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LEO STRAUSS: A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND MEMORIAL, 1899-1973*

JOSEPH CROPSEY

Leo Strauss, Robert M. Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Chicago, died in Annapolis, Maryland, on October 18, 1973. Professor Strauss was born in Kirchhain, Hesse, Germany, on September 20, 1899, and was educated in German schools and universities. He received the Ph.D. from Hamburg in 1921 for a dissertation on the epistemology of F. H. Jacobi. He left Germany in the 1930s and settled in the United States in 1938, where he took up a teaching post at the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science, The New School for Social Research. There he remained until 1949, when he joined the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He retired from Chicago in 1967, taught next at Claremont Men's College, and was Scott Buchanan Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at St. John's College, Annapolis, at the time of his death.

Mr. Strauss' scholarly corpus consists at present of some eighty contributions to journals and fourteen books, of which three are collections of articles and two are elaborations of material delivered during the course of lectureships. Some of his books are available in translation in six European languages. Between 1930 (Die Religionskritik Spinozas) and 1958 (Thoughts on Machiavelli), most of his books were on the moderns; from 1964 to his death, his books were on the classic ancients. Known as he is for having inclined toward antiquity, it is worth noting that his studies of Spinoza, Hobbes, and Machiavelli, as well as Natural Right and History, appeared in roughly the first half of the period during which his books were being published. It was characteristic of his scholarship that he did not criticize, and most certainly did not dismiss, where he had not first given his careful attention. It appears also that he did not merely prefer antiquity but rather rediscovered it through an arduous process that evidently impressed him as an ascent.

Social science, and especially political science, knew Mr. Strauss as a severe and sometimes sharp critic. He came close to suggesting that the social sciences, through the abstraction from moral concern that accompanied the quest for scientific validity, were in danger of becoming irrelevant. In a famous remark in "An Epilogue" to Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics (ed. Herbert J. Storing), Mr. Strauss asserted that the new political science was in the position of fiddling

* Published, in a slightly different form, in The University of Chicago Record, VIII, No. 2 (1974).
while Rome burned. He seems to have provided a forecast that social science has been blaming itself for not producing; he did not foresee how far his criticism would become the confession of the discipline.

Mr. Strauss has long been described as controversial, and in view of his thought could hardly have been described otherwise. To modernity he taught the claims of antiquity. In an era profoundly affected by the successes of science he kept alive deep reservations against the unreflective enlargement of that vast human enterprise. In an age overrun by the belief in history, he reminded of eternity. Where convention or culture was considered as everything, he spoke of nature. Those who twisted nature into a license heard from him about propriety and convention. Ideologists harboring behind science were rebuked in the name of philosophy. The presumptuous who appropriated the dignity of philosophy were admonished to look within and learn modesty. Above all, those who apotheosized the here and now were called to elevate the mind’s eye and practice that form of forbearance or moderation which gazes without prejudice on every place and time.

Pursuing the last remark, it should be said that Mr. Strauss was regarded as controversial also because of his manner of reading and interpreting the texts that he studied. He declined to assume, from the outset, that in all ages and circumstances men wrote with the same freedom that is used now as a matter of course. It is worth noting that a dedication to historicism, to a belief in the radical difference between ages and places, has not always restrained scholars from denouncing as fanciful an approach to alien writings that insisted on the need to study them as having been fashioned in, if not by, circumstances unlike our own.

Emphasis on his achievements in the interpretation of texts is not misleading, for much of his scholarship consisted of clarification of the history or tradition of political philosophy through what has come to be called “careful reading.” The question arises reasonably enough whether the history of political philosophy is itself philosophic; and it arises with especial force when the interpretation of that history leads away from philosophy of history altogether, thus depriving the history as such of a peculiar philosophic gravity. The question deserves to be faced.

Mr. Strauss’ work has shown effectively what interpretation aims at. It aspires to resemble the immersion of a dry root in water rather than the grafting of a scion onto alien stock: the text acquires at best the fullness that belonged to it implicitly and that it must achieve in the reader’s thought before it can be said to have reached its own completion. Always the possibility exists that the author of the text has expressed his thought not only explicitly but through a reticence, and the interpreter must therefore be alert both to what is present simply and to what is present in the mode of a void, without tenuous, arbitrary, or tendentious selections out of the infinite field of the absent.
In brief, the mind of the interpreter must be at the same time passive to the initiative of the author and active in bringing to the text a richly furnished scholarly and human experience.

Interpretation that intrudes nothing extraneous into the economy of the text but that supplies the text with an amplitude drawn from the same material as that of which the text is fashioned might be rare, but surely is philosophic. And so far as the philosophic activity itself consists of the collaboration of passivity and activity in relation to a world, interpretation is not the instrument but the emulative copartner in the theoretical activity proper.

It is easy to recognize Mr. Strauss' stature and impossible to foretell his influence. He left an unknowable number of followers on several continents, but the sense in which he left a school is problematic. The term "Straussians" is at present much more common than "Strauss-ism." Certainly he did not open up the thought of classical antiquity without projecting the content of that thought, nor did he contrast antiquity and modernity with an indecisive mind on the great issues of nature, the whole, and the ground of the human good. He proclaimed a conception that the world considers obsolete but that yet exhibits, partly because of him, some of the signs of immortality through the veil of presumed moribundity.

The world that Mr. Strauss taught, provoked, and sometimes offended is poorer now that he is gone. The ones who knew him and his care take leave of him with a sorrow I cannot express.
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* Users of this bibliography are indebted, as I am, to those people too numerous to mention by name whose assistance was invaluable to me in its preparation. — J. C.
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A READING OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE: III

Seth Benardete

47 (883–90). 47.1.* Creon’s speech consists of three parts: a rhetorical question to Antigone and the Chorus (883–4), a command to his servants (885–7a), and, closely linked with his command, a justification of his way of dealing with Antigone (887b–90). Only when he comes to his own justification does Creon explicitly speak of, and point to, Antigone. “This girl” is opposed to “we.” Apart from that opposition Antigone does not exist (cf. 567).

47.2. Creon speaks as if he had interrupted Antigone and the Chorus before they could begin another kommos. He seems not to recognize Antigone’s words as putting an end to any further sharing with the Chorus. He is unaware of the extent to which the Chorus have been his spokesman. He further takes it for granted that no song of grief could possibly dissuade him or anyone else. By universalizing the subject (οὐδὲ ἀνεξάκολοθ) and omitting every circumstance but one (πρὸ τοῦ ἀνεξάκολοθ), Creon turns Antigone’s death before her time (896) into the common lot of men. Her fate becomes the paradigm of mortality. Creon unconsciously makes himself out to be as inexorable as Hades, for Hades must do the work that Creon’s scrupulous piety forbids him from doing. Creon must speak of Antigone’s death as fated if he is to remain innocent of her execution. He therefore cannot help beginning as if he were offering a conventional piece of consolation. Were it not for πρὸ τοῦ ἀνεξάκολοθ (“instead of getting killed”), it would have been perfect as such: “Don’t you know that dirges would never cease if one was not fated to stop saying them?” But Antigone was not singing a γόος, which strictly applies to ritual lamentation for someone already dead (cf. 427, 12.47). But as Creon cannot acknowledge the right of ritual lamentation without undermining his case (cf. § 13.2), he must adopt the standpoint of the god whose will the γόος of men do not alter. He can punish Antigone only by submitting to her terms as he himself understands them (cf. 777–80).

47.3. Creon combines a brutality of intent with a certain delicacy of expression (cf. 665). He tells his servants to imprison Antigone in her

* The text used is Pearson’s OCT except where otherwise indicated. I have myself, however, not always accepted his readings wherever I am silent, for if I did not see any connection between the reading chosen and my interpretation of the passage, I have passed over my own preference. Each line or group of lines interpreted is given a section number, with the line numbers in parentheses after it. Each paragraph of every section is numbered as well for ease of cross-reference.
grave as if they were to wrap her in a garment (περιπτύχαντες); and she is to be left alone and isolated in such a dwelling (στέγης) as if she were some sacred beast left to roam a distant pasture (ἐφετε μόνην ἐρήμων). Forced to speak piously “for form’s sake,” he must reject the fate that he had just invoked when cutting short the threnodies of Antigone. Antigone now has a choice. If she chooses suicide, Creon will be plainly ἁγνός. If she chooses to live, so as to keep up her burial practices underground (τῷμβεύον), Creon has only offered Antigone the means of literally fulfilling her own wishes. Creon’s way of punishing Antigone, which suspends the issue of her death, duplicates the way in which Antigone herself understood the rites of burial. Creon has inadvertently discovered the most telling mockery of Antigone’s life in death. It forces her at last to reassess the ground of her devotion.

47.4. Creon sees Antigone as deprived of any share in what is here above (μετουλιξας της ανοι). He implies that she has been an alien in and to this world (cf. § 35.1). Antigone herself had twice sung of her status as a μέτουλος, first as an alien among the living and the dead (852), and then as an alien to her incestuous parents (868, cf. § 46.8). She saw herself as forced to be with either those with whom she cannot fully share because she is unlike them or those who, because she shares everything with them, find her abhorrent. Antigone is everywhere a metic (see § 3-4).

48 (891–928). 48.1. Antigone, in her third and last defense, gives an account of herself in a threefold way: Antigone and her family apart from Polynices (891–902a), Antigone and Polynices (902b–14a), Antigone and Creon (914b–28). Family links the first and second parts: the family she has and the family she hypothetically spurns in favor of her brother. And family again links the second and third parts: the family she has just spurned and the family she can never have because of her devotion to her brother. In design, her speech resembles her second defense, where death was the link between the gods of the first part and the pain of the third (cf. § 17.1). Oedipus, Jocasta, and Eteocles now gloss the connection between gods and law that she had there tried to establish (Phersephassa displaces Zeus and Dike); the irreplaceability of Polynices now glosses the inevitability of her death; and the punishment she hopes Creon will undergo now glosses the pain she would have had if she had not buried Polynices. That law, however, now appears only in the second part, where any trace of its connection with the gods seems to have vanished, shows how much Antigone’s imminent punishment has affected her understanding of what she has done. Creon has, in a sense, managed to shatter Antigone, but only to

115 Morstadt’s ὑμβεύειν should be rejected; but τῷμβεύειν should not be taken intransitively; it is too common a word to bear it; cf. T. M. Barker, CR 1907, 48.
reveal the core within the core of her resolve. Antigone had ended her second defense by charging Creon with folly; she now hopes that Creon will suffer no less than she has suffered.

48.2. The triple invocation with which Antigone begins characterizes the three parts of her speech. She calls the place where she is going to meet her own a grave, a bridal chamber, and a deep-dug dwelling that keeps eternal watch. What begins as a literal designation (τὸμοῖος) of her place of punishment becomes through the metaphorical νυμφεῖον the region where she will dwell (οἰκησίας) forever with the rest of her family. The grave that deprives her of being with a husband allows her to be with her family, for τὸμοῖος, in replacing νυμφεῖον, replaces as well the οἰκησίας that could not be on the earth (cf. § 9.6). To stay at home with Oedipus and Jocasta is no less impossible for Antigone than marriage. κατασκαφῆς οἰκησίς ἀξίφρουρος describes not only Creon's underground chamber but Hades, which Antigone later calls θανόντων κατασκαφές, and to which she will descend while still alive (920). This fusion of grave and Hades, which Creon has forced Antigone to reenact in her own death, and which the apparent redundancy in the coupling of ἐν νεκροῖς and διωκότων here exemplifies, is for Antigone indispensable, for on it rests the sanctity of burial. Antigone can no more give up her own body in death than abandon Polynices' corpse to birds. If she cannot go as herself to Hades, she cannot defend the obligation under which she has acted. The strange argument to which she now resorts arises from the need to keep Polynices' burial and her own death strictly together.

