

# APEIRON

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<sup>1</sup> This is a retyped, corrected version (of typing errors only) of the original.

SOCRATIC HUMOR:  
UNDERSTANDING THE MOST IMPORTANT  
PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT

The style of this essay will be mosaic. I do not draw connecting lines between the blocks; the unity of the essay will be evident to the reader because I force a distance between him and the design.

BLOCK I

The most important philosophical argument occurs in Plato's Theaetetus, 146c7-147c1.

BLOCK II

Philosophy did not always exist. It is possible that some day it may go out of existence. Perhaps there have been times, lapses, between the beginning of philosophy and now when philosophy did not exist. Many who are devoted to philosophy spend time in trying to assure its continued existence; they embroil others in their efforts. The others are often young.

BLOCK III

Frequently, the young are ignorant, rebellious, stubborn, obtuse, irreverent, uncaring, wonderful. What if, because of one or more of their youthful qualities, they refused to become embroiled in philosophizing? What if they said, "No, thanks;" or "Who cares?"; or "Crap;" or didn't understand what we wanted of them; or honestly doubted that they would philosophize? We who love philosophy would mourn its [end of page 23] imminent end. We would be the remnants before the lapse, guardians of mullock. Perhaps we would dread the morrow. What would we do should all the youth of the world be as Theaetetus prior to 146c7?

#### BLOCK IV

Theaetetus earned his pug nose. He was ignorant. Plato represents Socrates embroiling Theaetetus in philosophizing. Theaetetus stands on the precipice of a lapse. A dialectical bridge is constructed on which he may cross safely to the other side, which he does, and where he is rewarded with a pug nose. Philosophy is saved. We breathe a sigh of relief, but it is short lived for all about us swarm the young Aquilines.

#### BLOCK V

Do not fear. Wasn't Theaetetus, himself, once an Aquiline? Yes. Do we still have 146c7-147c1? Yes. Did that not once have the power to move Theaetetus over the bridge, and thus, have the power to save philosophy? Yes. Can't it do it again and again? I hope so. I wonder. You know that there is argument in 146c7-147c1? Yes. And that arguments don't lose their power? I hope not; I wonder. Can you suppose that it could save philosophy from non-existence again and again? Yes. What would you say of such an argument, supposing you weren't being extravagant? That it was the most important philosophical argument.

#### BLOCK VI

Arguments do not always convince; this is true of good arguments as well as bad arguments. The best may lack all conviction. And Socrates cannot walk over the bridge for Theaetetus.

#### BLOCK VII

We can continue to count on the power of 146c7-147c1. It is mined with fuses that are connected to powerful resources (belief bombs) hidden within and from the Aquiline [end of page 24] himself. The Aquiline has been booby-trapped for assent (by Theodorus and his kind). Socrates knew of and took advantage of Theaetetus's belief bombs; the fuses in Socrates' argument (146c7-147c1) detonated the bombs that exploded their charge on Theaetetus's will. At 147c2, the released force of Theaetetus's own belief bombs propelled him into

philosophy; they forced him to say “True” rather than “No.” These belief bombs are hidden within all Aquilines.

#### BLOCK VIII

The Aquiline may have five belief bombs. 146c7-147c1 is cleverly ambiguated; it is able to detonate any one, two, three, four, or five of the five bombs. That is good, for not every Aquiline comes to us with the same belief bomb as every other Aquiline. Then, too, any combination of the five belief bombs may be lodged in some Aquilines. When all five nestle in them, the Aquiline is maximally mined to cross the bridge.

#### BLOCK IX

At 146c3, Socrates asks Theaetetus, “What do you think knowledge is?” In the first of four parts of 146c7-147c1, which I call the List part, Theaetetus replies, Englished by F.M. Cornford:

Theaetetus: Then I think the things one can learn from Theodorus are knowledge --- geometry and all the sciences you mentioned just now; and then there are the crafts of the cobbler and other workmen. Each and all of these are knowledge and nothing else [but knowledge].

