In my Plato’s Phaedo¹ I suggested (a) that Phaedo 100A and 101D are not concerned with one and the same general logical method for arguing with provisional propositions, and (b) that while the λόγοι of 99D-E are Socratic definitions, the ἦποθέσεις of 101D are provisional notions of Platonic Forms, so that there is a transition from Socratic ‘causes’ to Platonic. I am much indebted to those reviewers² who have pointed out my error in going further and contrasting my view of the ἦποθέσεις of 101D as notions with the view that they are propositions; clearly such notions could be expressed as propositions, and would be in debate; and even when unexpressed, they would be equivalent to stated propositions for purposes of deduction.³ But this does not affect my belief in contentions (a) and (b), on which I should now like to make a few additional remarks.

I will begin with (a). The main difficulty in the way of supposing that 99D sq. and 101D are concerned with one and the same general logical method lies in the extraordinary way in which, if they are, the argument is broken up. Why should Plato intersperse his account of Forms as causes, which he must have regarded as all-important for his final proof of immortality, with a general explanation of how you can use provisional propositions as a basis for deduction — a procedure already adopted frequently in earlier dialogues? Professor Hackforth (Plato’s Phaedo, pp. 138-9) suggests that what lies between 100A and 101D is ‘an illustrative example, namely the deduction from the hypothesis of the existence of Forms of a general theory of causality that is to be applied to establish the immortality of the soul. This illustrative example is, however, so important in itself that Socrates seems temporarily to lose sight of the reason for which, formally speaking, it was introduced, and consequently fails to explain the precise relation of the two reasoning processes described respectively before and after it’. Let us consider this explanation. According to Hackforth (p. 139) — and Mr Robinson

³ Nevertheless I do not believe that Plato was as ‘proposition-conscious’ as some of his critics. If he decided that sensible objects x and y conformed to his notion of some particular Form, there is no reason to suppose that he looked upon this as a logical deduction from one proposition to another, though it might be expressed as such.
(Plato's Earlier Dialectic, 2nd edition, p. 128) reaches the same conclusion 1 - the meaning of 100A is 'that any proposition arrived at by what the inquirer deems a valid process of deduction is accepted, and the contradictory of any such proposition is rejected'. This, as Hackforth says, 'taken by itself, can hardly be said to indicate a method at all'. Nevertheless Socrates proceeds, we are to suppose, to illustrate this 'method', deducing a theory of causality from the ὑπόθεσις 'that there are Forms'. Now nothing is said at 100A about testing one's ὑπόθεσις, and if the method is introduced in order to be applied to the ὑπόθεσις 'that there are Forms' - which, again, Robinson seems to suppose 2 - a method of testing would not seem to be required. Our notions of particular individual Forms of course need careful checking (107B); but the proposition 'that there are Forms' receives no checking, has in fact been unreservedly accepted as true, and may be regarded as having been already established by what was said earlier about recollection. To speak about testing propositions by deduction of consequences, with the general proposition about the existence of Forms particularly in mind, would seem entirely out of place - especially at 101D, after discussion of the 'illustrative example' has begun. 3 It would not be surprising, therefore, if Hackforth should wish to eliminate mention of testing by deduction of consequences from 101D. At any rate, he takes the ὑπόθεσις there to be, not independent results of the ὑπόθεσις, but intermediate propositions in a single chain of deduction, 'in agree-

1 'The whole idea in his mind is that that which follows from the hypothesis is to be set down as true, and that whose contradictory follows from the hypothesis is to be set down as false.'

2 'The hypothesis chosen is the theory of Ideas. There is no question of testing or recommending this theory in any way; but it is used as a premiss for inferring another proposition, namely that soul is immortal. Socrates introduces the notion of testing only when he comes to imagine somebody objecting to the hypothesis (101D)' (pp. 134-5). Robinson (p. 139) finds the hypothetical method - here the use of the hypothesis 'that there are Forms' - commended at 92C-E. He then has to admit that this 'makes Simmias understand the hypothetical method before Socrates explains it to Cebes in 100A. But', he says, 'the failure in dramatic verisimilitude is small and of a likely kind'.

3 The well-known difficulty (on the usual view of 101D) of how conflicting results can emerge from a single proposition has been given a possible, if not convincing, explanation by Robinson, who observes that a hypothesis may have conflicting consequences 'when combined with some of our permanent beliefs', but believes that when this happened Plato thought that the 'results' emerged from the one proposition alone (pp. 131-3). But Robinson does not explain the relevance of any mention of testing hypotheses to the present passages. Indeed he cannot explain the relation of 100A and 101D to the context at all (p. 143).