48.3. Antigone contrasts the hospitable reception (δέδεστρα) that Phersephassa has extended to her own with her own most miserable descent before her time (cf. 59). Antigone no doubt continues to ignore the mutual killing of Eteocles and Polynices; and she still must regard her own evils as outside the evils that Zeus has inflicted on her family (cf. § 2.2); but the misery that overwhelms her now was the secret burden of the kommos: no one will do for her what she did for her father, mother, and brothers. No one remains to wash, adorn, or pour her libations. Ismene will not risk doing what she would not risk doing for Polynices, for the same prudential considerations now apply even more. Antigone's greatest sacrifice consists in depriving herself of burial rites (cf. 848-9 with 80-1). She must now confront her family without the rites that were indispensable for them. She therefore can do no more than nourish the hope that they will hold her ritual devotion to them as greater than her own lack of sanctity (cf. 867). She must appeal to them over the head of Persephassa, on whom she cannot rely to be gracious. Perhaps this consideration more than any other prevented Antigone from ever asserting that burial rites alone can assure one's passage to Hades. It now prevents her in any case from plainly distinguishing between Hades and the grave.
48.4. Antigone seems to think of her family together, but she speaks of or to them separately. She will come φιλη to her father, whom she does not address, προσφιλης to her mother, whom she does, and φιλη again to Eteocles, whom she calls κασιγνητον κάρα (cf. § 1.3). She cannot bring herself to say that she will come beloved to them all (cf. 75, 89); indeed, she no longer speaks of Polynices’ love (cf. 73), for whom she has not done all that she did for the others (cf. § 33.4). Only in so far as her family were corpses and the objects of her ritual devotions do they belong to one another. Antigone’s performance of burial rites is the only nonsacrilegious bond her family has. Her family is not a γένος (cf. § 8.6).

48.5. Antigone now knowingly lies for the first time. She had come close to it in saying that she would heap up a tomb for Polynices (cf. § 10.1); but now she says that she laid out Polynices’ body for burial. The technical verb περιστέλλω embraces even more than the three rites she has just mentioned; but whatever else she did, we know that she could not have either washed or dressed Polynices (cf. § 7.1). That she now invokes Polynices by name—the only time she does so—indicates the extent to which she depends on his good will to make up for her failings in ritual piety. The wise (and Antigone told Ismene who they were [557]) know that she honored Polynices; but to honor is not the same as to bury (cf. § 13.2): the very argument Antigone uses to confirm the honor confirms the difference. The sacral terms περιστέλλω and δέμας—only here does Antigone refer to a corpse as a body—signify Antigone’s attempt to adhere to piety as piety “for form’s sake” despite her own living of its truth. To keep together the surface and the heart of the law is as difficult as to separate Hades from the grave.

48.6. To favor a brother over against a hypothetical husband or son seems to be absurd when it means to favor a brother already dead; but the absurdity is due to the need to compare incomparable things. It is precisely because death makes all the difference that any argument about burial must appeal to what does not suit the argument. The Chorus of Sophocles’ Electra see in the stork the most fitting way to praise Electra for her devotion to the dead Agamemnon: “We see the wisest birds above carefully tending those from whom they grow and receive support—why is it that we do not perform these duties equal-

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116 The sacred character of δέμας, which it shares with all neutrals with the same suffix (cf. note 55), is plain in Δαινάξ δέμας (944–5); and that Creon is indifferent to this nuance (203) is a sign of his consistency and on a par with his use of σωμα (cf. § 20.2). For the difference between δέμας and σωμα, see Xenophon, fr. 13, 4–5, where Xenophon has the animals make the σωματα of the gods such as to be like their own δέμας. Greek, like English, often opposed head to body (cf. Her. 2.66.4; 3.110; 4.75.3, 103.3; 7.75.1); it is therefore significant that Antigone calls Polynices by name when she refers to his body but calls Eteocles κασιγνητον κάρα when she speaks of his loving her, and again Polynices is κασιγνητον κάρα when she speaks to him of Creon’s injustice.
ly?” (1058–62; cf. § 25.3). The Chorus must ignore the absence of stork burial rites; and Antigone likewise seems to ignore the same difference, which is what makes her adaptation of Herodotus’ story so damaging to her piety (Her. 3.118–9). Yet to defend Antigone in this way and hence the authenticity of the passage misses the import of her words. Intaphernes’ wife was given the choice of saving her husband, her children, or her brother; Antigone has to invent choices in order to give the semblance of choice to the inevitable. The way in which she presents these choices reconfirms the lack of choice. She says that if one husband died she could have another; and if one child died she could have another from another husband. Antigone, however, seems to run the two cases together, for in ordering them chiastically she speaks at first of her children’s life (τέκνων μητρὸς ἐφών) but of her husband’s death (πόσιν κατθανὼν ἐτέχετο). She thus assumes that if her son died she would need another husband to have another son; and only one condition would make that inevitable: if her son were her husband (cf. 486–7). Antigone imagines herself to be another Jocasta. Even ex hypothesi she takes her family to be the model family. Even ex hypothesi she does not depart from the antigeneration of her name: the husband of her supposition is merely a lawful husband, a πόσις and not an ἄνήρ (cf. Tr. 550–1), and the brother that could be born were her mother and father still alive would grow (βλάστωτοι). Antigone, however, does not mean what she seems at first to imply, that if her mother and father were alive she would not have done what she did, for she could not then make her action depend on a contingency over which she would have no control—the birth of another brother.117 Lines 911–2 mean something very different: there is no growth from those who can legitimately be a family only in Hades (cf. § 27.5). Her mother and father are now concealed in Hades; they should always have been concealed there and never have seen the light. Antigone cannot wish that Oedipus and Jocasta could still supply her with a living brother. The duties to her husband would cease because she could acquire another; but the duties to her brother cannot cease because she would even wish that no one in her family had ever been born. Antigone imagines herself to be a mother for no other reason than to repudiate in advance the very possibilities she envisions. It is her way of making a retroactive wish against all generation; and such a wish allows her in turn to call an apparently special case a law.

48.7. Antigone would not bury a husband despite the citizens because she could have another husband; she must bury her brother because she cannot wish to have a brother. In order to prove the need to bury Polynices, Antigone must assume that “to have” or “to be with”

117 No more than she thinks it possible at 450 that Zeus could have told her not to bury Polynices.
primarily means "to live with" (cf. § 9.6): she could have a second husband because she would then be without (ημπλακων) the first, and she would be without a husband because he had withered away (ἐπηκετο). To bury a husband is second-best; to be with a husband is best simply. Antigone, then, must bury Polynices because she cannot be with him; but in burying him she dies and hence is with him. Her obedience to the law thus looks like a rationalization of her desire to die; but the spirit of the law informs that desire, for it says that to bury means to be with the buried. The rites for the dead are the means for being with the dead. They therefore compel Antigone's return to the corpse, but they cannot satisfy her (cf. § 25.4). Antigone's pain at ever being apart from her family—her desire to overcome the endless repetition of ritual—forces her beyond burial to suicide; and indeed the law of burial contains within itself the inducement to commit suicide; but that inducement can come to light only within an incestuous family, where the impossibility of ever living with one another necessarily entails being with one another in death. The truth of the law, however, destroys the heart of the law for any lawfully constituted family; and so the law becomes in practice something done "for form's sake." Only the incestuous family can fulfill the spirit of the law, for it alone must regard "the being with" that burial affords as the primary sense of "to be with." The law that enjoins burial thus seems to enjoin incest; but the law can avoid that consequence through the demand for consanguinity without generation. The law demands the reconstitution of the family in Hades; it is in perfect agreement with Antigone.

48.8. Antigone speaks three times of her nature. It is her nature not to share with her brothers in their mutual hatred but to join them through the love of her own (523; cf. § 31.1); it is her nature to have been born from incestuous parents (866; cf. § 46.8); and if her nature were to be the mother of children, she would not have defied the citizens of Thebes (905). Merely to put these three ἐξου together reveals that the link between the first and second is the per impossibile hypothesis of the third. Antigone's origin precludes her possible motherhood as it makes inevitable that the love of her own manifest itself in burial rites. And yet she cannot help but wish away the condition of her piety (cf. § 46.8). She must long to be a mother as totally as she is now the embodied denial of generation: she must regret not having been a wife (N.B. του, 917) and mother four lines after she has shown that she would not have done what she did for a husband's or child's sake. A mother might die to save her child's life; she would not die to give him burial. The divine law does not hold in such a case because a child is always replaceable. A mother's nature is to be the perpetual giver of life; but the προφη of children does not include burial. Antigone does more than imagine herself to be like the earth itself, παµµητορ (cf.
§§ 22.9, 61.1): with her parents dead no brother could grow. Antigone has to die in order to escape from the repetition of burial ritual and guarantee her being or lying forever with her own; when she considers the alternative, she no less holds fast to eternity, the eternal succession of generations, on account of which no individual can be preferred over against the perpetuation of the race. Not only inexperience blinds Antigone to the possibility that a mother's love for a son might not stop with his death. Her family has so colored her imagination that only incest can properly express the love of one's own. She cannot think of being a mother without holding up Jocasta as a model at the same time that she longs to be a mother just to be free from the love of her own. She forgets Niobe (cf. § 46.4).

48.9. The last part of Antigone's speech turns on three triads: wrongdoing (921, 926, 927), gods (921, 922, 925), and justice (921, 925, 928). One might suppose that Antigone would see their relation as simple: Creon has done wrong in the eyes of the gods and she has done right; the gods will punish him and reward her. Antigone, however, thinks that she can only wish that such a relation hold. The execution of her punishment—to go alive to the deep-dug chambers of the dead, friendless, unmarried, and childless—follows at once on Creon's judgment of her wrongdoing; but the gods have delayed the confirmation of her justice. Antigone suggests that she has been expecting the gods to interfere all along. Her piety should have been recognized as piety and not been qualified by the Chorus and ignored by the city (cf. §§ 40.3, 46.10). The gods should have brought about a change of heart in everyone but Creon; but since they have failed to do so, Antigone might suffer still more and be forced to acknowledge her error. What error does she have in mind? Does she suspect that the law she has just promulgated does not have the gods' sanction? Or that her belief in her reward as she has imagined it is not the way of the gods? To discover that her reward will consist solely in Creon's punishment and not in any reunion with her family would be enough to break her. Antigone might be innocent of transgression against the gods' justice, yet not be deserving of recompense for her death. Antigone, however, assumes that the just and the noble (µαλακω) coincide (cf. Pl. Leg. 859d2-860c3). But her action in itself might be just without being noble; she might have done what simply had to be done, and the risk she willingly ran to do it might not affect the gods' estimate of its worth, particularly if the risk entails a reward (death) that is nothing but the truth of the law itself. But in this speech Antigone never speaks of her own death; and just in this lies the difference between her second and third defense; she has replaced through her new law the gain of death with the gain of being with her family. Antigone cannot see that her justice might no more be noble than Creon's suffering for his injustice would be. In hoping that Creon
suffer as many evils as she unjustly has, Antigone counts his suffering as her own reward. She thus makes herself out to be the instrument of the gods' punishment of Creon; but as such an instrument she supposes she will obtain the other hope on which she has been nourished, to come beloved to Oedipus, Jocasta, and Eteocles. It is the tension within this double hope that makes her, if anything does, "tragic."