Socrates: You are generous indeed, my dear Theaetetus -- so open-handed that, when you are asked for one simple thing, you offer a whole variety.

#### BLOCK X

As have other Aquilines, Theaetetus has had some education. He has been innocently booby-trapped by Theodorus to whom he has paid money for some education. And out of his pocket Theaetetus has paid various artisans for the exercise of their technical skills. He knows this. He distinguishes [end of page 25] what he pays Theodorus for from what he pays the artisans for. We note this, making two columns, picking up entries for the column from the List and from other parts of the conversation. It is important to notice that

each of the columns has a word at the top (I italicize them for emphasis) that are not themselves entries.

*Sciences*

geometry  
astronomy  
harmonics  
arithmetic

*Crafts (arts)*

cobblery  
carpentry  
midwifery (embroidery)  
image-making (sophistry)

BLOCK XI

Theaetetus is not alone in giving a List answer to Socrates' questions. We find the fear of philosophy's lapse was, if not an obsession of Plato's, at least, an occupation. Some reference words to the lovers of wisdom are sufficient. Meno's first answer to "What is virtue?" is of the list stamp. You see a similar response in Euthyphro's answer (5d) to Socrates' question about piety. It may be to your interest to look at Laches 191 and 192.

BLOCK XII

I find it helpful to look at the end when someone is trying to help me to understand something. There is an end to 146c7-147c1. It is a comic end. Socrates wishes to get Theaetetus to laugh at himself for being ridiculous, for giving a ridiculous, a laughable answer to Socrates' question by giving a list of some sciences and some crafts. Socrates says, starting at 147b10, Englished in the fourth edition of Jowett, and by John Anton when parenthesized:

Socrates: (Hence such an answer is laughable or ridiculous) when a man is asked what knowledge is, to give an answer the name of some art ...; for his reply 'A knowledge of this of that' is no answer to the question that was asked.

BLOCK XIII

Socratic (Platonic) humor is an acquired taste. One should want to acquire such a taste. Perhaps it can be [end of page 26] acquired by coming to see why something that Socrates says is ridiculous is ridiculous. Theaetetus had the hidden resources which enabled him to laugh at himself. If only we could expose those hidden resources! For then, we could look and learn how Theaetetus could come to see as ridiculous what Socrates thought was ridiculous. It is imaginable that Theaetetus's belief bombs were something like ours are.

#### BLOCK XIV

On our way to Socratic taste, we pass through the second part of 146c7-147c1, the Knowledge Of part (146d6-146e11). In the beginning of this part, Theaetetus wonders, "What do you mean, Socrates?", not yet having the taste to be amused at Socrates' irony of "You are generous indeed, my dear Theaetetus..." (The Ironic Case of the List). In Cornford's English, the Knowledge Of part goes this way:

Socrates: There may be nothing to it, but I will explain what my notion is. When you speak of cobbling, you mean by that word precisely a knowledge of shoe-making?

Theaetetus: Precisely.

Socrates: And when you speak of carpentry, you mean just a knowledge of how to make wooden furniture?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Socrates: In both cases, then, you are defining what the craft is a knowledge of?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Socrates: But the question you were asked, Theaetetus, was not, about what are the objects of knowledge, nor yet how many sorts of knowledge there are. We did not want to count them, but to find out what the thing itself -- knowledge -- is. Is there nothing in that?

Theaetetus: No, you are quite right.

