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ABOUT PLATO'S *PHILEBUS*

JACOB KLEIN

To speak about a Platonic dialogue, about a Platonic dialogue, means to do violence to it. A sense of guilt will, therefore, be a continuous source of pain within me while I am speaking. But I cannot resist the temptation to shed some light—some moonlight, as it were—on the Philebus. I hope you will forgive me—I cannot—for sounding extremely pedantic, for speaking much longer than I should, and for making it sometimes very difficult for you to follow.

Let me state five basic points on which my talking about the Philebus will rest.

First: a Platonic dialogue is not a treatise or the text of a lecture; it is not comparable in this respect to a work of Aristotle or, for that matter, to any of Plotinus's Enneads as edited by Porphyry. A Platonic dialogue is usually a drama, a mime, in which what happens cannot be separated from what is said and argued about.

Secondly: however serious the purpose and the content of a Platonic dialogue, its seriousness is permeated by playfulness; indeed, as we can read in the sixth letter attributed to Plato, seriousness and play are sisters. The comical aspect of a Platonic dialogue can never be completely disregarded.

Thirdly: no Platonic dialogue can be said to represent what might be called and has been called the "Platonic doctrine." The dialogue may well hint, though never "with perfect clarity," at genuine and ultimate thoughts of Plato, the thinker. The Sophist, for example, does that most certainly. But an unimpeachable source provides us with more direct information about Plato's thinking than he himself ever put down in writing. This source is Aristotle, who spent twenty years at that place of leisure, the Academy, and heard what Plato himself said. I assume that we have to pay attention to Aristotle's reports, never forgetting that Aristotle has his own way of describing other people's thoughts, a peculiar terminology rooted in his own thinking and not in the thinking of those other people about whom he reports.

Fourthly: in the last two centuries scholars, not all, but most of them, have tried to understand the Platonic dialogues as belonging to different stages of a "development" in Plato's own thinking. Now, it is of course possible that Plato, in his long life, changed his views on many and perhaps even on most important points. But to follow a Platonic dialogue means to take it as it is, as one whole, in which the interlocutors play a

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* A lecture given at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, on May 20, 1971.
1 Soph. 254 C.
definite and unique role and in which what is said and what is happening does not depend on anything that is said and is happening in any other dialogue. Before we could understand any "development" in Plato's thinking, it is incumbent on us to understand each dialogue in its own terms. This understanding is not helped by assigning a dialogue to a certain period in Plato's life. Yet, in the case of the Philebus, it will not be unimportant to take notice of the time this dialogue was written—not in order to track some "developmental" deviation in Plato's thinking, but merely to establish whether certain statements in the dialogue may refer to somebody's conspicuous behavior within the Academy in Plato's later days. And, happily enough, there is general agreement that the Philebus is a late dialogue, although some of the reasons for this dating might be questionable.

Fifthly: every word in a Platonic dialogue counts, and for somebody in the dialogue to remain silent may count even more. That's why talking about a dialogue must necessarily remain insufficient.

And now let us approach the Philebus. The conversation takes place in Athens; we do not learn exactly where; it may be at a gymnastic school or at a wrestling school. What we read is a part of a very long conversation which begins some time in the afternoon. There are three interlocutors: Socrates, Protarchus, Philebus: many young men, half a dozen or a dozen perhaps, are listening. Socrates is, well, Socrates—a man devoted to inquiries and discussions and a friend and lover of youth. Protarchus is the son of a well-known Athenian, Callias. Philebus is not known at all. He is one of the few personages in the Platonic dialogues, like Callicles, Diotima, Timaeus, invented by Plato; if they do not remain nameless, like the Stranger from Elea and the Stranger from Athens, their names are appropriately coined. The name of Philebus indicates that he is a "lover of youth"—as Socrates is. Philebus seems to be young, but slightly older than Protarchus and all the listening young men around them.²

The title of the dialogue as it has been handed down to us is Philebus. This title is never mentioned in the writings of Plato's contemporaries. Aristotle refers to what is said in the dialogue at least eight times, mentioning Plato once. There seems to be no reason, however, to doubt that the title "Philebus" is genuine. Moreover, there is one good reason which speaks forcefully for its authenticity. The dialogue contains 2,369 lines (I did not count them, but somebody did). Of these 2,369 lines only 23 are spoken by Philebus (those I counted). He raises his voice altogether only 14 times. Under these circumstances, who else but Plato could have chosen the name of Philebus for the title of the dialogue? There will be more to say about this matter later on.

The main question raised in the dialogue is: What is the best human life? And this question has to cope primarily with the all-pervasive feeling

² 16 B.
of pleasure, common to all living beings—haunting, filling, mocking us. All of us—without exception—want to be pleased in thousands and thousands of different ways: we seek to lie down or to sit comfortably; we like hearing things that flatter us; we enjoy good company, witty words, good drink and food; we delight in traveling, in going to the theatre or to the movies, in looking at beautiful things; we love caresses, precious gifts, wild emotions; we loose ourselves with rapture in exerting power, in sexual satisfaction, in ecstasies, and so on, and so on. A list of pleasures like the one I have just given is not to be found in the dialogue, but an infinite number of possible pleasures is implied in the arguments we are facing. It is Philebus who looks at Pleasure as the highest good, who sees in Pleasure not only the best of human possessions, but the goal after which all living beings strive. Pleasure (ἡδωνή) is the goddess he worships. And quite a few of us, I think, follow him.

Socrates does not. He contends that there is something better and more desirable than pleasure, to wit, thoughtfulness in deciding how to act (τὸ φρονεῖν), the apprehending of what is intelligible only (τὸ νοεῖν), the power of memory (τὸ μεμνημόνευμα) and that which is akin to these, right opinion (δόξα ὅρθη) and true calculations (ἀλήθειά λογίσμοι); but Socrates carefully adds that these powers are better and more desirable than pleasure for those beings who are able to share in these powers; only to beings who have this ability will these powers be profitable, now and in the future.

This juxtaposition of both contentions, of that of Philebus and of that of Socrates, is made by Socrates very shortly after we begin reading. It is introduced by Socrates with the following words: "See, then, Protarchus, what the assertion is which you are now to accept from Philebus, and what our assertion is, against which you are to argue, if you do not agree with it. Shall we give a summary of each of them?" 3 These words are the very first words of the dialogue. But what strikes us immediately is that they cannot be understood as indicating the beginning of a conversation; they just continue what was said before; if they were the beginning of a conversation, the vocative Πρώταρχε would be preceded by ὅ (ὅ Πρώταρχε, not simply Πρώταρχε); and the words "then" (δὴ) and "now" (νῦν) would not be used. Listen again: "See, then Protarchus, what the assertion is which you are now to accept from Philebus..." The dialogue has no true beginning. Nor does it have a true ending. This is the last sentence we read, spoken by Protarchus: "There is still a little left, Socrates; you will certainly not give up before we do, and I shall remind you of what remains." We do not yet understand why the dialogue has no beginning and no ending. But we see (and this is important), when we begin reading, that Protarchus has to take over the thesis upheld by Philebus. More about that later.

Enjoyment and thoughtfulness are the two banners that Protarchus and
Socrates are respectively wavering. The life of pleasure and the life of thoughtfulness face each other. But it becomes clear immediately that Socrates is considering some other life superior to both of them. He will keep reverting to this third life. It will finally be described in the last pages of the dialogue.

What follows the juxtaposition of the two views, that of Philebus and Protarchus on the one hand and that of Socrates on the other, is Socrates' insistence that pleasure has many different aspects: "For, when you just simply hear her named, she is one thing, but surely she takes on all sorts of shapes which are, in a way, unlike each other." Socrates gives two simple, though significant, examples: the pleasures of a licentious man are very different from those of a self-restrained man, who enjoys his very self-restraint; the pleasures of a fool are very different from those of a thoughtful man, who enjoys his very thoughtfulness. No, says Protarchus, the sources of pleasure may be different, may have an opposite character, but "how can pleasure help being of all things most like pleasure, that is, like itself." Yes, says Socrates, color and figure are what they are, but colors and figures can be very, very different and even, in the case of colors, most opposed to each other, like black and white. Protarchus does not see how this could make him change his mind. Socrates tries for the third time, this time incisively, anticipating what will be said later in the dialogue. No argument, he says, disputes that pleasant things are pleasant. But Protarchus's contention, which upholds Philebus's conviction, implies that all pleasant things are good. That's what is wrong. Pleasant things are for the most part bad and only some are good. But you, Protarchus, says Socrates, call all of them good, although you might be forced by the argument to agree that they are otherwise different. Protarchus tacitly admits that pleasures may be very different from each other, and even opposed to each other, but sticks to his main point that pleasures, inasmuch as they are pleasures, are always good.

At this point Socrates goes back to his own contention, namely, that thoughtfulness (φάνηδ) and the apprehension of the intelligible (νοῦ) are good. He adds to these—for the first time—knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and predicts that many kinds of knowledge will come to the fore, some among them unlike each other. Should it turn out that some are even opposed to each other, could he, Socrates, then cling to the point that all knowledge is alike and—not unlike Protarchus—"save himself" in an absurdity?

Protarchus is pleased that both, his assertion and that of Socrates, receive the same treatment and is now willing to grant that there are many different pleasures just as there are many different knowledges (we have to note that he does not mention opposite pleasures and knowledges).

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4 11 D.
5 12 C.
6 12 D/E.
Socrates is satisfied with Protarchus’s concession about the manyness within knowledge and within pleasure and speaks as follows: “With no concealment, then, Protarchus, of the differentiation within my good and within yours, but facing it squarely, let us be bold and see if perchance, on examination, it will tell us whether we should say that the good is pleasure or thoughtfulness or some other third thing.” It is the second time that Socrates reverts to the possibility that something third may be the best of human possessions. He proceeds by strengthening this statement by an assertion which has a wide, wide range.

This is one of the transitions in which the dialogue abounds. (Parenthetical remark: in the 2nd century A.D. Galen wrote a treatise entitled “On the transitions in the Philebus,” which is unfortunately not extant). Let me say a few words about the transition we are now facing.

Up to this point the talk was about things most familiar to all of us, about pleasure and about thoughtfulness and about knowledge, this last word taken in its colloquial and vague sense. The talk was concerned about our lives in this our world. What Socrates is undertaking now is to lift the conversation to a level of all-embracing universality, disregarding pleasure and knowledge altogether. He will come back to them after a short while and then launch out to an even higher level. Why does he do that? The answer is: to find the ultimate sources of what is so close to us and usually unquestioned by us. The dialogue seeks to link the most common to the most uncommon and fundamental. To find the link will require a great deal of vigor on Socrates’ part.

The manyness within pleasure and within knowledge leads Socrates to remind Protarchus of the “astounding” assertions that “many are one” and that “one is many.” There is nothing particularly surprising and difficult about these assertions if they refer to visible and tangible things, which come into being and perish. A man, for example, is one, but he is also many, because he has many members and parts. But when we consider intelligibles, the εἰδη of things, the “invisible looks,” which can be encountered only in speech (ἐν λόγῳ), and each one of which is one and unique, the “one and many” problem becomes extremely perplexing (Socrates mentions four of the intelligibles: the One Man, the One Ox, the One Beauty, the One Good). That’s where the trouble sets in. Any young man, says Socrates, challenging those present, any young man, once he has tasted the flavor of that perplexity and thinks he has found a treasure of wisdom, does not spare anyone, neither himself, nor his parents, nor any human being, who can hear him, and joyfully sets every possible argument in motion, confounding everybody. Protarchus feels hit. “Do you not see, Socrates,” he says, “how many we are and that we are all young men? Are you not afraid that we shall join with Philebus and attack you,
if you revile us?" 9 But Socrates' challenge works. Protarchus wants Socrates to find a better road than was used up to now and to lead them on.

Socrates retorts that there is a better road, which he always loved, which is easy to point out, but very difficult to follow. Whatever human art has discovered had been brought to light through it. Socrates' description of this better road marks a new transition in the dialogue.

Socrates calls this road a "gift of gods to men," which we owe to some Prometheus together with some gleaming fire (let me remind you: Prometheus stole the fire he gave to men). The ancients, who were better than we and lived nearer the gods, says Socrates with deadpan seriousness, have handed down to us the tradition that all the things which are ever said to exist are sprung from One and Many and have, inherent in their nature, Limit (περιμετρός) and Infinitude (অসীম). We shall come back to this point in a little while. What Socrates emphasizes now is that we must, in every case, look for one εἰδής (he uses the word ἐίδης here) and next for two, if there be two, and if not, for three or some other number; and we must treat each of these εἴδη in the same way, that is, subdivide each of them, "until we can see that the original one is not just one and many and infinite, but also how many it is." 10 Then we may bid farewell to infinity, bid farewell to the ἐίδη of infinity.

Protarchus wants Socrates to clarify what he has said. No wonder! Socrates provides this clarification by pointing to the letters of the alphabet. The sound which we emit through our mouth can be called one, yet it is infinite in diversity. A god or a godlike man, as an Egyptian story tells, observed, however, that there are distinct vowel sounds, semi-vowel sounds and consonants—in Greek 7 vowels, 3 semi-vowels or sonants (λ, ρ, σ), and 14 consonants, more exactly 10, if we include the rough breathing sound h and exclude the 5 double consonants. This means that between the oneness and the infinitude of sound there are definite numbers of sounds. One has to know all of them to possess the art of reading and writing. Socrates emphasizes the numbers of sounds and letters. But this example of the alphabet and the example of the numbers of musical intervals, which Socrates also gives, are meant to let Protarchus and Philebus and we understand that there are numbers in the realm of the εἴδη. Later in the dialogue 11 Socrates will clearly distinguish between numbers of unequal units, that is, numbers of sensible things, and pure mathematical numbers of units, that is, of units which do not differ at all from each other. But we learn from Aristotle 12 that Plato also spoke of eidetic numbers, of numbers of units which are themselves nothing but εἴδη. To try to find them means to embark upon that better, but difficult road.

9 16 A.
10 16 D.
11 56 D–E.
12 See esp. Met. XIV, 3, 1090 b 32ff.
Protarchus and Philebus do not understand what is going on. Philebus especially does not see what the theme of *numbers*, which Socrates has injected into the discussion, has to do with the alternative of pleasure and thoughtfulness, which was in question. Socrates reminds him that they were wondering how each of them, pleasure as well as thoughtfulness, was one and many, and whether “each of them possessed a number before becoming infinite,”\(^\text{13}\) that is to say, whether there were ειδη of pleasure as well as of thoughtfulness, which then are dispersed among beings that continually come into being and perish and that live their lives in pleasure and thought.

Protarchus is perturbed. He understands what Socrates is after. He cannot find an answer to the question. He wants Philebus to answer it. And he formulates the question as follows: “I think Socrates is asking us whether there are or are not ειδη of pleasure, how many there are and of what sort they are, and the same of thoughtfulness.”\(^\text{14}\) Philebus does not utter a word. But Socrates remarks: “What you say is most true, son of Callias.”\(^\text{15}\) He underscores the importance of this fact by addressing Protarchus ceremonially as son of Callias.

Protarchus is intent on bringing the discussion about pleasure and thoughtfulness to a satisfactory end. We learn from what he says that Socrates *promised* that he would stay on and not go home before this end was reached. This promise must have been given, we have to assume, during the discussion which preceded what we read in the dialogue, and we should not forget that. Protarchus demands that Socrates stop perplexing him and the other young men and decide *either* to divide pleasure and knowledge into their ειδη himself *or* to let that go, if there be some other way to solve the matters at issue among them. Socrates is willing to do the latter, and this marks a new transition in the dialogue.

Socrates claims playfully that some god has just reminded him of some talk about pleasure and thoughtfulness, which he heard when he was dreaming or perhaps when he was awake. What he heard was that neither pleasure nor thoughtfulness was the good, but some *third* thing, different from both and better than both. We remember, of course, that Socrates himself had intimated this twice. He does it now for the *third* time. If this could be clearly shown now, says Socrates, pleasure would not be the victor and it would no longer be necessary to divide pleasure into its ειδη. And Socrates adds that, while the discussion proceeds, this will become still clearer.

What follows leads to three insights: (1) it is the lot of the Good and only of the Good to be self-sufficient; (2) if we take the life of pleasure and the thoughtful life separately, so that the life of pleasure is totally divested of any thought, any knowledge, any opinion, any memory, and the

\(^{13}\) 18 E.

\(^{14}\) 19 B.

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*
thoughtful life, on the other hand, totally untouched by any pleasure, both lives—in this bare form—cannot be conceived as self-sufficient, as desirable and as good; (3) only a life made up of a mixture of pleasure and thoughtfulness and sharing in both will be the kind of life everybody would choose. Let me remark that Socrates and also Protarchus list under the powers associated with thoughtfulness the power of apprehending the intelligibles, νοῦ which in common parlance may simply mean good sense. This term will now play a central role for quite a while. Socrates concludes: it has been sufficiently shown that Philebus’s goddess, Pleasure, cannot be considered identical with the good. Thereupon Philebus raises his voice: “Nor is your νοῦ the good, Socrates; it will be open to the same objections.” 16 Let us hear Socrates’ reaction: “My νοῦ perhaps, Philebus; but not so the true νοῦ, which is also divine; that one, I guess, is different. I do not as yet claim for the νοῦ the prize of victory over the combined life, but we must look and see what is to be done about the second prize.” 17 Socrates goes on, still speaking to Philebus: “Each of us might perhaps put forward a claim, one that νοῦ is responsible for this combined life, is its cause, the other that pleasure is: and thus neither of these two would be the good, but one or the other of them might be regarded as the cause [of the combined life].” 18 Then, turning to Protarchus, Socrates claims he might keep up his fight against Philebus in an even stronger way and might contend “that in this mixed life it is νοῦ that is more akin and more similar than pleasure to that, whatever it may be, which makes that life both desirable and good.” As to pleasure, he adds, “it is farther behind than the third place, if my νοῦ is at all to be trusted at present.” 19

The emphasis in this passage is clearly on the terms νοῦ and “cause” (αἴτιον). What remains unclear is the sense in which the term “cause” is to be taken and the rank to be attributed ultimately to the νοῦ. And let us not for a moment forget Socrates’ own νοῦ.

Socrates suggests that it might be better to leave pleasure and not to pain her by testing her in the most precise way and thus proving her in the wrong. Protarchus disagrees. Socrates asks whether Protarchus disagrees because he, Socrates, spoke of paining pleasure. It is the second time that pain is mentioned in the dialogue. It is done jokingly. Pain was mentioned for the first time when Socrates dealt with the thoughtful life, totally untouched by pleasure. The way he put it then was this: “Would anyone be willing to live possessing thoughtfulness and νοῦ and knowledge and perfect memory of all things, but having no share, great or small, in pleasure, or in pain, for that matter, but being utterly unaffected by everything of that sort?” 20 The question, which is supposed

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16 22 C.
17 22 C–D.
18 22 D.
19 22 E.
20 21 D/E.
to be negated, when put in this form actually involves a difficulty: one would perhaps be willing to accept a thoughtful pleasureless life, which does not involve us in any pain. The third time pain will be mentioned is going to show pain as a close companion of pleasure and as a real evil. Protarchus says he is not shocked by Socrates' phrase "paining pleasure," but rather by Socrates' apparent attempt to stop talking about pleasure altogether and because Socrates does not seem to understand "that not one of us will let you go yet until you have brought the argument about these matters to an end." 21 This is the second time Socrates is warned about leaving too early.

Whew, Socrates exclaims, and predicts that a long and difficult discussion lies ahead of them. To fight the battle of the νοῦς for the second prize requires new weapons in addition to those already used. A new beginning has to be made, and this will mean a new transition in the dialogue.

Let us be on our guard in making this beginning, says Socrates, and we should indeed pay attention to these words. Socrates suggests that everything that now exists in the world be distributed in a twofold, or rather in a threefold way. The results of this distribution are very different from each other. They are called by Socrates, indiscriminately and unprecisely, εἰδή or γένη, which I shall translate by the word "tribes." The first two have been mentioned before as a kind of Promethean gift: the "limitless" (τὸ ἀπειρον) and the "limit" (τὸ πέρας). The third is the mixture of these two into one. This is not to be taken literally, as we shall see in a moment: let us be on our guard. And now Socrates adds: "But I cut a considerably ridiculous figure, I think, when I attempt a separation into tribes and an enumeration." 22 Protarchus wonders why. Socrates: "It seems to me, a fourth tribe is needed besides." 23 It turns out that Socrates means the cause of the commixture of those first two. And Protarchus, who is eager to supply even a fifth, namely the power of separation, is told in affable words that this fifth is not needed now, but that if it be needed later, he should excuse Socrates for going after it. The mentioning of Protarchus's proposal and the way of handling it cast a doubt on the necessity of the fourth tribe, the cause. There might be something strange and even ridiculous indeed about that. We should be on our guard.

Let us consider one of the first two tribes, namely τὸ ἀπειρον. The following English translations are all adequate: the limitless, the endless, the boundless, the unlimited, the infinite, the innumerable, the indefinite, the indeterminate. And we must not forget the homonym ἀπειρος, meaning the inexperienced one, upon which word Plato does not fail to pun. 24

As to the second tribe, τὸ πέρας, the "limit," it becomes almost im-

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21 23 B.
22 23 D.
23 Ibid.
24 17 E.
mediately apparent that, although Socrates keeps using this term, he also substitutes for it the phrase “that which has limit,” τὸ περὶ τὰς ἔγχον, that is to say, the “limited.” Protarchus and the other young men as well as we are somewhat confused. Socrates proposes to investigate how each of them, the “limitless” and the “limited,” are both “one and many”; for he contends that each one of them is split up and scattered into many. He starts with the “limitless,” warning Protarchus again: “What I ask you to consider is difficult and debatable.” 25

Here are special cases of this tribe, parts of its manyness: “hotter and colder,” “quicker and slower,” “greater and smaller,” “exceedingly and slightly,” “excessive and lacking.” 26 In each there is “the more as well as Each of them is constantly advancing the less” (τὸ μᾶλλον τὸ καὶ ἡμῖν). and never stationary—in sharp contrast to what is determined by a fixed number, by just “that much”: if such a number advances, it ceases to exist. What captures our attention is the expression τὸ μᾶλλον τὸ καὶ ἡμῖν. This expression is meant to gather together the tribe of the “limitless” and to put upon it the seal of a single nature. 27 It is used six times in the passage we are now considering and once more much later on. Once the particle τὸ is omitted. This omission focuses our attention on the use of this particle in all the other cases. The verbs related to this expression are all in the dual. And Socrates summarizes pointedly: “By this argument the hotter and its opposite become together limitless.” 28 The “limitless” is a pair. The expression “the more as well as the less,” as the seal of a single nature, seals a duality. And this duality remains completely indeterminate. The “limitless” is an indeterminate pair.