49 (929-43). 49.1. The Chorus do not discern any difference between the Antigone who convicted Creon of folly and the Antigone who would condemn him to suffering. The same onrush of her soul's selfsame winds still possesses her. The Chorus had spoken of ἄγεμων before: Capaneus in a Bacchic frenzy breathed against Thebes the onrushing winds of hatred (137). Antigone is another Capaneus, possessed as he was with hatred and impious defiance; but Capaneus was divinely inspired (βαχχησθῶν), Antigone owes her possession to her own soul. The Chorus now ascribe to her soul what they had formerly ascribed to her father (cf. § 28). But the Chorus virtually identify soul and winds; and they had likened to Thracian blasts the gods, who once they have shaken a family let disasters pursue it from generation to generation (cf. § 37.3). The metaphorical use of wind would seem to be the Chorus' sole consistency (cf. 353, 1146). Gods and soul equally account for Antigone; but they are linked through Oedipus, who inherited the Labdacids' fate and passed it on. The Chorus, then, have left it dark whether τὸν αὐτῶν ἄγεμων αὐτὰ τις ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός refers to Antigone or her family. They might understand Antigone just now to have been the spokesman for her whole family. The savagery she inherited from Oedipus might have its roots in the gods.

49.2. Creon then takes up obliquely what the Chorus have said: "It is a consequence of this that those who lead her will regret their slowness." Since Antigone has not confessed her error—she did not even try to escape (557-80)—the only thing to do is to hasten her death, the slow execution of which Creon supposes has let her keep up the show of her intransigence. Creon takes out his failure to break Antigone on his servants: someone must learn through suffering, someone must cry. Creon, however, does succeed in forcing Antigone to acknowledge her own death, on which she was silent throughout her third defense (cf. § 48.9). The ὀφθαλμος testifies to the collapse of that defense. It is the signal for her suicide, which is equally compounded of hope and despair—hope that she will be reunited with her family, despair that such a reunion can ever be more than parasitic on life. Out of that despair she now asks the gods, whom she thought she should no longer look to for help (922-3), to look upon her. The gods she calls on are gods of generation (cf. § 8.6), without whom she can face Hades but not death.

49.3. Antigone addresses her last words to her father's city of Thebes,
her ancestral gods, and the Chorus, whom she calls the rulers of Thebes (cf. 988). She implicitly rebukes the Chorus for letting perish the last link Thebes has to its past. She thus ends where Creon had begun. He had put forward a twofold title to rule: he was nearest in kinship to the royal house and wholly devoted to the city (cf. § 12). Antigone now adopts this argument for herself: she is last in the royal line and wholly pious. Creon failed to keep his two titles together, for he both con-founded and divorced the city and its regime. Antigone, however, succeeds, for she connects the ancestral city with her piety through the gods who founded Thebes. Creon spoke of Cadmeans but never of Thebes (cf. § 30.2); and he spoke of ἱεροὶ ἐγγενεῖς but never of ἱεροὶ προγενεῖς or ἱεροὶ πατρεῖοι (199, 838). He is unaware of the city’s divine origin; his link with the Spartoi means nothing to him. His laws were as silent as Antigone’s about the gods; but whereas Antigone’s silence merely hid her law’s ultimate reliance on the gods, Creon’s reflects his partial failure to politicize the gods (cf. § 19.2). Antigone, on the other hand, remains oblivious of the political to the end: she invokes the ἡστυ, not the πάλις, of her father (cf. § 46.6).

49.4. The suicides of Haemon and Eurydice are verbally prepared. Haemon angrily makes a scarcely veiled threat to that effect, as the Chorus recognize (cf. § 43.1), and Eurydice’s silent departure provokes the Chorus and the messenger to a similar foreboding. Antigone, however, ends with “by my reverent exercise of piety,” and the Chorus then console her in a way that wholly fails to notice that she has resolved to kill herself. Her suicide occurs sometime during the interval that Tiresias’ confrontation with Creon and the Chorus’ hymn to Dionysus occupy. It is thus introduced by Antigone’s avowal of her piety, and it occurs in that part of the play where the issue of the gods is most prominent. One is forced to wonder then whether piety and suicide necessarily go together.118 Perhaps the peculiar uniqueness of her circumstances allows Antigone to see more deeply than Tiresias into the gods (cf. § 52.4).

50 (944–87). 50.1. The fourth stasimon falls into three parts, of which the first describes the punishment of Danae, the second Lycurgus’, and the third Cleopatra’s and her sons’. It seems to have little to do with Antigone, whom the Chorus address twice at the beginning and once at the end (949, 987); Lycurgus as the only man seems the least relevant.119 The stasimon’s irrelevance could be partly due to the Chorus’ lack of agreement with, and compassion for, Antigone; it would show the strain they are under to prove their perfect adaptability to any situation; and the best they can do for the πέρας Antigone is

118 Cf. L. Strauss, Aristophanes and Socrates, 82–3; S. Benardete, Herodotean Inquiries, 49.
119 Cf. Wolff-Bellermann’s analysis.
to cite three examples of fate. To urge Antigone's compliance with fate would seem to be the precept best suited for showing off their own moderation. Yet this explanation fails to account for Lycurgus, in whose connection the Chorus do not mention fate and abstain from drawing a moral: neither Danae nor Cleopatra, unlike Lycurgus, was guilty of any crime. Lycurgus, then, forces one to look more closely at the Chorus' intention. Even if one comprehends the three examples under the rubric "imprisonment," despite the Chorus' silence about it in Cleopatra's case, one cannot extract a meaningful parallel for Antigone, for none of them died in prison. Danae's prison (τωμβήρης θάλαμος) was figuratively a grave and literally a marriage chamber; Antigone's will be just the reverse (cf. § 48.2). But this difference might indicate that the Chorus lag behind Antigone's final understanding of death (cf. § 49.2) and that deliberately or not they are more compassionate than they seem.

50.2. "Fate" and "high birth" put together Danae and Cleopatra, "imprisonment" Danae and Lycurgus, and "Thrace" Lycurgus and Cleopatra, but nothing seems to put all three together. The stasimon's coherence therefore might be thought to lie in its very incoherence. Since the Chorus point the moral in the first strophe (the second anti-strophe merely repeats it), and all things considered Danae does seem to fit Antigone better than the other two, the Chorus during the rest of the stasimon, one could argue, are induced despite themselves to sing of the irrelevant Lycurgus and the distracting addition of Cleopatra's sons. They then are caught in the grip of something like inspiration, which carries them outside the limits they had set for themselves (cf. 801-2). The second strophe, at any rate, is more ornately "poetic" than anything the Chorus have sung before. The Chorus would thus experience for an instance an equivalent to the "gusts of her soul's self-same winds" that always possess Antigone and we should get to know Antigone's peculiar inspiration through our hearing a more conventional Muse. Through the Chorus' adoption of a voice not their own we should begin to sense what it must entail for Antigone to live a divine law. It would be as well a fitting punishment for the Chorus: they would never recognize that they had been possessed.

50.3. Such an explanation, however, ignores the stasimon's apparent continuity. It begins at least as a reply to Antigone's last words; but it does not reply to everything she said. The ancestral city, their own ruling, and Antigone's piety find no echo in the Chorus. They are rather struck by Antigone's royal descent and her kinship with the gods (cf. § 46.5). They directly link Antigone to Danae, not through imprisonment or fate's dread power, but because Danae was of high birth too and the treasurer of Zeus' son. Lycurgus, on the other hand,

120 See Pearson on Sophocles' Phineus, 311, n. 1.
denied the divine birth of Dionysus, while Cleopatra was the offspring of the gods. That the gods generate with mortals is the theme of the stasimon, in which Danae represents its promise for the future, Lycurgus its denial in the present (the only verb in the present tense occurs in the first antistrophe), and Cleopatra its claim from the past. The Chorus' inspiration is not in the poetry or the moral but in this theme, of which, I think, they are wholly unaware, for otherwise they would have reserved the phrase ματρὸς ἔχοντες ἀνύμφευτον γονάν (980) for Oedipus and his children (cf. OT 1214-5, 1403-8) and much of ἀρατὸν ἔχος ... κερκίδων ἀκμαίαν (972-6) for his own self-blinding (cf. 51-2, OT 1276). The Chorus stick as always to the immediate likeness, which they then poetically elaborate before drawing the moral. All the choral odes suffer to some degree from the tension between the moral, which lends itself to poetry, and the theme, which does not (they thereby imitate the tension between the law as it is practiced "for form's sake" and the law as it is lived); and the fourth stasimon, as the Chorus' confession of bafflement before Antigone, necessarily suffers from it the most. For its theme, but not for its moral, Lycurgus is central. Antigone angers the Muses as much as Lycurgus did (cf. §§ 32.1, 37.3). Her crime is his. As Lycurgus tried in speech to disrupt the continuity of divine generation, so Antigone disrupts in fact the continuity of human generation. As antigeneration she embodies the denial of Eros' divinity (cf. § 44.2). Aphrodite and Dionysus are in her lineage but not in her future. She has no right to appeal to θεοὶ προγενεῖς if she forgets Ismene (cf. § 8.1).

51 (988-97). 51.1. Tiresias is the only character with a proper name whose arrival the Chorus do not announce (cf. 155, 376, 386, 526, 626, 801, 1180, 1257). He shares with the watchman and the two later messengers the role of reporter; and like the watchman he neither did nor saw what he speaks of (238-9, 1012), though Creon believes in the complicity of them both and for the same reason; and again like the watchman on his first entrance, he takes the Chorus and Creon by surprise. The Chorus had concluded just before the watchman's entrance that no one would disobey Creon's decree because plainly no one is in love with death; and they now advise Antigone to resign herself to fate just before the knower of fate, Tiresias, enters. He, however, begins by offering hope, but he ends by confirming the fatefulness that the Chorus had divined. The two scenes are the joints on which the play's action hinges. The first dealt with the soul, the second deals with the gods; and gods and soul are united in the question of burial (cf. § 19.4). The watchman needed three speeches and eighteen lines to protest his innocence and quiet his own fears (cf. 237) before he described the signs, or rather the lack of them, attendant on Polynices' burial; Tiresias needs three speeches of a line each to remind Creon of his own infallibility and arouse Creon's fears (cf. 997) before he
describes the signs he heard and heard about at his place of augury (cf. 257, 990, 252, 1004, 1013). When the watchman left, he gave thanks to the gods for his unhope-for salvation (\(\sigma\omega\delta\varepsilon\zeta\)); when Creon now leaves, he fears that it be best throughout one's life to keep safe (\(\sigma\phi\lambda\nu\sigma\alpha\) the established laws (1113–4). Creon gave the watchman a second chance; the gods give Creon none at all. Creon learns too late the difference between a decree and a law.

51.2. The lords of Thebes, whom Tiresias addresses, seem to be the Chorus; but since Tiresias does not object to Creon's answering for them, he apparently regards Creon as the Chorus' spokesman. They would in that case be as guilty as Creon (cf. 577). That they are in no way punished would underline how indispensable Antigone is in order that Creon be punished (cf. § 17.5). Tiresias, at any rate, says nothing to terrify the Chorus (cf. OT 316–8). He talks to them as if they knew as little about his blindness in particular as about blindness in general; and this despite their having just sung of the blinding of Cleopatra's sons and their long acquaintance with Tiresias (1092–3). Tiresias, however, might not know any of this; he might know nothing of the Chorus and their political position. His boy-servant, then, would have said to him as they approached something like, "Tiresias, the lords of Thebes are gathered here," and Tiresias simply repeated what he was told. The error in the address, if it is an error, suggests that a part of the city agrees with Antigone and holds the Chorus to be the active partisans of Creon (cf. § 46.6). But this may not be the full or the only possible explanation of Tiresias' words. He might address the Chorus proleptically (cf. 1155; OT 631, 911, 1223). Creon would already be finished, and Tiresias would then proceed to give him advice he could not act upon. If Tiresias thus toys with Creon, he warns the Chorus, as the future rulers of Thebes, that they can never even once afford to act without him (cf. 1058). He must therefore speak to them as if they were ignorant of him in order to charge them with forgetfulness (cf. OT 297–9). They had in the first stasimon been silent about divination (cf. § 22.5). Without any risk to themselves, they could have suggested to Creon, as soon as they heard the decree, that Tiresias be consulted. That they suspected Creon's prudence but not his competence to act as he did shows the degree to which the sacred not only has decayed but, in light of Antigone, must always be in decay. Her appeal to the divine law did not impress the Chorus.

