dream. The trouble is that the contrast which the phonetic model gives, i.e. the contrast between names of letters and pronunciation of syllables, is far sharper than the one we actually find in the dream. The contrast in the phonetic model described in the last paragraph can be compared to that between use and mention. If we are allowed to talk about the linguistic distinction between use and mention in an extended sense, we can say that the “S” is used when it appears as part of a pronounced syllable “SO”, but it is only mentioned when it is called by its name “sigma”. Of course we can make a statement about the letter using the name “sigma”, as eg. “sigma is a consonant”, but even then we are still mentioning the letter, not using it: what we use in this statement is the name, not the letter itself; the letter itself can only be used in pronunciation.

An important consequence of this contrast is that *onoma* (name) and *logos* (pronunciation) can exist independently. Pronouncing a syllable is possible without the letters that constitute it having names. For example, we can easily imagine a five-year-old child who, being a native speaker of Greek, can pronounce the syllable “SO”, but cannot give the name of “S” or “O”: he or she may not know that “S” is named “sigma”, or that “O” is named “omega”. We can also imagine a student who has just begun learning Greek as her second language, and has already learned all the names of Greek letters, but still cannot pronounce any syllable in Greek. (I myself was once like her, and still am, more or less.) In short, according to the sharp contrast between *onoma* and *logos* implied by the phonetic model, they function on two different levels, one on the level of mention and the other of use, without any essential connection with each other.

This ill squares with what is given in the dream. For the dream hardly makes *onoma* and *logos* independent of each other: *logos* is generated when names are put together, and the essence of *logos* is the weaving together of names (*onomatōn symplokē*, 202b4-5).

One may still try to find a way to retain the phonetic model without having this undesirable implication. The difficulty noted above arises only from regarding the implicit sharp contrast between naming and pronouncing in the phonetic model as an intended representation of the contrast between *onoma* and *logos* in the dream. Why not forget about this special

aspect of the phonetic model, and just focus on its other useful aspects? Ryle's attention, for example, seems to be drawn to the second point only, i.e. the point that syllables can, but letters cannot, be pronounced separately. Why not follow him in his understanding of the model?

Many authors have criticized Ryle's attempt to read a version of "logical atomism" into the dream⁹. Thorough examination of this is beyond the scope of this paper, and I would like to make it clear that my criticism here concerns only one part of his interpretation, i.e. his phonetic understanding of the model of letters and syllable. The crucial passage is 203a-b, mentioned above, where Socrates leads Theaetetus to an explanation of why the model of letters and syllables is to be considered a good model for the dream. Let me translate their exchange.

Socrates ... For example, suppose someone asked about the first syllable of "Socrates" in this way: "Theaetetus, say what is SO." What would you answer?

Theaetetus "Sigma and omega".

Socrates Is what you have just given the *logos* of the syllable, then?

Theaetetus Certainly.

Socrates Now, say in the same way the *logos* of sigma as well.

Theaetetus How can anyone say the elements of an element? For in fact, Socrates, sigma is one of the voiceless (*tōn aphōnōn*), just a certain sound (*psogos*), something like a hiss of the tongue; and beta does not have either voice or sound, nor do the majority of letters. Letters are, therefore, quite well said to lack *logos* (*aloga*), since even the most conspicuous elements, i.e. the seven vowels themselves, have only voice, not *logos* of any kind whatsoever. (203a6-b7)

Theaetetus' answer "sigma and omega" is clearly treated here as the *logos* of the syllable, and this answer is not the pronunciation of the syllable, but a list of the names of its component letters. To interpret, therefore, the

⁹Gallop's article is a direct criticism of the claim of Ryle (1960) that Plato had the phonetic model in mind in his uses of the model of letters and syllables in some dialogues, including the *Theaetetus*. As for the objections to the Rylean semantic interpretation of the dream, mainly advocated in Ryle (1990), his famous and long unpublished paper read to the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1952, see Fine 373-375 and Annas 99-100. See also McDowell 232, 240, White 194 n.48 and Bostock 206. Burnyeat (1990) 157ff. offers a bit more sympathetic examination of Ryle's interpretation..

logos of the dream as corresponding to pronunciation in the model of letters and syllables cannot be right. This is, as I see it, the most serious difficulty for the phonetic interpretation of the model of letters and syllables. However if we abandon, as I think we must, the idea of *logos* in the dream being represented as pronunciation in the model of letters and syllables, there is hardly any point in retaining the phonetic model. For without the idea, we will lose not only the undesirable third aspect, but also the first two promising characteristics of the phonetic model.