#### BLOCK XV

I do not need to suppose that part of Theaetetus's hidden belief bombs are Ideas or Forms or definitions of them. They do not have to be lurking in Theaetetus (nor us) as a condition for acquiring a taste for Socratic ridiculousness. Neither the Forms nor definitions are funny. [end of page 27]

#### BLOCK XVI

I feel the need to skeletonize the Knowledge Of part:

- (a) What is knowledge? (Socrates)
- (b) Geometry, astronomy, harmonics -- the sciences; carpentering, cobbling -- the crafts. (List)
- (c) What is, for example, cobbling? (Socrates)
- (d) (i) Cobbling (df) = (ii) the (craft       ) of making shoes.  
(knowledge)

#### BLOCK XVII

I feel the need to juxtapose. I juxtapose (a), What is knowledge?, with (d) (ii), the (craft       ) of making shoes. I juxtapose what I  
(knowledge)  
just juxtaposed with Socrates' speech at the end of 146c7-147c1, thinking I will be on my way to knowing why what Socrates thinks is ridiculous is ridiculous when he says "(Hence such an answer is laughable or ridiculous) when a man is asked what knowledge is, to give in answer the name of some art ...; for his reply 'A knowledge of this or that' is no answer to the question that was asked."

#### BLOCK XVIII

Theaetetus is apt but young. For Theaetetus, Socrates stoops to clay in the third part, what I call the Clay part, of 146c7-147c1. We are treated to the ridiculous again. The English is that of Jowett's fourth edition except where there are parentheses filled in by John Anton. (The Clay part: 147a1-147b3)

Socrates: (Think now also about this case. If someone were to ask us about a thing of the trivial or common sort, what

such a thing is;) for example, What is clay? (Now, if we were to answer him “clay of the potters, clay of the oven-makers, and clay of the brick-makers,” wouldn’t we be ridiculous?

Theaetetus: Yes, perhaps.

Socrates: (First of all, we would be making quite an assumption to expect the questioning person to understand [that is, what clay is] when we say “clay,” whether we add clay of the doll-makers or that of any other such worker. Or do you suppose that one can understand the name of a thing, when he does not know [end of page 28] what the ([nature of the] thing is?)

Theaetetus: He cannot.

#### BLOCK XIX

“Clay” is a name (ὄνομα), and so is “knowledge.”

#### BLOCK XX

There is a fourth part, what I call the Of Knowledge part, of 146c7-147c1 (147b4-147c1).

Socrates: Then, if he has no idea of knowledge, ‘knowledge about shoes’ conveys nothing to him? (F.M. Cornford)

Socrates: Then he does not understand knowledge of shoes if he does not know knowledge. (H.N. Fowler)

Socrates: Likewise, a man who does not know what ‘knowledge’ stands for, cannot understand the phrase, ‘knowledge of shoemaking’? (Jowett, fourth)

Socrate: Donc on ne comprend rien aux mots “science de la chaussure” quand on ne sait pas ce qu’est la science. (August Diès)

Sokrates: So versteht Einer also auch nicht das Kenntniss des Schuhmachens, weiss er nicht was Kenntniss ist. (Hieronymus Müller)

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Οὐδ’ ἀρα ἐπιβτήμην ὑποδημάτων συνήσιν ὁ ἐπιστήμην μὴ εἰδώς.

Theaetetus: That is true. (H.N. Fowler)

Socrates: ‘Cobblery’, in fact, or the name of any other art has no meaning for anyone who has no conception of knowledge. (F.M. Cornford)

Socrates: Then he who is ignorant of knowledge does not understand cobblery or any other art. (H.N. Fowler)

Socrates: And therefore the same man will not understand the name ‘cobbling’, or the name of any other art? (Jowett, fourth)

Socrate: Donc on ne comprend pas ce que signifie la cordonnerie, pas plus, d’ailleurs, qu’aucun autre art, si l’on n’a aucune idée de la science. (August Diès)

Sokrates: Was Schuhmachen, was irgend eine andere Kunst sei, begreift also nicht, wer nicht, was Kenntniss ist, weiss. (H. Müller)  
[end of page 29]

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Σχυτιχὴν ἀρᾶ οὐ συνήσιν ος ἀν’ἐπιδότημην ἀγνοῖ, οὐδέ τινα ἀλλητέχνην’.