51.3. On 993–5 see § 38.1. Tiresias tells Creon that he stands on the razor's edge; and he surely speaks as if Creon had a choice. Unless Creon was fated to reply as he does, his immediate acquiescence at line 1033 would apparently have canceled his fate. The opportunity has passed seventy-two lines later (1105). Whether that interval would have been enough to stay Antigone's suicide is not an altogether idle question; perhaps her reprieve, we should suppose, would have so
altered her that she would then have been content to bury Polynices and no longer be with him and her family. But Creon, even if he had at once acquiesced, might still not have gone unpunished; and all perhaps he would have gained might have been his ignorance of his fate (cf. § 54.1). Tiresias, at any rate, does not connect the signs of his art from which he infers that the city is polluted with his foreknowledge of Creon's fate (cf. § 55). He might have come to save the city and not Creon. We, however, could not perhaps have borne the city's redemption if Creon had not railed against Tiresias; for it is Creon's distrust of Tiresias' public-spiritedness that seems to justify his punishment (cf. § 61.2). Creon in this scene never mentions the city (cf. §§ 30.2, 56.1).

52 (998–1032). 52.1. The first seventeen lines of Tiresias’ speech deal with the signs of his art (998–1014), the last seventeen with the conclusions Tiresias draws from those signs (1016–32). What links them is καὶ ταῦτα τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενίς νοσεί πόλις (1015). The first and second parts are each in two sections: (1) the sounds Tiresias heard himself (999–1004), (2) the sights he heard about from his servant (1005–14), (3) his interpretation of the signs (1016–22), (4) his counsel (1023–32). So the whole speech consists of three parts: signs, their interpretation, and advice. That the speech allows a twofold analysis of its plan points directly to the apparent misalignment between Tiresias' art and Tiresias' advice, of which one is couched in the most exact and particular language and the other mostly consists of non-specific generalities. Tiresias disregards the unholliness of Creon's deed—he returns to it when he foretells Creon's punishment (1068–73, 1080–3)—and stresses instead its meanness: "Why kill once more the dead?" Tiresias argues that Creon has made a mistake—every human being makes mistakes—and not that he has committed sacrilege. He needs his art to convict Creon of error; but he does not use it to condemn him. The signs are inauspicious but corrigible; Tiresias is silent as to whether the single crime for which they stand—Creon's failure to bury Polynices, not his burial of Antigone—admits of correction. He thus veils Creon's future punishment behind the possibility of Creon's future happiness; but the happiness lies in Creon's service to his country—the restoration of favorable communication between the city and the gods. Tiresias demands of Creon a sacrifice as unrewarding for himself as Megareus' was in light of Creon's own failure to memorialize his son (cf. § 38.1). Creon is to benefit the city without recompense. If he abandons at once the position in which he has so much invested, he will be acting justly but not nobly.

52.2. At his place of augury Tiresias heard the unintelligible and barbaric cries of birds, and he knew at once that they were murderously clawing at one another. Tiresias' art primarily consists in his knowledge of a language not known to other Greeks (cf. 1094); when bird
cries are as dark to him as they always are to everyone else, he knows that something is amiss. But he does not know what those cries signify before he “tastes” burnt offerings at the altar. The “dying oracles from non-prophetic rites” tell him that the fault lies in birds and dogs infecting public and private altars with Polynices’ flesh. But for all his exactness of description Tiresias does not explain how birds and dogs infect the city. He talks as if Polynices were a sacrificial victim whose flesh refused to burn properly; yet that could literally hold true only if birds and dogs, having eaten Polynices, were themselves sacrificed. Tiresias could have avoided this difficulty if he had argued as follows. He cannot understand the birds because the corruption of a dead man’s fat has rebarbarized their voices. In order to keep them “hellenized,” the gods must on each occasion accept the sacrifices they are offered; and that these now fail to burn proves that the gods have withdrawn this favor. But Tiresias does not go directly from line 1015 to line 1019. He inserts between them a conclusion that universalizes his own experience (N.B. ἡμῖν, ἡμῶν, 1016, 1020), as if each citizen at his own altar could understand the cries of birds. The infection of the city and its altars therefore seems to be symbolic. Not until Tiresias predicts Creon’s downfall does he suggest that an unholy smell in the mouths of birds interferes with the smell of sacrifice (1080–3). He now omits that key to his account because he wants to join as closely as possible two different aspects of himself, soothsayer and citizen. He thus minimizes his own importance while implying that the city depends entirely on him. His speech, accordingly, suffers from the strain of arguing for Polynices’ burial on both a universal and a particular ground. The particular ground is Tiresias’ own art, which cannot work unless birds of omen do not contaminate the messages they convey. The universal ground, on the other hand, holds good regardless of whether anyone understands the cries of birds. The universal ground says that every city must prevent carrion from polluting its sacrifices, for otherwise the gods do not welcome the sacrificial prayers of its citizens; the particular ground says that Thebes must prevent its birds from lapsing into savagery, for otherwise the gods do not inform Tiresias of their plans and wishes. Yet Tiresias cannot help but imply that even in the general case birds take precedence over dogs and wild beasts. They “hallow” the corpse they mangle, but only birds pollute the city with all its hearths (cf. § 53.1).121

52.3. Antigone’s bestiality was evident to the Chorus (cf. § 28), but they did not connect it with her devotion to a law of the gods, gods who, as Tiresias now explains, are the mainstay of civility. The gods forbid human sacrifice in any form, for they reject carrion for them-

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121 Perhaps ἄστιχος πόλεως should be taken as a case of transferred epithet, i.e., as ἄστιχοι πολιοῦχοι; cf. the easier Aesch. fr. 343 Mette (= Pap. Oxy. 2245, col. ii, line 5): παρ’ ἄστιχοιον σέλας = παρ’ ἄστιαν σέλας ἔχωσαν.
selves and for their messengers (cf. 1081). Antigone, however, could not have resorted to an argument that so entirely disregards the law's injunction to bury one's own. On the basis of what Tiresias says, Antigone should have defied Creon even if Polynices had not been her brother and had been besides most hateful to her (cf. 10). She would then have been acting on behalf of Tiresias and Thebes; but Antigone would never have done what she did unless the law had not only supported but been grounded in the love of her own, which made what offended the gods and barbarized the birds, the consumption and the stench of Polynices' corpse, something innocuous, and more than innocuous, to herself. Tiresias, however, mentions neither the law nor Antigone's devotion to it. He is silent about the blood relation between the "soul" Creon buries and the "corpse" he does not (1069-71). He shares with Antigone nothing but her conviction that Creon is in error. Yet his intervention has the effect of restoring to "the established laws"—"law" does not recur after Creon uses that phrase (1113)—the obligation to obey them. He succeeds, against Creon, in making that obligation political; and he succeeds, against Antigone, in keeping it unqualified. He makes the obligation political through the city's need of his art; and he keeps it unqualified through the suppression of the soul (cf. § 9.8). Burial no longer engages the soul of the living—Antigone's ἕν δὲ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν πάλαις τέθνηκε is now impossible—or involves the issue of body and soul of the dead, for the benefits of burial are wholly in this world (cf. § 55).

52.4. The only god Tiresias names is Hephaestus. The god of fire, who is fire, guarantees that the smoldering sacrifices are significant. If fire were under man's control, Tiresias could not have inferred from the sacrifices' failure to burn the displeasure of the gods.122 In this light, Polynices' attempt to have "piney Hephaestus" fire Thebes was in itself impious (123); and it in turn must have determined the Chorus' choice of depicting the fire-bearing Capanes, whom Zeus destroyed with a cast of fire (cf. § 11.4). In the first stasimon, however, the Chorus were silent about fire (none of the nine examples of man's δεινὸτης entailed man's possession of it; cf. 373); in the second stasimon they made use of a proverb like "once burnt twice shy" to illustrate hope as "the deceitfulness of light-witted desires" (cf. 265; El. 619); in the fourth stasimon they counted Lycurgus' prohibition of "Dionysian fire" as one of his three crimes (964); and finally in the hyporchema they call on Dionysus as the choral leader of the fire-breathing stars (1146-7; cf. 1126). Fire runs an underground course through the play

122 Cf. Eur. IA 1602. Aeschylus' Clytemnestra, in order to answer the Chorus' question as to who of messengers could come so quickly from Troy, was forced to say Hephaestus (Ag. 281): φωκὺς (282) or the like would not have sufficed; indeed, not until 293 sq. does she mention human beings and have them kindle the light.
only to emerge in Tiresias’ tasting of the ἐμπυρα; but the reason for its unnoticed presence has to wait for the play’s greatest shock: Creon’s servants burn Polynices’ remains (1202). Nowhere else is cremation even hinted at. To bury has always meant heretofore to bury a body in the earth (cf. §§ 4.1, 16.2). Antigone talked of how she prepared the bodies of her family for burial, and she once boasted that she would heap up a tomb for Polynices (cf. § 10.1); but she seems to have been indifferent to, or rather wholly unaware of, the alternative to interment. Cremation is equally compatible with the law but not with Antigone’s devotion to it. Interment allowed, if it did not promote, Antigone’s blurring of the distinction between body and soul, Hades and the grave; but it no less diminished, if it did not prevent, the possibility of Antigone’s arguing that only the burial of Polynices’ body could grant his soul access to Hades. The structure of the play is doubly gracious to Antigone. She does not hear Tiresias propose an interpretation of the gods that undercuts her understanding of the law; and she does not live to learn that Polynices is burnt before he is buried. The two favors are for, the smell of carrion but not of burning flesh offends the gods and barbarizes their messengers. The burnt and the raw are polarized in the way that the holy and the unholy are. The first pair is the marker for the second; and the Chorus called Antigone and her father raw right after she had cited the divine law as her defense. Antigone is in the strictest sense pre-Promethean (cf. § 23.1). She antedates the prohibition against cannibalism, which ancient authors often associate with the eating of raw flesh (cf. Her. 3.99; Arist. EN 11.4 8b 19–24); indeed, it can only be the discovery of fire that makes Plato’s Athenian Stranger head a list of the arts with the prohibition against cannibalism: the second art he mentions is the making of bread (Epin. 975a5–b2). By standing outside the arts Antigone had threatened the link between the holy and civility (cf. § 28.1); through burnt sacrifices Tiresias restores it. But all that Antigone stood for cannot survive its restoration.

52.5. Creon must be astonished that Tiresias does not differ from Haemon in the moral he draws from completely different premises (cf. § 40). The sameness of the moral, however, does not extend to the language in which it is expressed. Haemon’s was so vivid that it concealed the political threat it contained; Tiresias’ is flat because he

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123 Cremation is rarely mentioned in early grave epigrams. How inconceivable it would be for Antigone is shown by this late fifth-century distich: σάρκας μὲν πύρ ὄμματ' ἀφελέτο τῆς Ὀνυσοῦς, / ἄστε αὖ ἀνθεμοίς χῶρος ὅθ’ ἄμφις ἥκει (IG II/III: 1237 = 58 Peek).

124 Cf. Juvenal 15. 78–87:
conceals the threat from the gods behind a proverbial wisdom. Creon, Tiresias says, is wilfully in error; but he can change, and the change will profit him. Even the change itself will be pleasant, for he will not have to learn through suffering. Haemon had told Creon that it was as noble to learn from good speakers as to be naturally wise oneself. He did not put it in terms of pleasure, for the prosperity or glory he promised Creon if he relented would be no more Creon's than his own. He urged Creon to give in to the people's judgment; Tiresias urges him to give in to the dead Polynices. The people had judged Antigone's deed most glorious because she tried to stop Polynices from utterly perishing. They could not have argued as Tiresias does now that Creon's efforts to rekill the dead are unworthy of him. The flesh-eating dogs horrify them more than the birds. They do not imagine that Creon's crime is sacrilege and has infected themselves (1015); that it has deprived them of the fruits of the victory he had brought about; and that as long as Polynices remains unburied the celebration at the temples of the gods, which the Chorus had proposed in the parodos, cannot take place. Not until Hephaestus lights the sacrifices once more can Dionysus answer the Chorus' request that he lead Thebes in night-long dances.

