



Noêsis and Logos in the Eleatic Trilogy, with a Focus on the Visitor's Jokes at Statesman 266a-d
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Let me begin with an acknowledgment of the elusiveness of my topic. By *noêsis* I mean the intuitive insight into the essential that is at once the epistemic goal of dialectical inquiry and the basis for the discursive exegesis which that inquiry requires. It is profoundly elusive for at least four strikingly obvious reasons.

[i] It is all too easy to mistake what is only a subjectively *compelling opinion* — a δόξα — for genuine insight; indeed, as the Eleatic Visitor says to Young Socrates at 277d, describing what he calls “our strange human plight where the winning of knowledge is concerned,” “every one of us is like a person who sees things in a dream and thinks that he knows them perfectly and then wakes up, as it were, to find that he knows nothing.”¹ It’s not clear that we can ever get free of this “plight,” and this introduces uncertainty into any claim that we have achieved a *noêsis*.

[ii] What’s more, when we try to characterize *noêsis* — by contrast with characterizing its object or content —, we run head-on into the problem that it itself is *not an object* and, accordingly, that it does not have the kind of structure or structures that objects have. And yet we can hardly characterize it without treating it as an object and, so, without misrepresenting it. This is, I think, at the heart of the reservation that the author of the 7th Letter expresses when, explaining why “there is no writing of mine about the matters [Dionysius claimed to have learned from him],” he writes that “this knowledge is not something that can be put into words *in the way that other matters of study (μαθήματα) can*” (341c, my stress).

[iii] Further, in sharing our reflections on *noêsis*, we face a paradox as old as Heraclitus and as familiarly modern as Descartes and Husserl: even while such insight is, at least *ex hypothesi*, an experience of the universal, it is always — if we can agree that it occurs at all — *my* experience; my only access to it is my own first-person experience of it. This gives our best efforts to learn of *noêsis* from Plato, and also our best efforts to share with one another what we learn, the character of an inescapably risky venture.

[iv] Finally, there is the problem posed by what is also, so to speak, a blessing, the intimate association of *noêsis* as intuition with discourse: as we shall consider more carefully, *noêsis* both inspires and is inspired by *logos*. This is a blessing in that *logos* can preserve, if not *noêsis* itself, then the substantive occasion for its renewal. It is also a problem, however, because the combination of the elusiveness of *noêsis* and the explicitness of *logos* makes it both difficult to distinguish *noêsis* from the *logos* it is associated with and — especially in the thoroughly discourse-centered context of our present-day practice of philosophy — all too tempting not to try to make this distinction in the first place.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake and a great loss to turn away from reflection on *noêsis* in Plato. Plato marks it as the high point of inquiry in several famous passages: Diotima’s portrayal of “seeing Beauty itself” as the climax of the “higher mysteries” (*Sym.* 210e, 211e^{ff.}),

Socrates' designation of "seeing" the form of the Good as the goal of education in the allegory of the cave and in his following account of the curriculum of the philosopher-king (*Rep.* 517b, 518c, 519d, and cf. 516b, 532c, 540aff.), and — in a passage of particular importance for our reflections to come — the 7th *Letter*'s description of the "leaping spark" of insight that, "nourishing itself," is "kindled" into a "blaze" (341c-d)². I think, moreover, that the dialogues are structured so as to give us many other *indirect* portrayals of *noêsis* in the form of the characteristic sequences in which refutations and the *aporia* they generate are followed by surprising fresh thoughts, that is, seeming insights that, in some way triggered by the refutations, rejuvenate and reorient inquiry. It belongs to the distinctive drama of the dialogues that our access, as the readers, to these insights depends on our ability to live the protagonist's consciousness from within; and it belongs to the provocative irony of this drama that we are usually incited to enter into this consciousness by the portrayal of the protagonist's interlocutor's failure to do so. We the readers are put in the position of being provoked by an absence to discern a presence, with our basic access lying in our own responsive experience.³

All of this makes *noêsis* in Plato at once exhilarating and maddeningly difficult to identify and thematize. But, in the spirit of 'nothing ventured, nothing gained,' let's venture forth. I want to open up my own interpretive intuition that the *Statesman* is a provocation to, and then an exegesis of, a *noêsis* of what is essential to statesmanship. In the final phase of this reflection, I will try to show that this provocation peaks in the three jokes by which, at 266a-d, the Eleatic Visitor completes his initial *diaretic* account of statesmanship as the shepherdly nurture of the human herd (*ἀνθρωπονομικὸν*, 267c, also 266e); we will see, I hope, that these jokes concentrate the irony of the whole initial *diareisis*, and from the insight they trigger — an insight that, as befits the characteristic indirectness of Plato's communication with us, Young Socrates pointedly fails to have —, there flow, as its exegesis, the setting aside of the paradigm of the shepherd, the introduction of the new paradigm of the weaver, and the introduction of the new form of *diareisis* that lays out the fifteen kinds of "care" by which the members of a flourishing city take cooperative responsibility for their material and political lives.

To prepare the way for this appreciation of the power of the Visitor's jokes, however, let me first offer three reflections aimed at setting the *Statesman* into the context that we have been recovering together in our three workshops,⁴ the context of the whole Eleatic trilogy of the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the *Statesman*.

[1] First reflection: the positive yield of the 'refutation' of the idea of knowledge as "true judgment" and an "account" (*logos*) in the *Theaetetus*

The final part of the *Theaetetus*, Socrates' examination of Theaetetus' proposal that knowledge be defined as "true judgment" together with an "account" (*logos*), ends ostensibly in manifold *aporia*: though Socrates begins with an apparent endorsement — "... what knowledge could there be apart from an account (*τοῦ λόγου*) and correct judgment (*ὀρθῆς δόξης*)?" he asks rhetorically at 202d —, by the end he appears to have refuted both the schema of the object of knowledge that the proposal implies and each of the three candidates for the form that a successful "account" might take. If, however, we respond to these refutations as pointed provocations for further thought, "the *Theaetetus* ends well."⁵ Here I will limit myself to a systematic synopsis of the central ideas and positive implications of Socrates' provocations.

[a] *The paradoxical character of the object of knowledge as both simple and complex*

To flesh out Theaetetus' very sketchy idea of the character of the object that is implied by the final proposal for what knowledge is, Socrates offers as if a "dream" (*Theaet.* 201d) the notion that the things in the world are complexes of perceptible⁶ simple elements and that, since knowledge requires giving a *logos* and giving a *logos* requires of the object that it be distinguishable into parts, only the complexes, and not the elements, can be known. Socrates then attacks this notion of the object by constructing a dilemma:⁷ either the complex is just the plurality of its elements, in which case, if the complex is knowable, these elements must be just as knowable as the complex, or the complex is not reducible to its elements but rather is a simple in its own right, in which case it is just as unknowable as its elements (*Theaet.* 205d-e). Since the second horn amounts to the unqualified denial of the possibility of knowledge, we are thrown back on the first horn, and Socrates in effect urges this by reminding Theaetetus that in his early education in music and grammar, in each case he began with the simple elements, the notes and the letters, and went on from there to study the complexes they form (*Theaet.* 206a-b). But, note, we can take up this tacit affirmation of the knowability of the simple elements only if we add an initially perplexing qualification: since knowledge requires giving a *logos* and giving a *logos* requires that the object be somehow distinguishable into parts, the simple elements must also be, in some sense, complex! Thus we are led to the paradoxical characterization of the object as, somehow, both simple and complex.

How are these seemingly contradictory aspects compossible? Understanding this is the task that we readers are left with at the close of the first phase of Socrates' refutations at 206c. Happily, we find that Socrates provides pointed resources for reaching this understanding in his subsequent treatments of the last two senses⁸ of *logos* at 206e-210a.

[b] *The correlation of the two moments of knowledge with the two aspects of the object*

Socrates has affirmed that knowledge requires both "true judgment" and a *logos*. Reflection on what he says about the last two senses of *logos* should lead us to see that "true judgment" correlates with the object in its aspect of simplicity while *logos* correlates with it in its aspect of complexity.

Giving a *logos* in the second sense is going through the "elements" (διὰ τῶν στοιχείων, *Theaet.* 206e, c) or parts that the "what" that a thing "is" (τί ... εἶναι, *Theaet.* 207a), or its "nature" (τὴν οὐσίαν, *Theaet.* 207c), requires of what instantiates it; giving a *logos* in the third sense is identifying the difference, that is, the differentiating features, that distinguish the object from everything else (*Theaet.* 208c-210a). Thus both sorts of *logos* correlate with the object in its aspect of complexity, disclosing it in their distinct ways as a plurality of "elements"⁹ or features.

To make such a disclosure, however, each sort of *logos* presupposes the prior presence of the object in its aspect of simplicity, and it is in this prior presence that the object is the correlate to "true judgment." This becomes clear if we reflect on the two key sensible analogues that Socrates gives Theaetetus in presenting the object of each sort of *logos*. The first is the "what"-it-"is" or "nature" of a wagon, and it is simple in the sense that as that which first requires, of

whatever is to have the nature of a wagon, that it have a definite set of “elements” or parts, it stands prior to these parts; that is, as what is responsible, in the manner of a formal cause, for a wagon’s having the parts that it does, it precedes the whole of these parts and orients the *logos*’ disclosure of it in terms of this whole of parts. The second analogue is Theaetetus’ face, that is, the unique ‘look’ or *Gestalt* of his countenance; this too stands prior to the plurality of features by which a *logos* in the third sense, aiming to identify what differentiates it from any comparable ‘look,’ discloses it. Though we can try to mark the distinctness of such a ‘look’ from any other by giving a list of such features, such a list can never add up to that ‘look’; on the contrary, precisely because the various features are abstracted from the ‘look’ and distinguished from one another (Socrates cites Theaetetus’ “snub nose” and “bulging eyes”), the best that such a list can do is to remind us of the ‘look’ as that presence in which, in our pre-analytic experience of the object, the features are given as indissolubly one.