But what about the “limit,” on the one hand, and the “limited,” that “which has limit,” on the other? Let us take the “limited” first. It is, as Socrates quite clearly states, 29 contrary to “the more as well as the less”; it is the equal, and equality, the double, and any number in firm relation to another number or a measure in firm relation to another measure, that is, everything which “puts an end to the variability between the opposites and makes them proportionable and harmonious by the introduction of number.” 30

We understand that what Socrates means by this tribe of the “limited” is what we read in the Fifth Book of Euclid’s Elements. This book is in all probability either a perhaps somewhat condensed copy of an original work of Eudoxus or imitates this work. Who is Eudoxus? He was born in Cnidus, on the shores of Asia Minor, came to Athens and stayed at Plato’s Academy for a while. He was an astronomer, a mathematician, and a

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25 24 A.
26 “Lacking” is not mentioned. It is lacking in deed.
27 25 A.
28 24 D.
29 25 A/B.
30 25 D/E.
geographer; he firmly established the doctrine of ratios and proportions, including those of numerically incommensurable magnitudes; he tried to "mix" the εἴδη, as understood by Plato, with all the sensible things; and—what is most important to us—he declared pleasure to be the supreme good. But pleasure was not his goddess, as she is for Philebus. Eudoxus, as Aristotle reports, "seemed to be a man of exceptional temperance, and hence he was thought to uphold this view not because he was a lover of pleasure, but because it seemed to him that it was so in truth." 31 Socrates, as we see in the dialogue, disagrees.

The tribe of the "limited" then consists of ratios. The tribe of the scattered "limitless," of the ἄπειρον, in its infinite manyness found its unity in the seal of "the more and its opposite," 32 that is, in "the more as well as the less." The tribe of the "limited," the manyness of determinate ratios, has not yet found its unity. This unity was only postulated, was only, as Socrates says, "referred to." There was indeed a direct "reference" to the "limit" itself (εἰς τὸ πεῖρον). 33 And Socrates concludes: "The limit did not contain a multitude nor did we feel a difficulty that it might not be one by nature." 34

It is at this point that we might turn to Aristotle's reports about Plato's unwritten words to confirm what we found in the dialogue and to win greater clarity.

In the Sixth Chapter of the First Book of the Metaphysics 35 Aristotle says of Plato: "It is peculiar to him [i.e., Plato] to posit a duality instead of the single Limitless, and to make the Limitless consist of 'the Great and the Small.'" In the Third Book of the Physics, where Aristotle discusses the ἄπειρον at great length, we read in the Fourth Chapter 36 again: "For Plato there are two Infinites, 'the Great and the Small.'" We see thus confirmed what we read in the Philebus, except that Aristotle, in his own way, uses the words "great" and "small" without their comparative forms. 37 He keeps using these words, in speaking about Plato, at many other places. But, what is more important, in Books XIII and XIV of the Metaphysics Aristotle mentions several times two "elements," as he puts it, out of which, according to Plato, "numbers" are derived. We have to understand that Aristotle has in mind "eidetic numbers," assemblages of εἴδη. These two sources are the "indeterminate dyad" (ἡ ἀδόποιοτος δύνας) and the "one" (τὸ ἕν). We recognize the indeterminate pair of the Philebus in the "indeterminate dyad," the duality of the Limitless, "the more as well as the less." But we see now that what was named the

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32 26 D.
33 25 B.
34 26 D.
35 987 b 26–28.
36 203 a 15.
37 Cf. 37 C end.
"Limit" in the *Philebus* can also be named the "One." What Aristotle calls the "elements" can be called the ultimate sources of everything, that which has the first rank both as beginnings and as ruling powers. That is what is meant by ἀγαθή, in common parlance as well as in most thoughtful speech. We should not assume, I think, that Plato had a definitely fixed name for each of these ἀγαθά. The terms the Good, the One, the Precise itself, the Same, the Limit, and perhaps the Whole are all suited to one of the ἀγαθά, depending on the context in which they are used. As to the names of the second ἀγαθή, the "indeterminate dyad," "the more as well as the less," and the Other (which also implies a duality) seem all of them no less suitable. In the *Philebus* Socrates, in putting a seal on the tribe of the ἀπέλευθον, makes its intrinsic character perfectly clear. But the character of the περικός, the "limit," remains obscured.

Now let us take up the third tribe, the "mixture" of the "Limitless" and of the "Limit." What does "mixing" here mean? It means that the two ἀγαθά, the "Limitless," the "indeterminate dyad," and the "One," exert their power on each other. What happens then may be described as follows. The "indeterminate dyad" duplicates the "One," that is to say, produces two entities, two εἰδή, duplicates each of these εἰδή—we may also say "divides" each of these εἰδή—and keeps on duplicating—we have to assume up to a certain point. In Aristotle's reports the "indeterminate dyad" is explicitly characterized as a "doubling power" (δυναμοὶ). It is the ultimate source of definite manyness, of "numbers," in the realm of the εἰδή as well as in our world. In the earlier passage, when Socrates first introduced the Promethean gift of "infinitude" and of "limit" and urged that in every case a definite number of εἰδή had to be found (the alphabet helping him to clarify this point), there was hardly a discernible hint that the "Limitless" with its doubling power is responsible for the multiplicity of the εἰδή. You will remember that in this context the "limitless," the infinite, was ultimately dismissed. Not so in the world in which we live. What happens here is this: the "Limit," the "One," transforms the "indeterminate dyad" into a determinate one, that is to say, transforms the two constantly and indeterminately changing terms of the dyad into two stationary and determinate ones and keeps doing this, produces, in other words, a multitude of ratios. That's why Socrates can call the manyness of ratios "the offspring of the limit." 40

We understand now what confused Protarchus and us when Socrates substituted "that which has limit," the "limited," for the "limit" itself. The "limited," the assemblage of ratios, is already a part of the mixture, of the third tribe. But it represents a mixture, or rather mixtures, of a special kind, mathematical partnerships that can give to parts of the world we live in a certain rightness, remove the excess and indefiniteness,
and produce balance and right measure. Such mathematical partnerships engender, for example, health, establish the entire genuine art of music, bring about the temperate seasons and all the bounties of our world, beauty and strength of the body, and all the beauties of the soul. And Socrates, addressing Philebus directly and speaking about that proper partnership (δοθέναι γνώσις) of mathematical ratios, has this to say: “For this goddess, my beautiful Philebus, beholding the wanton violence and universal wickedness which prevailed, since there was no limit of pleasures or of excess in them, established law and order [νόμος και τάξις] in which there is limit. You say she exhausted us; I say, on the contrary, she kept us safe.” Socrates addresses Philebus, but we cannot help thinking of Eudoxus. Philebus remains completely silent. Socrates turns to Protarchus: “How does this appear to you, Protarchus?” And Protarchus answers: “It is very much how I feel, Socrates.”

Let us conclude: the common power of the two ἀγχαῖ determines the mixture. Sometimes the community of this power is lacking.

Socrates turns now to the fourth tribe, the cause. You will remember that Socrates seemed somewhat reluctant to add this fourth to the first three. And indeed, is there any need for it? The common power of the “Limitless” and the “Limit” appeared as the cause of the mixture and of what is engendered in this mixture. Listen now to Socrates’ words: “Should I say, a false note if I called the fourth the cause of the mixture and generation?” And listen to what Socrates one moment earlier says with regard to all the first three tribes: “That which fabricates all these, the cause, we call the fourth, as it has been sufficiently shown to be distinct from the others.” That has not been shown at all! How can ultimate sources, ἀγχαῖ, be caused by something else? If that were so, the first two tribes, the “Limitless” and the “Limit,” would not be what they are.

The exploration of this fourth tribe, the “cause,” is left pending, and Socrates makes a new transition, which helps him to turn backwards.

What was the purpose, he asks, of coming to the point they have reached? They were trying to find out whether the second prize belonged to pleasure or to thoughtfulness (φιλόσοφος). They had posited, Socrates reminds Protarchus and us, that the mixed life was the victor. We can see now, he continues, to which tribe it belongs, namely, to the third tribe, formed by the mixture of all that is “limitless” and all that is “bound by the limit.” And now Socrates asks Philebus to which of the

41 26 A.
42 25 E.
43 26 B–C.
44 26 C.
45 27 B/C.
46 27 B.
47 27 D.
three tribes his life of unmixed pleasure belongs. The full question is this: have pleasure and pain a limit or are they among the things which admit "the more as well as the less?" Philebus's answer is: "Yes, among those which admit the more; for pleasure would not be all the good, if it were not limitless in multitude and in the 'more.'" 48 Socrates dryly replies: "Nor would pain, Philebus, be all the evil." 49 This is how pain is introduced in the discussion for the third time, and this time decisively. For Socrates adds he would grant Philebus that both, pleasure and pain, are in the tribe of the Limitless. We note Philebus meant only pleasure, not pain. Socrates' addition is decisive.

Pleasure and pain are a limitless pair. One of the consequences of this finding is that there are no εἰδή of pleasure, in the strict sense of this word. We remember that Socrates had intimated that the discussion would show in a clearer way why it would not be necessary to divide pleasure into its εἰδή. Socrates will use this term later on in discussing pleasure, but it will not have to be taken in its strict sense.

The next question Socrates asks Protarchus and Philebus is: to what tribe thoughtfulness, knowledge and νοῦς shall be assigned without impiety. Socrates explains: "For I think that our risk is not a small one in finding or not finding the right answer to what is being asked now." 50 Philebus: "You exalt your own god, Socrates, you do." 51 Socrates: "And you your goddess, my friend. But the question calls for an answer, all the same." 52 Protarchus intervenes and urges Philebus to answer. Whereupon Philebus says: "Did you not, Protarchus, choose to reply in my place?" 53 This is the last time Philebus raises his voice. Let us look back for a moment.

At the beginning of our reading we learn that Protarchus will defend Philebus's thesis of pleasure, because Philebus himself, as Protarchus says, "has grown tired" (the Greek word is ἄπειροψε, a pun on the word ἄπειρον). A little later Philebus has an opportunity to regret that he spoke up again and calls upon his own goddess to witness that he does regret. When the "one and many" question comes up, Protarchus remarks: "It is perhaps best for the inquirer not to disturb Philebus in his sweet repose." 54 And now he will be silent all the time, even when pleasure, his goddess, is thoroughly discussed. What is he doing all this time? Just listening?

Protarchus has some difficulty in answering Socrates' last question, namely, to what tribe knowledge and νοῦς should be assigned, and asks Socrates to answer this question himself. Socrates is willing. He declares:

\[\text{[tacit reference to the proverb: } \mu \lambda \ ξίνειν \ κακόν \ εὕ \ κείμενον].\]
"What you enjoin me to do is not difficult," and he repeats: "It is easy." Let us be on our guard. All wise men agree, and thereby really exalt themselves, says Socrates, that νοῦς is king of heaven and earth. Socrates adds: "Perhaps they are right." What follows is indeed an easy, but not too convincing "cosmological" account, which ends with the statement that νοῦς belongs to that of the four tribes which was called "the cause of all." Notice, please, again, "of all." And Socrates adds: "Now, you have at last your answer." Protarchus: "Yes, and a very sufficient one; and yet you answered without my noticing it." Socrates: "Yes, Protarchus, for sometimes playing provides rest from serious pursuit." We understand: the "cosmological" account, which makes the νοῦς the cause of all the other tribes, was a playful account. We are not sure whether this νοῦς is the "divine νοῦς" mentioned before. And let us not forget that, within the confines of human life, the best, νοῦς could obtain, was the second prize.

Socrates concludes this entire discussion of the four tribes by pointing to νοῦς and to pleasure. He does not mention anything pertaining to "limit" and to the "mixture." Let us remember, he says, "that νοῦς was akin to cause and belonged roughly speaking [σχέδιον] to this tribe and that pleasure was itself limitless and belonged to the tribe which, in and by itself, has not and never will have either beginning or middle or end." We must add that this holds also for pain. As we have seen, the dialogue, too, has neither a beginning nor an end, and for that matter, no middle. The graph of a Platonic dialogue usually—not always—looks like this:

But the graph of the Philebus looks like this:

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55 28 C.
56 Ibid.
57 30 E.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 31 A.
The dialogue itself, taken as a drama, in which we, the readers or listeners, are involved, seems to resemble pleasure and pain. If it does that, it must be pleasurable and painful. We will have to wait and see... But we need not wait to register the most important result of the preceding discussion. All the pleasures and pains, small or great, which pervade our lives, reflect in their duality an ultimate source, one of the ἀδιανυστίκης, namely the “indeterminate dyad.” It is thus that some of our most familiar and common experiences are tied to one of the highest points human reflection can reach.

Socrates now abandons this high level and turns to a much lower one. A new transition is made. Only about a third of the dialogue has been considered so far. I shall be able to proceed much faster from now on.

The next task is to see, says Socrates, where each of them, that is, νοῦς and pleasure, can be found and by means of what affection both come into being, whenever they come into being. Note, please, that the νοῦς mentioned here is said to come into being and cannot, therefore, be understood as the eternal divine νοῦς. Socrates takes pleasure first, and immediately adds that it is impossible to examine pleasure sufficiently apart from pain.

Socrates’ contention is that pain and pleasure emerge in the combined tribe, the one, we remember, where the “limitless” and the “limit” join together and form a mathematical partnership conducive to balance and right measure. When this balance is broken in us, living beings, “a disruption of nature and a generation of pain also take place at the same time.” If, on the other hand, balance is being restored and is returning to its own nature, pleasure is generated. The process of destruction is pain, and the process of restoration is pleasure. When we are being emptied, we are becoming hungry and pained; when we are filling up again through eating, we are pleased. And the same can be said of thirst. It is shown later that it is not the body that hunger or thirsts or has any such affection, that the body cannot, therefore, be pained or pleased. Pleasure and pain belong to the soul, and to the soul only. But sometimes, or rather often enough, as in the case of hunger and thirst, the body is involved. Whenever this is the case, we face one kind of pleasure and pain.

Another kind of pleasure and pain does not involve the body at all. It arises within the soul itself as the sweet and cheering hope of pleasant things to come and as the fearful and woeful expectation of painful things to come. Both the pleasant and the painful expectations originate within the soul in memory. Socrates proceeds to give a circumstantial description of this origin by passing from perception to memory, to forgetfulness, to recollection, and finally to desire. But he ends this passage by reverting to pleasure and pain that involve the body. He points to a man who is

61 31 B.
62 31 D.
63 Ibid.
empty and suffers pain, but who, because of his memory, hopes to be filled again and enjoys this hope. "At such a time, then, a man, or any other living being, has both pain and joy at once." 64 If, however, an empty man is without hope of being filled, a twofold feeling of pain arises in him. The stress is on the duality of pleasure and pain. The possibility of a twofold pain and—although this is not mentioned—of a twofold pleasure emphasizes the duality even more. Let us not forget its ultimate source.

Looked at in this passage is also a life in which there is no feeling of pleasure or pain at all, but only thoughtfulness and ἔλευθερες. Such a life had been considered much earlier in the dialogue and had been rejected as totally undesirable, lacking self-sufficiency and, therefore, goodness. Now Socrates calls it "the most divine life." Protarchus chimes in: "Certainly it is not likely that gods feel either joy or its opposite." 65 And Socrates agrees: "No, it is very unlikely; for either is unseemly for them." Socrates adds that they may consider this point later on, if it would help the argument; they might give ἔλευθερες credit for it in contending for the second prize. We shall be watching.

A new transition takes place. What follows can be subdivided into three parts, and the title that can be given to all of them is "On false pleasures." This is what happens in part one: Protarchus is unwilling to agree that pleasures and pains could be false; he accepts the possibility of false opinions, but rejects the possibility of false fears, false expectations, and false pleasures; a lengthy discussion follows which culminates in the assertion that a "just, pious and good man," a "friend of the gods," has "true pleasures," while an "unjust and thoroughly bad man" can only have "false pleasures," which imitate the "true pleasures" to the point of ridicule; and the same can be said of pains. 66

This, now, is what happens in part two: we are reminded that pleasure and pain are a limitless pair tied to "the more as well as the less"; any one who feels pleasure in any way always really feels pleasure; but these pleasures may be felt as present pleasures and also as pleasures to be felt in the future; the latter ones may be false because they may not come into being as expected, not as great and intense as expected; and when, in our feelings, we are trying to compare pleasures with pleasures, or pains with pains, or pleasures with pains, we may reach entirely false results, because of the limitless and indeterminate character of both, pleasure and pain.

The third part of this passage does not concern false pleasures directly, but rather pleasures falsely understood or falsely judged. The theme of pleasure and pain is a common topic in Plato's own time, widely discussed by outstanding men. One of the opinions about pleasure, rejected by Socrates, is that freedom from pain is identified with pleasure. For some men this opinion amounts to the firm denial of the existence of pleasures

64 36 B.
65 33 B.
66 39 E–40 C.
altogether. For them that which Philebus and his friends call pleasures are merely escapes from pain. These men are men "of harsh judgments." Socrates does not mention any names, but it is highly probable that Antisthenes is one of these men. Antisthenes is reputed to have said: "Should I ever meet Aphrodite, I would strangle her with my own hands."

I have condensed this passage of the dialogue to the utmost. But you understand that it challenges the conviction of Philebus radically. Let us look at him again. He has not said a word. Is he really listening? We know, he had grown tired. Has not his sweet repose mentioned by Protarchus a long time ago transformed itself into sound sleep? And sleep, sound, dreamless sleep, we should observe, excludes any feeling of pleasure and pain, brings about, in other words, a condition of the "most divine life," yet a condition not compatible with Philebus's own aspirations. Yes, there he lies, the beautiful Philebus, with closed eyes and closed ears, while Socrates continues the inquiry, imposed upon him by Philebus, Protarchus, and the other young men. In sharp contrast to Philebus's fatigue and somnolence are Socrates' vigor and straightforwardness.

A subtle transition is brought to pass inasmuch as Socrates takes those men "of harsh judgments" with whom he disagrees as allies. He is going to describe more accurately what pleasure means to these men, who oppose it or deny its existence. We have already seen that pain and joy can be felt at the same time. The point is now emphasized: pain and pleasure do not only constitute an indeterminate pair, but they also mix with each other. This is again shown by Socrates in a tripartite way. Some mixtures of pleasure and pain are those in which both pleasure and pain, involve the body, as, for example, itching and scratching, which Protarchus tends to consider a "mixed evil." Some mixtures are those in which the body and the soul contribute the opposite elements, "each adding pain or pleasure to the other's pleasure and pain," as, for example—we have heard that before—a man suffers from thirst, is pained by his bodily emptiness, but rejoices in his hope to be filled, a hope entertained only by his soul. The third kind of mixture is the most important; it is the one in which the soul and only the soul is involved. Socrates gives as examples of pains belonging to this third kind: anger, fear, longing, mourning, love, jealousy, envy—and he asks: "Shall we not find them full of ineffable pleasures?" He then refers—in one sentence only—to anger and to mournings and longings in order to show the mixture of pain and of pleasure in them. Protarchus fully agrees. Socrates' next question is: "And you remember, too, how people, at tragedies, enjoy the spectacle and at the same time weep"? "Yes, certainly," says Protarchus.

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67 44 C–D.
68 See, for example, 34 D 4–8 and 38 B 3–4.
69 46 A.
70 47 C.
71 47 E.
72 48 A.
Socrates asks: "And the condition of our souls at comedies—do you know that there, too, there is a mixture of pain and pleasure?" 73 Protarchus's answer is: "I do not quite understand." Socrates confirms that it is not easy to understand such a condition under such circumstances, and Protarchus, on his part, confirms that it is not easy for him. It is not easy for us either.

This is the short beginning of the discussion about the third kind of mixture of pleasure and pain, which involves only the soul. And now, surprisingly, Socrates launches into a lengthy explanation of what happens to spectators at comedies. It takes no less than four pages, and ends with Socrates’ contention that pain is mixed with pleasure—not only for spectators in the theatre, where tragedies and comedies are performed—but also "in all the tragedy and comedy of life." 74 Today, we are prone to call any horrible or simply sad event a "tragedy" and a funny one a "comedy." But that was not done in ancient times. The expression "tragedy and comedy of life" in the dialogue is highly unusual and even paradoxical. It is almost unique; a somewhat similar phrase referring to tragedy, not to comedy, can be found only in Plato's Laws. 75 Why is this expression used in the Philebus? Let us hear what Socrates says.

He takes up envy first. Envy is a pain of the soul, but we also see an envious man rejoicing in the evils that befall those close to him. Thus envy is both pain and pleasure. Socrates then takes up the ridiculous. The ridiculous is in the main the consequence of a disposition in the human soul which contradicts the famous inscription at Delphi. A ridiculous man is a man who does not know himself. This folly of not knowing oneself can have three aspects: (1) the conceit of being richer than one is; (2) the conceit of being more beautiful than one is; (3) the conceit of being more virtuous than one is, especially wiser than one is (δοξοσοφική). This third kind of conceit is the most numerous. Now, we tend to laugh at men thus conceived. But two cases must be distinguished here. Those who are laughed at may be strong and able to revenge themselves, and are then powerful, terrible, and hateful; for folly in the powerful is hateful and base. Or they are weak and unable to revenge themselves, and then they are truly ridiculous. When we laugh at the follies of such men, who may be our friends, we feel pleasure. But to feel pleasure at the follies of our friends is what envy brings about, since it is envy that makes us rejoice in the evils that befall these our friends, and envy is painful. Therefore, when we laugh at what is ridiculous in our friends, we mix pleasure and pain.

It is not quite clear how all this explains what happens at comedies, although Protarchus appears to be satisfied. Socrates adds that all that was said by him so far concerned only envy, mourning, and anger (he

73 ibid.
74 50 B.
75 817 B.
omits longing, which was also mentioned by him in that one sentence he uttered before passing on to tragedies and comedies. And now, Socrates declares, he need not go further and Protarchus ought to accept the assertion that there are plenty of mixtures of pain and of pleasure. But now something extraordinary happens that sheds more light on the theme of comedy.

You will remember that the young men, who surround Socrates, extracted from him the promise not to go home before bringing the discussion about pleasure and thoughtfulness to a satisfactory end. And you will also remember that Protarchus, later on, reminded Socrates of this promise and assured him that not one of the young men would let him go before the end of the discussion was reached. Listen to what Socrates says now: “Tell me then: will you let me off, or will you let midnight come? I think only a few words are needed to induce you to let me off.” 76 How strange! Why on earth does Socrates utter these words? Is this the Socrates who is known for his never abating eagerness to discuss things? Has he grown tired like Philebus? Or is it that envy has entered not only the λόγος but also the stage, the “comedy of life” presented in the dialogue? Incredible as it might seem, Socrates appears to be envious seeing Philebus asleep, “divinely” asleep, without pleasure and pain. 77 Does that not mean that Socrates is pained by this envy and yet also pleased by the ridiculous aspect of Philebus’s sleep, which manifests the latter’s “conceit of wisdom,” the δοξοσοφία of friend Philebus? But what about us, who read or hear the words of the dialogue and are the spectators of this “comedy of life”? Well, we are puzzled and pleased by realizing that Socrates of all people is envious at this moment, and we are also pained by witnessing what happens to him. We might refuse to accept that this is what is going on at this moment, but this refusal would only mean that we expect to be pained and pleased, if we accepted it.