53 (1033–47). Creon addresses Tiresias as respectfully now as he had on his entrance (991, 1033, 1045). Tiresias is corrupt, but Creon cannot help deferring to him (cf. 1053). Tiresias could not except wilfully make an error; and his error is so gross that it betrays the profiteering behind it. Tiresias is in the pay of Creon's political enemies; but no matter how far his avarice will induce him to lie, Creon will not cravenly submit, even if, he implies, Tiresias succeeds in hoodwinking the rest of the city (cf. 178–81). The most extravagant lie Creon can imagine Tiresias asserting would be that the eagles of Zeus have brought Polynices' flesh to the seat of Zeus; but since no human being in any form can pollute the gods, Creon sees no reason for taking seriously Tiresias' much weaker interpretation. Creon's silence about Tiresias' own art points to the difference between the soothsayer's interest in keeping the birds uncontaminated and the citizen's interest in having the gods accept his sacrifices. His silence further suggests that he does not think that Tiresias' wisdom, which he never doubts, depends on the cries of birds. Tiresias, in any case, does not refer to that point again. Creon limits the issue to the mechanics of pollution, which Tiresias had left obscure. If birds, Creon argues, have brought Polynices' flesh to the

125 'Tiresias' ἀληθῆ, the refusal to yield in combat before one's enemy, is the opposite of his ἐλεος (cf. E. Benveniste, Le vocabulaire des institutions i–e, vol. 2, 72–4). For the difference between τῷ θανόντι and ἀθλότατα (1029) see Th. 7:75:3: οἱ ζώνες καταλειπόμενοι ἐν τοῖς τεθνητοῖς τοῖς θανόντι λυτηρότεροι ἠσχον καὶ τῶν ἀπολλοθῶν ἀθλοθέτοι.
altars and thus polluted them, then, according to Tiresias, eagles should be able to pollute Zeus himself. The sacred cannot be susceptible to what the gods are not (cf. § 46.10). Creon points somewhat obliquely to the weakness in Tiresias’ account. Why should any beast have to link the stench of carrion with its interference with the city’s sacrifices? It is not the beasts themselves that make such a stench unholy. Even if Polynices’ corpse had remained as undefiled as Hector’s was, Creon would still have committed sacrilege (cf. 1070–73). Tiresias ignores both the horror the city felt at Polynices’ annihilation by dogs and the tenderness with which Antigone regarded Polynices’ corpse, so that even its consumption by birds was something precious to her. If the birds whose cries Tiresias can no longer interpret had not touched Polynices, Tiresias could still have argued that the gods are depriving the city of its art because a divine law has been violated, which would equally follow from the failure of the sacrifices to burn without dogs and birds having polluted the altars. But Tiresias does not appeal to the divine law; he replaces its violation with the pollution of altars, to which, however, he needlessly adds the notion of their pollution through beasts. The birds and dogs he invokes vivify his account, but they essentially belong to Antigone’s devotion to Polynices and the city’s recognition of it; they are not indispensable for Tiresias’ understanding of the gods. To make them indispensable would have required Tiresias to integrate the divine law as Antigone lives it into his own account. Such an integration seems to be impossible. That birds have consumed Polynices’ fat, as the blind Tiresias declares, is plausible but false; dogs alone mangled it (1198).

53.2. Creon denounces Tiresias’ avarice as hyperbolically as he disproves Tiresias’ divination; but nothing else seems to connect the two main parts of his speech. He does not, however, harp on avarice now just because, though he loathes it, it is the only thing he understands and therefore sees everywhere. The drift of his speech suggests not only that Tiresias trades on the gods but that he trades with the gods. Sacrifice and omens are established currency (cf. § 19.4), and piety is a kind of commerce between gods and men (cf. Pl. Euthyphro 14c6–8). Creon surely misunderstands Tiresias, but Tiresias is partly to blame. Instead of simply citing the divine law, the obedience to which would be automatic, he chose to replace its authority with his own knowledge; and his knowledge could only replace the holy with the ledger. He spoke of Creon’s profit but not of his repentance. Tiresias tried at first to rationalize the holy; later he tries to do it justice; but he then cannot offer Creon any choice. The divine seems to admit of choice when it is speciously rational; when it is holy, it is inexorable.

54 (1048–63). 54.1. Creon’s speech prompts Tiresias to a general reflection, which Creon interrupts before he can complete it, as if he
knew that it would be as trivial as the last part of Tiresias’ previous speech. And it is trivial in content, but paradoxical in phrasing: who does not know that prudence is the best of possessions (cf. § 40.2)? Tiresias, however, means by prudence a certain kind of prudence, the submission to his own authority. Creon cannot accuse Tiresias of false divination without convicting himself of an inborn imprudence. Tiresias, it seems, had intended more to remind Creon of his wisdom than once again to prove it. If Creon cannot take a friendly reminder for what it is, he should not be spared foreknowledge of his fate. The profitable and most pleasant learning Tiresias held out to Creon was ignorance. He would not terrify Creon and thus delude him with hope if Creon were only willing to reacknowledge his subservience. Tiresias anticipates the gods’ punishment with his own. It is as though he suspected that the gods’ punishment would not be sufficient punishment for Creon (cf. § 38.1).

54.2. Creon, in order to justify his abuse of Tiresias, explains that the abuse was directed against all soothsayers indiscriminately (cf. 1035). Love of money is their class characteristic; and as nothing Creon heard from Tiresias differed at all from what any soothsayer would have said, he concluded that Tiresias had betrayed himself in adopting the usual patter of his class. Tiresias’ attempt at reasonableness backfires. Creon needs to hear something that reveals Tiresias’ special position before he will consider his advice. If, then, Tiresias’ first speech really offered Creon the chance to alter his fate, not just to save the city (cf. §§ 51.3, 52.1), the reason would be that Creon’s immediate submission to Tiresias would have shown his regard for the sacred in its everydayness. The reasonable—why rekill the dead?—and the sacred in its everydayness are hardly distinguishable. The civil and the decent cover them both. To Creon’s charge that he is the typical soothsayer, Tiresias replies that he is the typical tyrant: he loves base gain. Tiresias here tries to convince Creon of his unreasonable ness and warn him of his impiety. To prohibit Polynices’ burial is a form of base gain, for it is an attempt to profit from either what is profitless or what should not be turned to profit. If Creon refuses to understand the first point and has to be instructed in the second—why burial in itself is mandatory, apart from the consequences for the citizens’ sacrifices and Tiresias’ art if it is not done—Creon is past saving. Creon cannot learn the divine ground of the holy without learning at the same time of his divine punishment. He would be punished not so much for his being unmovable (ἀχίνητος, 1027) as for his prying into the unmovable (τὰ ἀχίνητα, 1060).

55 (1064–90). 55.1. Tiresias’ second speech is harder to understand than his first (the dispute about lines 1080–3, both as to their meaning and authenticity, proves it), but they do resemble one another. A
central line here too divides the speech into two equal parts, each of thirteen lines. The first part deals with three things—Creon’s punishment (1064–7), Creon’s crime (1068–73), and the divine aspects of his punishment (1074–6); the second part also deals with three things—the domestic consequences of Creon’s crime (1078b–9), its political consequences (1080–3), and Tiresias as the human agent of his punishment (1084–90). The first part is inspired; the second seems to be its prosaic translation: οὐ μακρὸν χρόνον τριβή replaces μὴ πολλοὺς ἐτὶ . . . τελῶν (cf. fr. 664P). The first part explains the penalty Creon must pay and the reasons for it; the second explains the suffering he causes—κακῶματα (1079), ἔχθρα (1080), λυπεῖς (1084)—and now undergoes himself. The first part concerns the relation of gods to men and one another, the second with the relation of men to themselves. The bond between them is the unholy; but in the first part it is the unholy corpse (1071), in the second its unholy smell (1083).

55.2. The symmetry between the two parts of Tiresias’ speech is plain; but how deep it goes or what it means is not as evident. The one who came from Creon’s flesh and blood to be his payment for corpses will provoke the ritual lamentation of men and women in his house; but do these ritual lamentations include those on behalf of Eurydice? Does Tiresias know of her suicide? The balance of payments would be more nearly equal if Haemon pays for Polynices and Eurydice for Antigone; but Tiresias presents Haemon alone (ἔνα) as paying for both of Creon’s crimes. To conclude from this, however, that Tiresias knows nothing of Eurydice is not warranted. He might suppress his knowledge, not to spare Creon, but to gloss over his own contribution to her death. Eurydice curses Creon for the death of both her sons, Megareus and Haemon (1302–5, 1312–3); but Tiresias could not have accused Creon of Megareus’ death without condemning himself (cf. § 38.1). Tiresias recognized in Megareus’ suicide a sacred necessity; he does not recognize it in Antigone’s. Haemon’s death looks very different if only in the eyes of men but not in the eyes of the gods it is in payment for Antigone’s. Tiresias, then, might have been closer to the truth when he held Creon’s only crime, or rather error, to be his failure to bury Polynices (cf. § 52.1). His art might better inform him about the sacred than his inspiration.

55.3. Tiresias predicts that within not many circuits of the sun Creon will be punished; and he calls the Furies διστροφθόροι and says that no

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126 In light of the hieratic tone of Tiresias’ prophecy, nothing perhaps should be made of σπλάγχνα; but since σπλάγχνα are technically the parts of a sacrificial victim eaten by men as opposed to the thigh bones reserved for the gods, Tiresias could mean that Creon will pay for the gods’ rejection of thigh bones with what otherwise would be his. The ἄντιδοσις would be superficially an exchange of human corpse for human corpses, but essentially an exchange of human corpse for bestial sacrifice.
long time will pass before lamentations fill Creon’s house. Tiresias thrice deludes Creon (and the Chorus) into believing that his fate is not yet foreclosed; he still has time to make amends (cf. πτος-4). Since the events prove otherwise, we are again forced to think about Tiresias’ knowledge. If he did not know that Creon would be punished before the day was out, his ignorance would explain the hopefulness of his first speech. If the city’s loss cannot frighten Creon into correcting his error, the threatened loss of his son might; and the second speech too would be meant to be hopeful. Tiresias, on the other hand, could have concealed his more exact knowledge: Creon was not to know that the gods are unforgiving and repentance unrewarded. The delusion of hope would be a divine favor. Creon could come to believe that had he just reversed himself sooner, he would have saved his son. But that would only be Creon’s consolation; the truth would be that Creon through his crime alone and not through his obduracy merited punishment. If, however, all men err, as Tiresias says, the punishment would have then seemed to men excessive. Perhaps Tiresias out of compassion spared us all the truth about sacrilege: the reasonable and the sacred in its everydayness are not as alike as Tiresias had pretended. Creon rejected their equation only to learn his fate; but his fate was phrased in such a way as to keep him in ignorance about the gods. To sustain Creon’s hope, moreover, in order that he never learn that an act of sacrilege is not the same as an act of imprudence, would not be incompatible with sustaining it for a different reason. To cast Creon into total despair would delay what Tiresias and the city most need—the immediate burial of Polynices.