[c] *The two-way interplay of “true judgment” and logos*

These reflections suggest that in the effort to come to know, “true judgment” and *logos* stand in a two-way relation. On the one hand, the intuition of a “nature” or a ‘look’ orients and thereby empowers the *logos* that seeks to explicate it; the apparent presence-to-intuition of the “nature” or ‘look’ is the inspiration that first moves and enables us to try to articulate it discursively. On the other hand, just insofar as the *logos* responds faithfully to the intuition, it can either support our sense that it is a genuine insight or expose it as, on the contrary, a false judgment that only seemed to be true. Thus the very effort to explicate what first appears to be a “true judgment” also serves to put it to the test, making it available to critical reflection and, so, potentially exposing it as off the mark.

[d] *The pointed ambiguity of Socrates’ notion of “true judgment”*

Note, finally, the ambiguity that this two-way relation implies for the notion of the “true judgment” of the object: as what guides the giving of a *logos*, the intuition may be exposed by that very process as a pretender, a merely seeming insight that proves really to be a false judgment; or it may be — at least within the context of inquiry and, so, as far as the *logos* extends — sustained as a genuine insight into the “nature” or ‘look’ of its subject matter, hence into its form. Indeed, we may wonder whether, at least in part, Plato’s intention in having Socrates designate the intuitive component of knowledge as “true judgment” is to hold open this two-fold possibility; in this case the strength of the notion of “true judgment” will lie in its ability to serve as a kind of place holder for what may turn out to be, as the *logos* will first let emerge, either mere δόξα or genuine *noêsis*.

[2] *Second reflection: on logos in the Sophist and the Statesman — the two senses or modes of logos at the end of the Theaetetus, the two modes of διαίρεσις κατὰ γέννη, and the two sorts of eidetic field that these “discern”*

Plato has Socrates introduce the last two senses of *logos* in the *Theaetetus* with the proleptic intent of preparing us for the two modes of dialectic that he has the Eleatic Visitor introduce and practice in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. This, I have argued,¹⁰ we can see by recognizing the match of the two senses of *logos* with the two sorts of eidetic field that are traced

by “division according to forms” (τὸ κατὰ γένη διαιρεῖσθαι), according to the Visitor at *Sophist* 253d, and by recognizing the exhibition of *logos* in these two senses in the two modes of division that the Visitor practices in his various exercises of dialectic in pursuing the sophist and the statesman.

To recapture this web of relations, we should start from the Visitor’s abstract tracing of the two sorts of eidetic field at *Sophist* 253d and then relate each sort back, first, to the specific sense of *logos* at the end of the *Theaetetus* that it answers to and, second, to the exhibitions of each sense of *logos* by the corresponding dialectical accounts in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Here, first, is the Visitor’s tracing of eidetic fields at *Sophist* 253d, marked as two couplets separated by the “again” (αὖ) at d5: by “division according to forms,” the Visitor declares, the dialectician “discerns”

- [i] a single form that is extended in every way through many, each one [of which] is situated apart,
- [ii] and many [forms]¹¹, different from one another, that are embraced from without by a single [form],
- and, again, [iii] a single [form] [running] through many wholes that is gathered into a one,
- [iv] and many [forms] that are separated off apart in every way (*Soph.* 253d)

[i] and [ii], first of all, answer to Socrates’ second sense of *logos*, that of going “through the elements” (διὰ τῶν στοιχείων) or parts that “what” a thing “is” (τί ... εἶναι), or its “nature” (τὴν οὐσίαν), requires of what instantiates it (*Theaet.* 206e-208c). The couplet is a *tour de force* in conceptual density and intricacy. While [i] moves from the “single form” — in Socrates’ terms in the *Theaetetus*, the “what”-it-“is” or “nature” — to the many “elements” that it requires, [ii] moves from this many back to the single form; but each clause within itself addresses both the relation of the single form to the many and the relations between the many themselves. Hence, to bring Socrates’ terms into relation with the Visitor’s, the “single form” of the “nature” “is extended through [the] many” forms of the “elements” in the sense that it is the form that calls for each of them; that is, to invoke Socrates’ example, each of these many forms is picked out just because it is the form of an “element” that the “what”-it-“is” *of wagon* requires. At the same time, just insofar as each of the many forms of the “elements” is, as the form of an “element” or part that is fit for interplay with each of the others, on equal terms with each of the others, “each [of the many] is situated apart” from each of the others and they are reciprocally¹² “different from one another.” It is, accordingly, as “embraced from without by [the] single [form],” and not in any relation of subsumption¹³ of one to any other that they go together.

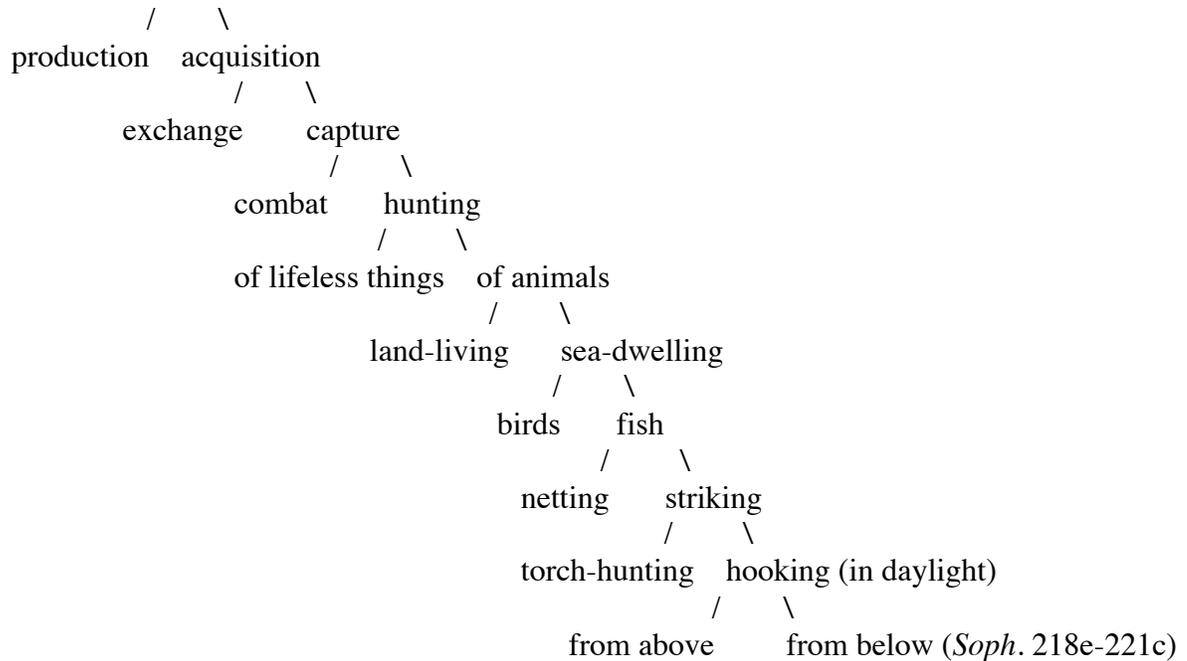
Here it is timely to turn to the exhibition of [i]-[ii], understood as a schematic tracing of the sort of one-and-many form structure that dialectic in the mode of going through the “elements” implies, in the one fully presented execution of this mode in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*; this is the Visitor’s distinction at *Statesman* 287c-290e and 303d-305e of the fifteen kinds of art — or better, since this is the “single form” that the Visitor identifies at 275eff.: of the kinds of “care” — that the citizenry must practice collaboratively in a well-constituted city. Here is the Visitor’s list of the fifteen:

- {1} the providing of “raw materials” (τὸ πρωτογενές, 288e, 289a)
- {2} the providing of “tools” (ὄργανον, 287d, 289b)
- {3} the providing of “containers” (ἀγγεῖον, 287e, 289b)
- {4} the providing of “bearers” (ὄχημα, 288a, 289b)
- {5} the providing of “defenses” (πρόβλημα, 288b, 289b)
- {6} the providing of “playthings” (παίγνιον, 288c, 289b)
- {7} the providing of “nourishments” (θρέμμα, 289a, 289b)
- {8} the service provided by slaves (289d)
- {9} the service provided by traders and merchants (289e-290a)
- {10} the service provided by heralds and clerks (290b)
- {11} the service provided by priests and seers (290c-e)
- {12} the service provided by the orator (304a, c-d)
- {13} the service provided by the general (304a, e-305a)
- {14} the service provided by judges (304a, 305b-c)
- {15} the work of statesmanship (305e and ff.)