Yes, the dialogue is pleasurable and painful in deed (εἴρηκος), in addition to dealing with pleasure and pain in speech (λόγος). And is there any need to mention the pain and the pleasure one feels in reading, or listening to, the dialogue in all its deliberately complex and inordinate convolution? We understand now, I think, why the title of the dialogue is Philebus.

Socrates proceeds, of course. He takes up now—and this is a new transition—the pure pleasures, that is, pleasures unmixed with pain. Socrates lists five kinds of such pleasures, four of them conveyed to us by our senses, one involving that which cannot be sensed. The first four kinds of pure pleasure have their source in beautiful figures, in beautiful colors, in clear sounds and in many odors. The beautiful figures are not beautiful living beings or paintings, but—“says the argument” 78—a

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76 50 D.
77 Cf. Apology 40 C–E.
78 51 C.
straight line drawn with the help of a ruler, a circular line drawn with the help of a compass, plane figures drawn with the help of these same tools, and solid figures constructed with the help of suitable instruments. 79 The beautiful colors are pure colors, in which there is no trace of any other color. Clear sounds are those that send forth a single pure tone. The pleasures these figures, colors, and sounds generate are pure pleasures, unmixed with pain. As to the pleasures of smell, they are, as Socrates playfully says, "less divine." The last kind of pure pleasure—and this is deeply serious—is that which has its source in the known or the knowable, accessible to human beings without hunger for learning and without pangs of such hunger. 80 What Socrates means is contemplation (θεωρία), which is not preceded by φθορά, the desire to know, as we feel it in the pursuit of knowledge. This pleasure of contemplation is felt by exceedingly few.

The transition now made leads to a passage that again has three parts, of which again the third is the most important. The first part extends in some way the realm of pure pleasures by the statement that what characterizes such pleasures is due measure. The second part makes us understand that the pure pleasures are, because of their purity, also true pleasures. In the third—the longest—part Socrates refutes "certain ingenious people" 81 while accepting one of their premises. These "ingenious people" are reduced a little later to one man, and there is hardly any doubt that this man is Aristippus. His premise, which Socrates accepts, is that pleasure consists in a process of generation and has no stable being. What is rejected by Socrates is that such a process in itself is a good. To refute this assertion, Socrates proposes to consider the relation that the process of coming into being (γένεσις) has to being (φύσις). The question is: which one of the two is for the sake of the other? Protarchus rephrases the question as follows: do ships exist for the sake of shipbuilding or is shipbuilding for the sake of ships? Protarchus knows the answer to this question, of course, but Socrates gives the answer in an all-comprising form: "Every instance of generation is for the sake of some being or other, and all generation is always for the sake of being." 82 Now, the being for the sake of which the process of generation takes place is "of the order of the good," while the process of generation itself is not of that order. Therefore, says Socrates, we must be grateful to him who pointed out that there is only a generation, but no being of pleasure. He makes a laughingstock of all those who find their highest end in pleasure and know that pleasure is nothing but a process of generation. For their highest end is not of the order of the good. Protarchus concludes: "It is a great absurdity, as it appears, Socrates, to tell us that pleasure is a good." 83

79 53 A–B.
80 52 A.
81 53 C.
82 54 C.
83 55 A.
There is a new transition, in which courage, self-restraint and νοῦς are mentioned and which begins to move the dialogue upward. The task is now to consider νοῦς and knowledge carefully and to find out what is by nature purest in them. We expect that their truest parts will be joined with the truest parts of pleasure in the desired mixed life.

Two kinds of knowledge are distinguished. One is necessary to produce things. the other serves education and nurture. The productive knowledge, the “know how” of the producing arts, is taken up first, and here again a division is to be made. Some of those parts are acquired by practice and toil, aided by guessing, and lack precision. They do not use sufficiently the arts of counting, measuring, and weighing. This holds, Socrates says, for music, as it is commonly practiced, for medicine, agriculture, piloting, and generalship. But in the arts of building, shipbuilding, and house-building, for example, there is much more precision, because measuring and the use of ingenious instruments play a much greater role in them. It is at this point that Socrates divides the arts of counting and of measuring (not, however, that of weighing) into two kinds. Some counting refers to visible and tangible units, which are all unequal; but there is also counting of units that do not differ at all from each other. This kind of counting is the basis of the true art of numbering, of true “arithmetic.” The art of measuring may also refer either to visible and tangible things or to entities that cannot be sensed. To measure, and to deal with, the latter entities means to be engaged in “geometry,” not for the purpose of production and trade, but for the purpose of knowing. And this holds also for the careful study of ratios and proportions. These true arts of numbering and measuring serve education and nurture. We see that there is a kind of knowledge purer than another, as one pleasure is purer than another. This purity of knowledge brings about much greater clarity and precision and much more truth.

But there is, beyond that pure mathematical knowledge, the power of dialectic. It deals with Being, True Being, with that which always immutably is. Protarchus remembers at this point the claim of Gorgias that the art of persuasion, the rhetorical art, surpasses all other arts. Socrates replies that he was not thinking of the art that surpasses all others by being the “greatest,” the “best,” and the “most useful” to men; he was thinking of the art or the knowledge which is most concerned about clearness, precision, and the most true, however little and of little use it might be. Socrates asks Protarchus to look neither at the usefulness nor at the reputation of the various sciences, but to consider whether there is a power in our souls which is in love with Truth and does everything for the sake of Truth. Would this power possess thoughtfulness (φρονήσις) and νοῦς in the greatest purity? Protarchus concedes that this must be so.

To be in love with Truth does not mean to possess it or to contemplate it. It means to pursue it, to try to find it, indefatigably, unremittingly; to pursue it means to submit to the power of discourse, a power that is able to discover in the spoken or silent words that which make speaking and
About Plato's Philebus

thinking ultimately possible, namely the unchangeable and, thereby, true beings. But, as Socrates points out, the many existing arts and the men engaged in them do not submit to the power of discourse, but are satisfied with their opinions. If a man sees fit to investigate nature, he spends his life in studying this world of ours—that is to say, tries to find out how it came into being, how it is acted upon and how it acts itself. By doing that, that man toils to discover transient productions of the present, the future and the past, not what unchangeably always is. And Socrates asks: "How can we gain anything stable about things which have no stability whatsoever?" 84 The argument compels us thus to see that the stable, pure, and true, can only be found in what is eternally the same without change or mixture or, Socrates surprisingly adds, "in what is most akin to it." 85 He may mean the moving, but never changing celestial bodies.

This passage which deals with the purest knowledge ends with the repeated reference to νοὴς and φιλόνοης, which have to be honored most. This reference is the last transition in the dialogue to the last passage of the dialogue.

This last passage is about the most desirable life, in which thoughtfulness and pleasure are mixed. Socrates undertakes now to make this mixture with the help of Protarchus. We expected and still expect that the pure pleasures and the purest knowledge will be joined in this mixture.

Before the mixing begins, Socrates reminds Protarchus and us of what had been said before. Philebus had claimed that pleasure was the true goal of every living being and that these two words, "good" and "pleasant," mean the same thing. Socrates, on the other hand, claimed that "good" and "pleasant" mean different things and that the share of thoughtfulness in the good is greater than pleasure's. They had agreed, Socrates continues, that any living being, in whom the good is present always, altogether, and in all ways, has no further need of anything, but is perfectly self-sufficient; but that neither a life of pleasure unmixed with thoughtfulness nor a thoughtful life unmixed with pleasure was a desirable life.

Directly related to the task of making the mixture is the task of winning a clear understanding of the good in the well-mixed life, or at least an outline of it, 86 so as to be better able to find out to what in the well-mixed life the second prize should be assigned. We remember that Socrates had raised the question before. At that time the possible recipients of the second prize were νοὴς and pleasure. Note that in this last passage of the dialogue νοὴς has not been mentioned so far.

This is now what Socrates says jovially and playfully just before he begins to make the mixture: "Let us make the mixture, Protarchus, with a proper prayer to the gods, Dionysus or Hephaestus, or whoever he be

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84 59 B.
85 59 C.
86 61 A.
who presides over the mixing.” 87 Dionysus leads on revellers and presides over orgies; he stands here for pleasure. Hephaestus is known for his thoughtful and sober craftsmanship. Socrates continues: “We are like wine pourers, and beside us are fountains—that of pleasure may be likened to a fount of honey, and the sober, wineless fount of thoughtfulness to one of pure, health-giving water of which we must do our best to mix as well as possible.” 88

The first question is: should Socrates and Protarchus mix all pleasure with all thoughtfulness? Socrates observes that this would not be safe. It would be better to mix first that pleasure which was more truly pleasure with that knowledge which was most true and most precise. Protarchus agrees. But Socrates is not satisfied. Let us assume, he says, a man who is thoughtful about justice itself, that is, about the ἔλεος of justice, and is guided in his reasoning about everything that truly is by his apprehension of the intelligible, by his νοητόν (it is the first time that νοητόν is mentioned in this last passage of the dialogue). If this man is fully cognizant of the mathematical circle and the all-embracing celestial sphere, but is ignorant of our human sphere and human circles, will this man have sufficient knowledge? No, says Protarchus, it would be ridiculous for a man to be concerned only with divine knowledge. “Do you mean,” Socrates asks, “that the unstable and impure art of the untrue rule and circle is to be put with the other arts into the mixture?” 89 Yes, says Protarchus, that is necessary, if any man is ever to find his way home. Socrates and Protarchus go further. They put music, which they said a while ago was full of guesswork and lacked purity, and all the deficient kinds of knowledge mingling with the pure into the mixture.

Then Socrates turns to the pleasures. Here again the pure and true pleasures are not the only ones to be put into the mixture. For the first and only time in the dialogue Socrates mentions “necessary pleasures,” 90 by which he means pleasures connected with the satisfaction of vital needs, and adds them to the pure ones. And the further question arises: is it not advantageous and harmless to let all pleasures be a part of the mixture, just as it was harmless and advantageous to let all the arts and all knowledge be such a part? Whereupon Socrates says: “There is no use in asking us, Protarchus; we must ask the pleasures themselves and the different kinds of thoughtfulness about one another.” 91 That’s what Socrates does. He asks first the pleasures: “Would you choose to dwell with the whole of thoughtfulness or with none at all?” 92 And Socrates lets them answer that for any tribe to be solitary and unalloyed is neither possible nor

87 61 B/C.
88 61 C.
89 62 B.
90 62 E.
91 63 A/B.
92 63 B.
profitable: "We think the best to live with is the knowledge of all other things and, so far as is possible, the perfect knowledge of ourselves." 93

Let us not forget, it is Socrates whom we hear speaking. It is highly doubtful whether the pleasures can speak — and can have any knowledge of themselves. And now Socrates turns to thoughtfulness and νοῦς. (It is the second time that νοῦς is mentioned in this last passage of the dialogue.) Socrates asks them whether they want the greatest and most intense pleasures to dwell with them in addition to the true and pure pleasures. And Socrates replies for them — that is, for thoughtfulness and νοῦς — that the true and pure pleasures are almost their own, and also those which are united to health and self-restraint and all those which are handmaids of virtue; they should be added to the mixture; as to the pleasures which madden the souls of men, which are the companions of folly and of all the other vices, it would be senseless to mix them with the νοῦς.

This is the third time that νοῦς is mentioned in the passage, while thoughtfulness (φρόνησις), which was also addressed by Socrates, is left out. When Socrates has finished replying in the name of both νοῦς and φρόνησις, he says to Protarchus: "Shall we not say that this reply which the νοῦς has now made for itself and memory and right opinion is thoughtful and sensible?" 94 And Protarchus says: "Very much so." Which νοῦς is this νοῦς? Is it the "divine νοῦς" that Socrates contrasted with his own in his reply to Philebus a long time ago? No, it is Socrates who was speaking guided by his own νοῦς. It is not the νοῦς that the "easy" cosmological account found to be "the cause of all" and that the sages, in exalting themselves, declare to be "king of heaven and earth." It is not the fourth tribe of the Promethean gift, which Socrates introduced, fearing to appear ridiculous by doing that. Socrates' own νοῦς is responsible for the kind of mixture he makes to produce the life which combines thoughtfulness and pleasure, is the cause of this life. It is neither the cause of the commixture of the "limitless" and of the "limit," nor the cause of these first two tribes of the Promethean gift.

What does the original introduction of the νοῦς as the "cause of all" and the subsequent somewhat veiled rejection of this νοῦς mean? I think it means a subtle mocking of Plato's great pupil Aristotle. Aristotle's thoughts must certainly have been familiar to Plato in his late years. A passage in an ancient manuscript,95 that informs us about Aristotle's life, hints at lively controversies between Plato and Aristotle. Plato appears to have nicknamed Aristotle ὁ νοῦς, and to have once said, when Aristotle was not present at a meeting: "The νοῦς is absent; dullness reigns in the lecture room." We do know that the investigation of the different meanings

93 63 B/C.
94 64 A.
of cause (αἰτία) and of the divine νοῦς plays a decisive role in Aristotle's works. What the dialogue intimates is that νοῦς is above all a human possession, and that Socrates is the embodiment of this νοῦς.

Socrates completes the mixture by pointing to the necessity that truth must be a part of it, and then asks what is the most precious in it and the chief cause for this mixed life to be most lovable. The answer is: due measure and proportion which bring about beauty and excellence. Nobody is ignorant of this. We should more properly, however, consider these three, beauty, truth, due measure, as the components of the goodness of the mixture. We see, first: νοῦς is more akin to truth than pleasure; secondly: nothing could be found more immoderate than pleasure and nothing is more in harmony with due measure than νοῦς and knowledge; and thirdly: νοῦς has a greater share in beauty than pleasure.

And now, finally, Socrates gives a list of the best human possessions in their proper order. First something like Measure, Due Measure, Propriety, and like everything which must be considered of the same order. Secondly comes what is well proportioned, beautiful, has been completed and is sufficient, and all that belongs to that very family. Socrates continues: "As to the third—this is my prophecy—if you insist on νοῦς and φόρμας, you will not wander far from the truth." ⁹⁶ Is νοῦς relegated to the third place? No, it is elevated to the proper rank, if you consider the role the triad played in the entire dialogue. Fourthly come the different kinds of knowledge, the arts, the true opinions; and fifthly the painless pure pleasures of the soul, some of which accompany knowledge and some of which—as we have seen—accompany perceptions (observe that knowledge was not mentioned before among the pure pleasures, presumably because the pursuit of knowledge involves the desire to know, involves ἐφόσον, in which pain and pleasure are mixed). There is no sixth place, says Socrates, quoting Orpheus. He reminds us that neither νοῦς nor pleasure is the good itself, since both are devoid of self-sufficiency. But within the mixed life, which is the victor, νοῦς has now been given the second prize, while pleasure—as Socrates' own νοῦς had predicted a long time ago—is further behind than the third place. Note that this holds even for pure pleasure and that the satisfaction of vital needs is not mentioned at all. Pleasure is fifth. We should be aware that, according to the tradition, the people called "Pythagoreans" associated the goddess Aphrodite with the number five.

The list given by Socrates is strangely unprecise and inordinate. It is indeed only an outline of the good in the most desirable life. The ἀμετακόπτειν, the "limitless," the "indeterminate," reigns, though not supremely, in the dialogue.

I shall not keep you until midnight. Good night! But there will be a discussion.

⁹⁶ 66 B.
ON CORNEILLE'S *HORACE*

DAIN A. TRAFTON

The drama of *Horace* is played against a background of allusions to Rome's origins. Behind Corneille's harshly illuminated characters appear the shadows of Romulus, the Sabine women, and Camilla of the Volsci. All that happens is under the auspices of the divine promise of empire made to Aeneas. Critics who have noticed this background and reflected upon it seem to agree that its function is to provide a framework of analogies to the characters and action of the play itself. What happens in *Horace*, these critics claim, is like what happened in Rome's earliest history. And by bringing together and expanding the scattered remarks made in a number of recent essays, one might synthesize a view of the play as a kind of recapitulation, reduced to its essential pattern, of Rome's legendary foundation.

*Horace*, one might begin, is in its own right a play about political foundation—not about the foundation of a state, to be sure, but about the foundation of an empire. The conquest of Albe is the first of those conquests by which, as we are frequently reminded, Rome is to spread its empire over the earth. But the conquest of Albe is also a parricide, for Albe is said to be Rome's "mother" (56). In the light of the play's allusions to Romulus (see II.52-54, 1532, 1755-58), then, Horace appears to be reenacting the parricidal role of the state's founder when he destroys Albe and kills his brothers-in-law and sister in the process. Camille, of course, plays the role of victim in this dramatic recapitulation. Her name (which is not found in the sources) and her curse, calling for

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2 Throughout this essay I use "state" rather than "city" to refer to Rome. Although the latter would be more appropriate from a Roman point of view (e.g., Livy's), the former is Corneille's word in the play. It is one of the ways by which he draws attention to the relevance of his material to seventeenth-century France. (See note 11.)
the annihilation of Rome by an army of its neighbors (1305-06), suggest that Corneille saw her as a reincarnation of the tragic and heroic spirit of Camilla, the warrior maiden who led her Volscians along with the other Italian cities and tribes against Aeneas and died in the hopeless attempt to throw him out of Italy. Camille's fate reminds us of the tragic suffering that seems destined to attend the harsh process by which states are founded and expanded. And Sabine (who is not in Corneille's sources at all), the daughter of Albe married to a Roman, who threatens to throw herself between her husband and her brother to prevent their parricidal combat (659-62), recalls those Sabine women who interceded in a similar situation during Rome's earliest days. The spirit of mediation she represents is no less essential to political foundation than the heroism and parricide of the founder or the tragic suffering of those who cling to the old ways. Through all these allusions, one might conclude, Corneille seems to be telling us that to become and stay great, states must occasionally return to their beginnings; the aggrandizement of states requires the same unholy crime, tragic suffering, and capacity for mediation that are necessary when states are founded.

No doubt Corneille does mean to suggest that Rome's founding and the founding of its empire followed similar patterns. Stress on the analogical function of the play's historical allusions, however, obscured another function, which is perhaps even more important but which commentators have altogether neglected. For in addition to revealing the similarities, Horace also makes clear the fundamental differences between the foundation of the empire and the foundation of Rome itself. Horace, Camille, and Sabine live in very different times from Romulus, Aeneas, Camilla, and the Sabine women. The times of the founders were simpler; the foundation of the empire is torn by uncertainty and paradox.

Although the new imperial state comes into being under the sign of a prophecy from the days of the founders, the new state also has its own prophecy, and a comparison between the two reveals how far Rome has come from heroic simplicity. In the beginning, the gods spoke directly and unambiguously to Aeneas. Although the destiny they foretold was hardly easy, it could not be doubted and ultimately promised a glorious reward for suffering. In contrast, the prophecy made to Camille by a nameless Greek living at the foot of the Aventine is a deceptive riddle, at best the source of fitful moods of hope and, when it finally proves true, pointing the way only to death. Similar changes, moreover, lie behind the allusions to Camilla and the Sabine women. The fact that Camille, unlike her namesake, is not an external enemy of Rome but part of the city itself, and not only part of the city but part of Horace's own family, tends to increase our sense of the paradoxical harshness of Rome's great destiny. The imperial undertaking to conquer others apparently also involves a kind of self-destruction. And while the desperate stratagem of the Sabine women was successful in effecting a reconciliation and in preventing parricide, the similar effort of Sabine is fruitless. Her entreaties are soon
silenced by her husband, who orders his father to keep her locked in the house while the parricidal combat runs its course. At the end of the play she is reconciled to her husband in Rome not because she has prevented bloodshed but in spite of the fact that she has failed to do so.

These changes in connection with Camille and Sabine are in accord with Corneille’s general expansion of the theme of parricide until it touches every aspect of the action and constitutes perhaps the central theme in the play. For the founders of the city, at least as they appear in the play’s historical allusions, parricide was limited to a single instance—the murder of Remus—and did not taint every deed, was even specifically averted in the war between the Romans and the Sabines. But for the founders of the empire parricide occurs at every turn; it infects everything. Accordingly, one must look to that theme and to its protagonists, the parricidal founders, Romulus and Horace, in order to understand what I take to be at once the most important difference between the founders of the city and the founders of the empire and the key to the play’s deeper political meaning.

According to one of the most interesting recent interpretations of *Horace*, parricide can be understood as an expression of the need felt by all heroes to destroy their origins. The hero’s impulse is to stand alone, to assert a godlike independence, and his aspiration toward divinity drives him to destroy any ties that bind him to the common lot. Of these, the family tie is especially galling because it reminds him of his radical dependence upon his origins; he is not self-created. Parricide in some form or other consequently becomes a heroic necessity. Horace’s part in the parricidal destruction of Albe and his murder of his sister, then, like Romulus’s murder of Remus, can be seen as inevitable consequences of heroic aspiration.

One can agree that the account of Romulus’s murder of Remus given by Livy (I.vii), Corneille’s main source, might be interpreted in the light of this analysis of heroism. At least one careful reader of Livy, Machiavelli, reserves his highest praise for Romulus precisely because his virìtù made him radically independent of his origins. Romulus, Theseus, Moses, and Cyrus are the four greatest princes for Machiavelli because they were able to break absolutely with the past and to found truly new states. Of course it was an accident of birth that freed Romulus from many of the ties that bind men to their origins, but when Fortune failed him, as when she burdened him with a twin brother, his heroic virìtù provided the remedy.

To see Horace’s parricide as the expression of a similar, heroic effort to liberate himself from his origins, however, is unconvincing. On the contrary, Horace’s parricide appears to be an affirmation and defense of his origins as he understands them. For if Horace is sternly ready to

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3 Doubrovsky, pp. 133–84; esp. pp. 151–52.

4 See *The Prince*, ch. 6.
commit sororicide, a kind of fratricide (killing his brothers-in-law), and a kind of matricide (as the Roman who kills Rome’s “mother”), the play also makes it clear that he is not about to complete the gamut of parricidal crimes and make a clean sweep of his origins. Patricide and that form of parricide that involves crimes against one’s patrie are unthinkable to him. Father and fatherland remain sacred, and his other parricides are in fact dedicated to them precisely because it is in them that he feels his origins lie.

After murdering Camille, Horace meets three characters in quick succession: Procule, Sabine, and his father. Against the reproaches of the first two, Procule and Sabine, Horace unflinchingly defends the “justice” (1323) of what he has just done, and if Sabine manages temporarily to upset his equanimity, it is rather by the pathos of her request that he kill her too than by any doubt she throws upon his opinion of Camille’s deserts. There is no convincing evidence in these encounters, or anywhere else in the play, that Horace’s conviction of the justice of his deed is ever shaken. But when his father accuses him, not of injustice, but of having dishonored himself, his submission is immediate and utter. And the terms in which he proffers it are revealing:

Disposez de mon sang, les lois vous en font maitre;  
J'ai cru devoir le sien aux lieux qui m'ont vu naître.  
Si dans vos sentiments mon zèle est criminel,  
S'il m'en faut recevoir un reproche éternel,  
Si ma main en devient honteuse et profanée,  
Vous pouvez d'un seul mot trancher ma destinée:  
Reprenez tout ce sang de qui ma lacheté  
A si bruteaulement souillé la pureté.  
Ma main n'a pu souffrir de crime en votre race;  
Ne souffrez point de tache en la maison d'Horace.