55.4. Creon’s crimes are (1) to have cast below someone who belongs with those above, for he has ruthlessly settled a life (ψυχή) in a grave, and (2) to have kept here (above) a corpse that belongs to the gods below, for he has prevented it from receiving due burial rites. Tiresias then explains still further the second crime: neither Creon nor the gods above have any share in corpses. Tiresias thinks it unnecessary to give a fuller explanation of Creon’s other crime. Could he have said that neither he nor the gods below have any share in souls? Or that Creon has forcibly deprived the gods above of Antigone? To have asserted the former would have entailed the denial that there are souls in Hades; to have asserted the latter would have implied some confusion between the region of οἱ ἄνω and the region of οἱ ἄνω θεοί. We are above in relation to the gods below, but where are we in relation to the gods above? The living cannot belong to the gods above because they alone are alive, any more than the dead can belong to the gods below because they too are dead. This difficulty cannot be separated from another: does the κατω of 1068 mean the same as ἐν τάφῳ κατωκατοικεῖ (1069) and the κατωθεν of 1070? If they mean the same, Tiresias shares with Antigone a confusion of Hades with the grave. If, on the other hand, Tiresias means that Creon has put Antigone in a kind of limbo,
Creon’s crime consists, not in his killing of Antigone, but in the way he killed her, the very way Creon had chosen in order to avoid pollution for the entire city (cf. § 43.1). Creon would have committed the same crime twice—ἐξομορος, ἀκτέριστος, ἀνδριός apply equally to Polynices and Antigone (cf. 1207)—and therefore would have to pay only once. The parallelism Tiresias draws between Polynices and Antigone—he calls them both corpses (1067)—conceals his denigration of Antigone. He cannot recall Creon to his original crime, which Creon had almost forgotten in the face of Antigone’s defiance (cf. § 41.2), without making what Antigone stands for of little or no importance. And if Tiresias cannot do Antigone justice, the reason must lie in a link between the gods and men above that excludes her: they alone share in generation (cf. § 50.3). Creon’s own flesh and blood must pay for his crime of exposing the dead in the region of the life-renewing sun.

55.5. Tiresias’ prophecy strictly ends at 1076; what follows from 1078b up to 1083 translates the prophecy into human suffering and at the same time replies to Creon’s argument at 1040–4. The translation and the reply are in a sense the same: the signs of Tiresias’ art forebode human suffering, not divine pollution. Tiresias begins with the ritual lamentations in Creon’s own house. The asyndeton of ἀνδρῶν γυναικῶν shows that, though κωκύματα are strictly a woman’s way of grieving, the rites of burial are not, as Creon had supposed, female (cf. 1206, 1227; § 42.4). σοῖς δομοῖς, in turn, points back to σῶν σπλάγγων and the difference between Creon the father and Creon the master. Creon’s payment for his crime is his son, but the experience and expression of his crime are sexually undifferentiable. These ritual lamentations, moreover, recall the barbaric cries of birds: Plato calls a kind of dirge the “Carian Muse” (Legs. 800c2–3; § 25.3).127 Tiresias would thus be deepening his original interpretation in light of his prophecy: his own failure to understand the cries of birds merely anticipates the unintelligible cries of mourning in Creon’s house. His apparently self-interested argument turns out to be in the interest of Creon. Tiresias then goes further in playing down his own importance when he reargues the second sign. What is now at issue is not the fact of pollution but the belief in pollution. The mangled bits of corpses that dogs, beasts, or birds hallow stir up hatred in every city.128 The human effect of a crime like Creon’s against all the gods is manifest in the universal loathing of all cities. Regardless of what Creon himself thinks of pollution, it would be to his self-interest to avoid such hatred in Thebes. The city, no less than the gods, can punish when every citizen thinks himself threatened at his own hearth (cf. § 22.1.4). The city is its

128 Böckh (275–6) rightly denies that Tiresias could be referring to the second expedition against Thebes, but he wrongly keeps ἐξθραί (sc. τοῖς θεοῖς); only Reiske’s ἐξθραί gives coherence to Tiresias’ speech.
hearth: the ἐγχαριτ count more than the βωμοί (1016). Nothing, according to Tiresias’ prophecy, mediates between οἱ ἄνω and οἱ ἄνω ὁποί; but, according to his translation, sacrifices mediate between the city and the gods. The unholy corpse does not belong to those above, its unholy smell does not belong at the city’s hearths. The city seems not altogether to belong to those above. It has a share in the nether gods as well (§ 22.9). 129

55.6. Tiresias ends his speech with somewhat the same triad as Haemon had used (cf. § 40.4). Creon should express his anger (θυμός) at those younger than Tiresias (i.e., those ignorant of his fate), learn to cherish a quieter tongue (γλῶσσα), and have a mind (νοῦς) better than his present wits (φρένες). Haemon said that whoever thinks he alone is sensible (φρονεῖν) and has a tongue (γλῶσσα) and soul (ψυχή) superior to any other is empty within. Haemon’s triad recalled the triad of speech (φθέγμα), thought (φρόνημα), and civility (ἀστυνόμοι δραγά) that the Chorus had ascribed to man’s δεινώτης (cf. § 22.11); and that triad, in turn, pointed back to Creon’s own triad, soul (ψυχή), resolve (φρόνημα), and judgment (γνώμη), which Creon held to be evident only in a ruler (cf. § 12.4). Tiresias now tells Creon that he proposed the wrong test. It is not what one loves that is decisive, let alone the degree to which one is devoted to it, but civility. Civility would at least have spared him the anguish of foreknowledge (καρδίας τοξευματι βέβαια), and perhaps have even checked him from issuing his decree (cf. ΠΠ13–4). Tiresias’ message has nothing to do with Antigone.

56 (1091–ΠΠ14). 56.1. The Chorus and Creon equally realize that Tiresias has never yet prophesied falsely to the city. Neither can see a reason as to why he should do so now (cf. § 61.4), yet neither thinks Creon’s fate to be unavoidable: prudence (εὐδοκία) can put everything right. Do they think, then, that prudence could have saved Oedipus or Megareus, and therefore condemn retroactively the one for his persistence in uncovering the truth or the other for patriotism? As the Chorus’ patriotism cannot be in doubt, whatever one may think of Creon’s, the parallel must be with Oedipus. But when should Oedipus have stopped his search? If he had not been public-spirited, he could have failed to consult the oracle or at least kept silent about it (cf. OT 93–4); and if he had not thought that Jocasta despised him for his origins, he could have stopped when she begged him to. In the first case, the plague would have continued until the city banished him for his lack of concern (cf. OT 47–50); and in the second, he would have gained no more than a respite, until he learned of Jocasta’s suicide. Oedipus, then, could have shown his patriotism without discovering his origins only if he had never summoned Tiresias but relied solely on the testimony

129 Note the syntax of σπαράγματα, whose antecedent is strictly πόλεις.
of the one survivor from Laius' retinue. He would then have been a regicide and nothing else. Does Tiresias have a similar role in mind for Creon? If Tiresias had stayed away and sent his servant, or even if a nameless citizen had come to report the failure of the sacrifices to burn, Creon could perhaps have avoided his fate. Such a report by itself, without any of Tiresias' authority behind it, should have been enough to tell Creon that he had gone against the practices of custom. Creon comes to fear that this indeed was the case (III3–4). The Chorus, however, seem to delude him into believing that he can outrun the swift-footed mischief of the gods (cf. 951–4). They advise him to release Antigone and bury Polynices; but Creon first buries Polynices and then goes to Antigone's prison. Is this, then, Creon's mistake and what the Chorus mean by prudence? If Creon's fate depends on the timeliness of his actions, Creon's very patriotism, which makes him release the city from pollution before he attends to his own, destroys him (cf. § 51.3). But the Chorus seem to have misunderstood Tiresias, for Tiresias spoke of Antigone as already a corpse (1067) and only put Haemon's death in the future; but since he also referred to Antigone as a soul, the Chorus took him to mean that she was still alive, whereas he really meant that Creon had killed her in an impious way (cf. § 55.4). As Antigone's death seems to make Haemon's inevitable, there would seem to be no room for prudence. Not until one learns more about Haemon's suicide can one say whether or not the Chorus were simply wrong (cf. §§ 61.5, 7).

56.2. Creon has some difficulty in adjusting to Tiresias' prophecy, the Chorus have none at all. Creon's mind and heart are in turmoil,130 the Chorus have never invested much in any position. The hopeful construction they put on Tiresias' prophecy agrees with their politic lack of policy; and Creon readily believes that he too can drift with the necessity of circumstance. As soon as the Chorus repeat Tiresias' word "prudence," he hands himself over to them. He ceases to be his own master even before they remind him of the swiftness of divine punishment. His conversion seems precipitate only if one accepts his words (καρδίας ἐξίσταμαι τῷ δραν) as implying that his principles were deeply rooted in his heart. His principles have long since eroded (cf. § 42.1). He obeys the Chorus rather than Tiresias because Tiresias' loyalty has always been to the city (994, 1058) and the Chorus' loyalty (he does not doubt) to him. The confusion inherent in Creon's principles comes home to him (cf. § 12.4).

56.3. The Chorus tell Creon not to entrust the freeing of Antigone and the burying of Polynices to anyone else; but Creon does not take them

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130 Brunck's δειλὸν is, I think, right, and Jackson's ἀτη 'μπαλάζαι τούμην ἐν δειν κάρα (1097) near the mark, but I should prefer κέρα (cf. Αἰ. 686, Τρ. 629, 1246, ΟC 655, but fr. 210, 45 F).
literally. He assumes that they mean he should supervise the work of
his servants, to whom he assigns the whole task of burying Polynices
while apparently reserving for himself that of freeing Antigone. He
cannot, however, be taken literally either; he is present on both
occasions and does no work himself. Creon could not have perhaps
removed by himself the stones that block Antigone's prison; that
Haemon does it proves nothing for Creon or, one might add, for
Antigone (1216). But why should he think that his servants must bury
Polynices? αὐτὸς τ' ἐδόσα καὶ παρῶν ἐκλύσομαι, after all, applies as
much to Polynices, if less literally, as to Antigone (cf. 40). Why, more
precisely, does Creon think at once of cremation and a barrow? Neither
Tiresias nor the Chorus even hint that a simple interment would not
suffice; and it would have sufficed if the city's pollution by dogs and
birds were the issue (cf. § 53.1). Creon seems to believe that Polynices
is due rites almost as elaborate as those he gave Eteocles—the high
mound he has raised would be conspicuous in the plain (1203)—but not
that he should do them himself. The Chorus, however, might have
meant that it was here and nowhere else that Creon's salvation lay:
only if he were to handle the stinking, rotting, and mangled Polynices
with his own hands could he find forgiveness from the gods (cf. 900).
Only such an act would imply remorse (cf. Diodor. I. 77.7). But not
only do the Chorus say nothing about remorse, Tiresias said nothing
about it either (cf. § 53.2). What genuine piety involves, rather than
just piety "for form's sake," disappears from the play as soon as Anti-
gone leaves. Creon never thinks of his crimes as impious; he continues to
the end to talk of his unfortunate imprudence (1261, 1265, 1269).