Plato has the Visitor make a point of marking the difference of this set of divisions from all of the many sets of diaireses that precede it: “it is difficult,” he first says (287b10) — and then adds, “it is impossible” (c4) — “to cut [the arts] into two.”¹⁴ But he does not give Young Socrates an explicit account of the positive principles of the new mode of division; saying only that “the reason [why bifurcation is difficult] will become clear as we proceed” (c1), he proposes that they “divide limb by limb, like a sacrificial animal” (κατὰ μέλη ... οἷον ἱερεῖον, c3). The notion of “limbs,” however, should be enough to remind us of the second sense of *logos*: the fifteen kinds are the analogues to the “elements” or parts in Socrates’ example of the wagon, and the Visitor is going through the “elements” — that is, the various kinds of “care” — that “care” itself requires be instantiated together in a flourishing city. These “elements” bear the double relation that the Visitor indicates in his tracing of one/many eidetic order in [i]-[ii] at *Sophist* 253d: the “single form” care is “extended through them” in the sense each is a kind *of care* and, so, is one in the series of kinds that the form care requires; but they also stand “apart” from each other as “different,” each from each other, and on this account they are held together not by virtue of any subsumption of one to another but rather by being “embraced from without by [the] single [form]” care.¹⁵

What, in turn, of [iii] and [iv]? That the eidetic field that the Visitor traces here answers to Socrates’ third sense of *logos* is easier to see if we first recognize the correspondence of the one-and-many relations in [iii]-[iv] with the practice of bifurcatory division in each of the Visitor’s many exhibitions of it in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Each of these begins by locating a form-to-be-defined within an encompassing form; to cite his opening paradigm of division in the *Sophist*: the Visitor begins by identifying the angler as an “expert” (τεχνίτην, *Soph.* 219a). Dialectic next divides the encompassing form into halves and locates the form-to-be-defined within one of the two halves, and the process continues on by as many repetitions of the same two-step — dividing into halves and locating the form to-be-defined within one of them — as are needed to reach a division that isolates the form-to-be-defined. Here is a schematic rendering of the course traversed from the first cut to the last in the exemplary division of the angler:

The angler is ... an expert



The concluding step is to collect into a unity all the kinds on the right-hand side — the kinds that the Visitor has cut in half as he has proceeded — and to identify the form-to-be-defined with this unity; hence the Visitor identifies the angler as an expert at acquisition by capture by hunting of animals, specifically sea-dwellers and more specifically fish, by striking them with hooks from below.

With this exhibition of the Visitor’s practice of bifurcatory division before us, we can see how it displays the one-and-many relations he traces in [iii]-[iv] and, so, how [iii]-[iv] serve to portray schematically the sort of eidetic field disclosed by bifurcatory division. [iii] portrays the relation of the form-to-be-defined, the “single [form]” (*Soph.* 253d8), to the complex unity that defines it, the “one” into which the “many wholes” are “gathered”: each bifurcation discloses the form that is cut as a “whole” of the halves into which it is cut, and the “single form” — namely, angling — is both shown by the series of these cuts to “[run] through [these] many wholes” and, when they are “gathered into a one” in the final collection, to be identical with this “one.” [iv] acknowledges all the forms on the left-hand sides of the cuts; in each step, when the form-to-be-defined is located in one of the two halves, the other half is abandoned. Thus each of the “many [forms]” on the left-hand side is “separated off apart in every way,” left out of relation to the form-to-be-defined, to the other forms on the left-hand sides of other cuts, and to the unity into which the right-hand forms are gathered.

Once we see this fit of [iii]-[iv] with the field of one-and-many distinguished by each set of bifurcations, the further fit of [iii]-[iv] with Socrates’ third sense of *logos* becomes plain. *Logos* in the third sense identifies the difference, that is, the differentiating features, that distinguish its object from everything else; the series of forms on the right-hand side in each set of bifurcations is just the series of these differentiating features, and once the final cut is made and the form-to-be-defined is isolated, the complex “one” into which those forms are “gathered” serves to differentiate it from everything else.

Plato's offering of Socrates' second and third senses of *logos* in the *Theaetetus*, then, does indeed anticipate and prepare us to recognize the two modes of dialectic — the bifurcatory process of collecting differentiating features and the non-bifurcatory process of discerning the parts that make for a harmonious whole — that he has the Eleatic Visitor introduce and practice in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. And once we recognize these two modes as answering to the two senses of *logos*, we will also recognize how dialectic implies that its object is, and represents it as, a complex unity. But knowledge, as we've interpreted the end of the *Theaetetus*, also requires that the object be present as a simple to the pre-analytic intuition that Socrates refers to under the ambiguous heading of "true judgment." Do we find such a presence-for-intuition in the *Statesman*,¹⁶ and do we find it partnered with *logos* in the ways that the *Theaetetus* suggests it needs to be?

[3] *Third reflection: "true judgment" and the use of paradigms*

Let's first ask where *in general* we should begin to look, in order then, taking our bearings from this first thought, to focus on the particulars of our text in section [4].

If, keying from *Sophist* 253d, we look to the practice of "division according to kinds" as the practice of giving a *logos*, where in this practice might we find a sign of the presence of a *noêsis* that both guides and is tested by *logos* — or, for that matter, a sign of the presence of a false judgment that is exposed by the *logos* it guides?

My suggestion is that we look to the paradigms that the Visitor introduces to orient inquiry. To be able to select a paradigm for something, one must already intuit, in epistemic priority to the analysis that the use of this paradigm will orient, the nature of that something; and as prior to that analysis, the intuition must have the intuited nature in mind in a way that does not yet distinguish it into different parts and present it under the aspect of the whole/part structure that the analysis will first disclose. It is, then, *as intuited* in the recognition of that which is paradigmatic for it that the nature is given to mind in its simplicity.

To this thought, however, our earlier reflections on the interplay of "true judgment" and *logos* require us to repeat that this intuition, no matter how compelling it may seem, cannot by itself count as knowledge. Moreover, we need to complicate this acknowledgment, for we have to consider not only the intuition of the sought-for nature that underlies the selection of what is paradigmatic for it but also the intuition of the nature of the paradigm. To put this in terms of the example that the *Statesman* provides us: the Visitor must not only explicate-and-test, by his ensuing *logos* of the statesman, the intuition of statesmanship that guides him in his selection of the weaver as a paradigm for it — he must also support his selection of the weaver with a *logos* of *its* nature. To presume to know the nature of the weaver on the basis of some mix of perception and familiarity would be to risk unwittingly misunderstanding it and importing this misunderstanding into the *logos* of the statesman.

If we now step back and take in the trajectory of the *Statesman* as a whole, isn't it something like this complicated interplay of intuition and analysis, as it is reflected in the Visitor's use of paradigms from early on in the dialogue, that we witness in its drama of inquiry?

From very early on in leading Young Socrates through the initial *logos* of the statesman, the Visitor is guided by — or, speaking more carefully to allow for his pedagogical irony: he lets himself appear to be guided by — the paradigm of the shepherd; that is, he presents himself as in the grip of the true judgment that the nature of the statesman is such that the nature of the shepherd is a paradigm for it. But he comes to discover — or, again to speak more carefully, he lets himself appear to come to discover — that the paradigm of the shepherd conceals more than it reveals of the nature of the statesman; thinking of the statesman on the model of the shepherd manifoldly misrepresents what statesmanship is. But, as we shall have occasion to consider more closely in section [4], to recognize this misrepresentation *as* a misrepresentation is already to begin to intuit what it is that is misrepresented, that is, what statesmanship truly is, and it is this new and seminal intuition that guides the Visitor in the three major movements of the rest of the dialogue: it enables him, in the myth, to show how the shepherd is a bad paradigm for the statesman and needs be set aside; it enables him, in the section explicitly devoted to the use of paradigms, to choose the figure of the weaver as a replacement for the shepherd; and, once he has supported this choice with a *logos* of the weaver, it positions him to recognize the limits of bifurcation and to turn to diairesis in the non-bifurcatory mode instead in order to work out both his final *logos* of the eidetic field that is implied by the form of “care” and his location of statesmanship within this field as the fifteenth of the “limbs” or kinds of “care”.

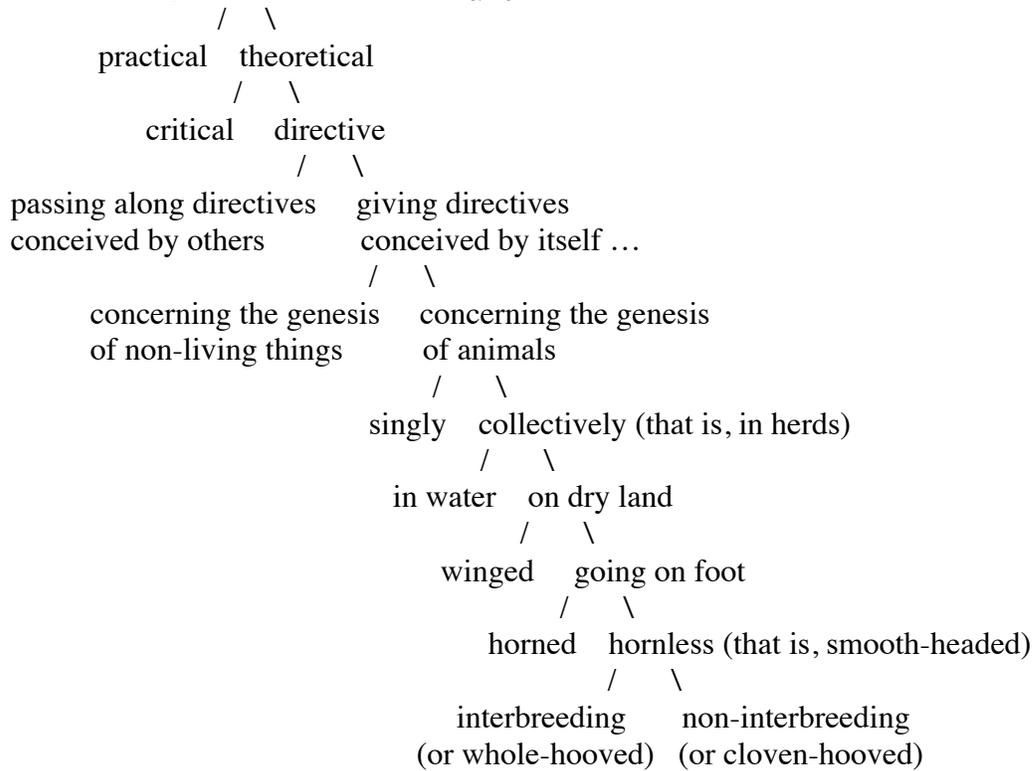
Can we now make out the presence of this seminal intuition in the particulars of the drama?