(491-92)

First it is important to note that it is not clear that Horace agrees with his father’s accusation any more than he agreed with the reproaches of Procule or Sabine. The words “Si dans vos sentiments...” and the conditional clauses that follow suggest that Horace’s “sentiments” are different from his father’s. And later, before the king, when Horace asks for permission to kill himself to save his honor, he does not speak of expiation for Camille’s murder or for any particular dishonor already incurred. He admits that he is “en péril de quelque ignominie” (1584), but the vague “quelque” indicates that he is not thinking specifically of Camille but generally of the future dishonor that may come to him simply because he will be unable to live up to the expectations created in “le peuple” by his exploit against the Curiaces. The point is that Horace submits to his father, not because he agrees with him, but out of piety. “Reprenez tout ce sang,” says Horace, and in the original version of 1641, he said “Reprenez votre sang.” In either case the implication comes
through clearly enough. "You have a right," Horace is saying, "whether I agree with your judgment or not, to take back this blood because it was yours in the first place. You gave it to me. You are its origin, the origin of my life."

Furthermore, behind this fundamental piety felt for his father as the origin of his blood lies an even deeper piety felt for Rome.

Disposez de mon sang, les lois vous en font maitre;  
J'ai cru devoir le sien aux lieux qui m'ont vu naître.

Horace will surrender his blood to his father, not only because his father gave it to him in the first place, but because his father's right to it is decreed by Roman law. Roman law recognizes fathers rather than mothers as the origin of blood. Horace never even mentions his mother in the play, nor would he, one can be sure, be moved by Sabine's argument that Rome should not attack Albe because Albe is Rome's "mother" and its "origin" (55-56). To the extent, then, that Roman law is the origin of Horace's opinion about his origin, the origin of his piety for his father, Roman law might be said to be the origin of Horace's origin. But Rome also figures in Horace's piety for his origins in another, much more direct way. Rome is the place where he was born, his place of origin. And the power that this idea of Rome has for him is evident in the fact that it was to this place of origin that he felt he "owed" Camille's life. Indeed, he even warned Camille, just before killing her, to remember "Ce que doit ta naissance aux intérêts de Rome" (1300). It is not surprising, therefore, that Horace considers himself, as he tells us within the first five lines of his first speech in the play, one of Rome's "children" (375) or that he feels that King Tulle, as the head of the state, has as much right to his blood as his father does. In his long final speech, Horace reveals that he would already have committed suicide to save his honor were it not for his belief that he does not have the right to shed blood that "belongs" to the king:

Mais sans votre congé mon sang n'ose sortir;  
Comme il vous appartient, votre aveu doit se prendre;  
C'est vous le dérober qu'autrement le répandre.

(1586-88)

From a passage such as the one just mentioned, in which Horace speaks of committing suicide to save his honor, some critics have concluded that he is primarily motivated by personal glory. The important point, however, is that in spite of his desire Horace will not kill himself unless he

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5 Cf. Aristotle's *Politics*, 1275b, 26-30 (III.i.9).
receives the king's permission. In other words, here, as elsewhere, he definitely subordinates his personal glory to his fatherland. In fact, it may even be doubted whether Horace has any conception of his glory as a distinctly individual quality separate from his origins. When he speaks of saving his honor and glory, he is also thinking of protecting his "name" (1569). The three words are interchangeable, and the sense of "name" that characterizes him throughout the play provides another illustration of the piety that binds him to father and fatherland. Horace has two names, and the very first reference to him in the play couples both of them around the verb "to be" as around an equal sign. "Horace est Romain" (25). "Horace" and "Roman": these are his names, and it is important that they are also names that he shares with others; they constitute a heritage and a bond with others that give him his sense of identity. He tells his father that he killed Camille, not only because he felt he "owed" her life to Rome, but because "Ma main n'a pu souffrir de crime en votre race," and in the next line he urges his father to kill him rather than suffer a stain "en la maison d'Horace." The rhyme carries the emotional weight; the name "Horace" is the name of "votre race," and it is the name of this race rather than a merely individual name that Horace is concerned to protect, as when he asks Tulle's permission to kill himself. Horace's name and honor are practically indistinguishable from the name and honor of his race. It is even possible to wonder whether the play's title refers to him or to his father or to the race in general. Certainly Horace would not have been offended by the attain to his honor as an individual that is implicit in such a doubt.

Horace regards with similar piety the name that comes to him from Rome. He is humbly aware that the fact that he is "named" (see II.307, 331, 368, 372, 502) by Rome as its representative against Albe offers him glory that he would never have acquired through personal merit alone. Although no one doubts his worth, his "naming" nevertheless comes as a surprise in the play. There may be some assumed modesty, but there is also fundamental sincerity in his reply to Curiace's compliments:

Loin de trembler pour Albe, il vous faut plaindre Rome,
Voyant ceux qu'elle oublie et les trois qu'elle nomme.
C'est un aveuglement pour elle bien fatal
D'avoir tant à choisir, et de choisir mal.
Mille de ses enfants beaucoup plus dignes d'elle
Pouvaient bien mieux que nous soutenir sa querelle.

(371-76)

By Rome's unexpected favor Horace and his brothers have become the children of Rome, Romans par excellence. "Hors les fils d'Horace, il n'est point de Romains" (354), exclaims Curiace. "Fils d'Horace" has become practically identified with "fils de Rome," and Horace accepts the burden of his new name eagerly:
It does not gall him that Horace become a glorious name because "Horace est Romain", that his glory will remain in significant part a reflected glory. "Si vous n'êtes Romain, soyez digne de l'être" (483), he admonishes Curiace when we might have expected him to say, had he been a different kind of hero, "Si vous n'êtes Horace, soyez digne de l'être."

Now we are in a position to state more fully the difference between Horace and Romulus. If the founding of the state called for heroic independence, the founding of the empire is a work of radical dependence. Both kinds of foundation involve crime, particularly the most terrible crime of parricide; but for Romulus parricide was the necessary means to something new, whereas Horace commits his parricide for the sake of something old, in the name of family and state, as well as for the new empire. Romulus was impious, and Horace is impiously pious. His impiety is limited by an almost simultaneous piety for pater and patria, and the patriotism that is so often attributed to him is precisely defined by the paradoxical union of these two qualities. The founder of an empire must be the profoundest kind of patriot. His task is to renew his fatherland by committing all the crimes necessary to political foundation except the ultimate crime against the fatherland itself. He is a paradoxical creature in whom nearly utter ruthlessness is joined to the deepest piety. By contrast, of course, the founder of a new state cannot be a patriot. His energies cannot be devoted to the preservation and aggrandizement of the state of his origins; he must be prepared to commit any crime, even against his origins, to accomplish his task. He respects no father or fatherland and becomes instead the father of a new land, the father of his state rather than, like Horace, one of its most eminent "children."  

7 Horace is also conscious of owing his "name" partly to fate; at one point he reminds Curiace that it is "Le sort qui de l'honneur nous ouvre la barrière" (431). This recognition of fate's role suggests that Horace does not identify himself completely with father or fatherland. At the same time, however, his feeling for them is clearly much stronger than his piety for fate or the gods. When he leaves Camille for the encounter with the Curiaces, his last advice to her is:

Querellez Ciel et terre, et maudissez le sort;  
Mais après le combat ne pensez plus au mort.  

(529-30)

In other words, he will allow her to curse heaven, earth, and fate; but when she curses Rome, he will kill her.

8 "Patriotism" is a word often used rather loosely in studies of Horace. That the play leads us to discover the roots of the concept in Horace's piety has never been pointed out.

9 Cf. Abraham Lincoln's "Address Before The Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield" (1838) on "the perpetuation of our political institutions."
The idea that Romulus, as founder, is the father of Rome is never explicitly stated in the play but is unmistakably implied by the passage, already mentioned, in which Sabine argues that Albe is Rome's "mother" and "origin." She is trying to persuade Julie that Rome should respect its maternal origin:

_Mais respecte une ville à qui tu dois Romule._
_Ingrate, souviens-toi que du sang de ses rois_
_Tu tiens ton nom, tes murs et tes premières lois._
_Albe est ton origine: arrête et considère_
_Que tu portes le fer dans le sein de ta mère._

(52-56)

I have commented upon Sabine's failure to understand Roman patriotism. We have seen that the Roman patriot's piety does not extend to mothers. Horace is animated by "_une male assurance_" (379; cf. 1069). But at the same time Sabine's words lead us to reflect that if Albe is Rome's mother, Rome's father must be Romulus. Indeed, it is much more directly from him than from Albe that Rome received its "name," "walls," and "laws." According to the legend recounted by Livy, Romulus raised the city's walls, and although he followed Alban usage for certain religious laws, the political laws that he established were apparently of his own devising. The name that he gave his creation was, of course, his own.

Thus Romulus gave to Rome all those things that Horace is conscious of having inherited from it: walls (the "_lieux qui m'ont vu naitre_"), laws ("_Disposez de mon sang, les lois vous en font maitre_"), and name ("_Roman_"). If Rome stands behind Vieil Horace as Horace's origin, Romulus stands behind Rome. Romulus is the origin of Rome and therefore ultimately the origin of Horace. In a certain sense the founder of a state is indeed the origin of its citizens, of the people who grow up in his state and are formed by the influence of the name, walls, and laws that he created. Now we can perceive the final irony of the play's allusions to Romulus. To equal Romulus (and make the play's allusions to him truly analogies to Horace), to destroy his origins and found something new, Horace would have to destroy Romulus. Horace could not do this literally, of course; he would have to do it indirectly by attacking Romulus's creation, his namesake, Rome. Horace the patriot would have to turn on Rome, destroy the name, walls, and laws of Romulus, and create new ones of his own. _Roma_ would have to be replaced by _Horatium._

Beyond this, one might detect the suggestion that for _Roma_ to be replaced by _Horatium_, it would also be necessary for Horace to destroy the gods. They have promised an imperial destiny to Rome, and any attack upon it by Horace at this point would run counter to their designs. More generally, does it not follow that the hero who wants to be truly independent of his origins will have to destroy the gods, or at least the old gods? Machiavelli hints that founders of states may have
That Horace's triumphs might have led to such a conclusion is not inconceivable. In fact Valère's demand, in the last act, that Horace be put to death for Camille's murder is based on the assumption that he is the kind of man who wants to and now can, unless checked immediately, make Rome his own. Valère admits the outstanding merit of Horace's victory, but he also sees him as capable of the most outstanding crimes and therefore warns Tulle:

_Mais puisque d'un tel crime il s'est montré capable,_
_Qu'il triomphe en vainqueur et périsse en coupable._
_Arrêtez sa fureur, et sauviez de ses mains,_
_Si vous voulez régner, le reste des Romains:_
_Il y va de la perte ou du salut du reste._

(1487-91)

"Quel sang épargnera ce barbare vainqueur?" (1501) he goes on to ask.

_Faisant triompher Rome, il se l'est asservie;_
_Il a sur nous un droit et de mort et de vie;_
_Et nos jours criminels ne pourront plus durer_
_Qu'autant qu'à sa clémence il plaira l'endurer._

(1507-10)

As Valère sees it, Horace has acquired a power of life and death over Rome, a power over blood that belongs to fathers alone, and Valère closes with the frightening analogy:

_Sire, c'est ce qu'il faut que votre arrêt décide._
_En ce lieu Rome a vu le premier parricide;_
_La suite en est à craindre, et la haine des Cieux:_
_Sauvez-nous de sa main, et redoutez les Dieux._

(1531-34)

Tulle, of course, comes to see that Valère's understanding of Horace is false. After listening to Valère, Tulle listens to Horace and realizes that Rome has nothing to fear from the hero who would already have committed suicide to save his name were it not for his belief that his blood belongs to the state. "_Vis pour servir l'Etat_" (1763), Tulle commands while he pardons, confident that Horace would not live for any other reason. And whereas Valère sought to condemn Horace by comparing him to Romulus, Tulle dares to turn the same analogy to flattery:

To do something like this when he characterizes them as "armed prophets" (_The Prince_, ch. 6), and Livy informs us at length about Romulus's establishment of a new religion in Rome (I.vii). _Horace_, however, contains no allusions to these activities of Romulus, and unlike the possibility that Horace might attack the state, the possibility that he might rise to an assault upon the gods remains only the remotest of suggestions, if it is in the play at all. (See note 7.)
De pareils serviteurs sont les forces des rois,
Et de pareils aussi sont au-dessus des lois.
Qu'elles se taisent donc; que Rome dissimule
Ce que dès sa naissance elle vit en Romule:
Elle peut bien souffrir en son libérateur
Ce qu'elle a bien souffert en son premier auteur.

(1753-58)

The flattery lies in the implication that the parricide committed by the state's "libérateur" is like that committed by its "premier auteur." If Tulle really believed in that implication, we can suppose that he would put Horace to death. The "first author" of a state is not the servant of a king. He does not preserve other kings but becomes one himself.

Horace saves himself, paradoxically, by asking permission to kill himself. If he had not revealed his piety so clearly, Tulle would have had to accept Valère's point of view. Horace's success against the Curiaces has made him the greatest man in Rome, and he stands temporarily even above the king himself, as Tulle recognizes when he admits that it is due to Horace that he is "maître de deux États" (1742):

Sans lui j'obéirais où je donne la loi,
Et je serais sujet où je suis deux fois roi.

(1745-46)

What could be more natural for Valère or for any other Roman in his position than to conclude that a man of such greatness, who has also just ruthlessly killed his sister, is potentially a Romulus? For Valère, Romulus's outstanding virtue joined to his parricide provide the only precedent from Roman history to explain Horace. How could Valère, who, when he accuses Horace, has not had the audience's opportunity to observe the intensity of his patriotism, be expected to understand it? It is unprecedented in Roman history.

No doubt there were Roman patriots of a kind before Horace. Vieil Horace seems to be one. But Horace is the first clear figure of a patriot in Livy, and Corneille's Horace carries his patriotism undeniably further than did his father. Camille suspects that Vieil Horace prefers the state to his family (255), but we actually see Horace act out the implications of that preference. To be ready to die for one's patrie is, as he says, a common form of patriotism; one must also be ready to kill one's nearest and dearest (437-52). Horace is the first Roman to go that far; in him, for the first time in Roman history, the piety felt for the fatherland as origin is exposed in all its impious power. Perhaps Corneille shared Machiavelli's belief that the common, respectable forms of political behavior are misleading. In any case, it appears that Horace turns to the extreme case in order to define the limits and essence of patriotism.
On Corneille’s Horace

Corneille is telling us that to understand patriotism we must strip away its blandly pious garb of every day; we must lay bare the terrible paradox, the impious piety hidden in its heart.11

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11 As every student of the play knows, Horace was dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu in terms of the warmest admiration, and there has been much speculation about the meaning of this tribute. See, for example, the edition of the play edited by Pol Gaillard for Les Petits Classiques Bordas (Paris: Bordas, 1967), pp. 22-23, or Jacques Maurens, _La tragédie sans tragique_ (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), pp. 198–242. I suspect that a connection may exist between the impious piety of Horace’s patriotism and the doctrine of _raison d’état_ that guided the great cardinal’s policy. Such a connection, however, is not readily demonstrable beyond a certain point. One would have to trace the pedigree of _raison d’état_ back to its origins in Machiavelli, and that would be the subject of another essay.
In the last chapter of *Tom Sawyer* Becky tells her father, in strict confidence, how Tom had taken her whipping in school: "...the Judge was visibly moved; and when she pleaded grace for the mighty lie which Tom had told in order to shift that whipping from her shoulders to his own, the Judge said with a fine outburst that it was a noble, a generous, a magnanimous lie—a lie that was worthy to hold up its head and march down through history breast to breast with George Washington's lauded Truth about the hatchet."

Tom Sawyer, master of the noble lie, is the master figure of American literature, the character in whom, more than in any other, Americans fancy themselves to be reflected and idealized. Not Captain Ahab, pursuing the great white whale, or Walter Mitty at the bridge of the destroyer, but Tom Sawyer playing hooky comes closest to our aspirations for glory. To be described as having a "Tom Sawyer grin" is an accolade of immeasurable value to any rising politician. In recent years the man to whom this epithet was most frequently applied was the late President, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower. It is a curious revelation of the American soul that the reflection of his Kansas childhood in his boyish smile and wave of the arms conveyed more of the reassurance the republic sought from his leadership than any specific achievement of his later life. We are a democratic people, and democracies love equality above all else, as Alexis de Tocqueville so forcefully pointed out so long ago. We tend to equalize the distinctions based upon wealth and birth, but we tend also to equalize those based upon age. Where else is it considered an achievement not to be able to tell the mother from the daughter—or the grandmother from the granddaughter? It is nature's way of providing immortality that a father should find in his son signs of his own qualities and characteristics. But it is part of democracy's quest for immortality to seek signs of its childhood in its elders. The ancients celebrated the strength that comes with maturity and the wisdom that comes with age. But we moderns turn instead to the cleverness and charm—if not the innocence—of the young. In part this follows from our belief in science and progress. "When I contemplate the immense advantages in science and discoveries in the arts which have been made within the period of my life," wrote Jefferson in 1818, "I look forward with confidence to equal advances by the present generation, and have no doubt they will consequently be as much wiser than we have been as we than our fathers were, and they than the burners of witches." As a nation we seem early to have
been committed to a depreciation of ancestral wisdom and to an elevation of the young that reverses the order of nature. Tom Sawyer had no father. Aunt Polly tells us that he is her dead sister’s son; but no allusion of any kind is ever made to his paternity. Even Huck Finn had a father, albeit the town drunk. Tom is the new boy, if not the new man, par excellence. “Tom Sawyer’s Gang,” whose formation is the culminating event, or conclusion, of the novel, is in fact the United States, whose founding or re-founding is described symbolically within the framework of the plot. The democratization of the republic requires a juvenile hero to replace the father figure of Washington. We know of course that the “lauded Truth about the hatchet” was Parson Weems’s invention, just as we know that Judge Thatcher is utterly deceived as to the generosity of Tom’s lie. But Judge Thatcher’s declared intention, to send Tom first to the National Military Academy and then to the best law school in the country indicates that even he comprehends somehow that Tom’s destiny is that of a guardian of the democratic republic. What Judge Thatcher fails to realize is that Tom’s education is already complete, that in the new order, of which Tom is a new prince, the boy is father of the man, and the old are ruled by the young.

In the third chapter we find that the small fry of St. Petersburg meet regularly in battle under the rival generalship of Tom and Joe Harper, a bosom friend. The two commanders do not, we are told, condescend to fight in person. Rather do they sit upon an eminence and conduct operations through aides-de-camp. We are not vouchsafed details of the conflict, although we may surmise it is carried on by well-defined rules, by which the advantages of the respective sides are evaluated. We are told that Tom’s army won a great victory after a long and hard battle, after which “the dead were counted, prisoners exchanged, the terms of the next disagreement agreed upon, and the day for the necessary battle appointed.” All Tom’s virtues, we learn, are in a manner arts of war, arts of force and fraud, in which the latter component is predominant. Tom may be said, like the grandfather of Odysseus, to surpass everyone in thievry and perjury. Yet his deceptions are of the grand, not of the petty variety. And they turn out, in the end, to be in the service of the law and justice and piety against which he appears to rebel. Tom’s unregenerate individualism, or protestantism, which is the book’s never failing source of humor, strikes a deeply sympathetic chord within the sanctuary of the conventions he appears to ridicule. In one of his moments of supreme glory, produced by a most profane deception, he makes the congregation of the little village sing the doxology with a passion and intensity they had not known. In the opening chapter the author tells us that Tom “was not the Model Boy of the village. He knew the model boy very well though—and loathed him.” In the end, however, Tom is the Model Boy. Tom, we may say, captures the town by his generalship.

Tom’s military skills are displayed in the opening episode, when he is
hidden in a cupboard as Aunt Polly seeks him out. As her back is turned, he makes a dash for freedom, only to be caught by the tail of his coat. He stoutly denies all wrongdoing, but the evidence of the jam jar is upon him. "The switch hovered in the air—the peril was desperate—'My! Look behind you, aunt!'" And as the old lady whirls around, Tom is gone in the instant, over the high board fence outside, and is lost to sight.

There follows a long soliloquy in which we learn from Aunt Polly that Tom is always playing such tricks and that she is always being victimized by them. She ought to be on to them now, she says, "But my goodness, he never plays them alike, two days, and how is a body to know what's coming?" Tom is an expert in trickery, not only because of the variety of his tricks, but because he knows how to work on the feelings of his subjects. "He 'pears to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up," she observes, "and he knows if he can make out to put me off for a minute or make me laugh, it's all down again and I can't hit him a lick."

The next episode displays still further Tom's resourcefulness—and something of the magnitude of the obstacles it faces. Tom has played hooky, as Aunt Polly expects he has, and at dinner she conducts a guileful (as she in her simplicity thinks) inquisition designed to entrap him. It has been a warm day and she supposes that he has gone swimming. He forestalls her by observing that "Some of us pumped our heads—mine's damp yet. See?" Aunt Polly retorts that he wouldn't have to unbutton his shirt to pump his head and demands that he open his jacket to see whether the collar she had stitched closed is still securely in its place. Tom feels he is safe now, until his half-brother Sid treacherously comments, "Well, now, if I didn't think you sewed his collar with white thread, but it's black." At this, Tom has no recourse but to flight. When alone, he examines the two large needles with black and white thread he carries concealed in his lapels and complains bitterly at his aunt's inconsistency in using now one and now the other. Nevertheless, we must be impressed by the fact that his guile was more than sufficient for dealing with her, had not Sid betrayed him. He vows retribution to Sid, which is not long to come.

Aunt Polly is now determined to punish Tom. She will make him work the next day, which is Saturday, when all the other boys will be having a holiday. Aunt Polly loves Tom, and there is a conflict within her, between a loving heart and a stern Puritan conscience. Her heart is vulnerable to Tom's wiles, which play upon her weakness. Her love for him is not without return, but it is slight beside the great love they share, which is for himself. There is no conflict within Tom between heart and conscience, of the kind that so dramatically preoccupies that other transcendent hero in the later volume, Huckleberry Finn. Yet Tom does, as we shall see, have a conscience of a sort. Tom, unlike Huck, is essentially a man (or boy) of the law, who needs only to have it settled that he is the lawgiver.
Or perhaps we should say that he is like Machiavelli's Prince, who knows that good laws require good arms and therefore devotes himself first to attaining eminence in arms. Tom retreats from the dinner table, discomfited. Wandering through the town, he comes upon a stranger, "a boy a shade larger than himself." The stranger is dressed to a degree of fashion that to Tom is astounding, and he "had a citified air about him that ate into Tom's vitals." Later Tom calls him "aristocracy," using the noun as adjective. The necessary outcome of the ensuing confrontation is a fight. It is a bitter one, and results in Tom's victory. Before the fight takes place, however, there is a contest of wills, in which we see both Tom and the other boy resort to every imaginable bluff. They come to force only after the resources of fraud are exhausted. But we see that Tom, although something of a bully, is no coward. Much later, when Tom, along with Joe Harper and Huck Finn, is thought to be dead, the children of the town vie with each other in memories of the departed. "One poor chap," remarks the author, "who had no other grandeur to offer, said with tolerably manifest pride in the remembrance: 'Well, Tom Sawyer he licked me once.' But that bid for glory was a failure. Most of the boys could say that . . ." We thus see that Tom's democratic leadership among the village boys is founded upon the natural right of the stronger, a right not inconsistent with an aristocratic love of glory.