Theaetetus: That is so

Socrates: Then, when we are asked what knowledge is, it is absurd to reply by giving the name of some art. The answer is: ‘knowledge of so-and-so’; but that was not what the question called for. (F.M. Cornford)

Socrates: Then it is a ridiculous answer to the question “what is knowledge?” when we give the name of some art; for we give in our answer something that knowledge belongs to, when that was not what we were asked. (H.N. Fowler)

Socrates: (Hence such an answer is laughable or ridiculous) when a man is asked what knowledge is to give in answer the name of some art ...; for his reply ‘A knowledge of this or that’ is no answer to the question that was asked. (Jowett, fourth; and John Anton)

Socrate: C’est donc donner réponse ridicule à qui demande ce qu’est la science, que de répondre par un nom d’art quelconque. C’est, en effet, se borner à répondre en nommant une science déterminée, alors que la question était tout autre. (August Diès)

Sokrates: Wer befragt wird: was Kenntniss ist? gibt also eine lacherliche Antwort, wenn er den Namen irgend einer Kunst nennt; denn er nennt die Kenntniss von Etwas, ohne darum befragt zu sein. (H. Müller)

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Γελοία ἀρα ἡ ἀπόκρισις τῶ ἐρωτηθέντι ἐπιστήμη τί ἐστίν, ὅταν ἀποκρίνηται τέχνην τινος ὀνομα. Τινος γὰρ ἐπιστήμην ἀποκρίνεται, οὐ τοῦτ' ἐρωτηθεῖς.

#### BLOCK XXI

Theaetetus had some education. He had gone from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge because he had learned something from Theodorus. He knows that an honest person who asks a question and wants an answer that he knows not does not know the answer to the question. He knows that an honest someone who asks him, for example, for the meaning of a word, for example, 'knowledge,' does not understand the meaning of 'knowledge.' Or if an honest someone asks him what knowledge is, he knows the questioner does not know what knowledge is. [end of page 30]

#### BLOCK XXII

Theaetetus's hidden belief bomb: Bomb I: Learning Theory  
Belief: A man's ignorance about something, for example, the meaning of a word, is not dispelled by giving an answer containing the word he does not understand; he will not understand it any better the second time than he did the first. Repetition of a word that is not understood does not add understanding to what was said the first time.

#### BLOCK XXIII

(a) What is knowledge? (d) (ii) the (craft ) of making shoes. (knowledge)

#### BLOCK XXIV

Theaetetus had some education. When he did not understand something Theodorus said to him, Theodorus explained it to him. He knows that Theodorus's explanation was not the same as the explicandum.

#### BLOCK XXV

Theaetetus's hidden belief bomb: Bomb II: Conceptual Relation  
Belief: The concept of explanation is related to the concept of

linearity; the concept of explanation requires that an explanation contain something that was not contained in the explicandum; if the explanation does contain the explicandum, the explanation is not an explanation because the explanation is circular rather than linear.

#### BLOCK XXVI

(a) What is knowledge? (d) (ii) The (craft ) of making shoes. (knowledge)

#### BLOCK XXVII

Theaetetus had some education. If he did not understand a word, he did not understand the phrase or sentence in which the word occurred, even if Theodorus did [end of page 31] pronounce it well, or intoned it loudly, or with a sly wink, or a meaningful nudge, or equated it (knowledge of making shoes) with a word (cobblery) whose meaning he knew or thought he knew. And Theodorus talked a lot.

#### BLOCK XXVIII

Theaetetus's hidden belief bomb: Bomb III: Theory of Meaning Belief: The meaning of an expression larger than a word is a function of the meaning of the words that it contains.

#### BLOCK XXIX

(a) What is knowledge? (d) (ii) The (craft ) of making shoes. (knowledge)

#### BLOCK XXX

Theaetetus had some education. Theodorus taught Theaetetus some mathematics. Theaetetus learned about two classes of numbers, the square and the oblong numbers. The classes had an infinite number of members. It would be ridiculous to try to List the members of each of these two classes. Theaetetus knew this.

#### BLOCK XXXI

Theaetetus's hidden belief bomb: Bomb IV: Logical Theory Belief: What is and what is not a member of a class of kinds is determined by the class term.