[4] *The “kindling” of the “leaping spark” into a “blaze” that “nourishes itself” — missing and getting the Visitor’s jokes at 266a-d*

I suggested at the outset that it belongs to the provocative irony of the dialogues that our access to their seminal insights is characteristically indirect: we are usually incited to share the protagonist’s insight by the dramatic portrayal of his interlocutor’s failure to do so.¹⁷ So it is with the *Statesman*. In the key text, 266a-d, the Visitor suddenly strikes a surprising, hitherto uncharacteristic tone, completing his initial bifurcatory account of statesmanship with three jokes, which he then follows, in what seems a return to character, with a brief explanation of the point of the last two. By his replies, Young Socrates seems to show that he ‘gets’ the jokes. But I shall argue that in his explanation the Visitor leaves unthematized a deeper level of meaning that Young Socrates shows, by his expression of satisfaction, he misses — and that his missing it should help to provoke us to ‘get’ it. And if we do, then, as I hope we will see together, we will have experienced the “leaping spark” of a *noêsis* whose “self-nourishing” motivates the Visitor’s major discursive turns in the rest of the dialogue.

The context, first of all, is that the Visitor is poised to make the final cut in his initial bifurcatory account of the statesman. Since early on, at 261d, he has taken his bearings from the idea that the statesman, as one who directs “the breeding and nurture (τὴν ... τῶν ζώων γένεσιν καὶ τροφήν, d3) of animals,” “resembles the man in charge of a stud of horses or a cowherd” (d8-9); that is, the Visitor has been guided by the paradigm of the herdsman. Here are the cuts he has made so far¹⁸:

Statesmanship is a “science” (ἐπιστήμη)



And here, finally, is my translation of the key text, 266a-d:

266a5 YS: But what are we to use to distinguish the [last] two [classes]?

EV: Something that it’s particularly just for Theaetetus and you to use, since the two of you devote yourselves to geometry.

YS: What is it?

EV: By the diagonal (τῆ διαμέτρῳ), one could say, and then again the diagonal of the diagonal (τῆ τῆς διαμέτρου διαμέτρῳ).

YS: How do you mean?

266b1 EV: The nature (ἡ φύσις) that our human kind possesses, is it any differently endowed, in its mode of walking, than the diagonal, which is two-foot in power (ἡ διάμετρος ἢ δυνάμει δίπους)?

YS: No, it’s no different.

EV: And now, take note, the nature of the remaining kind is, in its power, [the] diagonal of our power, since it is endowed with twice two feet.

YS: Of course it is — and now I think I begin to get what you want to show.

266c1 EV: And there's more — do we see, Socrates, that there's something else that has emerged in our discussions that's not without comic value?

YS: What's that?

EV: That our human kind has shared the lot and run the course together with the kind that is the most nobly born of beings and at the same time the easiest to manage (τῷ τῶν ὄντων γενναιοτάτῳ καὶ ἅμα εὐχερροστάτῳ)?

YS: I see — things are turning out pretty bizarrely!

EV: Well, isn't it fitting that the slowest — or sow-est — come in last (οὐκ εἰκὸς ὕστατα ἀφικνεῖσθαι τὰ βραδύτατα)?

YS: That's so!

266d1 EV: And don't we notice that the king looks even more comic, running together with [his] herd and keeping pace with the one who, of all men, is best trained for the easy-going way of life (πρὸς τὸν εὐχερρή βίον)?

YS: Entirely so!

EV: Yes, Socrates, and what we said before, in our search for the sophist, is now all the more evident.

YS: What was that?

EV: That such a method of argument is no more concerned with what is of greater dignity (σεμνοτέρου) than with what is not, nor does it dishonor the small in favor of the great, but proceeding always by its own standards, it holds to what is truest (ἀεὶ δὲ καθ' αὐτὴν περαίνει τἀληθέστατον).

YS: That is fitting (ἔοικεν).

[a] *The Visitor's three jokes, and his comment on the serious point of the last two*

The Visitor's three jokes serve to make the final cut in three steps: by cutting bipeds apart from quadrupeds in the first joke, he is able, in the second, to infer the distinction this implies, namely, of the last remaining kind of biped — human beings — from the last remaining kind of quadruped — pigs; and by this distinction, he is able, in the third joke, to infer the distinction that *it* implies, namely, of the herdsman of human beings from the herdsman of pigs, the swineherd. Thus the statesman is isolated and — if for the moment we look past the deeper irony of the jokes — disclosed as the herdsman of human beings.

First, how do the three jokes go?

The first joke, by far the most elaborate, appeals by way of a pun to the expertise in geometry that Young Socrates and Theaetetus have been developing under the tutelage of Theodorus. The

Visitor divides “the diagonal” from “the diagonal of the diagonal” (266a9). Our human “mode of walking,” he observes, is just like “the diagonal,” for both are “two-foot,” δίπους, “in power,” δυνάμει (b1-2). Obviously, we human beings are bipeds and in that sense are “two-foot in power.” But δύναμις, “power,” also has a technical sense in geometry: a straight line is “ n in power” in the sense that, when taken as the side of a square, it generates an area of n . By the line that is “2 in power” the Visitor refers to the diagonal of a 1-by-1 square; for when this diagonal (which is, of course, also the hypotenuse of the right isosceles triangle of short sides 1 and 1) is itself taken as the side of a square in its own right, it generates an area of 2. By “the diagonal of the diagonal,” in turn, the Visitor refers to the diagonal of that square that has as its side the first diagonal; this second diagonal has 2 as its length, and so it is “twice two feet in power”; for when *it* is taken as the side of a square in *its* own right, it generates an area of 4. Hence — as Young Socrates says he “begins to get” (266b6) —, in differing from our counterpart kind as bipeds differ from quadrupeds, we human beings differ from them as the diagonal of a 1-by-1 square, which is “two-foot in power,” differs from the diagonal of the square that takes that first diagonal as its side, that is, from the diagonal which is “twice two feet” or 4 in power. (For a diagrammatic reconstruction of the joke, see the Appendix.)

The obvious humor of this first joke lies in its professorial indulgence, in the Visitor’s seemingly gratuitous appeal to geometry to make the straightforward distinction of bipeds from quadrupeds. The humor of the second and third jokes lies rather in the imaginary spectacles the Visitor summons up in order to identify the kinds that this distinction implies.

The Visitor and Young Socrates have known all along, of course, that one side of the last cut will isolate human beings as the statesman’s herd, and with bipeds they reach “the nature that our human kind possesses” (266b1). But what are the quadrupeds? Now letting geometry go and comparing the whole process of bifurcatory division to a kind of foot race in which the last two kinds have drawn lots that place them side-by-side (cf. “shared the lot and run the course,” c3), the Visitor notes the “comic value” of the pairing. Counterpart to human beings is the kind that is, to translate as closely as possible, at once “most noble” or “well-bred” (γενναιοτάτω, c4) and “easiest to manage” or “undemanding” (εὐχερσεστάτω); the second term, with its connotation of laxity, makes light of and mocks the first term’s connotation of nobility of spirit in a way that is only fully brought home by the Visitor’s punning identification of the kind in his next line: the animal that, as “slowest,” finishes “last,” ὕστατα, in the diaretic race is ὕς, pig.¹⁹ Thus, to translate the Visitor’s wry sarcasm, the final cut pairs our human kind, whom of course we like to think of as the noblest of all animals, with the most ignoble: pigs!

The third joke, in turn, shifts Young Socrates’ attention from the herd that is ruled to the herdsman who rules. Having just referred to pig as the kind that is εὐχερσεστάτω, “easiest to manage” or “undemanding,” he now uses a form of the same term to characterize the ruler of pigs, that is, the swineherd; he is, says the Visitor, “the one who, of all men, is best-trained²⁰ for the easy-going way of life (πρὸς τὸν εὐχερῆ βίον, d1).” And he jokes that “even more comic” (c10) than the sight of humans paired with pigs at the finish line of the diaretic race-course is the sight of the “king” who, in “running together with his herd,” is paired and only just “keeping pace with” the swineherd. Thus, finally distinguishing the herdsman of the human herd from the swineherd, the Visitor isolates the statesman and, at least apparently, completes the diaretic process.