Tom returned home late, only to find his aunt awaiting him, and "when she saw the state his clothes were in her resolution to turn his Saturday holiday into captivity at hard labor became adamantine in its firmness."

Tom's generalship had enabled him to play hooky. But will it enable him to do so with impunity? He had nearly escaped scot free until Sid's treachery betrayed him. Aunt Polly's heart—before it was hardened—might have rescued him, had not her conscience accused her and him together. "He's full of the Old Scratch," she says, and to allow him to go unpunished is only "a-laying up sin and suffering for us both." She must do her duty by punishing him, or she will be his ruination. Thus is he cursed with Adam's curse; and being as full of the Old Adam as of the Old Scratch, "he hates work more than he hates anything else." But Tom's genius does not forsake him. Not only will he escape the fate of Adam, and revenge himself upon Sid, but he will in the end displace Sid and the Model Boy as the paragon of respectability. He will look down upon them, and he will do so ex cathedra, from a new seat of authority he will have created for himself. Sid, we are told, "was a quiet boy, and had no adventurous, troublesome ways." Tom will triumph, not only over Sid's person, but over the orthodoxy in aunt Polly's soul that Sid dutifully accepts. Tom is a hero of the new Calvinism, in which a new wine of worldly glory is poured into the old churchly vessel, and such success will henceforth be regarded as the hallmark of election and salvation.

"Saturday morning was come, and all the summer world was bright and fresh, and brimming with life . . . Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it . . . lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land."
Thus is the scene set for a most unpromising Christian. Tom is set to work with a bucket of whitewash and a brush. "Life seemed to him hollow, and existence a burden." Tom first attempts to suborn the little Negro boy Jim, who has been sent to pump water. He offers three temptations to Jim to whitewash for him: first, that he will carry the bucket to the well for him; next, that he will give him his white "alley"; and finally, that he will show him his sore toe. After many remonstrances that "Ole missis . . . [will] take an tar de head off'n me," poor Jim succumbs. He is bent over with absorbing interest as the bandage is unwound, but before the stigmata come into view, Aunt Polly descends in force, and Jim is sent "flying down the street with his pail and a tingling rear." Tom, for a moment, whitewashes with vigor. But soon despair settles upon him. He empties his pockets to examine his wealth; but by bartering it all away, he finds that he could not purchase more than half an hour of pure freedom. "At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration."

The effect of this inspiration is to set Tom tranquilly to work. This he could not hitherto do, because his soul within him was troubled. Now it is serene. But what is the work? It is not the work of whitewashing the fence, although that is how it will appear to Ben Rogers, the first of the long series of Tom's victims. The real work is in deceiving Ben into believing that he, Tom, is absorbed in the whitewashing, a work that requires for its consummation that he appear beyond possibility of detection to be so absorbed. The work of whitewashing and the work of deceiving are distinguishable to the mind, but not to the eye. And Tom does enjoy his work and take pride in it. At the end of the chapter the author intrudes the following reflection: "Tom . . . had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do."

But Mark Twain, that great and wise philosopher, like Tom, is not altogether candid. Tom could not have sold the boys whitewashing privileges, however unconstrained the activity, merely under the aspect of its being play. He had first to create in them the vision of its desirability, and this vision is a work of art. Tom makes Ben believe, first, that he, Tom, is enjoying it; second, that it is something that requires skill in its execution; and last and most important, that to be selected or permitted to do it is to occupy a position of envy and distinction. In a polity whose principle is equality, where the individual feels himself lost in the mass, no passion burns more universally than the passion for distinction, or more precisely, the illusion of distinction. Actual distinctions are of course by their nature rare and difficult, but the illusion of distinction is easy and
can be made available to anyone who is gullible and willing to pay for it.

As Ben begs for a chance to take a turn at the whitewashing, Tom cautiously refuses, saying it wouldn’t do, since Aunt Polly is so particular about this fence, “right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and she wouldn’t.” Tom says he reckons “there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand that can do it the way it’s got to be done.” And then in the spirit that was to descend upon one hundred, or maybe two hundred thousands of used-car salesmen, whose ancestor Tom is, he goes on in response to Ben’s begging, “Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—” Ben’s appetite is now whetted, from a faint inclination to a raging desire. He offers Tom the core of his apple; Tom holds out. Then he offers all of the apple. “Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, and planned the slaughter of more innocents.” And, as used-car salesmen have discovered ever since, “There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer but remained to whitewash.” At the end of the operation Tom “had had a nice, idle time... plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn’t run out of whitewash, he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.”

In that moment of great inspiration, Tom had revealed to him some of the profoundest mysteries of American democratic capitalism. Its essence does not, we see, lie in “the relief of man’s estate,” if that estate is understood to be merely the estate of nature. Rather does it lie in the relief of an estate the capitalist himself has created, by infusing the desires by whose relief he is to profit. Long after Tom, John Kenneth Galbraith was to make a theory of this fact, and call it the “dependence effect.” Tom is the quintessential capitalist, carrying enterprise to that consummation that is every entrepreneur’s deepest longing, but which he never hopes to achieve except, no doubt, in that better world to which good capitalists aspire to go. He turns the workers into customers and sells them their own labor. What he realizes is pure profit, purer profit indeed than Karl Marx ever imagined in his wildest polemics against the iniquity of surplus value. He has no overhead, no labor cost, and no cost of material, and he exacts the entire purchasing power of his market, at least until the whitewash runs out. We should, moreover, not omit to notice the twofold nature of the entire transaction. Tom sells not only to the boys but to Aunt Polly, with whom the original “exchange” takes place. He is under a “debt” to her—under what we might call the old, precapitalist order—a debt contracted by playing hooky. This debt too he discharges at no cost to himself. And there is a further bonus. When he reports back to headquarters, and “his” work is inspected, Aunt Polly “was so overcome by the splendor
of his achievement that she took him into the closet and selected a choice apple and delivered it to him, along with an improving lecture upon the added value and flavor a treat took to itself when it came without sin through virtuous effort.” Tom thereupon doubles his bonus, or, we might say, enlarges upon his state of grace, by “hooking” a doughnut, as Aunt Polly is closing with a happy scriptural flourish.

Tom has imposed his will upon every one of its obstacles; fortune has proved his slave, as it will hereafter. He has played hooky, and far from paying the wages of sin, he has reaped a wonderful bounty of profits from a venture of marvellous enterprise. The inspiration that brings these rewards is founded upon the capitalist discovery that wealth is not to be measured by the work it embodies—the principle of the just price—but by the appetites of those who exchange. By shrewdly rigging the market in his own favor, he exemplifies the new principle, upon which most of the great fortunes of America in the later nineteenth century were based. Tom Sawyer is an exquisite example of the genius of the “robber barons” of the Gilded Age, concealed in the idyllic setting of a Golden Age.

Taking his apple and the “hooked” doughnut, Tom skips off. But in passing out he sees Sid, with whom he still has an account to settle. A storm of clods fills the air; and although Aunt Polly comes to Sid’s rescue, it is not before revenge has been exacted. Now Tom’s soul is at peace.

The peace however is short-lived. Tom goes off to direct the victory of his army over Joe Harper’s. But this is mere epilogue to the victory at the fence. The more important sequel occurs afterwards as Tom is passing the house where Jeff Thatcher lives, and where for the first time he catches sight of a “lovely little blue-eyed creature with yellow hair plaited in two long tails,” who has just come to town. Mars and Venus are in conjunction, and the “fresh-crowned hero fell without firing a shot.” But the hero’s affections, we learn, had not been a tabula rasa. “A certain Amy Lawrence vanished out of his heart and left not even a memory of herself behind . . . He had been months winning her; and she had confessed hardly a week ago . . .” Later we watch the wooing of Becky, and the betrothal ceremony in which she plights her faith to Tom. After the coy denials, the chase, the maidenly blushes, and finally the kiss of surrender, he tells her that now she is never to love or marry anybody but him, “never, never, and forever.” She agrees, and demands in return that he never marry anyone but her. Tom’s reply is, “Certainly. Of course. That’s part of it.” But his obligations are clearly an afterthought. A moment later he blunders into disclosing the engagement to Amy and that “forever” to him can be a very short time. Tom’s conquest of Becky thereupon faces the same kind of complicating circumstances that had previously befallen his hooky playing, when Sid rattled on him. This time he has rattled on himself. But as before, his victory will be all the more astounding. The illusion of virtue that he will conjure before Becky (and her father), which will obscure the memory of his infidelity, is exactly of
a piece with that with which he confronts Aunt Polly when he presents her with the thrice-whitewashed fence.

We have followed our hero from Friday to Saturday, and now it is Sunday. Aunt Polly’s religion, over which Tom so mightily triumphed at the fence, now assails him with all its multiplied Sabbath-day force. First there is family worship, followed by a drill in the verses he is supposed to have memorized for the Sunday school. Sid, of course, had learned his days before. His cousin Mary tries to help him, but “his mind was traversing the whole field of human thought,” and the case appears hopeless. In her perplexity, Mary offers him a prize, without telling him what it is. Then, “under the double pressure of curiosity and prospective gain, he did it with such spirit that he accomplished a shining success.” And what were the verses? The five lines of the Sermon on the Mount, beginning “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Tom had chosen them “because he could find no verses that were shorter.” As we shall see, they constitute the exact point on the moral compass 180 degrees opposite to the principle by which Tom lives. Tom does nothing except for gain, the chiefest gain being the glory that nurtures self-esteem. But memorizing the injunctions to humility and meekness brings him a “sure-enough Barlow” knife, which sends convulsions of delight through his system. It was a good deal.

At the door of the Sunday school Tom drops back a step from the family procession and accosts a Sunday-dressed comrade. The trading for tickets begins, with a “yaller” exchanging for a “piece of lickrish and a fishhook.” Each blue ticket, we learn, is payment for memorizing two verses. Ten blue tickets are worth one red one, and ten reds equal one yellow. Ten yellow tickets would bring the scholar who had memorized 2,000 verses a Dore Bible, very plainly bound, and “worth forty cents in those easy times.” “Only the older pupils managed to keep their tickets and stick to their tedious work long enough to get a Bible, and so the delivery of one of these prizes was a rare and noteworthy circumstance.” We are told that it is doubtful that “Tom’s mental stomach” had ever “really hungered for one of those prizes, but unquestionably his entire being had for many a day longed for the glory and éclat that came with it.”

This Sunday proves to be different from other Sundays. There are visitors to the school of august presence. The great Judge Thatcher, from Constantinople, the county seat, comes accompanied by his wife and child, she of the yellow hair and blue eyes. Everyone, we are told, from the most restless of the boys to the Sunday school superintendent is, each in his own way, “showing off.” “There was only one thing wanting, to make Mr. Walters’ ecstasy complete, and that was a chance to deliver a prize and exhibit a prodigy.” But no one seemed to have the requisite number of tickets, or so his inquiries among the star pupils had indicated. “And now at this moment, when hope was dead, Tom Sawyer came forward
with nine yellow tickets, nine red tickets, and ten blue ones.” We are assured that the superintendent had not expected “an application from this source for the next ten years.” But the “certified checks... were good for their face,” and “Tom was therefore elevated to a place with the Judge and the other elect.” Too late did the other boys, their vitals “eaten with envy,” realize that “they themselves had contributed to this hated splendor by trading tickets to Tom for the wealth he had amassed in selling whitewashing privileges. These despised themselves, as being the dupes of a wily fraud, a guileful snake in the grass.” Or perhaps we should say that, like Esau, they found out too late that they had sold their inheritance for a mess of pottage. Certainly Tom here fits the role of the crafty Jacob, and like him will vindicate his character as one chosen of the Lord.

Tom has repeated upon a grander scale the miracle of the fence. As before he had used the labor of the boys, gaining the credit for it himself, so now he has utilized their labor in memorizing Bible verses. In doing so, Tom again demonstrates his superiority. He displays that “rational and industrious” soul that, by its prosperity in this world, came to be regarded as the elect of God, and therefore a proper witness of the true faith. Tom has already shown himself an artisan of belief, when he led the boys to credit something directly opposite to what they had previously supposed to be true. Of the many successors of Ben Rogers, the author had said that “they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash.” This paraphrases a familiar line in Goldsmith’s The Deserted Village, “And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray,” spoken of a gifted divine in a village church. Although Tom’s mental stomach may never have hungered for the prize Bible itself, yet he had the vision to see a good connected with its possession that the others—who presumably knew its contents better than he—lacked. Moreover they lacked his entrepreneurial genius, which saw that the assembling of the scattered efforts of many could create a new, capital asset, as distinct from the consumption goods with which he entered the market. Whereas the others sell the testimonials of their faith, he buys them. We see that it is not mere love of ease that drove him to escape work, or an appetite for goods that led him to sell whitewashing privileges. Nor is it love of glory or éclat alone, great as that is, that motivates him now. He displays a shrewdness that transcends these undoubted motives when he exchanges his newly acquired liquid assets for the far more durable capital of a churchly reputation. Tom is acquiring credit with the world, a world represented by the vast dignity of Judge Thatcher—who is, besides all else, her father.

Tom’s aspiration for the prize Bible may have had little to do with the contents of that book. Or perhaps we should say that it had little to do with such contents, as understood by the old Protestant orthodoxy, if a protesting orthodoxy be not a contradiction. As Tom was introduced to the Judge, “his tongue was tied, his breath would hardly come.... He would have liked to fall down and worship him, if it were in the dark.”
Tom Sawyer: Hero of Middle America

Tom sadly flunks the test of scriptural knowledge, and we are left to wonder, as the "curtain of charity" is drawn, what lies behind. It is our hypothesis that nothing detracts from Tom's essential triumph. As far as the Judge is concerned, Tom's display of genuine feeling, if not his rote learning, testify in his behalf. We must remember that at the end of the book Tom is as much the Judge's hero as the Judge is Tom's upon this occasion. We would surmise that the Judge misconstrues Tom's motives in Tom's favor on each occasion.

Tom is presented to us throughout as a rebel against the constraints of home, church, and school. But in each case his rebellion is the occasion for his becoming a hero, either of the institution, or at least in the institution, against which he rebels. By disobeying Aunt Polly, and grieving her beyond measure, he becomes the beloved prodigal, for whom she rejoices ninety and nine times more than ever she could for Sid. Tom's naming David and Goliath as the first apostles is infinitely funny. Evidently they were the only two Biblical names he could summon from the depths of a highly functional memory. But we should not overlook the significance that the story of David's heroism must have had for Tom. Nor must we forget that, very soon, Tom does play David to Injun Joe's Goliath and helps rid the town of a scourge believed to have taken the lives of five of its citizens. In Plato's dialogue on piety, Euthyphro, we are presented with these alternative definitions: that piety consists in obeying the gods or that it consists in imitating the gods. In both the Athens of Socrates and Tom Sawyer's America, the conventional wisdom would appear to have been on the side of obeying the gods, of doing what one is told to do, upon divine authority. But both Euthyphro and Tom insist upon the more radical form of piety; both insist upon imitating the gods, or the heroes who represent the divine to them. Euthyphro prosecutes his father for murder, upon the pattern of conduct he believes to be true of Zeus and Kronos; Tom imitates both David and the scion of the house of David.

In the service in the church that followed the Sunday school, Tom was busied in many ways designed to relieve his oppression. "Tom counted the pages of the sermon; after church he always knew how many pages there had been, but he seldom knew anything else about the discourse." This time, we are told, "he was really interested for a little while." The minister had evidently taken as his text the eleventh chapter of Isaiah and "made a grand and moving picture of the assembling together of the world's hosts at the millennium when the lion and the lamb should lie down together and a little child should lead them." But, says the author, "the pathos, the lesson, the moral of the great spectacle were lost upon the boy; he only thought of the conspicuousness of the principal character before the on-looking nations; his face lit with the thought, and he said to himself that he wished he could be that child, if it was a tame lion."

Whether the moral of the spectacle of the prophecy was lost upon the boy depends upon one's point of view as to what that moral was. The
Interpretation

author seems to be assuring us that his own understanding is orthodox and that he finds Tom to be amusing but mistaken. We doubt that this is Mark Twain's real intention. Tom wants the glory of the little child of the millennium. Are we to understand that the child himself does not want it? Does God not create man for his own glory? Tom understands that the admiration of the child depends upon a certain kind of belief in that child; and Tom becomes an ever greater expert in compelling wonder, or belief in himself. We believe Tom's enterprise, or the enterprise of which Tom is the vehicle, becomes intelligible in the light of a famous passage in the sixth chapter of Machiavelli's *Prince*. There it is said that all armed prophets have succeeded, and that all unarmed ones have failed. This must be understood in the light of the reflection that both Jesus and Machiavelli were unarmed prophets. Of the unarmed prophets who failed, Machiavelli mentions only Savonarola, "who was destroyed amid his institutions when they were still new, as soon as the multitude ceased to believe him, because he had no way to keep firm those who had once believed or to make the unbelieving believe." The art embodied in *Tom Sawyer* demonstrates how without the compulsion of arms men may become firm believers in the principle of a new regime. Tom runs away with Huck and Joe Harper to punish Aunt Polly and Becky by becoming that dread and fearful figure, the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main. But he returns instead as the central figure of that pathos that is his own funeral. He returns to enact his own resurrection! Let us retrace the development of this Machiavellian *Imitatio Christi*.

The evening of the day that Tom had gained his great victory over work, the ancient curse of Adam, he returned home in the best of spirits. He was reproached for clodding Sid, but this he did not at all mind. His knuckles are rapped for stealing sugar, and he complains that Sid is not punished for the same crime. "Well, Sid don't torment a body the way you do. You'd be always into that sugar if I warn't watching you," is the reply. Then Aunt Polly steps into the kitchen and Sid reaches for the sugar. "But Sid's fingers slipped and the bowl dropped and broke." Tom expects that Sid will catch it and adopts an attitude of demure silence on Aunt Polly's return. But just as he expects the thunder of vengeance to fall upon Sid, a potent palm sends him sprawling on the floor. Then Tom speaks up, "Hold on, now, what 'er you belting me for? Sid broke it!" Poor Aunt Polly is perplexed, and all she can say is that she is sure that Tom didn't get a lick too many, for all his many transgressions, seen and unseen. Now the situation between Tom and his aunt is the reverse of what we saw in the opening chapter. Her conscience, which then condemned him, now reproaches her. And he in his turn is quick to perceive possibilities in the advantage he has gained. "He knew that in her heart his aunt was on her knees to him, and he was morosely gratified by the consciousness of it." But the genius within Tom will have no cheap reward, merely by humbling her. He will die for her sin. "And he pictured himself brought home from the river, dead.... How she would throw herself
upon him . . . and her lips pray God to give her back her boy . . . . But he would lie there cold and white and make no sign . . . . And such a luxury to him was this petting of his sorrows that he could not bear to have any worldly cheeriness or any grating delight intrude upon it; it was too sacred for such contact . . . ." Then the scene shifts to the "deserted street . . . where the Adored Unknown lived," for this is before the meeting with Becky. He lies on the ground beneath her window, clasping to his bosom the wilted flower that is the memorial of his secret passion. "And thus he would die—out in the cold world, with no shelter over his homeless head, no friendly hand to wipe the death damps from his brow, no loving face to bend pityingly over him when the great agony came." This reenactment of the cross is interrupted when a window is raised and "a maidservant's discordant voice profaned the holy calm, and a deluge of water drenched the prone martyr's remains." The erstwhile "martyr" is now a "strangling hero" who now further profanes what had been a holy calm with a curse, which is quickly followed by the sound of shattering glass. The mysteries of love, war, and religion are in close proximity.

But the mood of martyrdom returns. After wooing, winning, and then losing Becky, he retreats into the woods beyond Cardiff Hill. "The boy's soul was steeped in melancholy . . . . It seemed to him that life was but a trouble, at best, and he more than half envied Jimmy Hodges, so lately released . . . . If he only had a clean Sunday school record he could be willing to go and be done with it all." This latter sentiment is one of the few expressions of what we might call conventional remorse. It should, of course, be taken for what it is, namely, an excuse, since Tom has not the slightest inclination for an early death. "Now as to this girl. What had he done? Nothing." Tom conveniently forgets the infidelity, or perhaps we should say hypothetical bigamy, that had so disturbed Becky. "He had meant the best . . . and been treated like a dog . . . . She would be sorry . . . maybe when it was too late. Ah, if he could only die temporarily!" In the earlier scene Tom had wished that he could be drowned, "all at once and unconsciously, without undergoing the uncomfortable routine devised by nature." Tom, we see, is the paradigm of that latter-day Christian, whose passion is the pleasant indulgence of his own self-love, expressed as grief at the neglect of others to take him at his own self-estimate. Or, more precisely, it is the pleasant contemplation of the grief or pain of others, for failing to take him at his own self-estimate. The pleasure that he is to enjoy occurs in virtue of a death that is both painless and temporary! Tom is unmindful that, by the traditional Christian doctrine of the resurrection, all death is temporary, for the faithful. Of course, traditional Christianity also taught that the soul of the individual found its fulfilment by the recognition given it after death, by God in Heaven. Tom demands that recognition, not by God, but by men (and women), not in Heaven, but on earth. Moreover, this is to happen, not in virtue of the grace and power of God, but in virtue of a certain secular skill. The fraud that Tom now perpetrates replaces traditional piety, in the same way that the traded
tickets replace the work of memorizing the sacred scriptures, as title deeds to the prize Bible.

Tom's wish for a painless, temporary death is followed by a series of fantasies of self-glorifying revenge. But we should notice that the fear and envy that he inflicts upon others in these fantasies are equivalents of the grief and remorse of earlier fantasies, in which Aunt Polly and Becky weep bitter tears over his poor dead body. They are simply alternative ways of enjoying the pain of others, ways with which he retaliates for his supposed rejection. First, then, an idea he had once had of becoming a clown recurs, to be rejected with disgust. It is entirely out of harmony with his present mood. Next he considers going away to be a soldier, "to return after long years, all warworn and illustrious." Better still, "he would join the Indians... and away in the future come back a great chief, bristling with feathers, hideous with paint, and prance into Sunday school, some drowsy summer morning, with a bloodcurdling war whoop, and sear the eyeballs of all his companions with unappeasable envy." This is getting closer to the mark. "But no, there was something gaudier even than this. He would be a pirate!" And the future is now vouchsafed to him in colors of unimaginable splendor. "How his name would fill the world, and make people shudder!... And, at the zenith of his fame, how he would suddenly appear at the old village and stalk into church, brown and weather-beaten... his crime-rusted cutlass at his side... his black flag unfurled, with the skull and crossbones on it, and hear with swelling ecstasy the whisperings, 'It's Tom Sawyer the Pirate!—the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main!'"