#### BLOCK XXII

(a') What is knowledge? (d') (ii) The (craft ) of making shoes. (knowledge)

#### BLOCK XXIII

Theaetetus had some education. He knew that some concepts are more general, higher, more comprehensive, than some others. He knew that the notion of knowledge comprehends the notions of science and crafts. He knew that the notion of craft is more comprehensive than the notion of cobblery because he knew that cobblery and carpentry and [end of page 32] midwifery are crafts but cobblery and carpentry are not midwifery, nor are carpentry and midwifery cobblery. We know he knew these things because we know he knew how to give an ordered List to Socrates.

#### BLOCK XXXIV

Theaetetus's hidden belief bomb: Bomb V: Epistemological Theory Belief: The lower, more specific concepts cannot be comprehended unless there are more general, higher concepts under which they may be comprehended.

#### BLOCK XXXV

(a') What is cobblery? (d') (ii) The (knowledge) of making shoes. (craft )

#### BLOCK XXXVI

Is not this laughter sweet as honey? Yes, we do the best we can, my boy. Once a person laughs himself over the lapse, it quite naturally occurs to him that the resources on which he called that made him laugh, that vaulted the lapse, that saved the philosophy that Socrates loved may, now that they are no longer hidden, if looked on

fully and frankly, reveal to us what we are to do once embroiled in philosophy. Even Greek coins had two sides. I can see it all, now.

#### BLOCK XXVII

There are those who think of themselves as teachers of philosophy. Some think this even if and while they lecture, they who have murdered Socrates by capitulating to Protagoras. Hear and remember this! Hear and remember that! Rote and tote! Repeat! Again! The repeatable is the understood. Right? Right! Awright, let's go through the List again; repeat after me. Cobblery – cobblery, carpentry – carpentry, midwifery – midwifery, image-making – image-making .... Still, there are some who want no part of a double-cross. They do not bow and scrape before the capacity for infallible repetition as if it were a philosophic attainment. With proffered sweet-as-honey understanding they beckon and pipe the [end of page 33] uninitiated to build dialectical bridges over raging Lethe. In dialectic, we are reborn to eternal recollection; in repetition, we are tied with bonds of water to some one else's past, who is tied with bonds of water to some one else's past, who is tied with bonds of water .....

#### BLOCK XXXVIII

Socratic paradox: How can a person not know what he knows? Solutions: How can a person not understand what he repeats? How can a person not understand what he retongues? How can a person not retongue what he understands? How can a person not repeat what he understands? How can a person not know what he knows?

#### BLOCK XXXIX

Of what is this man accused? Of leading others into contradicting themselves, your Honor. Hmmm. Is this true, Accused? Yes, your Honor. What do you have to say for yourself? May I ask the prosecutor a few questions, your Honor? Proceed. Prosecutor, is it wrong to lead people into contradictions? Of course it is; I wouldn't have you before this court if it were not. In leading people into contradictions, is it I who assert the contradictions or those I am

leading? Those you are leading. Would you explain to the judge how it is done? He asks someone a question to which the person answers, say A. And then he asks him some more questions and soon has him answering -A. What is wrong with leading someone into a contradiction? You have got him to say something which is false, to utter an untruth. You admit, still, do you, that it is someone else, not I, who uttered the untruth? Yes, but by the trickery of your clever questioning. That is, I got him to say something he might not have said without my questioning? Yes. Tell me, is it right to lead a man into saying what is true? Of course. Suppose, just for the sake of argument, that of the two things a person answered, A and -A, that it was -A that was true; would I not then have led him into asserting a truth? I suppose so. Then, since, in order to lead a man to truth, I had to lead him into a contradiction, is it not right to lead a man into contradiction? Your Honor, he has done it again; the evidence [end of page 34] is clearly before you; he is incorrigible and guilty. I find the accused innocent, Prosecutor; being a philosopher is not a crime; in leading men into contradictions, he has simply done that without which there would be no philosophical problems and, hence, no philosophy; in the present instance, he has shown that you, Prosecutor, have a philosophic problem; I remand you into the custody of the accused until he is satisfied that you know it is good to lead men into contradictions. Next case.