In his closing remarks at 266d4-10, the Visitor focuses on the last two jokes and explains that the point of his humor is methodological. The lesson of his comic spectacles is that the very insult to our human self-regard that makes them funny must itself be ignored! Just as “we said before, in our search for the sophist,” so here, he asserts, the “method of argument” must pay no heed to differences in the “dignity” of the kinds it divides and in their relative importance or triviality. In the *Sophist* he explained to Theaetetus that the method of diairesis focuses only on determining “what is akin and what is not akin” and that this requires “honoring [the kinds it distinguishes] all equally” (*Soph.* 227b); in his notorious example, louse catching and generalship are, as two kinds of hunting, to be treated as of equal worth and standing. So here, he now tells Young Socrates, the incongruity of the pairings of humans with pigs, and of the king with the swineherd, is irrelevant to the “truth” (cf. d10) that the method, “proceeding by its own standards,” seeks. Division according to kinds must ignore our ordinary uncritical value judgments: as kindred subkinds, pig and human, and swineherd and statesman, are to be “honored equally.”

[b] *The Platonic provocation in the Visitor’s irony: incommensurateness, Circe, Melantheus*

So far as Young Socrates’ education is concerned, so good. When, earlier, he rashly divided humans and “beasts” (τῶν ... θηρίων, 262a4), Young Socrates showed his vulnerability to just the sort of uncritical anthropocentric opinion the Visitor now targets and, so, how much he needs the discipline of bifurcatory diairesis as a way both to hold his thought open to critical reflection and to keep it trained upon forms (cf. μᾶλλον ιδέαις ἄν τις προστυγχάνοι, 262b).²¹ Within the context of the pedagogical drama of the dialogue, accordingly, it is good to see that he now seems to understand the lesson of the Visitor’s humor. Note, however, that only the second and third jokes, not the first, illustrate this methodological point. There is another level altogether to the Visitor’s jokes — one which keys from the first joke and is then developed by the second and third — that Young Socrates shows no sign of ‘getting,’ and Plato’s portrayal of his very obliviousness serves, I suggest, as a provocation for the attentive reader. This level provides the occasion for the “spark” of *noêsis* that motivates the major movements of discourse in the rest of the *Statesman*. To put ourselves in position to appreciate this, let’s reconsider the three jokes.

At the heart of his geometrical distinction of bipeds from quadrupeds the Visitor places the striking mathematical fact that “*the diagonal*” is *incommensurate with “the diagonal of the diagonal”*; the line that is 2 in power is the square root of 2, and this is an irrational number. The areas of the two squares, 2 and 4, are of course commensurate, and so, in a non-mathematical sense, are their analogues, biped and quadruped; 2-footed and 4-footed are positive physical features, comparable and contrasting. But the lines themselves are not commensurate; “the diagonal” shares no common measure with “the diagonal of the diagonal” and in this sense defies comparison with it. By shifting his focus to the areas 2 and 4, accordingly, the Visitor conceals what he has also revealed, that “*the nature that our human kind possesses*” is *radically different in kind from its supposed counterpart* — the nature of (as we learn next) pigs. *And insofar as they conceal this radical difference, the very terms of his comparison, biped and quadruped, do a violence to the “nature” of “our human kind.”*

But in what does this violence consist? What is the “nature” that the comparison conceals? If, feeling this violence, one also glimpses what it is that it violates, then the seminal “spark” of *noêsis* has already been struck!

But if not, the Visitor's second and third jokes are deft tinder. Note, first of all, that his closing admonition at 266d4-10 blocks a lapse back into the uncritical anthropocentric deference to the superior "dignity" of human beings that misled Young Socrates at 262a; the Visitor's admonition requires us to resist lazy laughter and to try to let emerge just what it is in our "human nature" that has no counterpart in pig. And here the strikingly Homeric resonance of his jokes²² is helpful.

In its pairing of humans and pigs, the second joke recalls the witch Circe and the magic by which she gives Odysseus' crew the bodies of swine. Here is Murray's helpfully close translation of the scene:²³ "... in the food she mixed evil drugs, that [the men] might utterly forget their native land. Now when she had given them the potion, and they had drunk it off, then she immediately struck them with her wand, and penned them in the pigsties. And they had the heads, and voice, and bristles, and shape of swine, but their minds were unchanged, [were] just as they were before. So they were penned there weeping, and before them Circe flung mast, and acorns, and the fruit of the cornel tree to eat, such things as wallowing swine are accustomed to feed upon." (*Od.* 10:235-43) What Circe takes from the crew is not, then, their "minds" but rather the exercise of — in the richest sense of the term — their 'political' intelligence: with the "utter forgetfulness" of their homeland, they lose their understanding of themselves as belonging to a community, and with the loss of their human voice and limbs, they lose the ability both to communicate and to take up the uniquely human responsibility of caring for themselves. Likewise, what the Visitor's pairing of human beings with pigs as bipeds and quadrupeds conceals — and more generally what he leaves pointedly unacknowledged by the whole series of merely zoological differences he picks out — is the exercise of moral and social intelligence by which human beings collaborate in the community-forming work of caring for their physical and spiritual needs. It is this exercise of 'political' intelligence for which there is no determinate contrary or other 'half' but only the privation among the rest of "living beings," and it is this radical difference that makes "the nature that our human kind possesses" incommensurate with any other animal kind and undisclosable by any properly bifurcatory halving.

The third joke brings home the implication of this for the status of the statesman. The imagined spectacle of the "king" "keeping pace with" the swineherd recalls the famous scene in which the goatherd Melantheus, servile lackey of the suitors, encounters Odysseus and the swineherd Eumaeus as they are making their way to town. Odysseus is disguised as a beggar, and Melantheus is fooled by appearances. "Here now in very truth comes the vile leading the vile (*κακὸς κακὸν*)," the unthinking Melantheus yells out. "As ever, the god is bringing like and like (*τὸν ὁμοῖον ... τὸν ὁμοῖον*) together." (*Od.* 17:217-218) Melantheus' and the Visitor's assimilations differ, of course, as unwitting and ironic: Melantheus fails to recognize the king in the first place whereas the Visitor deliberately pairs the king with the swineherd, likening them as comparable kinds of herdsmen. But the Visitor's pairing plays on Melantheus': to think of the king as a kind of herdsman is also, but now in the sense of a positive misconception, to fail to recognize the true status and work of the statesman. To treat statesmanship as herdsmanship is to treat those the statesman rules as a herd, and this, again, is to fail to recognize the exercise of moral and social intelligence that makes the "nature" of human beings radically different from that of any other animal kind; conversely, to recognize the exercise of that intelligence is also to recognize that the statesman is, unlike any herdsman, a member of the kind of those whom he rules, and one who shares with them the community-forming collaborative work by which together they care for themselves.

Thus the *quasi*-Melanthean failure to recognize the difference in kind of the statesman from the herdsman repeats the violence that the *quasi*-Circean pairing of humans with pigs does to “the nature that our human kind possesses”. These are complementary ways of missing (again, in the richest sense of this term) the ‘political’ intelligence that makes our “nature” incommensurate with those of other kinds of animals. The deep function of the Visitor’s three jokes is to give us a provocative occasion to see this.

[c] *The unfolding of the discourse of the Statesman on the basis of this intuition*

What is more, once we do, we will also be in position to recognize how this intuition both motivates and is explicated by each of the basic movements of discourse in the dialogue. Our space is too limited, and the *Statesman* itself is too rich, to go into detail. Here let me restrict myself to the effort to indicate, tying these reflections back into [1], [2], and [3] as we go, the way we can see the “spark” of this insight “nourishing itself” into a “blaze” in each of the major movements to come.

The myth as refutation: making patent the Circean violence done by the false judgment that gives the paradigm of the herdsman its grip. The key work of the Visitor’s great myth is to begin to make explicit what Young Socrates has so far missed, the way the paradigm of herdsman and herd and the false judgment that it reflects misunderstands what is essential to our “nature.” Breaking free from the rhetorical constraints of logical analysis, the Visitor conjures up as a vast spectacle the history of the cosmos and its alternation between periods in which, on the one hand, the god who first forms it directs its rotation and in which, on the other hand, the god withdraws, letting it rotate in the reverse direction. In the first kind of period (which the Visitor associates with the Hesiodic “age of Cronus”²⁴), human beings are born from the earth, grow from old to young, and are nourished by the spontaneously given fruits of the earth. Most important, “divinities (δαίμονες) rule over [all the animals, one being assigned to each kind,] ... like herdsmen, each being self-sufficient (αὐτάρκης) in all things for those he pastures (ἐνεμεν), ... just as now human beings, being a different and more divine animal, are herdsmen to the other kinds [of animals], which are inferior to them” (271d-e). Life under our divine herdsman is at once idyllic and sub-human: protected by the δαίμων, knowing neither scarcity nor labor, having no families or cities, with our ‘maturity,’ so to speak, being (what we now know as) childhood and infancy, we are at once blessed with every comfort (“we have soft beds from abundant grass”) and freed of any responsibility for one another and ourselves. This paradise is shattered in the second kind of period (“age of Zeus”): the δαίμονες withdraw along with the god, and the earth no longer begets and feeds us; human beings are suddenly left to fend for themselves in every way, including in “procreation, birth, and rearing” (274a) and in protecting themselves from the other kinds of animals (274b). “Without resources and expertise” (274c), how are we to survive these difficulties? Here the Visitor resorts to popular myth in a surprising bit of *deus ex machina*, then breaks off his tale: Prometheus gives us fire, Hephaestus gives us the crafts, and unnamed “others” give us “seeds and plants” (274d).²⁵ The key to our survival, in other words, is learning the practice of the arts; but which arts, and what sort of sociality we develop in order to sustain and develop this practice, the Visitor leaves unspoken.