And so Tom gathers up Joe Harper, who has had a difference with his mother, similar to Tom's with Aunt Polly, and Huck Finn, who is ready to go anywhere with anybody, and off they go to Jackson's Island to play pirates.

The pirating expedition turns out, in the main, to be no more than skylarking, away from the town, away from all adult supervision or interference. They do steal certain provisions—a boiled ham, a side of bacon, and hooks and lines for fishing. And Tom and Joe have difficulty getting to sleep that night. They remember the stolen meat, and conscience causes trouble. "They tried to argue it away by reminding conscience that they had purloined sweetmeats and apples scores of times; but the conscience was not to be appeased by such thin plausibilities... there was no getting around the stubborn fact that taking sweetmeats was only 'hooking,' while taking bacons and hams and such valuables was plain simple stealing—and there was a command against that in the Bible." So they inwardly resolve that "their piracies should not again be sullied with the crime of stealing. Then conscience granted a truce, and these curiously inconsistent pirates fell peacefully to sleep." Tom's piracy, as we shall see, is of the grand, not petty variety. He means to capture the town. Why then should he despoil it? That would be to diminish the value of his own. All the laws of property are in his favor—as his commercial genius has already
demonstrated. He should be the last one to hold them in disrespect. Mark Twain's interpretation of his leading character is again misleading. These pirates, or at least one of them, are anything but inconsistent.

In the middle of the day, the boys are puzzled to hear a distant booming. Presently they see the village's little steam ferryboat, its decks crowded with people. Then they realize that the booming is a cannon and that the entire town is engaged in a quest for drowned bodies. But it is Tom's mind in which the 'revealing thought' flashes. "Boys, I know who's drowned—it's us." "They felt like heroes in an instant. Here was a gorgeous triumph; they were missed; they were mourned; hearts were breaking on their account; tears were being shed... the departed were the talk of the whole town, and the envy of all the boys, as far as this dazzling notoriety was concerned. This was fine. It was worthwhile to be a pirate, after all."

But when the excitement subsides, trouble sets in for the pirate chieftain. His crew grows homesick and mutinous, and play loses its savor, reversing the process by which the work of whitewashing had been transmuted into play. After Joe and Huck have drifted off to sleep, the troubled leader steals out of camp and makes his way back to St. Petersburg and to his own home. He creeps unobserved into the sitting room and squeezes under the bed. Aunt Polly, Sid, Mary, and Mrs. Harper are there. It is a kind of wake being held for the lost boys. Tom who is believed—at least by Aunt Polly—to be in a better place, is quite literally beneath them. Now the fantasy that Tom had imagined, of the grief occasioned by his death, is being enacted in his very presence. He is enjoying a "death" that is both painless and temporary!

Tom remains silently beneath the bed until everyone has departed. He joins the heavenly witnesses to Aunt Polly's prayer for him, delivered "with such measureless love" that Tom welters in tears in his hiding place. As she finally falls into a troubled sleep, he steals out and looks down at her, "his heart full of pity." Tom takes from his pocket a sycamore scroll, upon which he had written a message. "But something occurred to him... His face lighted with a happy solution of his thought; he put the bark hastily in his pocket." The light on Tom's face, of course, is the idea of coming and hiding in the church, to provide the tremendous climax to his own funeral. And he couldn't bear to spoil such a gorgeous spectacle. So his love and pity for Aunt Polly do not deter him from making her love and her grief an instrument of his self-glorification.

There is a curious epilogue to the secret visitation of that night. After the funeral is over, and the resurrection has transfigured Tom into unbelievable glory among the smaller fry, and unappeasable envy among the larger, he imposes scandalously upon Aunt Polly's credulity for a further enlargement of his apotheosis. He tells her in complete detail—but with artful hesitations—the story of everything he overheard from beneath the bed, pretending that it came to him in a dream while on the island. Sid overhears this shameless imposture in silence. He is now hopelessly overpowered by Tom's grandeur. He only comments to himself, "Pretty thin—
as long a dream as that, without any mistakes in it!" Eventually the hoax is revealed because Joe Harper had told his mother of Tom's having left the camp that Wednesday evening. Poor Aunt Polly, who had rushed to tell Mrs. Harper of Tom's prophetic powers, is subject instead to remarkable embarrassment. Yet Tom has a knack for profiting from the exposure of his deceptions no less than from the deceptions themselves—as we saw in the case of the collar thread, and as we guessed in the case of the "curtain of charity." In the pocket of his old jacket he still had the bark on which he had written, "We ain't dead—we are only off being pirates." When he pleads in extenuation of his fakery that he had come over that night to relieve Aunt Polly's anxieties and not to gloat over them, she says, "Tom, Tom, I would be the thankfullest soul in this world if I could believe you ever had as good a thought as that, but you know you never did, and I know it, Tom." He pleads that this is the truth, and Aunt Polly begs him not to lie, that it only makes things a hundred times worse. Tom insists, against all probability and reason, that this is not a lie. Aunt Polly rejoins that she would "give the whole world to believe that—it would cover up a power of sins." Tom explains that it was only the thought of the funeral that made him change his mind and put the bark back in his pocket. Then he tells her how he kissed her as she slept, to which she responds with infinite pathos. Tom has so wrought upon her that her will to believe in him is equal in full to the great power of faith that is in her. It will require but a single scrap of evidence to make him the complete beneficiary of that faith. When Tom leaves she turns toward the closet with its tattered jacket. Her heart is overwhelmed with its burden of love, and she reasons herself into justifying him, whatever the evidence. "Twice she put out her hand to take the garment . . . and twice she refrained." Finally, "she fortified herself with the thought: 'It's a good lie—it's a good lie—I won't let it grieve me.' . . . A moment later she was reading Tom's piece of bark through flowing tears and saying: 'I could forgive the boy, now, if he'd committed a million sins!' " As far as Aunt Polly is concerned. Tom's redemption and glory are complete.

Before turning to the culminating episode of Tom's piracy, let us consider it against the background of certain alternatives. Tom's favorite game is that of Robin Hood. We see him at it twice, once with Joe Harper and once with Huck Finn. Joe and Tom play at it regularly and store their equipment in the woods beyond Cardiff Hill. What they do is, in fact, to play roles in episodes drawn from the story, just as if it were a stage production. It is not a game, played to win. It is, rather, a dramatic ritual. Here we first see Tom's own kind of scriptural authority. But Huck has never heard of Robin Hood, and Tom tells him, "Why, he was one of the greatest men that was ever in England—and the best. He was a robber." Huck asks who he robbed. "Only sheriffs and bishops and rich people and kings, and such like. But he never bothered the poor. He loved 'em. He always divided up with 'em perfectly square." Huck rejoins, "Well, he must 'a' been a brick." To which Tom replies, "I bet you he
was, Huck. Oh, he was the noblest man that ever was. They ain’t any such men now, I can tell you.” When Tom had played Robin Hood with Joe Harper, the boys had ended “grieving that there were no outlaws any more, and wondering what modern civilization could claim to have done to compensate for their loss. They said they would rather be outlaws a year in Sherwood Forest than President of the United States forever.” In the final episode of Tom’s and Joe’s reenactment, “Tom became Robin Hood again, and was allowed by the treacherous nun to bleed his strength away through his neglected wound.” Then Joe, “representing a whole tribe of weeping outlaws, dragged him sadly forth,” and put his bow into his hands, that the falling arrow might indicate Robin’s place of burial. Tom shot the arrow, “and fell back and would have died, but he lit on a nettle and sprang up too gaily for a corpse.” All Tom’s deaths are, we see, highly dramatic and extremely temporary. But the story of Robin Hood is the romantic embodiment of that Machiavellian or piratical Christianity that is Tom’s religion.

Tom calls Robin “the noblest man that ever was.” We can understand why. The people that Robin robbed, “sheriffs and bishops and rich people and kings,” are essentially appendages of a feudal regime. He appeals therefore to democratic, Protestant radicalism. In his attack on the privileged orders, Robin represents the egalitarianism of the American Revolution; in his betrayal by the established church, he represents the spirit of the Reformation. But Tom’s America, represented by Judge Thatcher, whom Tom would have liked to fall down and worship (if it were dark), is dedicated to that “simpler but wider justice” that Robin Hood robbed to implement. When Robin Hood’s principle becomes that of the establishment, noble outlawry is no longer possible. That is why Tom can engage in ritualistic play as Robin Hood, but when it comes to a serious choice of a vocation, it never occurs to him to make Jackson’s Island into Sherwood Forest. In the world of American democracy Tom is on the side of property and authority, because that world is itself antagonistic to bishops and kings. Yet that world lives, in its imagination, in the golden glow of its revolutionary past, symbolized by the story of Robin Hood. In a deeper sense, Tom does enact Robin Hood, in the same sense that Robin himself enacts the Christ of radical Protestantism. Robin is a robber, and Tom Sawyer’s Gang is a robber gang. But it is a robber gang that meets the highest standards of respectability. At the end of the novel Tom explains it to Huck in this way: “A robber is more high-toned than what a pirate is—as a general thing. In most countries they’re awful high up in the nobility—dukes and such.” Robin himself, if memory serves, was an earl. Tom Sawyer’s Gang is founded, not only upon the powerful imagination of its leader, but upon his wealth—which is inherited from an earlier nonrespectable gang, Murrell’s, whose treasure cache becomes Tom’s and Huck’s in the end. In other words, Tom ends by despoiling the despoilers, which is exactly what Robin Hood had done; only after the American Revolution, the despoilers can only be enemies of the legal
order. Yet nothing prevents the ill-gotten gains from supplying an admirable foundation for the new, respectable gang. In the new legal order the highest and most respectable kind of robber is also the most highly honored. And so the myth of Robin Hood is replaced by, or becomes instrumental to, a new myth—that of Tom Sawyer.

Before piracy is settled upon for the expedition to Jackson’s Island, one alternative is briefly considered. When Tom meets Joe as he is on the point of running away and finds that Joe is about to do the same, “they began to lay their plans.” “Joe was for being a hermit, and living on crusts in a remote cave, and dying, sometimes, of cold and want and grief; but after listening to Tom, he conceded that there were some conspicuous advantages about a life of crime, and so he consented to be a pirate.” We know that Tom’s piracy consisted eminently in the appropriation of all those pleasant passions connected in Joe’s mind with the spectacle of the unpleasant life of the hermit. Tom has already indulged the fantasy of a lonely death, and his steps are already directed toward enjoying all its advantages without its disadvantages. On Jackson’s Island he has some further discussion with Joe and Huck about the comparative merits of hermiting and pirating. A pirate, Tom explains, “don’t have to get up mornings, and you don’t have to go to school, and wash, and all that blame foolishness. You see a pirate don’t have to do anything, Joe, when he’s ashore, but a hermit he has to be praying considerable, and then he don’t have any fun, anyway, all by himself that way.” Joe assures Tom that, now that he’s tried it, he much prefers being a pirate. “You see,” Tom continues, “people don’t go much on hermits, nowadays, like they used to in old times, but a pirate’s always respected.” Moreover, Tom continues, “a hermit’s got to sleep on the hardest place he can find, and put sackcloth and ashes on his head, and stand out in the rain, and—” This is too much for Huck, who demands to know what they do such things for. Tom says he doesn’t know, but they always do these things, and Huck would have to do them too, if he was a hermit. Huck stoutly insists that he would not, upon which Tom demands, “How’d you get around it?” Huck says he wouldn’t stand it, that he’d run away. At this Tom exclaims, “Run away! Well, you would be a nice old slouch of a hermit. You’d be a disgrace.” Tom thus sees quite clearly that hermiting, meaning ascetic Christianity, is out of style. On the other hand, pirating ashore comes close to Marx’s vision, in the Germain Ideology, of a communist society in which there is perfect freedom, and all distinction between work and play is abolished. It also resembles the Garden of Eden. The “work” of piracy is said to consist in taking and burning ships, making people (but not women) walk the plank, and burying treasure. But these pirates, we soon learn, do none of these things. Their climactic moment comes not afloat but ashore, and it comes in the church, where they demonstrate the superiority of the piratical to the hermitical, of the comfortable to the uncomfortable brand of Christianity. Yet Tom remains true to his compulsive sense of propriety, which is also an unreasoning sense of
authority, even as he rejects hermiting. Whereas Huck would reject the hermit’s life because it makes no sense—even though it comes closer to his own style of living than to Tom’s—Tom rejects it because it is out of fashion. Yet if it were in fashion, Tom would see no way for departing from the authoritative version of hermiting. Tom cannot conceive of an alteration or variation from an authoritative model except if it be founded upon an equal or superior authority. All Tom’s defiances of authority are based, like Euthyphro’s, upon a higher and more esoteric version of the authority he seems to defy.

Let us then return to the churchly consummation of Tom’s piratical Christianity. “When the Sunday-school hour was finished... the bell began to toll, instead of ringing in the usual way.” The villagers gathered in the hushed atmosphere induced by the presence of the mystery of death. “None could remember when the little church had been so full before.” The congregation rises reverently as the bereaved families enter. Amidst muffled sobs the minister spreads his hands and prays. “A moving hymn was sung, and the text followed: ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life.’” Little could the congregation guess that, but a week before, the central figure of the present drama, sitting in their midst, had lusted after the glory of the little child who should lead them. They had seen in the departed only “faults and flaws... [and episodes] that at the time had seemed rank rascalities, well deserving of the cowhide.” These same incidents are now related by the minister in such a way as to illustrate the sweet, generous natures of the departed. And the congregation, conscious that heretofore they had been persistently blinded to the truth about the lost lads, felt the pangs of conscience compounding their grief.

“The congregation became more and more moved, as the pathetic tale went on, till at last the whole company broke down,” including in the end the preacher himself. At this moment, when the pathos of the occasion had reached its extremity, there is a rustle in the gallery. A moment later the astounding event occurs, as the three boys come up the aisle, Tom in the lead, Joe behind, and Huck in his tattered rags slinking in the rear. In the pandemonium that follows, two incidents are remarkable. As their families throw themselves upon Tom and Joe, Tom laid hold of Huck and said, “Aunt Polly, it ain’t fair. Somebody’s got to be glad to see Huck.” As Aunt Polly responds with her warm humanity, the minister’s voice thunders out, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow—SING!—and put your hearts in it!” “And they did. Old Hundred swelled up with a triumphant burst, and while it shook the rafters Tom Sawyer the Pirate looked around upon the envying juveniles about him and confessed in his heart that this was the proudest moment of his life.”

We are told by the author that “As the ‘sold’ congregation trooped out they said they would almost be willing to be made ridiculous again to hear Old Hundred sung like that once more.” This puts us in mind of the missionary piracy of the king, as he worked the camp meeting in Pokeville, in Huckleberry Finn, as well as reminding us of how the king and
the duke "sold" the little Arkansas river town with the "Royal Nonesuch." When Jim is shocked by the rascality of the king, Huck explains that it's "in the breed . . . [that] all kings is mostly rapscallions, as fur as I can make out." Later Huck comments to himself, "What was the use to tell Jim that these warn't real kings and dukes? It wouldn't 'a' done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn't tell them from the real kind." Kings and dukes are the fraudulent rulers of the *anciens régimes*, who appear as mere frauds, divested of all the aura of rule in this democratic regime. But Tom's fraud is a success. Unlike the gullied townspeople who come back for blood to the third performance of the "Royal None-such," those in the church of St. Petersburg have, in a manner of speaking, got their money's worth. And it was not money but glory that Tom sought. His ambition, unlike the king's and the duke's, is not vulgar. Yet the price that Aunt Polly and the town pay for Tom's ambition—a price exacted not in money but in grief and anguish—is far higher than that taken by the emblems of spurious nobility in the later work.

All Tom's virtues, we have said, are arts of war; yet the consummation of these virtues has been an imitation of the greatest of the unarmed prophets. But the deceptions practiced by Tom have been recognizable as deceptions. The fame Tom has achieved in the episodes noted, and the pleasures attendant upon a painless and temporary death, are only stages upon his way to a place and station beyond detection and beyond reproach. We have noted a resemblance in Tom to the patriarch Jacob, who deceived both his brother and his father. But there could be no final recourse to fraud when alone Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord. Tom, as he wrestles with his conscience during the trial of Muff Potter and as he faces death in the cave, also demonstrates that his daring and his cleverness are not the full measure of his character.

We have presented Tom's piratical Christianity as animated by a lust for glory in a world still believing itself to believe in the otherworldly religion of humility. Tom's religion appears as a sanctification of that process by which the blessed have their rewards here and now. We should bear in mind that the *ancien régime*—the one plundered by Robin Hood—was characterized by inequality and the postponement of the pleasures of the many to the next world. Modern democracy is characterized by equality and the enjoyment by the many of the pleasures of this world. Tom is a hero of that myth by which religion is transformed to meet the requirements of modern democracy.

Tom has an elaborate set of superstitions, which strike one as having a kind of humorous absurdity, against the background either of staid orthodoxy or of scientific reasoning. However, if we remember the orthodox roots of Tom's piety, in imitating rather than obeying the divine, we can see an equally radical Protestantism in his superstitions. Protestantism was in its origins a movement of religious authority from the established church to the common people. The extension of this movement is shown
Tom Sawyer: Hero of Middle America

here when Tom reveals the source of his convictions in regard to the supernatural. Tom, we should remember, always settles disputes by an appeal to authority, never to experience. Usually it is the books he has read, about Robin Hood, hermits, pirates, or robbers, that supply the truth about these things. In Huckleberry Finn Tom undergoes a radical extension of his literary authoritarianism. Tom Sawyer's Gang is there conducted upon methods borrowed from Don Quixote. The attack upon the Sunday school picnic is closely modeled upon episodes from Cervantes. The emancipation of Jim, at the end of the latter novel, is based upon borrowed bits and pieces from "Baron Trench . . . Benvenuto Chelleeny . . . Henry IV" and other of "them heroes," the Count of Monte Cristo chief among them. Tom's Law is derived from the Book, the original being transformed by infusions from such other sources as we have suggested. Accordingly, it is remarkable when, in considering a question in regard to the supernatural—with Huck questioning the authenticity or reliability of the superstition that a stray dog howling in the night is a certain prophecy of death—Tom settles the matter by saying, "That's what the niggers say, and they know all about these kind of things, Huck." Negroes as a source of authority stand outside conventional Christianity in Tom Sawyer's America, much as earlier Protestants were outside the precincts of authority in the Europe from which Tom's ancestors had fled.

Tom is led by his superstitions to a rendezvous with Huck Finn, to test the virtues of a dead cat for the removal of warts. The cure requires going to the graveyard "long about midnight when somebody that was wicked has been buried," on the assurance that "a devil will come, or maybe two or three" to carry off the deceased. "When they're taking that feller away, you heave your cat after 'em and say 'Devil follow corpse, cat follow devil, warts follow cat, I'm done with ye!'" We suspect that Huck himself is as much an attraction for Tom at this point—the beginning of their relationship in the novel—as the ritual of the cat. Huck's position outside conventional society, like that of the slaves, promises communion with an esoteric and more genuine reality. But Huck's belief in a devil or devils coming for the corpse has a certain foundation in reality. It is notable that Huck expects the body and not merely the soul of the deceased to be carried off. From the events that follow in the graveyard, culminating in the murder of young Doctor Robinson, we infer that body snatching was practiced by many young medical scholars, who needed cadavers for dissection and who could not get them any other way. The main obstacle to dissection was the traditional religious belief in the bodily resurrection, a belief to which Tom also addresses himself, as we have seen. The doctor, like Huck, Tom, and the Negroes, represented a ground of conviction outside traditional religious views. Huck's superstition was then not random, but arose from the frequency of grave robbing in the early days of modern medicine. Dobbins the schoolmaster is also a secret votary of medicine, and the book he keeps locked in his desk—and which must be kept from the view of children, as Becky discovers, because of its pictures
of the naked human body—is a textbook in anatomy.

Huck's and Tom's wart cures have other points of resemblance to modern medicine, and indeed to modern science altogether, in contradistinction to traditional religious beliefs. Getting rid of warts is a catharsis of the body, in contrast with ridding oneself of sin, a catharsis of the soul. In ridding oneself of warts, method is all-important. The devils that carry off Hoss Williams must be approached at the right time, in the right place, and with the right incantation. Earlier, Tom had described two other methods of removing warts. One is with spunk water, the rainwater remaining in the hollow of a tree stump. Bob Tanner is said to have failed with this method. For Huck this is evidence of the inefficacy of the method. Tom, however, insists that Bob had not done it correctly, the proper way being as follows. One must go at midnight to a stump that is in the middle of the woods, and back up to it to immerse one's hand. Then you recite a prescribed verse, take eleven steps with your eyes shut, turn around three times, and walk home without speaking to anyone. "Because if you speak the charm's busted." The other method consists in splitting a bean, drawing blood from the wart and putting it on one half of the bean, and burying that half at midnight at the crossroads in the dark of the moon. Then you burn the rest of the bean. "You see that piece that's got the blood on it will keep drawing and drawing, trying to fetch the other piece to it, and so that helps to draw the wart, and pretty soon off she comes." Implicit in the three wart cures—all of which are performed at midnight—is the belief that the powers of darkness are impersonal forces, like the laws of physics and chemistry, and have no option but to produce the desired results if they are solicited in the proper manner. They differ in this from prayer, to which a personal God may or may not respond, according to the desire of the petitioner. They are also like modern science in that the power in question obeys anyone who discovers the right method, and the possession of this method is independent of the character of the seeker. For one of these superstitions to fail means to Tom only that it has not been performed properly. In fact, we never see Tom verifying any of his wart cures. He claims that he has taken off "thousands" of warts with spunk water and attributes the supposed multiplicity of his warts to the fact that he plays a great deal with frogs. That frogs cause warts is as much a superstition as the idea that spunk water removes them, and we suspect that the cause and the cure are equally imaginary. Neither of the boys exhibits any warts for removal before the trip to the graveyard. All their interest is concentrated upon the ritual and none upon the warts for the sake of which the ritual is ostensibly performed. We observe that, to a devotee of modern science, the failure of science to solve a problem does not mean that science cannot solve the problem. All it means is that the right experiment has not yet been devised or the right formula found. The votary of traditional religion, however, believes that God acts for the best, whether he seems to grant our prayers or not. It is assumed that God knows better than we do what is good for us and
that, moreover, his purposes are fulfilled and his goodness made manifest, in the next world as well as in this one. Tom's expectations are confined strictly to this world, and we can see that science and superstition in a kind of fluid mixture are reshaping the traditional beliefs of St. Petersburg. Aunt Polly, although a traditionalist in religion, subscribed to all the new "health" periodicals and "phrenological frauds" and made Tom their victim whenever she deemed his health in need of assistance. Aunt Polly's traditional faith does not protect her from these incursions of pseudo science, any more than it protects Tom from wart cures. In Aunt Polly's decisions to "cure" Tom with the water treatment, the sitz baths, the blister plasters, and finally the "painkiller" (which was probably raw whiskey), both the ailment and the cure are probably as imaginary as the warts and the wart cure. In this respect the triumph of imagination over experience is no less in the new than in the old dispensation.