If the phonetic model, after all, has to be rejected as the interpretation of the model of letters and syllables in the dream passage, do we simply have to retreat to the part-whole model? Scholars who reject the Rylean semantic interpretation of the dream usually seem to end up with accepting the part-whole model. They rightly see that in the dream passage the *logos* of a complex is supposed to take the form of enumeration of the constituent parts of the complex. "Sigma and omega", the *logos* of "SO", is such an enumeration. Still, as I see the matter, something more than the simple part-whole relation is involved in the process of giving the *logos* of a complex object by enumerating its parts, and this something is in fact easier to see in the case of syllables than in the case of other complexes, which is I think the reason why Plato relies so much on the model of letters and syllables in the dream passage. Let me explain.

5 The phonological model

I want to draw attention to Theaetetus' last remark about letters in the passage quoted above (203b2-7). He gives there a classification of letters that seems to constitute a part of a phonological theory, however primitive, of the Greek language: some letters (i.e. seven vowels) have voice (*phōnē*); among the rest, some (eg. S) have only sound (*psogos*), and others (eg. B) do not even have sound. Even vowels, he says, have only voice, not *logos* of any kind. His remark thus seems to be directed to a certain rule included in the phonological theory. One implication of the rule is that what can be regarded as pronounced sounds in the language are restricted to syllables, even if a sound physically identical to that of some phonetic element in a certain syllable can be made separately on its own. For example, even if a S-sound, i.e. a sound similar to the first part of the pronounced sound of the syllable "SO" ("a hiss of the tongue" 203b4) can be produced separately, it is not to be regarded as a pronunciation, but just a sound. If our phonology

includes such a rule, as Theaetetus' remark clearly implies, the separate pronunciation of any single letter, even that of a vowel like "O", cannot be regarded as possible. Sometimes the characteristic sound of a letter, i.e. the sound that would be made, when a syllable that contains the letter were pronounced, by that part of a syllable which is represented by the letter, is easy to produce separately (in the case of vowels), sometimes difficult but possible (eg. in the case of "S"), and sometimes impossible (eg. in the case of "B"), but no matter how easy it is, every letter is impossible to pronounce separately, in a phonological theory including the kind of rule Theaetetus mentions here.

Phonetic aspect retains its place in this understanding of the model of letters and syllables, for a syllable is a unit of pronunciation, and pronunciation is a way of making a sound *viva voce*. But it is not simply a matter of any sound made in speech. What pronouncing is, and therefore, what a syllable is, can only be understood against the background of a phonological theory like the one that Theaetetus partly gives at 203b. Once we construct such a theory, we need not necessarily be aware of the implicit phonetic aspect: it recedes, as it were, to the background, and even when we decide to use only written characters and no spoken sound, we can still state consequences of the theory, and still talk about what can be a syllable and what cannot. When we write "SO" on a blackboard, it represents a syllable, a unit of pronunciation, and it is even easier to give "S" and "O" separately in written characters than in spoken sound. But if we write them separately as letters, they are not syllables, not units of pronunciation. No matter how easy it is to write them separately, a letter cannot be a syllable, a unit of pronunciation. This is why we can learn the phonology of, say, ancient Greek using only written characters, and this is also why Socrates and Theaetetus sometimes talk about both spoken sounds and written characters indiscriminately in the dream passage. This can be seen most clearly later, in 206a, where both characters and sounds are mentioned as the letters we learn.