Heard in the context of the intuition the Visitor has sparked with his three jokes, the primary force of the myth is refutative. With the figure of the shepherd-δαίμων, he holds up a mirror to the conclusion of the initial bifurcations and exposes the way in which, in mistakenly elevating the statesman to the status of a divine superior, the paradigm of the herdsman of the human herd reduces

the rest of mankind to the status of Circe’s “wallowing swine,” that is, of a heteronomous and un-self-responsible drove of animals. But as the Visitor indicates with his final words, with the withdrawal of the shepherd-δαίμων in the age of Zeus, humans must learn to take his work upon themselves by practicing the arts. For the purposes of the inquiry, accordingly, the paradigm of the shepherd and his herd and the false judgment of human being that it reflects need be set aside. But in favor of what?

Acknowledging the suddenness with which he breaks off the myth, the Visitor compares it to an unfinished painting; though “the outline is adequate,” it still requires “the mixing of colors” and the “vividness” or “distinctness” (ἐνάργειαν) that this will provide (277c). This nicely expresses the sense in which the underlying insight is only partly emergent and still lacks and needs a positive articulation — that is, further *logos* that will bring it into view in terms not just of what it opposes but, more, of what it posits in its own right.

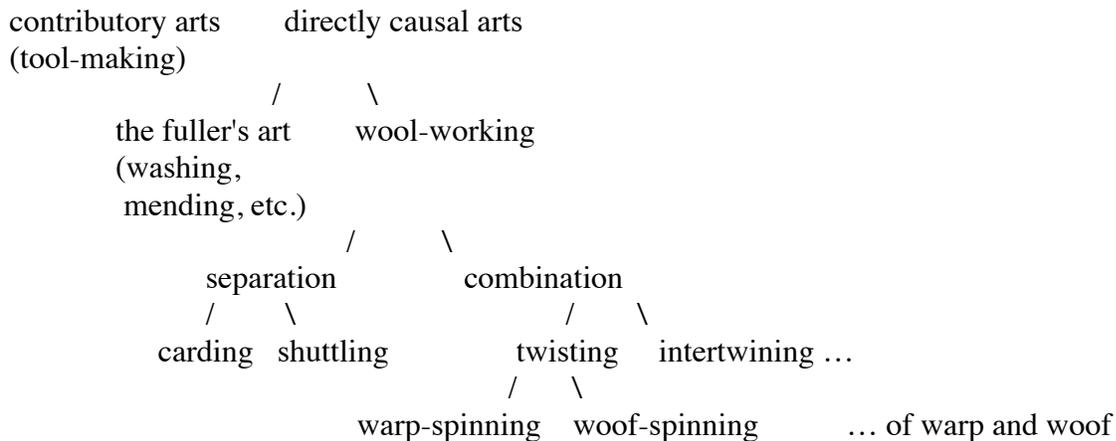
The introduction of the paradigm of the weaver as positive reorientation: bringing into view the place and role of the statesman. That the paradigm of the weaver is specifically fit for statesmanship in the age of Zeus, the Visitor indicates wryly by introducing it with his only oath in the dialogue: “By Zeus!” (πρὸς Διός, 279b1) In a pair of related respects, the choice of the weaver will turn out at once to reflect and to articulate what we have called the exercise of ‘political’ intelligence that is unique to the “nature” of mankind.

We position ourselves to see this if, reading closely, we notice the Visitor’s characterization of the “composites,” σύνθετα (279d), that the weaver produces as τὰ ... αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς συνδετά, “things that are themselves bound together with” — or, more sharply focused, “by means of”²⁶ — “themselves” (279e). The specific work of weaving proper is the “intertwining of warp and woof” (283b), and this consists in interlacing each of the woof threads between alternate warp threads with such spacing and tautness that *each holds to, and so is held by, the other*. Thus the cohesion that makes a woven fabric tight and smooth is the result of *the forces that the warp and the woof themselves, when properly placed, exert on one another*.²⁷ In a sense that sets the weaver into striking contrast with the herdsman, the success of the weaver’s work culminates, so to speak, in his disappearing into the self-sustaining internal order and play of forces of what he fashions.

What is more, there is an analogous relation between weaving proper and the various other arts that share in the responsibility for the final product. These other arts — in particular, tool-making, fulling, carding, and spinning — are the weaver’s “co-workers” (τῶν ... συνεργῶν, 280b), and even while they grant weaving proper the “greatest part” in the “care and production of clothes,” they also claim “great parts” of it for themselves (281b). Thus weaving proper turns out to be part of a collaborative undertaking, involving partners whose specific kinds of activity presuppose and are interdependent with one another as well as with it; even while weaving proper is, so to speak, the first of this group of arts, it needs these others and is, as each of them also is to it and to the others, one partner among others.

On both levels, then, the paradigm of the weaver prepares us to recognize, instead of the figure of an external and superior agent who provides for others what they only passively receive,²⁸ a community constituted by the active cooperation of its members.

The introduction of the non-bifurcatory form of diairesis, that of “going through the ‘elements’” that a “nature” requires of what instantiates it, in order to disclose the collaborative work of the kinds of art. In the context of the myth, it is the taking over of the task of “caring” for themselves — that is, the task of taking upon themselves the work done for them by the shepherd-δαίμων in the age of Cronus — that requires of human beings the exercise of ‘political’ intelligence. This exercise takes the form of a manifold collaboration between different kinds of art. That the Visitor already has this in mind when he gives his diaretic account of the weaver as the new paradigm, we can see by observing the ways he begins to depart from the standard form of bifurcatory diairesis in its final steps at 282c-e. Here is a schematization of his divisions of the arts that cooperate with weaving at 281d-283b:



All of his cuts remain bifurcatory. But whereas in all of the sets of bifurcatory cuts he has laid out up to this point in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* he has proceeded by abandoning the ‘left-hand’ side of each cut, here the Visitor pauses to bifurcate the arts of separation into carding and shuttling and, next, the arts of twisting into the spinning of warp and the spinning of woof.²⁹ Thus he brings into view the specificity of the weaver’s closest “co-workers” — and, so, the nexus of collaborators that includes the weaver himself — in the last two sets of cuts.

These departures, however, are only foreshadowings of the full break from bifurcatory procedure that the Visitor makes when he turns from the paradigm of weaving to statesmanship itself at 287bff. and guides Young Socrates through his distinction of the fifteen kinds of art — or, as we qualified this earlier, of the “care” for themselves that the citizenry must practice collaboratively in a well-constituted city. He holds back from explaining to Young Socrates why it is “difficult” and even “impossible” to proceed by “dividing into two” (287b, c), saying only that “the reason will become evident as we go”; thus Plato leaves it for us to see this for ourselves, and if we keep in mind the insight the Visitor sparks by his three jokes, we can understand what moves him. Because the exercise of ‘political’ intelligence requires a manifold collaboration of the different kinds of art, and because statesmanship proper is, however important, nonetheless but one of the partners in this collaboration, it can be brought to light only insofar as the whole set of its “co-workers” — the “limbs” of the city, in his pointed simile at 287c — is brought to light along with it. And this requires giving up the form of diairesis that, proceeding from subsuming kind to subsumed subkinds by the normative rule of ‘halving,’ then abandons one of the ‘halves.’ Had the Visitor stuck with bifurcatory procedure, he would have treated the first seven kinds of art (287c-289b) as he does the “tool”-

making arts at 281e, leaving them subsumed together and undistinguished under the heading of “contributory arts,” and he might even have treated the next seven arts as he does the “fuller’s art” at 282a, leaving them subsumed under the heading of arts of “service” (ὑπηρετικῶν, 289e). But the statesman does not cooperate with “contributory arts,” as such, nor with arts of “service,” as such; it is not these but the more specific kinds of work that the distinction into fifteen discloses that are the “limbs” with which statesmanship, itself a “limb,” cooperates. What is more, statesmanship cooperates not just with each one of these fifteen kinds but rather with each of them as they themselves also cooperate, and in a variety of ways, with each other.³⁰ To put us in position to see this nexus of cooperative relations, the Visitor must take up the non-bifurcatory mode of diairesis that goes through all the “elements” or parts that the “nature” (*Theaet.* 207aff.) — here, of the “care” for themselves that humans in the age of Zeus must take — requires of what instantiates it. Or, to shift to the complementary language of *Sophist* 253d, he must turn away from the relations of subsumption that bifurcatory diairesis traces and distinguish each of the “many” that, “set apart” and “different from one another,” “are embraced from without by the single form” “care.” Hence his distinction of the fifteen kinds of work that collaborate in a well-constituted city.³¹