We can see that in Tom Sawyer's St. Petersburg law, religion, science, and superstition are moving in the direction of a new order in which self-preservation in this world replaces salvation in the next as the dominating human concern. All Tom's superstitions are ways of recognizing and evading or controlling threats to his person or his property. Although he believes the devils are coming to take Hoss Williams, there is no mention of the hell or hell-fire awaiting the victim. The only allusion to future punishment—there is none whatever to future reward—is when he contemplates the fate of Jimmy Hodges, "lately released," and thinks he might be willing to go too "if he only had a clean Sunday school record." When the stray dog howls nearby as the boys flee the murder scene, they reckon they're "goners." Again, Tom momentarily regrets his Sunday school record, but only because of the conviction of doom that has seized him. Elements of the oldtime religion thus survive in Tom, but only as part of the new religion of self-preservation in this world. That is, they appear, along with his superstitions, as elements of his wariness in dealing with the supernatural as one among the threats to his personal safety.

Tom and Huck are drawn to the graveyard at midnight, ostensibly by the dead-cat wart cure but in fact by the secret exigencies of modern medicine. There they witness the murder of the young doctor. They become the guardians of an important truth, upon which both the justice of the law and (to a degree) the safety of the community depend. Not even Muff Potter knows the facts about the murder, because he was drunk and unconscious when it was committed. The boys are terrified and swear an oath, written out by Tom on a pine shingle, that "they will keep mum about this and they wish they may drop down dead in their tracks if they ever tell and rot." Huck admires Tom's facility in writing and takes a brass pin to prick his flesh. But Tom stops him and insists on using one of the clean needles he carries for the sewing of his shirt collar. There is a danger of poisoning from the pin, he explains to Huck. We can see, in this informative sidelight, the beginning of Tom's transition from superstition to science. Although invoking the powers of darkness by their oath,
Tom will take care not to corrupt the blood that invokes those powers by any negligence with respect to natural causality. The oath is required, as Huck puts it, because "that Injun devil wouldn't make any more of drowning us than a couple of cats, if we was to squeak 'bout this and they didn't hang him." The oath then has the purpose of guaranteeing their personal safety by adding a supernatural sanction to the fear already engendered by Injun Joe. It draws a kind of pledge for its enforcement from the blood, which takes the place of God in what we would consider a conventional oath. Of course, it is their lifeblood that they wish to safeguard. Shedding blood makes the oath a kind of homeopathic antitoxin, in which respect it bears a certain resemblance to the wart cures.

Before the night is out the horror of the murder has been augmented by the howling dog. After that omen of death has passed, Tom is convinced that it is Muff Potter who is doomed. He seems unaware that if Muff is doomed, it is because of their own oath to conceal the truth. As we have seen, that oath now stands in the way of truth, justice, and the security of the community. This oath, we see, protects Injun Joe at the inquest, where the boys for the first time feel the pull of sympathy for poor, betrayed Muff Potter. They hear the "stonyhearted liar [Injun Joe] reel off his serene statement" falsely accusing Muff, and they expect "every moment that the clear sky would deliver God's lightnings upon his head." When divine vengeance fails, they conclude that "this miscreant sold himself to Satan and it would be fatal to meddle with the property of such a power as that." Tom's conscience is thus quieted by the opinion that God has abdicated responsibility too. When in the crisis he does the work of God, it will not, however, appear to be God's work. It will be Tom Sawyer's.

It is some weeks later that Muff, who has now been charged with the murder, finally comes to trial. The boys are oppressed by their secret, yet fear dominates guilt. Tom seeks out Huck to find whether the latter's resolve has weakened. Huck seems firm enough. He appears to know Injun Joe better than Tom, and being an outcast himself is less likely to have protection from Joe's vengeance. It is clear that Tom fears his own resolve more than he fears Huck's when he suggests that they swear their oath of secrecy again. Having sworn, the boys relapse into commiseration for Muff. "He ain't no account," says Huck, "but then he hain't ever done anything to hurt anybody. Just fishes a little, to get money to get drunk on...." But it transpires that he also shared food with Huck, when there wasn't enough for two, and that he has mended kites for Tom and knitted hooks to his fishlines. They try to relieve their guilt by doing many small kindnesses for Muff at the village jail, but the pathetic gratitude they receive in return only adds mightily to their inward torture.

The trial comes on, and at the end of the second day, with Injun Joe's evidence unshaken, it appears there can be but one verdict. That night Tom is out late and returns home "in a tremendous state of excitement." The next day three witnesses are called. The first testifies to seeing Muff
wash himself at a brook, early in the morning following the murder. A second testifies to the identity of the murder knife. A third attests that the knife in question was Muff's. In each case, Muff's lawyer declines to cross-examine. The courtroom buzzes with dissatisfaction at the lawyer for the defense, who appears to be letting his case go by default. But suddenly the lawyer addresses the court, saying that he has changed his defense from that he had indicated in his opening remarks two days before. Then he had intended to prove only that Muff had committed an involuntary homicide under the influence of drink. Turning to the clerk, he says. "Call Thomas Sawyer!" In an atmosphere electric with puzzled anticipation, the clerk administers the oath, an oath different from that Tom had administered to himself and to Huck. Then Muff's lawyer leads Tom, breathless and almost inaudible at first, through the sensational narrative of the events he and Huck had witnessed from their hiding place that night in the graveyard. "The strain upon pent emotion reached its climax when the boy said: '—and as the doctor fetched around and Muff Potter fell, Injun Joe jumped with the knife and—' Crash! Quick as lightning the half-breed sprang for a window, tore his way through all opposers, and was gone!"

"Tom was a glittering hero once more—the pet of the old, the envy of the young." The heroism is on a more solid basis than before; but Tom now pays a price for his glory. His days, we are told, were "days of splendor and exultation," but his nights "were seasons of horror." "Injun Joe infested all his dreams, and always with doom in his eye." What was it that tempted Tom into this new heroism? All his glory hitherto had been the consequence of tricks played upon others. Fear had dominated him from the moment of the murder. Sympathy for Muff Potter had only led to the precaution of a second oath, until the trial was under way and the tension began to build. The scene in the courtroom certainly was one whose "theatrical gorgeousness" appealed to his nature as strongly as that in which he returned to play the lead at his own funeral. We have no introspective evidence of what it was that led to Tom's great decision to risk Injun Joe's vengeance, or the doom invoked upon himself in his own oaths. In *Huckleberry Finn* we are provided abundant evidence of the hero's inward processes of moral crisis and of the deliberations accompanying their resolution. The Huck of the later novel articulates his private world much as does Hamlet in the great soliloquies. In Tom's case, we are never told in advance how the hero determines upon his great deeds. In the whitewashing episode we are told only that "an inspiration... a great, magnificent inspiration" had burst upon him. At the Sunday school we saw Tom mysteriously trading for tickets among the boys, but his sudden presentation of himself for the prize Bible, in the presence of Judge Thatcher, is almost as much of a surprise to us as to Mr. Walters, the Sunday school superintendent. Later, in the midst of his pirating expedition, as he stands silently in the night over the troubled sleeping form of Aunt Polly, we only know that "his face lighted with a
happy solution of his thought." In each of these cases we only learn what he had decided from the results of his decision. An indication of how Tom decides may be gleaned, however, from the description of how he chooses his runaway vocation. He contemplates the careers of the clown, the soldier, and the Indian chief. Then, as the vision of the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main seizes and convulses his being, it sweeps the field, and his choice is made. It is the workings of Tom's passions, not any inner reflection upon alternative courses or motives, that determine his fate. We venture to suggest, therefore, that fear controlled him from the moment of the murder but that compassion for Muff Potter warred closely with fear until the second oath recorded the ascendancy of the latter.

We recollect but one reference to Tom's conscience in connection with the murder trial. In the twenty-third chapter, in which the case is brought on, we are told that "Every reference to the murder sent a shudder to his heart, for his troubled conscience and fears almost persuaded him that these remarks were put forth in his hearing as 'feelers'; he did not see how he could be suspected of knowing anything about the murder, but he still could not be comfortable in the midst of this gossip." It is not clear from this whether conscience and fears are altogether different things. Tom would like to be "comfortable," even as he earlier had sought a comfortable way of enjoying the advantages of death. The feels threatened by Injun Joe; but he also feels threatened by the community, which could use legal processes to compel him to testify if they suspected what he knew. Yet we know that he is troubled also by his attachment to Muff Potter and by the threat to Muff. It is our judgment that it is, strictly speaking, compassion for Muff, not conscience proper, that motivates Tom in the direction he finally takes. By compassion we mean sympathy arising from a sense of identification with another. We distinguish it from conscience, insofar as the latter implies recognition of a duty or obligation. Tom shows no sense of obligation to Muff, or to either law or justice. But he quite literally feels for him, and this feeling, this passion, is at war with the more fundamental passion he has for his own life. In the end, the ascendancy of fear over compassion is reversed, not by the strength of compassion, but by its mighty assistance from Tom's love of glory and éclat. The melodrama of the trial and the vision of himself in the central role—like that of the little child of the millennium—overcome the contrary force of fear. The playing of the heroic role before the entire community, and of the role of personal savior of Muff, presented overwhelming immediate gratifications, which obliterated for the moment the more remote sense of danger from Injun Joe.

But let us understand thoroughly what that love of glory was that seems to have acted so decisively upon Tom. Love of glory has two roots that, strictly understood, differ as much as conscience and compassion. Glory is an intensification of fame, as fame is of honor. We can love honor either from self-knowledge or from self-love. In the former case,
what we ultimately seek is a competent assurance of our virtue or excellence. That is to say, we may desire virtue as a means to well-being, and honor as a means to virtue. The quest for honor may then be an element in the quest for self-knowledge in the service of excellence. But the quest for glory rooted in self-love apart from self-knowledge tends to make glory an end in itself. The passion Tom seeks to gratify—clearly of the latter species—thus appears as a passion merely for a name. Perhaps this is not unnatural for a boy who has no father and who must overcome his anonymity by becoming a founder in his own right. We spoke earlier of the love of distinction to which Tom appealed in his sale of whitewashing privileges. Love of fame, in a modern mass democracy, tends to be the passionate negative to the constant threat to the sense of individual identity. At bottom, it is the equivalent upon the human level of the reaction of the organism to the threat of physical extinction, as that threat is seen from the perspective of modern science. From this perspective the individual organism is never more than a hypothetical and temporary sequestration of atoms upon a gravitational field into which, presently, it will dissolve. Radical nominalisms in physics and in ethics parallel each other. Because Tom's glory has no foundation beyond the acclaim he sees and hears—or feels—he is constantly driven to repeat it. He must constantly revive that limelight in which alone he experiences assurances of his own authenticity. Whether he is swearing the oath to keep the secret, or revealing the same secret before the astounded court, he is obeying the same law of his nature.

Tom's questionable glory in the church has now been transformed into unquestionable glory in the courtroom, and beyond. Yet Injun Joe remains at liberty. Rewards have been offered, a detective from St. Louis has come and gone, but no Joe. Of course, it is Tom, assisted by Huck, who must prove Joe's nemesis. After the trial had ended so sensationaly and Tom had been immortalized by the village newspaper, "There were some that believed he would be President, yet, if he escaped hanging." The humor notwithstanding, it is Tom's quasi criminality that qualifies him as an antagonist of Joe. "Set a thief to catch a thief" is the relevant proverb.

In fact, Tom never sets out to catch Joe. Because of Mark Twain's myth that this is a story of a boy, certain things are ascribed to chance by the art of the novel that otherwise might be ascribed to the art of the protagonist. Tom and Huck discover the secret meeting place of Joe and his confederate as an accidental by-product of a treasure hunt that is presented to us as a development unrelated to the prior action of the plot. In a ruined, abandoned house, they witness the equally accidental discovery by Joe of the long-lost treasure of the Murrel Gang. From their hiding place they watch the criminals cart off the treasure, which they hear is to be hidden in one of Joe's dens, "Number Two—under the cross." At that point the boys set off, not to apprehend Joe, but to steal the treasure for themselves. Their motive is simply to rob the robbers.
It is of some interest to recognize the cause of Joe’s undoing. It is not Tom’s skill in tracking either him or the treasure. Joe and his companion planned to light out for Texas with their loot; but Joe would not do so until they had done one more “dangerous” job. Had they foregone that final job, they might have taken both their loot and the treasure and departed for a life of ease, and perhaps even respectability. But the job consists, as the confederate himself discovers only at the last moment, in taking revenge upon the Widow Douglas. At a crucial moment, Joe threatens even the confederate with death unless he renders the necessary assistance in carrying the act of vengeance to its conclusion. Joe had murdered young Doctor Robinson as revenge for once having caused him to be jailed for vagrancy. The widow’s husband, who had been a justice of the peace, had done the same thing. Moreover, he had once done something infinitely worse: he had had Joe horsewhipped in front of the village jail, “like a nigger!” The insult to Joe’s pride had demanded the judge’s death, and since the judge had cheated him by dying without Joe’s assistance, it now demanded the widow’s mutilation. Joe has a brutal and barbaric sense of honor, yet it is a sense of honor nonetheless. It is moreover a sense of honor that has nothing in common with Tom’s love of glory and éclat. It causes him to lose both treasure and life. Yet Joe shows, in the dialogue with his confederate, that neither life nor gold count for much with him in comparison with his pride or honor. Mark Twain presents Joe to us as a worthless as well as a dangerous being. Yet except for Aunt Polly’s old-fashioned piety, Joe appears to be the sole representative within the novel of devotion to an immaterial good. Joe’s pagan pride joins Aunt Polly’s Christian humility upon the altar of Tom’s materialistic self-glorification.

Tom and Huck trace Injun Joe to his lair in the whisky room of the temperance tavern. They believe the treasure is in the room and that if they can get in there when Joe is away they can make off with it. They are certain he will not leave by day, and agree that Huck will watch every night and come for Tom when Joe has left on the “dangerous” job. Several nights pass without event, and on Saturday Tom goes on the long-heralded picnic that had been planned by Becky. Why Tom risks being away on a night when Injun Joe might emerge from his den is expressed to us as follows. “The sure fun of the evening outweighed the uncertain treasure; and boylike, he determined to yield to the stronger inclination and not allow himself to think of the box of money another time that day.” We think the author meant, not that Tom “determined to yield,” but that he yielded. The present good of the picnic outweighed the treasure, just as the fear of Injun Joe had been outweighed by the glory in the courtroom.

Before pursuing the dual themes of the treasure and the picnic, we must direct attention to an episode that was a necessary condition of the picnic, namely, the reconciliation of Tom and Becky. Their estrangement, which began with the discovery by Becky that Tom had been engaged to Amy
Lawrence, had finally reached an impasse. But one day during the noon recess, Becky passes the schoolmaster’s desk and sees the key in the lock. The master keeps a book there, the identity of which is the great and tormenting mystery of the school. Becky turns the key, opens the drawer, and presently is inspecting the anatomy text with its handsomely engraved frontispiece, “a human figure, stark naked.” At that moment Tom steps up behind her, Becky starts, and as luck would have it, tears the page. Becky bursts into tears: her terror of discovery and punishment thereupon multiply a thousandfold her grievance against Tom.

What old Dobbins does in such cases is to demand of the class that the guilty party step forward. When no one volunteers, he asks each of the scholars in turn, fixing his gaze full upon him or her, to discover evidences of guilt. Such a procedure might not succeed with such a hardened prevaricator as Tom, but it cannot fail with such an innocent as Becky. Becky might have confessed had she not been so paralyzed by fear. The beating that is the sure punishment for such a crime appears to her in all the lurid light of eternal damnation. But Tom has been licked times without number. We have seen him deliberately court a licking in order to be sent to sit with the girls, the first day Becky had come to the school. He can’t understand why Becky is so bitter at the prospect. “That’s just like a girl—they’re so thin-skinned and chicken-hearted,” he comments. But of course we know that that is part of their charm for Tom. At the same time, we know that taking a licking is about the smallest price Tom could possibly pay for any good thing he might desire. At the crucial moment, just as Dobbins reaches Becky in his relentless search for the guilty one, Tom has another of his great inspirations. “He sprang to his feet and shouted— I done it! . . . and when he stepped forward to go to his punishment the surprise, the gratitude, the adoration that shone upon him out of poor Becky’s eyes seemed pay enough for a hundred floggings.” Their reconciliation is complete. Indeed, it should be characterized, not as a reconciliation, but as a conquest. No knight slaying dragon had ever won fair lady by what the lady had perceived as greater valor.

So Tom and Becky are inseparable upon the long-delayed picnic. In the afternoon the children take to exploring McDougal’s cave. There was a main avenue that was familiar to most. No one, we are told “knew” the cave, for there were labyrinths beyond labyrinths, and it was not customary to venture beyond the main avenue and the corridors and recesses immediately adjacent thereto. “Tom Sawyer knew as much of the cave as any one.”

Tom leads Becky on into the cave, beyond the known portion to the unknown, until finally they are lost, with no idea, and finally no rational hope, of emerging alive. Why? At a certain point, “the ambition to be a discoverer seized him.” Tom is a venturer; his is the spirit of enterprise. But Tom never seeks danger for its own sake; nor does he willingly face danger except when, as in the courtroom, it is suppressed by another,
more immediate passion. But now Tom is led to unsought and unnecessary danger. There was no reason for him to venture into the unknown without marking the pathway by which they might return. But Tom is under a compulsion to break with the trodden pathways, to go onward without retracing his steps. There will be either death or salvation, but no turning back. And so, having lost the way and being driven ever onward, Tom and Becky are lost.*

Their only food is a piece of cake she has “saved... from the picnic for us to dream on, Tom, the way grown-up people do with wedding cake...” Tom shows great tenderness for Becky’s growing weakness in the cave and reserves the greater part of the cake for her, never eating more than a small part of his own share. Yet he never returns the pledge of her troth. To him, the cake is not consecrated; it is only a means of survival. When they come to a spring, Tom decides that they must make a halt; at least the water will keep them alive longer, while they wait and hope for rescue. Becky becomes very weak; slowly she sinks into “a dreary apathy,” and eventually loses all hope. She tells Tom to take his kite line and continue to explore if he chooses; but makes him promise to return from time to time and to hold her hand when the end comes.

During this terrible vigil, Tom makes a discovery—that Injun Joe is in the chamber of the cave next to their own. Fear of Joe overcomes fear of the cave at that moment. It apparently never occurs to Tom to appeal to Joe to rescue them. Yet Joe could have had no grudge against Becky; and it might have been in Joe’s interest to have saved both of them. After all, there was already a petition being circulated for Joe’s pardon. Rescuing the children after all other hope had gone might have led to the success of the petition. But Tom’s future glory brooks no such medium. How then and why does Tom succeed?

There are two conspicuous facts about the vigil in the darkness. First is the apparent absence from Tom of any conception of his own death. Although Tom knows fear—particularly of Injun Joe—there never seems to be the decided equation between hopelessness and death that there is in the case of Becky. Becky feels her growing weakness and accepts death as its inevitable conclusion. But Tom, although aware of the facts of the situation, never resigns himself to it. Second is the absence of any suggestion of prayer, by either Tom or Becky. We recall that only once before did Tom ever pray, when Huck was overcome by fright at the approach of the “devils” in the graveyard. But he broke it off before ever naming the Lord. In his utmost extremity, Tom relies on no other power than himself, whether higher or lower.

Tom then, wasting no time or energy on useless thoughts or actions, extends his kite line, first down one corridor, then down another, and then down still another. Turning back from the third, “he glimpsed a far-off speck that looked like daylight.” Dropping the line, he groped toward the

* See note page 224.
light and presently "pushed his head and shoulders through a small hole and saw the broad Mississippi rolling by!" Tom is thus saved, and Becky is saved by Tom, by a light vouchsafed to him far within the innermost recesses of the cave, at a point where the probability of finding light—or of light finding him—was the most remote, if not most unreasonable. Tom thus becomes an authentic hero of that new Calvinism in which grace comes, not by works or faith, but by the spirit of utter and indefeasible self-reliance. Tom, we may say, is saved by the Lord because the Lord finds merit in the fact that it had never occurred to Tom to ask for help. Tom may have appeared as a clever and lucky trickster hitherto. But he will emerge with a new aura of authenticity and legitimacy. The highest principle of the old order has now anointed the leader of the new. Tom's education and the formation of his character have been completed deep within the earth. Tom Sawyer's Gang is now ready for the light of the sun.

Huck meanwhile has kept his own faithful vigil. On the night that Tom and Becky are wandering ever deeper into the cave, Huck follows Joe and his companion as they leave their lair. But they carry a box with them, which Huck mistakenly believes is the treasure. There is no time to go for Tom. The men pursue a course toward the Widow Douglas's, and following closely in the dark, Huck discovers the evil nature of their mission. But the widow has company, and the men lurk under cover waiting for the lights to go out. Then Huck runs for help. The Welshman and his sons arrive with guns. Joe and his confederate are driven off, but not captured. Huck is terrified and is taken into the Welshman's house, where he is seized with a fever and for a long time loses consciousness. When he comes to himself again, he too will taste, but without pleasure, the glory of a hero.

Before Huck recovers, Tom and Becky triumphantly return. Judge Thatcher has the mouth of the cave sealed, not knowing that Joe is within. And Joe dies of thirst and starvation before Tom discovers what the Judge had done. The light that had been vouchsafed to Tom has been denied to Joe.

Now the boys are safe, and when Huck is well enough, Tom takes him aside and imparts his secret. Number Two is in the cave, and Tom knows an easy way to get there. He is sure that that is where the treasure is kept. They gather up provisions and two bags to carry the treasure. Then they head for the secret place five miles below the mouth of the cave from which he and Becky had emerged to safety. Exploring the chamber where Tom had nearly stumbled upon Joe, they discover a cross, done with candle smoke on a big rock. This without doubt is "Number Two," and the treasure must be "under the cross." But Huck is again struck with terror. Injun Joe's ghost must be nearby. Tom remonstrates that the ghost must surely be at the mouth of the cave, where Joe had died, rather than here. But Huck disagrees, "No, Tom, it wouldn't. It would hang around
the money. I know the way of ghosts, and so do you.” Tom begins to have doubts too. That the ghost would stick to the treasure seemed eminently reasonable. But once more inspiration comes to Tom. “Looky-here, Huck, what fools we’re making of ourselves! Injun Joe’s ghost ain’t a-going to come around where there’s a cross!” And so the sacred symbol performs the function that will now be characteristic in the order over which Tom is to preside. It will point the way to the new salvation and keep the air pure and free of evil spirits for the votaries of the faith.