#### BLOCK XXXX

Of what is this man accused? Of taking money under pretenses, your Honor. What is his pretense? He says that he is a philosopher. And you say that he is not? That is the burden of my claim, your Honor. Why do you say he is no philosopher? Because he fails to do what philosophers are supposed to do, that is, to make advances in understanding and to help others to do so as well; to do this he must march ahead or help us to march ahead and not go around in circles with us, ever returning to the point we were desirous of leaving. Do you know of an instance in which he failed to perform the philosopher's task? Just the other day, your Honor, I heard this man,

the accused, whom they call The Prosecutor, arguing with a man they call The Accused; the argument went much like this:

The Prosecutor: It is I who am the true philosopher, not you, The Accused; I lead people to the truth in my work as the prosecutor, while you lead them into contradictions.

The Accused: The True Philosopher is one who leads men, such as jurymen, to truth?

The P: That is my business.

The A: How do you do this marvelous thing?

The P: By finding perceptual witnesses, cross examining the opposition's witnesses, and helping the jury to make inferences from the evidence.

The A: Does the opposition do the same?

The P: Of course; you have been in the courts often enough to know that.

The A: Does what you say sometimes contradict what the opposition says?

The P: You know that it does.

The A: Does the jury ever find for the defendant and against you? [end of page 35]

The P: On occasion.

The A: Then, it seems to me, you have led the jurymen to the opposite of truth by your witnesses, cross examination, and inferences. By your first definition, this must mean you are not a True Philosopher but a False one.

The P: I know you fancy you have led me into contradicting myself, but you have not. Surely you do not suppose that jurymen are always right? That they never make mistakes?

The A: I suppose they do. But how do you know when they make mistakes?

The P: When they find against me.

The A: You are a True Prosecutor, all right, but I wonder if you are a True Philosopher. How do you know it is the jurymen rather than you who have made the mistake?

The P: I wouldn't have prosecuted in the first place if I didn't know the accused was guilty. It is my business to know, for I would be guilty of malfeasance were I to prosecute someone who is innocent. It is my business to know. That is what I am paid for.

The A: How is it that you know how to find your way and to lead others infallibly to the truth?

The P: It is because I do as the True Philosopher does, something I recommend that you do.

The Prosecutor, the accused in this case, who has declared himself to be a philosopher, is hereby judged guilty of pretenses, for, by arguing in a circle, he failed to do what his declaration led us to believe he would do; in not performing his function, he has shown himself to be not a bad philosopher who deserves low pay but no philosopher at all, and so, deserving of no pay. Anyone who argues in a circle while pretending to be a philosopher deserves a fitting noose, but since neither circle improves its victim, I remand you, instead, to the man they call The Accused until such time as he decides you have either ceased calling yourself a philosopher or have regained your sense of direction.

#### BLOCK XXXXI

If philosophers were not such a queer form of fish, we should all be surprised that they swim in a medium of words. But then, there is nothing else for them to swim in! Biologists tell us that philosophers are clear water [end of page 36] fish. They do not thrive in a murky medium. Out of the mouth of guppies. There are all these fish, see. And they try to move in these schools, you know. But it's difficult to keep bunched in schools if you have to keep in touch in murky waters, understand. It would be just great if we could demurk the medium, if we could just clarify how it is that these word atoms of our medium are to be fitted together into transparent sentence molecules. We have just heard from the alchemists: To demurk is to define. Know thy words, and thou canst then not murk any sentence, dig.