The moral disposition that founds collaboration in community: the intertwining of warp and woof as the paradigm for the “binding” of the courageous and the moderate. What the Visitor’s jokes at 266a-d ‘spark’ into intuitive view as what makes the “nature” of human beings incommensurate with Circe’s “wallowing swine” is, I have suggested, the exercise of ‘political’ intelligence. The richness of this notion of the political extends beyond the distribution and sharing of the work by which we take responsibility for ourselves and to the moral disposition by which, actively caring for our partnership with one another, we build a community. As the Visitor makes clear in his closing portrait of the statesman at 305e-312a, engendering this disposition in the citizenry is the work of statesmanship proper. That it has a vivid analogue in the weaver’s intertwining of warp and woof lies at the heart of what first moves the Visitor to select the weaver as the new paradigm for the statesman. Left to themselves, the Visitor argues, human temperaments fall into opposed dispositions of aggressiveness and gentleness, and both the depravity of their extreme forms and the active dislike that those of each type — again, if left to themselves — tend to have for those of the other are threats to the unity and survival of their city. Statesmanship proper has the task of opposing this opposition, of converting it into complementarity and friendship, and the statesman’s means, the Visitor says, are “divine” and “human bonds” (309c). The “divine bond” consists in a shared “true opinion of the beautiful and just and good and their opposites” (309c), whereas the “human bonds” are intermarriage between the two types (310b-e) and their sharing of honors and offices (310e-311a). Here the notion of woven goods as τὰ αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς συνδετά, “things that are themselves bound together by means of themselves” (279e), is key to the statesman’s work. Once he has, by his supervision of education (308d-e) and by the laws he issues (308e, 309d, 310a), instilled in the citizens the divine bond of shared true opinion of the beautiful and just and good, the very content of this opinion will undermine and transform the tensions between those of the two dispositions, even to the point that “there will be no difficulty at all in tying them together” (310e) by the human bond of intermarriage; that is, to go the heart of what this ease signifies, those of each type will themselves be moved to appreciate and let themselves be complemented by those of the other, and so, like warp and woof, each will be the “means” by which it is itself “bound together” with the other. In this way, the statesman’s task consists not only in orchestrating the collaboration of the fifteen kinds, itself included, in the work of “care” but also, more pointedly, in bringing it about that

the citizens themselves become the moral enactors of their community with one another in this collaboration.

* * *

If these reflections are well-taken, they show us the stages of “self-nourishing” by which the intuition “sparked” by the Visitor’s jokes at 266a-d both requires and is expressed by the selection of the new paradigm of the weaver and the shift from the bifurcatory to the non-bifurcatory mode of diairesis in the account of the fifteen kinds of art. Or, to begin this summary from a step farther back and carry it a step further on, they show us how the perception of the violence done to the “nature” of human being by the false judgment expressed by the paradigm of the herdsman and his herd gives rise, in the intuition of what it is that is violated, to the conception of statesmanship as a political intelligence that is distributed in various ways, both at the level of kinds of labor and at the level of moral disposition, throughout the community that it gives rise to. Thus read, the *Statesman* gives us an exemplary display of the interplay, negative and positive, between intuition and *logos* in the process of coming-to-know.

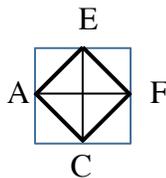
Appendix: The Visitor’s First Joke (266a5-b7)³²

Here, done by diagram rather than, as the Visitor does it, in prose, is a breakdown into its geometrical steps of his first joke, in which he contrasts “the diagonal” with “the diagonal of the diagonal.”

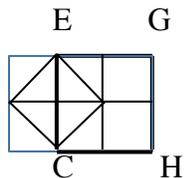
First construct a 1 x 1 square ABCD and mark its diagonal AC.



Now construct, on AC as its side, the square AEFC. ‘See’ that the area of AEFC is 2; ‘seeing’ this, we ‘see’ that AC is 2 in power.



EC is the diagonal of AEFC. That is, in the Visitor’s elliptical phrase, it is “the diagonal of [the square that has as its side] the [first] diagonal.” The length of EC is 2. Now construct, on EC as its side, the square EGHC. ‘See’ that the area of EGHC is 4; ‘seeing’ this, we ‘see’ that EC is 4 in power.



Accordingly, whereas “the [first] diagonal” is 2 in power, “the diagonal of the diagonal” is 4 in power.

¹ This is J.B. Skemp and Martin Ostwald's free but excellent translation in *Plato, Statesman* (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1992 [1957]).

² This is Glenn Morrow's translation in John Cooper (ed.), *Plato, Complete Works* (Hackett Publishing: Indianapolis, 1997), slightly altered and with the syntax adapted to fit my text. The relevant clauses read: "after long-continued intercourse between teacher and student, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is born in the soul and nourishes itself." I take it that the 7th *Letter's* description of the "shining forth" (ἐξελάμψε) of φρόνησις and νοῦς at 344b describes the same achievement of *noêsis*.

³ For fuller treatments of dialogue structure, mimetic irony, and the indirect communication that their combination enables, see my "Platonic Mimesis," in Falkner, T., Felson, N., and Konstan, D. (eds.), *Contextualizing Classics: Ideology, Performance, Dialogue* (Rowman and Littlefield: Lanham, MD, 1999): 253-266 and the introductions to my *The Philosopher in Plato's STATESMAN*, with "Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's STATESMAN" (Parmenides Publishing Co.: Las Vegas, 2004) and to my *Plato's PARMENIDES: The Conversion of the Soul* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA, 1991 [1986]).

⁴ I refer to our gatherings in New York in November 2011, hosted by Nickolas Pappas, to discuss the *Theaetetus*, in Seattle in November 2012, hosted by Burt Hopkins, to discuss the *Sophist*, and in Boston in November 2014, hosted by John Sallis, to discuss the *Statesman*. For the gist of my contributions to the previous two gatherings, see my "Unity and Logos: A Reading of *Theaetetus* 201c-210a," *Ancient Philosophy* XII, 1 (Spring, 1992), 87-110 and my "What the Dialectician Discerns: A Reading of *Sophist* 253d-e," *Ancient Philosophy*, forthcoming.

⁵ I quote E. S. Haring's arresting title in order to associate myself with her recognition in "The *Theaetetus* Ends Well," *Review of Metaphysics* 35 (1982): 509-528, that Socrates' refutations bear positive implications that point the way to a successful account of knowledge. Rosemary Desjardins 1981 made a kindred attempt in "*The Horns of Dilemma: Dreaming and Waking Vision in the Theaetetus*," *Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1982), 109-126.

⁶ Socrates never explicitly abandons, in the closing pages of the *Theaetetus*, his characterization of the object as perceptible. Nor does he ever explicitly observe what reflection would have revealed, that nothing perceptible, just insofar as it must have some spatial and temporal spread, can be truly simple; this reflection belongs to the *Parmenides*, which shows how the simple and unique is the object not of perception but rather of intellectual intuition. For exploration of the place of the *Parmenides* within the movement of the Eleatic trilogy, see my Comment on Diskin Clay, "Gaps in the Universe of the Platonic Dialogues," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy* III (1987): 158-164.

⁷ The argument by which Socrates constructs this dilemma is a *tour de force* of dialectical complexity in the course of which he both repeatedly suggests to Theaetetus and then suppresses the very conception of the object to which the dilemma points as what is required for its disarming. Socrates' various models of the object of knowledge — the number 6, the mile and the acre as units of measure, and an army — all exhibit as aspects of the object an irreducible structure and a plurality of elements that the structure requires for its instantiation in the object. In Socrates' suppressions of Theaetetus, I suggest, we witness Plato's ironic provocations of us his readers.

⁸ I pass over the first of the three proposed senses of *logos*, the vocal expression of one's thought (206d), because it fails to contribute to the insight into the compossibility of simplicity and

complexity in the object. But it does not fail to contribute to the notion of knowledge; on the contrary, it makes the crucial suggestion that discursive expression is necessary for knowledge, a suggestion befitting the Platonic commitment to dialogue and crucial to the notion that the pursuit of knowledge requires the interplay of intuition and discourse.

⁹ Socrates' term στοιχείον, especially when we translate it as is customary as “element,” may raise worries about an infinite regress. If each “element” must be, to be knowable, a complex of further parts, have we begun an incompletable series of analyses of parts of parts of parts, etc.? But the worry is misplaced, for as we will see, the model of wholeness it presupposes — that of a material, hence divisible, composite that is made up of parts that are also material, hence also divisible, composites, etc. — does not apply to the relations of simple to complex that are presupposed by Socrates' two senses of *logos*.

¹⁰ In our workshop in Seattle, cited in n. 4, and in my “What the Dialectician Discerns.”

¹¹ By using the feminine, the Visitor pointedly refers back to his use of ἰδέαν at 253d5.

¹² That is, as terms on par rather than different in kind.

¹³ By “subsumption” I mean to refer ahead to the relation that holds between each “whole” that is cut into halves and each of its halves in the bifurcatory process that the Visitor reflects on not in [i]-[ii] but only in [iii]-[iv]. Each pair of forms that are distinguished as ‘halves’ in the bifurcatory process is subsumed under the form that is cut into these ‘halves,’ and conversely, each of the forms that is cut into ‘halves’ subsumes the ‘halves’ into which it is divided. Thus these forms do not stand “apart” from one another in the way the elements or parts do that are picked out by division in the mode the Visitor reflects on in [i]-[ii].