Huck and Tom return to St. Petersburg. As they enter the town, the Welshman sees them and tells them they are wanted at the Widow Douglas’s. Their wagon appears to him to be loaded with old metal. As they reach the widow’s it appears that something great is in progress. All the people of consequence in the town are there. The boys are quickly sent aside for scrubbing and dressing. Huck wants to find a rope and drop out the window and escape. But Tom senses another scene of grandeur and won’t miss it for anything. The celebration is a setting for the supposed grand revelation by the Welshman of how Huck had risked his life that Saturday night to save the widow. Huck had earlier sworn the Welshman to secrecy, but the death of Injun Joe evidently has convinced the Welshman—but not Huck—that the oath is no longer binding. Huck still feared that Joe might have some friends around. But the secret had already leaked out, and the surprise lacked some of its supposed force. When the widow responded by saying that she meant to give Huck a home, have him educated, and start him in business some day, “Tom’s chance was come. He said: ‘Huck don’t need it, Huck’s rich.’”

And so the long trail of successes winds its way to the triumph to end

* The exact cause of the break with the return path is not easy to state precisely. Tom had made two smoke marks for future guidance before they were attacked by the bats. To escape, Tom leads Becky hastily down a corridor, just as Becky’s candle is put out. The flight continues for some time, down a succession of corridors entered at random. Is the pathway broken at this point? Tom does not think of returning for some time, still impelled by his search for novelties to brag about later. He then tells Becky he reckons he could find the way back, but fears encountering the bats again. He insists upon searching for a new way. His fear of the bats appears to govern him at this point, just as his fear of Injun Joe does a little later. But the bats are a largely imaginary danger. A resolute attempt to protect the candle, at least until they reached the smoke marks or the staircase might have succeeded. Even if they failed, they would have remained at a point in the cave where they might easily have been rescued. In fact, had they remained near the bats, they might have followed them out of the cave when night came, and the bats emerged in their quest for food. If it is true, as we are told, that Tom knew the ways of bats, his behavior becomes even more unreasonable. But Tom is ever dominated by the passion of the moment. He never acts reasonably. It is in his defiance of reason, and the cunning of his passion, that his virtu consists. His way is irreversibly downwards, and he emerges not from the top, but from the bottom of the cave. One can hardly imagine a more apt symbol of the replacement of Platonic by Machiavellian republicanism.
all triumphs. Once more Tom is the little child in a drama that has all
the glory of the millennium. The whitewashing of the fence, the prize
winning in the Sunday school, the return from the dead, the revelation in
the courtroom, all pale into insignificance beside the twelve thousand
dollars in gold coins that now transfix the assembled magnates of St.
Petersburg.

Tom’s glory will now endure. The Lord has shown him to be truly of
the elect. He has shown him the light of salvation in his hour of sorest
need. His cross has pointed him the way to the treasure. And the treasure
the cross has revealed and protected is such as neither moth nor rust can
corrupt, or other thieves can steal. Tom Sawyer’s Gang is set upon the
path to greatness and immortality such as no faith can assure so well,
either in this world or the next, as a large capital.
The title of this paper states its basic argument, namely, that the scientific study of politics—the study of what is politically—requires the hypothesis that reason can teach men something about how they ought to live politically. Not any normative yearning, but the empirical enterprise itself requires that hypothesis. Rational explanations of political facts require a like possibility of making rational statements about political "values." This is what is implied by the phrase "the dependence of fact upon value." Accordingly, I argue that the radical distinction made by modern political science between facts and values is false and misleading and that the refusal to treat the validity of values as subject to scientific reasoning is fatal to the empirical study of politics.

Let me hasten to add that this article is not addressed to the full theoretical scope of the fact-value question—at least not any more than can be helped. The perspective is that of a working political scientist who tries to understand and explain the factual stuff of politics, such as statesmen, governments, opinion, movements, parties.

Now the factual stuff of politics presents itself empirically to our senses and minds with facts and values inextricably entwined. Indeed, the first and most fundamental fact about politics is that it is all about values. For example, "power" and "influence"—those modern spook-terms (to paraphrase Hobbes) that have haunted us now for several generations—are not the indicator and measure of the political. Behavior is not political behavior merely because of the presence of power or influence. Until and unless power and influence are involved with the deliberate mutual public pursuit of values, we are dealing only with some merely social phenomenon such as, say, a gang, the bedroom, or the factory. Political power is distinguished from the power of a gangster, a courtesan, or a factory foreman by the fact that political power is generated and constituted out of the deliberate mutual public pursuit of values or, as it would be more sensible to say, out of the public process whereby rival opinions are put forward as to what is mutually advantageous and just for the whole community.

Consider what everyone of us knows in his bones—how we come in fact to see and hear the political. It is not when spook-abstractions like power and influence present themselves to our eyes and ears, for they

* The present paper is based upon a series of lectures given at Loyola University (Chicago) in 1970, and is to be published in the Loyola Series on Political Analysis by F. E. Peacock Publishers.
cannot be seen or heard. We see and hear the political when statesmen, governments, citizens, movements, and parties present themselves to us as rival claimants regarding virtue, justice, or the common good. Each comes clamorously explaining its behavior in terms of some argument or opinion as to what is good and just. These rival opinions about virtue, justice, or the common good are the first and the central political phenomenon: they are what makes behavior political behavior.

Now the peculiar character of these politics-constituting opinions is that they are arguments: for example, "such and such is just or good for the country because of this and that." Therefore, the first demand the empirical phenomena make on the working political scientist is that he confront and evaluate, that is, judge the validity of, these conflicting arguments as to what is just. After all, what else can you do with an argument besides evaluate it? The political scientist cannot go spelunking, he cannot reach beneath these opinion arguments to any underlying facts about power or influence until he has first dealt justly with the rival opinions regarding the ought. The fact he has to deal with first is the argument the opinion makes about values. In short, the ought stands at the gateway to the political study of the is.

But precisely here lies the failure of modern political science. It has barred itself from entering through the gateway because it does not believe that opinions regarding the ought can be evaluated. The fact-value distinction—that self-denying methodological ordinance regarding values—teaches modern political science that reasoned argument and values belong to two radically separate realms. Hence all value opinions are equal in being equally nonevaluable: the arguments upon which they claim ultimately to rest all equally fail before the tribunal of science. Accordingly, modern political science necessarily treats all serious political opinion, which is always at bottom some sort of reasoned argument regarding values, as ultimately spurious or self-deceived. Party platforms, constitutions, the great debates over policy issues, the promises of candidates, the speeches of statesmen, all these are ultimately massive rationalizations of underlying interests and passions. Politics as it presents itself to the eye and the ear is a snare and a delusion, a giant fabrication. The knowing scientific observer must steel himself against the delusions. Like the wily Ulysses, he must tie himself securely within the coils of scientific method and hold tenaciously to the fact-value distinction when exposed to the siren song of politics, that is, when exposed to the spurious opinion that is the fundamental stuff of politics.

Now this is not only to misunderstand the nature of political opinion, but it is also profoundly to degrade both the political and the science that studies it. The fact-value distinction degrades politics and political science because that view of values denies to the political the unique element that constitutes its being. As I have argued, politics is constituted by the rivalry of human opinion regarding justice and the common good. That is to say, politics is an expression of the uniquely human faculty of reason-
ing about such matters. It is that rational faculty alone that distinguishes human things from all other things and, in particular, distinguishes the political from the merely social or the economic or the biological. But the fact-value distinction denies the authenticity of the human capacity to reason about justice and the common good. That distinction is therefore fatal to political science; but it is a veritable spawning ground of the other social sciences. They rush to fill the gap created when modern political science improvidently abdicates its proper subject matter and cheerfully acquiesced in its preemption by others.

And it has been preempted. That is the history of the last century of the social sciences. Since the fact-value distinction makes the rational and the political epiphenomenal, derivative, and reflexive, the political becomes the dependent variable, varying with the underlying independent variables—the social, the economic, and the psychological. These sister disciplines seem to have a subject matter and an independent variable all their own; or at least all seem to be somehow closer to the core of the general stuff of behavior. Political science, in contrast, has come to seem derivative, marginal, sustaining life on table scraps of data and hand-me-down methodology from these richer autonomous relatives among the social sciences.

It is hardly necessary to document the recent development. But it may be illustrated clearly in S. M. Lipset’s Politics and the Social Sciences, the fruit of a series of panels conducted at the 1967 meetings of the American Political Science Association. The various essays explain the contribution of the other social sciences to the study of politics. Political sociology, we are told, is “the effort to apply various concepts and methods of sociology to the study of political behavior and institutions.” There is a “new enthusiasm for the application of economic theory to politics.” And political psychologists draw “their intellectual sustenance from psychology and apply it to the study of political attitudes and behavior.” Regarding the question of whether politics itself affects behavior, it does so only as “the effective arena” in which policy choices are made; but “our hypotheses concerning the determinants [of such choices] must come from the other social sciences.”¹ Sociological theory of politics, economic theory of politics, psychological theory of politics—any theory for the study of politics but political theory.

This situation results inevitably from the denial that political opinion regarding values can be founded on reason; political opinion must be understood as mere rationalization. Aristotle was wrong in thinking man to be the rational animal; modern political science knows him to be

¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, Politics and the Social Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). The quotations are from pages xi, xv, xv-xvi, xxii. It should be emphasized that Professor Lipset is primarily reporting on what is in fact happening and that he himself usually shows an awareness in his work of the dignity and autonomy of political things.
instead the rationalizing animal. Political opinion is a superstructural thing; what really counts is the substructure. Behavior when it manifests itself in the political arena has the annoying habit of masquerading itself as noble and just. As it were, the other disciplines may deal with the fundamental behavioral stuff neat, straight off the shelves as it comes to them; but the modern political scientist has, uniquely, the duty to unmask the data. He must discredit the pretended grounds of the behavior and reveal its true subrational or arational "determinants." Hence reality is to be sought, not in opinion, but behind and beneath it; not in the exercise of man's distinctive rational faculty, but in the exertion upon that faculty of determining forces that link man with all the other creatures and things.

From this it follows that what explains all other creatures and things likewise explains man; inevitably, then, political theory must give way to theory imported from those apparently more primary disciplines that deal more directly with the universal stuff of behavior. Hence "our hypotheses concerning the determinants" of political things must indeed "come from the other social sciences." From its former position as the architectonic study—the study of the most important independent variable, namely, man's unique rational-political capacity—political science is relegated to studying only the "arena" in which the universal stuff of behavior is displayed.

All the foregoing developments may be seen simply by considering carefully the term "values." In the process, it will become clear why quotation marks were used around the word "values" at the outset, as a way of indicating its dubious status. Consider first how recent is the contemporary social science usage of the term. The Oxford English Dictionary does not recognize it; in any event, the one reference that could at all be said to be in the new mode dates only from 1899. Webster's New World Dictionary lists the new meaning and attributes it to sociology, which both dates the usage and should give political scientists pause. The traditional meaning of the word was connected primarily with things, i.e., the value of commodities, of material values—as in the expression, "What value do you the buyer or seller place on this ring or jewel?" That is,

2 It turns out on closer inspection that modern science does not treat all values as equally nonevaluable, as, for example, Brecht seems only modestly to claim. Rather, all value arguments turn out to be equally false when evaluated by a science based upon the fact-value distinction.

3 A second traditional meaning according to the OED dealt with the "worth or worthiness (of persons) in respect of rank or personal qualities," for example, being of value as a soldier, holding a valued rank in society, setting a high value on one's own qualities, or valuing someone in the sense of esteeming that person. Still another traditional meaning of the word is as a measure of things, such as mathematical quantities or musical notes. But the way the word is used in modern social science clearly derives from the idea of material values, where the emphasis is on the desirer and the value he idiosyncratically places on things, rather than on their inherent worth.
the traditional use of the term emphasized the conventional value of material things—the worth assigned to them by the more or less arbitrary and changeable desires of men.

Thus the arbitrary element—so important to the modern usage regarding ethical and political values—was always implicit in the traditional term. But as far as I can tell, the word values was never used hitherto to mean opinions of justice or the common good. And that is precisely the change that was wrought: questions of justice were transferred from the realm of opinion to the realm of "values," which is to say, from the realm of the partly rational to the realm of the wholly arbitrary. Treating justice under a term heretofore reserved for material things and their conventional values proved an extremely effective rhetorical ploy, because whether applied to commodities or to justice, the word value persuasively implies that neither the commodities nor justice have any intrinsic merit, but only what men subjectively and arbitrarily attach to them. Indeed, when applied to justice, the word came to imply a wholly arbitrary matter; after all, everyone always knew that most commodities have some objective, intrinsic worth.

Values being thus understood, there is naturally a radical distinction between facts and values. The word value rhetorically prejudices the case and settles all the important questions before they can even be asked. For example, hear how the term value judgment settles the matter: a value judgment is a judgment made as to whether one likes or dislikes certain facts, but only after the facts have already been considered. The very term presupposes and thus seems to confirm that facts and values belong to different realms—facts are accessible to scientific reason, while values belong to the "noncognitive" realm of interests and passions.

Consider the similar import of some terms closely related to the concept of values—commitments, preferences, attitudes. They are used almost interchangeably with the word value, and for the good reason that they all have the same thrust regarding the status of rationality. By commitment I mean my will, by preference my desire, and by attitude my inclination or predisposition. And notice: my commitment, my preference, my attitude. Like the word value, these words also presuppose that there is no intrinsic merit that reason can perceive in the thing or idea valued; there is only an act of will or desire derived from material interests or passions. Consequently, the substantive or rational content of my commitment, preference, attitude, or value is of little significance; what counts are the interests and passions that determine the content.

The difference between all these terms and the idea of opinion must be stressed. For example, pollsters typically ask what the respondent's attitude is to a given issue, the word attitude being used synonymously with opinion. But an attitude need not justify itself, while an opinion must. An attitude can be expressed in a sentence that does not include the word "because"; but a sentence expressing an opinion must always give a "because," because opinions are arguments, while attitudes are only likes
and dislikes, tastes and preferences, inclinations and aversions. An attitude can be expressed with a shrug or a grimace and is merely expressive, but an opinion must always be discursive. However poorly stated, however ill considered, an opinion is an exercise of the rational faculty; it always includes a rational element that is independent of the subrational or arational influences that also bear upon opinion. By contrast, attitudes, commitments, preferences are simply the products of subrational or arational determinants. It is therefore an entirely different thing to speak of opinions of the just and to speak of values regarding justice. Values and facts clearly do belong to different realms when values are understood merely as the expression of desire, inclination, and interest. But it is not clear that facts and opinions are equally heterogeneous. That is why no one ever spoke of the fact-opinion distinction. Facts and opinions manifestly do not belong to different realms, the one in which reason is relevant and the other in which it is not. While reason cannot support values, it surely can support opinions. Indeed, the support of reason is precisely what distinguishes sound opinions from foolish ones.

Now opinion is so central to the study of politics that even modern political science, although it has misunderstood the nature of opinion, has nonetheless given a central place to the problem of opinion. Indeed, the study of opinion is perhaps that area in which modern political science most prides itself on having made the greatest advances upon the old political science.\(^4\) A formidable mass of studies would seem to be sufficient support for the claim. With all due trepidation in the face of these massed volumes, let me nonetheless state the following: far from advancing the study of opinion, modern political science has abandoned it. It has not studied opinion at all, but rather has substituted for that study something entirely different—the study of opinion formation.

The study of opinion proper is in the first instance the study of its substantive content, its arguments, its wisdom, its folly. The study of opinion formation, on the contrary, presupposes the utter irrelevance of an opinion’s substance to explaining the process of its formation. This radical conclusion is so startling to common sense that it may be insufficiently appreciated in its starkness. But the accepted contemporary texts on opinion formation readily confirm the point. For example, Smith, Bruner, and White introduce their work by disclaiming any interest in the specific opinions they dealt with; these were used only as the “focus of investigation.” Their book is not concerned with any particular opinions but “is, rather, a study of the psychological processes involved in forming

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and holding an opinion—any opinion.”5 Consider what “any opinion” means. No matter how wise or foolish, how soundly based or ill informed, no matter whether the opinion is that of Plato or the Athenian town drunk, the same “psychological processes [are] involved in forming and holding... any opinion.” The content of the opinion, its accuracy and sense regarding the ethical or political problem to which it is a response, has zero consequence for the process of opinion formation. In explaining why an opinion is formed and held, one abstracts wholly from its evidence, arguments, and inferences, because they cannot have been the reasons why the opinion is formed and held. The study of opinion formation is perfectly divorced from the study of opinion.

How could so incredible a position come to have been held? The answer is that once the fact-value distinction was accepted this ludicrous conclusion was inescapable. The theoretical presuppositions must be restated. All important political opinions rest on “values,” i.e., upon arguments as to the ought. But since values can have no cognitive status, such arguments can have no standing. All opinions ultimately are equally unfounded in reason; hence there are no sound or foolish opinions regarding the ought. The purported grounds of any opinion—that is, the arguments that constitute its content—cannot possibly have influenced the formation of the opinion. That content is a mere rationalization of subterranean interests and passions, which are the true determinants of the opinion. Thus, by necessary inference from the fact-value distinction, the study of opinion formation divorces itself from the study of opinion.

The persuasiveness of modern political science, despite the ludicrousness of its main conclusion, rests in part on what we all know and acknowledge, namely, that interests and passions do profoundly influence political opinion. Of course men are influenced by their pocketbooks, their character structures, their childhood training, and the like. But influenced only; modern political science radicalizes that common sense understanding into the idea that opinions regarding the ought are determined by such factors, that opinion cannot be more than a rationalization of underlying interests and passions. I want to argue exactly the contrary: that passion and interest cannot by themselves determine opinion and that we have been wrong to accept the notion that any opinion, no matter how crass or transparent, can be so determined. What an economic interest, for

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5 M. Brewster Smith, Jerome S. Bruner, Robert W. White, Opinions and Personality (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964). Emphasis supplied. See also Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964). “Our study deals mostly with the ways people arrive at their opinions—this, rather than exploring just what it is the public believes” (p. vi). Lane and Sears seek to understand “the mechanisms and processes of opinion formation” (p. vi). And in conclusion, “We have not looked at the complexion of popular beliefs in this book, but we have examined various ways in which beliefs and opinions are learned and changed...” (p. 114).
example, can determine is the conclusion or objective that the opiner or rationalizer wants to reach. A man's pocketbook can indeed make him favor or oppose a policy because it will or will not put money into his pocket; he wants the end result. But that does not end the matter. The man or the group or the politician has to make arguments; they have to support the result they desire with an opinion that makes sense to others and, for that matter, usually to themselves as well. What I submit is that the economic interest, while it explains favoring the conclusion, does not and cannot explain the arguments offered, i.e., the content of the opinion.

Let us acknowledge that most political opinion is in some important respect a rationalization. Yes, but why does, say, the economic interest choose this particular rationalization, these words, these arguments, out of the infinite number of possible words and arguments? Why this view of justice or the common good and not another? The easy answer is that groups choose arguments that will be persuasive to particular audiences. But that only pushes the problem one step back. Why does this argument and not another persuade that audience? What is it in the argument that makes sense and hence persuades? Whatever it is, it cannot spring from the economic interest by itself; no subrational or arational factors can transform themselves into a precise set of arguments or rationalizations. Our inquiry therefore impels us to look for something else that will help explain the empirical political phenomenon, the contending opinions about justice that form political life. As it were, plotting the curve of a rationalization requires points on two axes. One is indeed the axis of, say, economic interest; but what can the other be? I can conceive of no other explanation for the behavior to be explained, i.e., the content of opinion, than a perception, a rational intimation, of what really is just. Our effort to give an empirical account of opinion forces us to acknowledge that, just as facts impose themselves upon our senses, so too does the ought impose itself on our minds. In short, with regard to both the is and the ought, the rightness or correctness of opinion is one of the causes of opinion. This at least is a tenable hypothesis regarding the formation of opinion, whereas the prevailing view that opinion is simply the product of underlying arational forces is incapable of answering the political question: what determines the precise content of opinion?

All important political opinion, I submit, is the product of these two kinds of "determinants," that is, what men opine is the truth about human justice skewed by the force of interest and passion, which do indeed so deeply press upon all of us. We all hear the voice of justice, but the meaning is twisted and dulled in the caverns through which it has to reach us. The force of the rational factor, the intimation of what really is just, is the independent variable that belongs to political science; the force of interest and passion is what we share with the other disciplines. But ours is the architectonic task—the fascinating task of seeing the blend in actual behavior of the rational and subrational forces. And the only way we can do our job is by evaluating the ought arguments, which are the factual stuff of political behavior.
My meaning can be illustrated with a well-known example from Aristotle's *Politics*. The two perennial sources of political division, Aristotle explains, are the oligarchs and the democrats. They have sharply opposed opinions of justice. The democrats believe that justice requires the equal sharing of office and honors; the oligarchs believe that justice requires inequality. The very first thing Aristotle does is to show what is sensible in both these views. "Both oligarchs and democrats have a hold on a sort of conception of justice"; but their views are incomplete and distorted. What each holds is a skewed version of distributive justice; the view of each, Aristotle seems to believe, is the product of two forces, one the rational intimation of what justice is, and the other the biasing force of interest. In the first instance, their opinion is formed by the portion of the truth that they do in fact see. According to Aristotle, justice does indeed require both a certain kind of equality and a certain kind of inequality in the distribution of office and honors. But the democrat, biased by his social and economic position, sees only the equality side of justice; the oligarch, biased by his position, sees only the inequality side. Both democrats and oligarchs are partially blinded in their conceptions of justice by their respective interests. Thus, "the oligarchs think that superiority on one point—in their case wealth—means superiority on all: the democrats believe that equality in one respect—for instance, that of free birth—means equality all round." The reason they have only this partial and hence distorting opinion of justice is that "they are judging, and judging erroneously, in their own case," 6 that is, in the light of their special interest.

Democratic and oligarchic opinions, then, are a blend of justice rationally perceived and of interest rationalized. The task of political science is to see all important political opinion as precisely such blends and to distinguish the elements. In a proper political analysis, interest and reason are each assigned their just share of influence in determining the content of opinion. Evaluation is thus inextricably a part of explanation; facts are dependent upon "values." The true foundation of a political science that can explain political behavior is the capacity to distinguish between the rational and the rationalizing, between the sound and foolish and fraudulent parts of opinion.

Now before everyone is turned off by this astonishing claim, let me assert that we all act on that claim every day in our work. Unfortunately, most of the time it is done covertly; but that is another story. When political scientists analyze patterns of aggressive behavior or the question of violence, they presuppose knowledge of what the right behavior is, i.e., behavior that is neither aggressive nor timid but just right; one might almost say they presuppose knowledge of a sort of Aristotelian mean.

Analysis of ghetto riots and of "backlash" similarly presupposes normative knowledge. For example, riot behavior has to be discriminated into categories of ordinary criminality and political militancy; i.e., the behavior has to be judged as either self-seeking or vicious or as justifiable and manly wrath. And what happens to the fact-value distinction when the very word "backlash" means an unjustified or excessive hostility or punitiveness? For example, in a survey study of backlash, every characterization of a respondent would involve a normative judgment. In short, all important empirical analyses of behavior rest upon tacit "value" premises; and if the value premises can have no objective validity, neither can the empirical conclusions. You can't tell one factual datum from another without a normative score card.