Socrates ... when you were learning, you spent your time trying to distinguish nothing but the letters both in seeing them and in hearing them, each one just by itself, in order that their different positions, spoken or written, would not confuse you. (206a5-8)

Consider a very simple rule that defines a syllable as a serial ordering of one or more letters including one and only one vowel. This definition is too

crude, and in fact wrong, but enough for the point I want to make, though I think the same point can be made, with necessary complication, using a more refined definition of a syllable. Now, for example, “O”, “SO”, “OS”, “TOS”, “TSO”, “OTS” and “BOTS” are all syllables according to this rule, but “S” and “TS” are not.¹⁰ Further, this rule is thought to enable us to regard giving any list of letter names including one and only one vowel name as the proper way of giving a syllable. For any such list singles out one and only one syllable, and in addition does so in a way that shows that the syllable does satisfy the definition. There may be different ways to formulate such a list. Here is one formulation. Since any instance of the following schema **LogS** is obviously such a list, we can formulate a proper way of giving a syllable as giving an instance of **LogS**, written or spoken.

LogS ($c_1, c_2, \dots, c_{n-1}, c_n$)[v]($c'_1, c'_2, \dots, c'_{m-1}, c'_m$)

where $n, m \geq 0$, $c_1 \dots c_n$ and $c'_1 \dots c'_m$ are to be replaced with consonant names, and v with a vowel name.

The number of consonants before and after the vowel can be 0, in which case nothing is to be placed in the parentheses for consonants, but not only brackets but also parentheses must not be omitted even when the latter contain nothing. Now, since according to our formulation giving any instance of **LogS** is a proper way of giving a syllable, if Theaetetus’ answer “sigma and omega” is a loose and abriveated way of giving an instance of **LogS**, that is, if it is said as:

(sigma)[omega](),

his saying so can also be regarded as a proper way of giving the syllable “SO”. I do not think it is far-fetched to treat Theaetetus’ answer in this way. Similarly if “tau, sigma, and omega” and “beta, omega, tau and sigma” are said as:

(tau, sigma)[omega]() and
(beta)[omega](tau, sigma)

¹⁰A combination of letters that, as “SOI”, contains a diphthong does not count as a syllable according to this definition. This is one of the reasons why it is in fact wrong.

respectively, they also give the syllables “TSO” and “BOTS” properly. Note that simple “omega” can also be a perfectly proper way of giving the syllable “O”, for it can be construed as

()[omega]()

which is indeed an instance of **LogS**. Such a proper way of giving a syllable is, I think, what the dream regards as “saying with *logos*” the syllable, and if a syllable is given in such a proper way, what is given, i.e. an instance of **LogS**, becomes the *logos* of the syllable. This is the way I think we should understand the model of letters and syllables in the dream passage. Let me call this understanding of the model “the phonological model”.

At first the phonological model might not seem to be importantly different from the part-whole model. In any case, *logos* of x takes the form of the enumeration of the constituent parts of x on both models. Here I would like to point out two characteristics of the phonological model that are not present in the part-whole model. If we are right, as I think we are, in reading the phonological model in the dream passage, each of these two characteristics seems to affect the interpretation of the dream itself in an important way. First, the *logos* of a given object (a syllable) on the phonological model is indeed an enumeration of the constituent parts of the object, but these parts are not simply a result of dividing it in an arbitrary way. Enumeration in the phonological model involves implicit appeal to a definition, and must show that the object does fall under the definition. When, for example, Theaetetus gives “sigma and omega” as the *logos* of the syllable “SO”, he is not simply reporting a result of an arbitrary division of the syllable’s sound. If all that matters were simple part-whole relation, an answer obtained eg. by a physical analysis of the spoken sound or the written shape would also be a perfectly legitimate answer. Imagine he had answered, aided by a sound analysing machine, “such and such a wave pattern followed by so and so a wave pattern”. Or imagine he divided the shape of “SO” at the middle of “O”, and give the resultant two parts as his answer. Either answer would be the *logos* of the syllable in the part-whole model, which neither would be in the phonological model.