57 (1115-54). 57.1. The Chorus now accept Creon's understanding of
the priorities, but they go even further: since Tiresias never spoke of
Antigone's death as politically relevant, the burial of Polynices, as far
as the city is concerned, alone counts. The Chorus abandon Creon to
his fate as soon as he is out of earshot; he can take care of his own
without the help of Dionysus; but if the Thebans are to have Dionysus
lead their dances, he must cleanse the city of the pollution that now
violently grips it (cf. § 52.5). The Chorus thus hark back to the end of
the parodos (cf. 152-3, 1153-4), as if all that had happened between
then and now were of no importance. What we have witnessed are the
last traces of the war that the Chorus wanted Dionysus to help them
forget. Dionysus now takes hold of them completely. The shaft of
sunlight that the Chorus had greeted as their savior in the parodos
yields to Iakchos the choral-master of the fire-breathing stars; μεγα-
λόωνυμος Nike becomes πολυδύνυμος Bakchos; and the frenzied Capanes
is forgotten in the hoped-for presence of the frenzied Thyiads (cf.
§ 11.3). Dionysus is to wipe clean the Chorus' memory; and he succeeds.
The moral they draw at the end almost repeats the moral they had put
in the center of the parodos (127-8, 1348, 1353).
57.2. The hyporchema is the antithesis of the first stasimon.\footnote{Rhetorically, it is built up to a great extent out of triads. The first strophe consists of an opening invocation of three elements (πολιόνωμε, ἄγαλμα, γένος), followed by three verbal phrases (ἀμφίπετες, μέθες, νικεῖτων), the last of which is expanded into a threefold description of Thebes. The first antistrophoe, on the other hand, is held together by three nouns, the first two of which (λιγνύς, νόμις) share the same verb, while to the last is added another noun and two participial phrases. The sequence of places in the first strophic pair is: Thebes, Italy (Κασταλίας confirms Ἰταλίαν), Eleusis, Thebes, Delphi, Euboea, Thebes. The second antistrophe begins with a threefold invocation: χοράγε, ἐπίσκοπε, γένεθλον.} That was almost wholly general, this is almost wholly particular; that had no proper names except Earth and Hades, this has seventeen, eight of which are place names; that called Earth, whom man wears away, the highest of the gods, this says Dionysus honors autochthonous Thebes most highly of all cities and presides with Demeter over Eleusis; that held man to be the conqueror of earth and sea, this begs Dionysus to come now over Parnassus or the Euripus; that presented man as the hunter of wild beasts, this traces the origin of Thebes back to a wild dragon; that spoke of man's taming of the mountain bull, this has the ivy-clad Nysaean mountains escort Dionysus to Thebes; that spoke of man's self-taught speech and thought, this hails Dionysus as master of nighttime voices and madness; and that said man contrives a cure for impossible diseases, this relies on Dionysus to cleanse the city of a violent disease. But despite these antitheses, the stasimon and hyporchema do share one thing in common: what is under the earth is as close to Dionysus as to man. Hades is not alone in closing it to man; man has no fire to mine the earth (cf. § 52.4). He has no fire because it is divine and Dionysus is its master. Dionysus is the offspring of Zeus βαρβαρεμέτης, who cares for Thebes with his mother xeroujía, is seen by the smoky flame of torches above Delphi, and leads the fire-breathing stars in dance. Fire comes down to earth only for sacred purposes: sacrifices, ordeals (264–5), festivals, or cremation. Sacrifices and festivals unite the city with the gods, and with none more closely than Dionysus; and cremation dissolves the Antigonean conflict between civility and holiness. Dionysus rightly represents their Tiresian solution, for he sponsors a frenzy in speech and mind different from Antigone's (603), and he has nothing to do with Hades (cf. § 50.3).

58 (1155–71). 58.1. Antigone's entrance upset the moral of the first stasimon; the messenger reports nothing that does not harmonize with the hyporchema: the Chorus did not ask for Creon's safety. Once they have confirmation of Tiresias' prophecy they are not interested in Creon; and only the appearance of Euridyce distracts them from planning for the future, as the messenger advised (cf. Aj. 904, 981–2). The messenger resembles the watchman on his first entrance: both are reluctant to act as messengers. The watchman delayed his report until he had proved his innocence; the messenger delays just as long in
order to show first how Creon exemplifies his own understanding of human life. From his understanding one could draw the moral that resignation is best; but whereas the watchman, though equally holding to resignation as his final hope, was resigned to his fate (cf. § 15.2), the messenger has no hope, for there is nothing but chance. Chance replaces the gods (cf. 162–3, 1158–60). This is, in fact, the only scene in the play (1155–79) in which the gods are not mentioned either individually by name or collectively. The messenger’s standard for happiness is pleasure (cf. § 24.2), his standard for misery is to be a corpse.

58.2. The messenger does not address the Chorus, as Tiresias had, as the rulers of Thebes (cf. § 51.2); he calls them the neighbors of Cadmus’ and Amphion’s house. Cadmus founded Thebes, Amphion built its walls; but after the hyporchema the name of Thebes does not recur. The invocation of Dionysus succeeds in making the city as an issue disappear (cf. 1094, 1247). The city and the regime are replaced by the land and the earth (1162–64, 1203). The enjoyment of what is one’s own, whether it be victory over the land’s enemies, kingship (cf. 178), or children, alone counts: Amphion was the husband of Niobe. The messenger, of course, does not know what else Creon will lose, but his wife’s death would be a redundant proof of chance’s power: Eurydice learns of her son’s death by chance (cf. 1182). The messenger seems to know nothing of Tiresias’ prophecy (cf. 1212); and it seems to be Creon’s inopportune presence, in his account, that occasions Haemon’s suicide. The messenger’s speech has three parts: chance (1156–60), Creon (1161–59), pleasure (1165b–71). Creon supplies the link, one would suppose, because the messenger assumes that the loss of Haemon wipes out Creon’s pleasure; but he needlessly refers to Creon’s noble sons, and Creon never takes any notice of Megareus. The messenger, moreover, conceals Creon’s loss of Haemon, which he does not mention, by holding Creon’s victory over Argos and his kingship to be elements of his enviable life, one of which Creon cannot and the other Creon does not lose in any literal sense. The messenger therefore must shift from Creon’s downfall, for which his thoughts on chance have presumably prepared us, to Creon’s pleasures now that his son is dead. In order, however, to extract a moral from the death of Haemon, the messenger must put himself in Creon’s place, for he is not certain that Creon experiences the moral he wishes to illustrate. He lets his imagination stretch beyond Creon’s good fortune, where he sees great wealth and the pomp of tyranny—the tyrant’s private wealth replacing Creon’s victory over his country’s enemies (cf. Th. i.17)—and then declares such magnificence to be deficient if the man who has them

132 There are nineteen scenes in the play, the central one of which is the Chorus’ song to Eros. The guard initiates the fourth scene from the beginning, the messenger the fourth scene from the end.
takes no pleasure in them. Pleasure, then, comes entirely from one's children; everything else is hollow without them. The messenger does not think, as Creon had, that children are good only if they support their father in his friendships and enmities (cf. § 39.2). He does not praise the fortunate just because their fortune might change, but because there is no good fortune without children (cf. Th. 2.44.2); nor does he find the unfortunate not to be unfortunate just because their fortune too might change, but because even in the absence of good fortune one can delight in one's children. The instability of one's own life is not in itself a matter of regret; it is the impossibility of fixing the life of others on whom one depends. The messenger rejects both the life lived for the city and the life lived against the city, for, if Creon is any model, either involves the loss of a son, Megareus or Haemon. This twofold rejection forces him into a paradox: one cannot divine what is established for mortals. Creon feared that the preservation of the established laws is the best policy throughout one's life; the messenger makes us fear that the truth lies in the literal meaning of Creon's words: it is best in preserving the established laws to end one's life. The messenger inadvertently vindicates Antigone. He vindicates, over against the ensouled corpse Creon, the dead soul Antigone (cf. § 35.1).

59 (1172–9). 59.1. The Chorus have to ask the messenger three questions before they learn what he should have told them at once. Consistent with his first speech he is more interested in Creon than in Haemon; but he does not explain how he reconciles Creon's guilt with the moral of his first speech, which Creon exemplified precisely because chance showed its power in his case. Guilt seems to be as incompatible with chance as with necessity; and the messenger has to admit that Creon's hand was not raised against his son. Is Creon guilty, then, in the way that Oedipus was the cause of Jocasta's suicide? Or did chance just give Creon the opportunity to be guilty? There was no necessity that Haemon love Antigone. Antigone, however, seems to be furthest from anyone's thoughts. The Chorus ask about the grief of kings; and we might suppose that they include Antigone in the royal circle, even as the messenger's answer (τεθνοὺς) suggests that more than one has died; but since he also makes Creon into a plural, and the Chorus' next two questions are in the singular, it would seem that Antigone's suicide, which the messenger now calls murder, does not count among the royal griefs. Creon, at any rate, never holds himself responsible for her suicide. That he failed to save her must look like chance to him (cf. § 61.3).134

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133 For this meaning of chance see Arist. EN 1135b18–9; Eur. Hipp. 258–60; and for Creon to be an ἐμφυχὸς νεκρὸς as the result of Haemon's death see Antiphon Tetr. 11.8.10: ἐπὶ τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ ἀπαθία ζών ἐτὶ κατορχῇ ἰδίομαι.
134 Cf. Müller, 253.
59.2. The pun on Haemon’s name (αἰμάσσεται) would seem to preclude any misunderstanding of the messenger’s reply (“he made himself bloody with his own hand”); but the Chorus suggest that the verb might be passive and αὐτόχερ not have its literal meaning. To ask whether the messenger could possibly mean that Creon killed Haemon is a grammarian’s question; but the Chorus are impelled to ask it for several reasons. First, the messenger did imply that Creon was guilty, and the Chorus perhaps only recognize the guilt of deeds. They had urged Creon to release Ismene on the grounds that she had not handled Polynices’ corpse (cf. § 34.1); and just as Creon thought his way of killing Antigone absolved the whole city, so they surely do not see themselves as involved in Creon’s guilt. Second, Creon had implied that he had the right to kill his own sons if they disobeyed him (cf. § 39.3), and they cannot be certain that Creon on second thoughts had not gone back on his word. Third, they did not dispute Creon’s assertion that it would be more than human for Haemon to carry out his threat of suicide (cf. § 43.1). And finally, Tiresias predicted Haemon’s death in such a way (αὐτὸς ... ἀντιδοὺς ἔση) as to be at least as compatible with murder as with suicide. They took, at any rate, Tiresias’ prophecy—ἀνήρ, ἄναξ, βέβηκε δεινα θεσπίσες (1091)—more seriously than their own understanding of Haemon’s anger—ἀνήρ, ἄναξ βέβηκεν ἐξ ὄργης ταχύς (766)—for they now exclaim at the rightness of Tiresias’ prediction despite Tiresias’ silence about Haemon’s suicide and its cause and the messenger’s confirmation of their own understanding on both counts. Not even the Chorus trust their own wisdom. For the messenger now to invite them to deliberate is unwittingly ironic.

60 (1180–91). 60.1. The entrance of Eurydice lets the Chorus avoid deliberation. They call her τάλαινα as they had called Antigone δώστηνος on her entrance (379). Once Antigone, however, had spoken in her defense, she never elicited from them again another expression of condolence. Eurydice, on the other hand, now says nothing to deprive her of their sympathy; but when they later learn that she cursed Creon for the death of Megareus and hence implicitly condemned Thebes for its self-defense, they do not hold Creon responsible, despite his self-accusation, for her suicide (cf. § 64.1). Eurydice’s death was not included in Tiresias’ prophecy (cf. § 55.2); and the Chorus cannot discern in it, as they do in Haemon’s, its justice (cf. 1270). For the Chorus she is an unaccountable intrusion. There is no one to tell them what to think. Creon could convince them of Antigone’s injustice, and Tiresias of Creon’s; but neither prepared them for Eurydice, whose silent suffering lies outside their experience and immune to their advice. Without the mean vanity of Creon or the holy madness of

135 Cf. schol. 1176: τό χατι ἐρωτάς πότερα κτλ. ἀκουόταις ἀδήδι ἂταχειρ ἀπέθανεν.
Antigone she reminds us of a suffering that the city as such inflicts and no theodicy comprehends. Tiresias preferred to remain silent rather than try to explain why Eurydice justly had to suffer Creon’s punishment.