## BLOCK XXXXII

Modern chemists tell us that the medium in which philosophical fish swim and have their being has three dimensions: Syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

## BLOCK XXXXIII

Once upon a time there lived a young man, yclept Theaetetus, who thought man could live by extension alone. He was one of the world's list givers. He was also a parasite, that is, when he wasn't random. When he was random he was very, very good, but when he was bad, he was a parasite. On those occasions when he was random, Theaetetus could reel off list after list, having nothing more in mind, nor needing anything more in mind, than the word-names or number-names of the members of the list. Sometimes two of his lists had all members in common, sometimes none, and at other times they shared some but not all members. Theaetetus and his friends, encouraged by the mathematician Theodorus, developed a Theory of Lists; they proved wonderful theorems about the identity of lists, the inclusion of lists, ordered pairs, each member of the pair being drawn from a different list, and so forth. When they did this, they were very, very good. But then, boys and girls, Theaetetus had parasitical days as he had one day in conversation with Socrates when he gave Socrates a parasitical list. Socrates had asked Theaetetus what knowledge is. Theaetetus, thinking that "knowledge" was simply the name of a list, for lists as well as their members may be given word-names, since anything may be given a word-name, proceeded to give a list [end of page 37] of names to indicate the knowledge-list's members. Theaetetus, however, did not make up a random list, he sucked one from the host body of his culture; he had heard others say that each member of his list was a knowledge of so-and-so, and he contentedly repeated what others had said. Fortunately (our story does have a happy ending), Theaetetus learned how parasitical he had been and learned to give up his bad ways. He learned, my dears, that the word "knowledge" is not merely a name for a random list, that it is not external to the list, not a stranger in a random land. He came to see that it is the name of an active, intensional ingredient of the list's

members, internal to each, and ridiculously near their surface. Theaetetus came to understand that unbeknownst to him his culture had deposited an intensional ingredient in each member of the list and that it was this ingredient that lured him into listing the list that he listed. Theaetetus (our story is a love story) became eager to know Intension who lived on the other side of the bridge; they married, brought forth children, and lived philosophically ever after.

Moral:

He who laughs intensionally lists best.

#### BLOCK XXXXIV

The development of conceptual photography in the late fifth century (B.C.) made it possible to produce the following snapshots.

#### BEFORE

#### KNOWLEDGE

##### SCIENCES

geometry  
astronomy  
harmonics  
arithmetic

.

.

##### CRAFTS

cobbler  
carpentry  
midwifery  
image-making

.

.

akkod

[end of page 38]

DURING

KNOWLEDGE

SCI(knowledge)ENCES

CRA(knowledge)FTS

geo(knowledge of)metry  
astro(knowledge of)nomy  
har(knowledge of)monics  
arith(knowledge of)metic  
. (knowledge of) .  
. (knowledge of) .

cob(knowledge of)blery  
carp(knowledge of)entry  
midwif(knowledge of)ery  
image-(knowledge of)making  
. (knowledge of) .  
. (knowledge of) .

.

.

.

.

akkod

AFTER<sub>1</sub>

KNOW(...intension...)LEDGE

SCI(...intension...)ENCES

CRA(...intension...)FTS

geo(know...intension...ledge of)metry  
astro(know...intension...ledge of)nomy  
har(know...intension...ledge of)monics  
arith(know...intension...ledge of)metic  
. ..intension.. .  
. ..intension.. .

cob(know...intension...ledge of)blery  
carp(know...intension...ledge of)entry  
midwif(know...intension...ledge of)ery  
image-(know...intension...ledge of)making  
. ..intension.. .  
. ..intension.. .

.

.

.

.

akkod

AFTER<sub>2</sub>

PERCEPTION

SCI(perception)ENCES

CRA(perception)FTS

geo(perception)metry

cob(perception)blery

astro(perception)nomy

carp(perception)entry

har(perception)monics

midwif(perception)ery

arith(perception)metic

image-(perception)making

. (perception) .

. (perception) .

. (perception) .

. (perception) .