Second, if we admit single letter syllables like “O” and “A”, as it seems that we have to in any case, it is not quite correct to say that complexes in the dream have more than one element. This is very difficult to explain on the part-whole model. The phonological model, however, can provide an

explanation. On the phonological model, what makes a complex a complex, and not an element, is not how many elements it has, but how complex it is. What matters is not multiplicity but complexity. Even a single letter syllable like “O” can have complexity, though it cannot have multiplicity. When “O” is a syllable, an instance of **LogS**, “() [omega] ()”, is the *logos* of it. This *logos* makes it obvious that it is a complex object composed of an element, though in this case only one element.

6 Generalization to cases other than syllables

We saw that there is good reason to regard the model of letters and syllables in the dream passage as the phonological model. We also saw that this model has interesting characteristics that are lacking in the part-whole model. Attempting an interpretation of the dream itself based on these observations seems, therefore, worth while. But I postpone this attempt to another occasion.

Instead, I would like to address only one problem before concluding this paper. We saw that the intended point of the model of letters and syllables must be applicable to other cases involving the part-whole relation. How can we generalize the phonological model to other such cases? Take for example a wagon, which according to Hesiod consists of one hundred parts (207a). Suppose Hesiod is right. Also suppose, these parts includes weels, axles, chassis, bumpers, yokes among others". In order to have something similar to the phonological model in the case of a wagon, we first need a theory which includes the definition of a wagon. This definition needs to be of the type that enumerates the constituent parts of a wagon. That is, it needs to tell us what is a wagon by, at least in part, specifying its one hundred components, just as the definition of a syllable tells us what is a syllable by, at least in part, specifying the component parts of a syllable. The qualification “at least in part” is needed here, of course, because the definition cannot be a mere enumeration of parts: it must also tell the legitimate arrangement, i.e. how they are to be put together. In the case of the definition of a syllable, the legitimate arrangement is simply placing component letters in a serial order. In the case of the definition of a wagon, the legitimate arrangement must surely be much more complicated, and the definition must cover that. The definition should also admit certain

"In the text these are in fact all that Socrates and Theaetetus, who are not experts about wagons, manage to give as parts of a wagon. (207a7-8).

variation among wagons. Just as a syllable may contain one, two, more or no consonants, a wagon may have, say, one, two, more or no seats. Suppose we have such a definition of a wagon as follows:

DefW A wagon =_{def} such and such one hundred parts, put together in an arrangement satisfying the condition C .

Now how can one give the *logos* of a wagon? Simple enumeration will not do: logos must reflect the legitimate arrangement. In the case of a syllable, we did not have to make the legitimate arrangement explicit, because it is reflected in the order of letter names that appear in the *logos*. If we like, however, even in the case of syllables we can modify **LogS** to make that explicit. Suppose our definitin of a syllable is:

DefS A syllable =_{def} a vowel and n consonants ($n \geq 0$), put together in an arrangement satisfying the condition D .

Here the condition D is simply that the letters should be arranged in a serial order. Consider the following schema:

LogS' $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_{n-1}, c_n, v, A$
 where $n \geq 0$, $c_1 \dots c_n$ are names of consonants, v is a name of a vowel, and A is a name of an arrangement such that (1) we can order $c_1 \dots c_n$ and v in the arrangement A , and (2) if we do so, they are arranged in an arrangement satisfying the condition D .

We can regard an instance of **LogS'**, instead of **LogS**, as a proper way to give a syllable, thus making the involved legitimate arrangement explicit. As a matter of fact, however, **LogS'** is needlessly strict in that it requires that the logos of a syllable should enumerate consonants first, a vowel second, and third and finally the arrangement. We can relax this restriction, having the following **LogS''** instead of **LogS'**:

LogS'' $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n, x_{n+1}, x_{n+2}$
 where

1. $n \geq 0$, and
2. $x_1 \dots x_{n+2}$ are names, of which
 - (a) n are consonant names,

- (b) one is a vowel name, and
- (c) one is the name of an arrangement such that (1) we can arrange all the letters (n consonants and a vowel) whose names are included in $x_1 \dots x_{n+2}$ in the arrangement, and (2) if we do so, they are arranged in an arrangement satisfying the condition D .