¹⁴ All of the preceding sets of divisions in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* are bifurcatory. With two exceptions, the Visitor proceeds by choosing one ‘half’ and abandoning the other. The two exceptions are at *Soph.* 265b-266c and at *Stat.* 282b-e. I will comment on *Stat.* 282b-e below. At *Soph.* 265b-266c the Visitor first divides production into divine and human and then — before abandoning the divine half because it does not contain the sophist's activity — bifurcates it into the production of originals and of copies. In this way he provides a model for his subsequent division of the ‘right-hand’ side, human production. I thank Justin Vlasits for astute comments on *Soph.* 265b-266c. — I have said that all of the “preceding” sets of divisions are bifurcatory because I am suspending for another occasion the hybrid form and normatively ordered character of the later series of cuts by which the Visitor will distinguish true statesmanship from its imitations and then will distinguish its three relatively good imitations from the three bad ones. These divisions fall under neither the second nor the third of Socrates' three forms of *logos* at *Theaet.* 206c-210a, and they trace relations different in kind from those indicated in [i]-[iv] at *Soph.* 253d. Here I owe thanks to Cristina Ionescu for helpful comments and conversation.

¹⁵ In these synoptic remarks I have limited myself to what is needed for us to see the relations of correspondence between the second sense of *logos* at *Theaet.* 206eff., [i]-[ii] at *Soph.* 253d, and the list of the fifteen kinds. See n. 31.

¹⁶ An analogous question might be asked of the *Sophist*, but this is work for another occasion.

¹⁷ This is both a bold and baldly made claim, I realize, above all because demonstrating it requires shifting focus from any such general formulation as I have just given to a close reading of particular passages that is sensitive to their contexts in particular dialogues. I have attempted this on a number of other occasions — e.g. my *The Philosopher in Plato's STATESMAN, Plato's PARMENIDES*, “Unity and Logos”, and “Platonic Mimesis” — that might, I hope, provide corroborative illustrations.

¹⁸ This tracking ignores the digression occasioned by Young Socrates' lop-sided cut at 262a-264b and also what the Visitor calls the shorter way at 266e. I resist going into these passages purely for reasons of economy. But see my *The Philosopher in Plato's STATESMAN*, 19-33.

¹⁹ Thus the Visitor puns on the first syllable of the adverb ὕστατα, "last," in order to refer to pig, ὕς. Puns are extremely difficult to preserve in translation, and I applaud the ingenious efforts of Christopher Rowe, in *Plato, Complete Works* ("Isn't it reasonable to expect the slowest — or sow-est — to come in last?"), and J.B. Skemp, in *Plato, Statesman* ("The slowest shuffle in — or snuffle in — last.") What the cleverness of these specifically linguistic tricks risks obscuring, however, is the humor of *the sight* that the Visitor aims to trigger in the reader's imagination, of pigs and humans lumbering along side-by-side in the diairetic race.

²⁰ With his mocking characterization of the swineherd as "best-" or even "most nobly trained" ἄριστα γεγυμνασμένῳ (266d2), the Visitor echoes his preceding characterization of pig as "most nobly born," γενναιοτάτῳ (c4).

²¹ Young Socrates' cut of "beasts" from humans mistakes a merely negative aggregate — the term "beasts" signifies only animals-that-are-not-human — for a genuine kind or form; the Visitor explains that cutting "down the middle" or into "halves" is "safer" and heightens the likelihood of "hitting on forms" (262b), and as illustrations he cites the cuts into male/female and odd/even (262d-e). Thus he sets the idea of (non-gradient, that is, mutually exclusive) contraries in place as the norm to strive for, or at least to approximate as fully as possible, in bifurcatory diairesis. For discussion of the logical and political errors in Young Socrates' cut, see my *The Philosopher in Plato's STATESMAN*, 19-28.

²² There is a rich story to be told by tracing the Homeric resonances in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. In addition to the references we're now discussing, consider Socrates' allusion in the beginning of the *Sophist* (216a-b, c) to the other suitors' chastising of Antinous for his violence against the beggar at *Odyssey* 17: 483-487 and the more global resonances of the Visitor's paradigms for statesmanship — shepherdry and weaving — with the epithet "shepherds of the people" and with Penelope's resort to weaving to hold off the suitors in hopes of Odysseus' return. — Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem in n. 11, p. 32, of their translation, *Plato, STATESMAN* (Focus Publishing: Newburyport, MA, 2012), note the second and third jokes' allusions to Eumaeus and Circe.

²³ Here and below I am quoting Murray, A.T. (tr.), *Homer, The Odyssey* (Loeb Library: Harvard University Press, 1919).

²⁴ *Works and Days* 111.

²⁵ One must take with a grain of salt this singular and unprepared-for introduction of the traditional mythological figures of Prometheus and Hephaestus and "others". The Visitor's myth is a rational cosmological fantasy, and there is little place in it for intervention by the Titans and Olympians of Hesiodic lore. Invoking them is only a short-hand way of introducing the arts.

²⁶ How should the dative αὐτοῖς be understood? It might merely be the dative implied by the συν-, "with" or "together with," of συνδετά, in which case τὰ ... αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς συνδετά means "things that are themselves bound together with themselves." (This is the way Rowe and Brann et al., both writing "with ...," seem to translate the dative.) But it could also stand as a dative of means, in which case αὐτοῖς means "by means of themselves." (This is how Skemp/Ostwald in *Plato, Statesman*, writing "by ...," and Schleiermacher in *Platon, Politikos, Philebus, Timaeus, Kritias* (Rowohlts Klassiker: Germany, 1959, writing *durch* ..., translate the dative.) Context should persuade us that the latter is the meaning Plato intends: the whole that the Visitor

bifurcates is [τὰ] τῶν τριχίνων, “[things made] of hair,” and the contrasting ‘halves’ into which the Visitor divides it are τὰ μὲν ὕδασι καὶ γῆ κολλητά, “things glued by means of water and earth,” and τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς συνδετά, the phrase we are interpreting; accordingly, αὐτοῖς stands in determinate contrast with ὕδασι καὶ γῆ, and this implies, since ὕδασι καὶ γῆ are a compound dative of means, that αὐτοῖς is also a dative of means. (In fact, there may be consensus here; Rowe and Brann et al. may intend the “with” in their translations to indicate a dative of means. But to bring this out requires the more pointed language that Skemp/Ostwald and Schleiermacher give us.)

²⁷ I owe thanks to Edward Halper for this recognition.

²⁸ I choose these words carefully, in order to preserve the accidental irony that if taken out of context, the figure of the weaver may present itself as that of precisely such an external and superior agent working on materials, the warp and woof, that are, as inanimate, precisely the passive recipients of his work; but this understanding misses the insight that the three jokes occasion and as a consequence looks past the aspects of weaving — the cooperative relations of the arts and the internal dynamism of the well-placed warp and woof — that move the Visitor to propose the paradigm of the weaver as a fundamental alternative to that of the herdsman.

²⁹ For the one cut in the *Sophist* in which he divides the ‘left-hand’ side, see n. 14. — I owe thanks to Dimitri El Murr and to John Sallis for helpful comments, on separate occasions, on the Visitor’s departures at 282c-e from customary bifurcatory procedure.

³⁰ To indicate in an exemplary way the sorts of collaboration I mean, let me quote from my “Non-bifurcatory Diairesis and Greek Music Theory”: “we [should] consider each [kind of art] not [just] by itself but in its various relations with each of the others. Thus, for instance, the physical health of a city requires not only the production of ‘nourishments’ but also, on the one hand, the ‘tools’ for this production and, on the other, the commercial transactions of traders and merchants by which these ‘nourishments’ are distributed to the citizens; and, again, these ‘tools’ must themselves be made — by means, of course, of still other ‘tools’ — from ‘raw materials,’ while commercial transactions require ‘containers’ to preserve and ‘bearers’ to move the goods between fields and markets and shops and homes. Commerce also requires the communications and clerical work that heralds and clerks do, the sense of justice that religious rites and the courts in their very different ways preserve, and the maintenance of peace for which the citizens can thank their walls (‘defenses’) and, [operating under the orders of the statesman,] their generals.” What such reflections quickly reveal is the aptness of the Visitor’s simile of “limbs” (287c).

³¹ As before (see n. 15), I have restricted myself to what in the list of fifteen shows it to exhibit the second sense of *logos* in the *Theaetetus* and, in turn, [i]-[ii] at *Sophist* 253d. Further exploration would reveal that there is much more to consider: the Visitor moves in a graded series that stretches from kinds concerned with providing stuffs and things that will meet the material needs of the city through kinds that perform the actions that constitute its economic, social, civic-religious, and civic-moral needs, with the juxtapositions suggesting, at once, both an underlying continuum on which the various kinds pick out ratios and the interrelatedness of the functions the different kinds perform. See my “The God-Given Way,” *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Volume VI (1990), 323-359; “Dialectical Education and ‘Unwritten Teachings’ in Plato’s *Statesman*,” in Ophuijsen, J.M. Van (ed.), *Plato and Platonism* (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, DC, 1999), 218-241 (and included in *The Philosopher in Plato’s STATESMAN*, 2004); and “Non-bifurcatory Diairesis and Greek

Music Theory: A resource for Plato in the *Statesman?*” *Proceedings of the Eighth International Plato Symposium, Czech Plato Society, 2013*, 178-200.

³² I owe great thanks to Nancy Fedrow for help with the clarification and formatting of these diagrams.