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akkod

Pictorial interpretation: The pictures run to vertical dots at the bottom; they may be interpreted as either the infinite or the indefinite. [end of page 39]

BLOCK XXXXV

Philosophers fly to and fro to philosophical meetings. They have physicalized the old habit of transcending the mundane. There is a way up and a way down. Philosophers have always striven to move on the way up. Below lie the Many, above lies the One. Geometry, astronomy, harmonics, and arithmetic, for example, are the Many; none is either of the others, yet they are One in science. Leave geometry to the geometers, astronomy to the astronomers, and so forth. To whom shall we leave science? Cobblery, carpentry, midwifery, and image-making, for example, are the Many; none is either of the others, yet they are One in craft. Leave cobblery to the cobblers, carpentry to the carpenters, and so forth. To whom shall we leave craft? Science and craft are the Many, for neither is the other, yet they are One in knowledge. To whom shall we leave knowledge? To whom shall we leave the One? The way up is the way to the One.

Philosophers have always striven to move on the way up. When taking pictures of philosophers, still or movies, be sure to have the top at the top of the frame.

#### BLOCK XXXXVI

Consider the hand. Extend the fingers on either hand until they are straight. Yes, your thumb also. Now, point them all down at the floor. Below, the fingers are Many; above, the palm, into which the fingers melt, is One. The palm comprehends the fingers; it makes it possible for the fingers to engage in the grasp of something. Old metaphors are wise. Comprehension comes from the top, the One is that which enables the Many to grasp the world in understanding. The Many are opposed; that is, they are contraries. Fantastic, isn't it, that contraries can exist in harmony in some One with each other? Philosophic comprehension is fantastic; it is comprehending -- Don't be shy. Say it straight out in the most literal way. They will understand --- grasping what is disparate, opposite, contrary, in the palm of the mind. Philosophic understanding is from top to bottom; abstract to concrete; general to specific; palm to fingers. That is why philosophers strive to move on the way up -- so they can come down again. [end of page 40]

#### BLOCK XXXXVII

I like the view from the top. I like the way you can see the pattern, the design. It makes me feel like laughing.

#### BLOCK XXXXVIII

It is not uncommon to believe that there are archeologists of the mind, that occasionally they dig their way into a long-covered artefact, and that such finds sometimes throw light on our own civilization. The coordinates of one such find is Stephanus 146c7-147c1. A mosaic was found there. I describe it from a perspective directly above the mosaic. It consists of forty-seven blocks. According to at least one archeologist, the center of the mosaic is the most important mosaic section ever found. The center consists of four parts: The List, Knowledge Of, Clay, and Of Knowledge parts. Like

many of the Satyr scenes of ancient vases, the four parts have a comic aspect; though orderly, they give off a sense of the ridiculous, an essence of the ridiculous. Arranged around the perimeter of the center section are blocks which are either similar or variations of each other; they look like this:

(a) What is (knowledge)? (d) (ii) the (craft ) of  
(cobblery ) (knowledge)

making shoes. One discerns the outlines of faces facing each other, identical except that one of each of the pairs of faces has a pug nose and the other of each of the pairs has an aquiline nose. Surrounding the center are five different figures, shaped somewhat like the spray an exploding bomb makes in a pliable medium. The left and right sides of the sprays are so designed that one side is the negative of the other; this effect is achieved by various means. The negative side of the Learning spray consists of blocks with the same color repeated, the positive side of blocks of varying hue. The blocks on the negative side of the Conceptual spray are arranged in concentric circles, those on the positive side linearly. The negative side of the Meaning spray consists of dimly seen fish with human faces, as if we were looking through the muddied sets of blocks in the foreground, while the positive side shows human faced fish in a sparkling clean stream. The Logical spray is interesting; the positive side consists of neatly [end of page 41] constructed figures which are also found on the negative side but this time each figure is situated within a crudely constructed figure of the same shape. The final spray, the Epistemological, shows a white bearded patriarch floating above a pyramidally arranged set of human figures; he is reaching down and tying strings to the figures at the lower part of the pyramid; the upper figures are already tied to those immediately below them, signifying, according to our interpretation, that the patriarchal string tier has started at the top. We take it that the patriarch is the positive side of the spray; he is laughing.