For example, “sigma, reverse alphabetical ordering, omega”, being an instance of **LogS**”, becomes the *logos* of the syllable “SO”. Similarly another instance of **LogS**”, “lambda, omega, sigma, alphabetical ordering, beta” is the *logos* of the syllable “BLOS”. The former differs from Theaetetus’ original *logos* “sigma and omega” in that it has one item additionally enumerated by “reverse alphabetical ordering”, the name of the arrangement in which the letters “S” and “O” are arranged to constitute the syllable “SO”. But this kind of addition, I think, only serves to make what was implicit in Theaetetus’ *logos* explicit. Theaetetus simply did not have to make explicit the arrangement of the letters listed in his answer. If it were expressed explicitly, Theaetetus’ answer would become something like “sigma and omega, in this order”, and this can easily be construed as an instance of **LogS**”, i.e. “sigma, omega, list ordering”, where “list ordering” is the name of that arrangement which places letters in the order of their appearance in the list itself. Note that an instance of **LogS**” is still a list of names, although one of the names listed is that of an arrangement. *Logos* is still composed of nothing but names: it is the “weaving together of names”.

In the case of a wagon, too, we can have a similar schema, **LogW**:

LogW $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n, x_{n+1}$

where

1. $x_1 \dots x_{n+1}$ are names, of which
 - (a) n are names such that all the names of the one hundred component parts of a wagon specified in **DefW**, and nothing else, are included in them, and
 - (b) one is a name of an arrangement such that (1) we can arrange all the component parts of a wagon whose names are included in $x_1 \dots x_{n-1}$ in the arrangement, and (2) if we do so, they are arranged in an arrangement satisfying the condition C .

Just as in the case of a syllable, we can regard giving an instance of **LogW** as a proper way of giving a wagon, and the given instance as the *logos* of a wagon. Thus a list, in any order, of the names of one hundred parts (some names may appear more than once), and the name of a legitimate arrangement is the *logos* of a wagon. It would look something like this:

body, wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel, wheel, chassis, ..., Spartan racing, seat, seat

where “Spartan racing” is the name of a certain component arrangement, say, a special arrangement for a wagon that was popular in Lachedaimon in the fourth century BC.

This is how I think the phonological model in the case of syllables can be extended to other cases of complex objects. Here is involved the idea of taking the arrangement of the constituent parts of a complex object as another constituent part of the object. This idea does seem to be controversial as an element of an interpretation of Socrates’ dream, and requires justification. Adequate justification of this idea needs to be incorporated in a full interpretation of the dream, which I cannot give here. I will note just two points. First, we must not forget the possibility that specification of the arrangement might be omitted in the enumeration, to be understood implicitly. This is most clear in the case of syllables, as we have seen in Theaetetus’ answer. Even in the case of more complex objects, there is nothing in principle to prevent this possibility. Second, and more importantly, we have to take into account the flexible character of the dream passage. As Burnyeat suggests¹², many factors necessary to interpret the dream passage seem to be left deliberately undetermined. It is as if Plato is challenging readers to fill in the gap left in his writing. And if so, we must not be afraid to give something *not* present in the text, so far as there is nothing that directly contradicts it. That is the contribution Plato especially expects us to make here, and that, I believe, is more or less what Plato always expects of us in reading his dialogues.

7 Conclusion

The model of letters and syllables is indeed a rich source of hints and suggestions for anyone who tries to interpret Socrates’ dream. It is, however, important to evaluate exactly how much we should read into the

¹²Burnyeat (1990) 129 ff.

model. On my view, we should be moderate, but at the same time not too moderate in this evaluation. To understand the phonetic model there goes too far, whereas to take the model's point simply as the part-whole relation falls too short. The *logos* of a complex does take the form of an enumeration of its constituent parts, but not every such enumeration counts as *logos*. The *logos* of x is what answers to the Socratic question "what is x ?" by enumerating x 's constituent parts (arguably including their arrangement), but the enumeration must, invoking some theory that provides the definition of x , show that x does fall under the definition. It is quite interesting to see that something so simple in its form as a mere list of names can suit the Socratic purpose to a considerable extent.

What has been contended in this paper is by no means enough for providing a fair understanding of the dream passage as a whole. I hope I can give a full treatment of the passage on another occasion.

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