60.2. The messenger had addressed the Chorus as house-dwellers; Eurydice addresses the Chorus and the messenger together as townspeople. The difference between citizen and servant means nothing to her. Even the messenger is more aware of the city than she is. He later hopes that her silence is due to her shame of expressing her private grief (πένθος οἰκεῖον) openly, ἐς πόλιν (1246–1249). She says that she overheard the messenger’s report while leaving the palace in order to pray to Pallas Athena, from whom she intended, we can suppose, to ask what the Chorus had failed to ask for from Dionysus, the life of her son. She wanted the virgin goddess to save Haemon from the effects of Eros. She began, however, much too late: Athena’s ability to defeat Eros the undefeatable is not put to the test. Chance, or perhaps more than chance, intervenes before one learns whether Eros is a god subject to other gods. Sophocles allows there to be no refutation in deed of the Chorus’ unprincipled wisdom.

61 (1192–1243). 61.1. Eurydice could not have fainted before 1173 or much after 1177. She might know that either one of her own is dead or Haemon killed himself. She might therefore want the messenger either to repeat no more than what he has already told the Chorus or to explain the exact degree to which Creon is the cause of Haemon’s suicide. The messenger assumes that she wants a full report, as if she doubted his charge against Creon. Eurydice is entitled to the truth, no matter how painful, neither because her recovery from a swoon has shown that she can take it nor because her experience of evils has steeled her to listen, but because any softened version that the messenger now might tell would be later proved false. The messenger believes that the truth can never be unjustified; but Eurydice’s departure in silence forces him to hope that to be versed in evils (κακῶν γὰρ ὁ ἄπειρος, 1191) is the same as to be versed in judgment (γνώμης γὰρ ὁ ἄπειρος, 1250). He believes so firmly in the decency of his mistress that he forgets his own speech, in which he counted Creon a living corpse for losing the enjoyment of what Eurydice also loses; and Eurydice has no political pleasures to fall back upon (cf. § 58.2). The messenger spoke for himself when he made pleasure the standard; he makes decency the standard when he speaks for his masters. He thus draws back from the conclusion that the lack of certain pleasures entails suicide. Chance, after all, could restore one to good fortune. One wonders whether he would have counseled Eurydice, in an argument like Antigone’s, to have more children (cf. Th. 2.44.3). The second messenger calls her παμμήτωρ (cf. § 48.8).
Interpretation

61.2. For νηλές (II97), see § 45.1; for κυνοσπάρακτον (II98), § 53.1; for σῶμα (II98), § 48.5; for συγκατήθομεν (I202), § 52.4; for χθονὸς (I203), § 22.9. The messenger frames his true account in such a way that the burial of Polynices—three aorist participles articulate its description (αἰτήσαντες, λούσαντες, χώσαντες)138—seems to be nothing but a slight incident on the way to the rescue of Antigone. However important his burial is for the city, it is of no interest to Eurydice. Creon’s servants prayed that Hecate, the goddess of roads,137 and Pluton check their wrath and turn gracious. They seemed to have been afraid that the chthonic gods were not pleased with their uncovering of Polynices’ body, which they had done on their own without the excuse of such a command from Creon (cf. § 25.4). They did not pray to the gods above, who according to Tiresias were equally angry. But Tiresias had not suggested how Creon should propitiate the gods; indeed, he had not even indicated what rites should be accorded Polynices. Creon on his own decided that only the most elaborate rites were now appropriate: Polynices is buried in a conspicuous tomb of native earth. Piety would have been satisfied and patriotism maintained if he had been buried outside of Theban territory (cf. § 12.7). Creon gave up his patriotism to save his son. He believed that Polynices had to be buried on the spot if he were to outrun the Furies. He thereby gave up his pleasure in his victory over Argos (cf. § 58.2) and admitted that the conquest of Thebes was unjustly thwarted (cf. § 42.1). Creon compensated for his crime against the gods by committing another crime against the city. He was tested in office and found wanting. His punishment could thus be due as much to his betrayal of his own principles as to his rejection of Antigone’s (cf. § 51.3).

61.3. The messenger, like Antigone herself, speaks of Antigone’s prison as a bridal chamber (cf. § 46.2); but he amplifies this aspect still more (λιθόστρωτων, παστάδα). It is, however, the presence of Haemon, who by embracing Antigone obtains his marriage rites in Hades (I224, I240–1), rather than Antigone’s marriage to Acheron (816), that dictates his choice of words. That Antigone has now rejoined her family, with all the horror that implies (cf. § 46.8), means nothing to him. He calls Haemon but not Antigone miserable (I234, I241; cf. I272, I310–1). Her suicide, like Polynices’ burial, is just an incident in his account. No one ever regrets that they came too late to save her. Neither the Chorus nor Creon, on the other hand, had thought of stopping Haemon from entering her tomb. Creon had so confidently spoken against the possibility of Haemon’s suicide that this precaution, which even on the ground that Haemon might try to free Antigone would have been sensible, eluded them. Creon must have expected her suicide as soon as

136 The change in construction (τὸν μὲν…αἰσθά) calls our attention to the shift from σῶμα Πολυνεκέως (I198) to τὸν (I199) and δ ὅψ (I202).
137 Fire is the constant attribute of Hecate; cf. fr. 535 P.
he had listened to her (cf. 567); and he must have changed the way of
punishing her, not out of a scrupulous piety, nor even out of fear that
the city would not stone her to death, but in the knowledge that
Antigone would do his work for him (cf. § 43.1). The Chorus understood
Antigone less well than Creon did; but it was because of their advice
that he had to pretend that he still had a chance to save her. He must
have known what Tiresias meant when he called her a corpse (cf.
§ 56.1) and for that reason put the burial of Polynices before the
rescue of Antigone.

61.4. A servant told Creon that he had just heard from afar the shrill
cries of ritual lamentation near the tomb; but Creon did not act on
this report before he had heard them for himself and seen the stones of
the tomb's entrance wrenched apart. He then divined (ἀφ᾽ εἰσιν μάντες)
their source while they were still indistinct (ἀνομαξ); but, unlike Ti-
resias, to whom a servant reported ἀνομαξ ἔργα, Creon was not sure of
their interpretation (cf. § 52). He wondered whether the gods were
deluding him; but for what purpose he did not say. Could Creon have
come to believe that Tiresias had deluded him with prophecy and that
all Tiresias had wanted to do was put a scare into him? Tiresias could
surely have relied on his former infallibility to put across so salutory
a lie (cf. § 55.3); and, despite the Chorus' exclamation at the rightness
of his prophecy, nothing Tiresias said argues for a more than human
source for its truth (cf. § 59.2); indeed, he never mentioned Apollo.138
Had Tiresias foretold the death of Eurydice, or given the circumstances
of Haemon's suicide, he would have confirmed his inspiration as
divine; but he would then have deprived Creon of hope, hope that
concealed the severity of divine punishment and the difference be-
tween sacrilege and error (cf. § 55.3).

61.5. Creon seemed to have been bent on self-punishment. He over-
heard Haemon's bewailing Antigone's death, his father's deeds, and his
own marriage; and thinking perhaps that all was forgiven if Haemon
could regret the cause no less than its effects, he tried to plead with Ha-
mon without repenting any of his crimes. His speech would have been the
same even if he had not revoked his decree. Creon did not ask Haemon
for forgiveness but rather asked three questions calculated to enrage
him—what deed he had done, what he intended to do, and what
circumstance distracted his wits. Since Creon saw what his servants did,
Haemon embracing Antigone around her waist as she hung from a
noose, and then asked him what he had done, what could Haemon have
thought except that Creon now dared to charge him with Antigone's
murder?139 It would hardly have occurred to him that Creon might

138 It is perhaps because Tiresias fails to remind them of Apollo that the
Chorus do not ask Apollo, the god of purification par excellence, to purify the city.
139 Cf. S. M. Adams, Sophocles the Playwright, 57-8.
have meant his forcible entry into the tomb; and if he had had the sense to understand him so, what could he have made of Creon’s third question? ἐν τῷ συμφορὰς διεφθάρης is not a question that a guilty man asks. Creon simply bungled his self-appointed task of dissuading Haemon. Anyone—why not Eurydice?—could have pleaded his case better than he did. Instead of giving Haemon time for his sorrow to abate, he opposed it at its flood. To face Haemon, after Haemon had promised that Creon would never see him again (1363–4), could only have intensified Haemon’s anger and frustration. Creon’s imprudence, then, in word and deed was the proximate cause of Haemon’s suicide. He is too heartless to be wise.

61.6. When Creon had finished speaking, Haemon wildly glared at him, spat in his face, and in silence drew his sword; but when Creon had succeeded in evading his attack, he grew angry at himself and slew himself. Haemon’s suicide seemed to have arisen from a compound of regret, remorse, vengeance, and love—regret for having missed Creon, remorse for having contemplated patricide, vengeance for Creon’s crime, and love for Antigone (cf. 1177). The remorse that Creon never shows for his transgression of one sacred law was shown by Haemon for his intention to transgress another; but this intention would never have brought Haemon to punish himself if he had not also wanted to punish Creon and join Antigone in death. Nothing could illustrate better the peculiar character pious remorse and divine punishment have in common than Creon’s evasion of death and Haemon’s suicide. Creon’s death—did Tiresias know that Haemon would fail?—would have deprived him of the chance to atone through suffering, and the compound cause of Haemon’s suicide suggests the difficulty of atoning for sacrilege. Oedipus rejected suicide on the ground that he could not bear looking upon his mother and father in Hades; and he chose self-blinding on the ground that he could not bear looking upon either his children or Thebes (cf. OT 1369–86). Oedipus’ vain attempt to isolate himself from everyone and everything haunted Antigone (cf. OT 1349–56, 1386–90, 1409–15, 1466–70), whose own piety entailed a remorse for which she could never atone. Haemon, on the other hand, could satisfy his original desire to punish Creon while making amends for his unholy impulse. Punishment and self-punishment make him doubly just, but they could not make him noble (cf. § 48.9).

61.7. No one would have faulted the messenger’s truthfulness if he had spared Eurydice the details of Haemon’s suicide and said no more about it than the second messenger will say about Eurydice’s (1315); instead, he dwells on Haemon’s still-living embrace of the virgin Antigone and the gush of blood on her cheek. The passage reads like a grim mockery of a sexual embrace; and the words τὰ νυμφικά τέλη λαχῶν make it almost certain that the messenger wanted to insinuate it. Forced to choose between two equally distasteful endings, a thwarted marriage
or a thwarted paticide (their juxtaposition recalls Oedipus), the messenger preferred the ending to which he could more readily attach a moral: no greater evil than imprudence belongs to man. The moral, however, bears a peculiar message when applied. Since the context forbids its application to Creon's impiety, with which, in any case, the messenger never charges him, Creon can be reproached only for not having yielded at once to Haemon's love of Antigone (cf. § 36.1). Creon should have let the love of his own override his sense of righteousness. If he had wanted to prevent their cold embrace, Haemon's pleasure should have guided him (cf. 648–50). It would have been prudent to be fond.

62 (1244–56). 62.1. The Chorus are bewildered by Eurydice's silent departure, and they are forced to ask the messenger about it; but they are not satisfied with his explanation (cf. § 61.1). They either doubt that any grief (or at least Eurydice's) is publicly inexpressible (cf. Her. 3.14–5) or think Eurydice incapable of such restraint. They rightly suspect that her silence is ominous, but not that she might want to say something not fit for them to hear. They forget Megareus, upon whose death Eurydice might look differently from the city. Eurydice's silence, moreover, is no more distressing to the Chorus than if she had indulged in an excess of lamentation. A few words of sorrow would have allayed their suspicion. A moderate utterance, they imply, is incompatible with an extreme resolution, for the mean in speech is consonant only with the mean in deed. They thought Antigone's defense of the law a proof of her savagery, but her last words (τἀν εὐσέβειαν σεβίσασα) were so devoid of paradox and excess— unlike, for example, δόσα πνεομέργεσαα (cf. 924)—that they never suspected that she had resolved to kill herself (cf. § 49.4). The Chorus always measure the deed by the speech and therefore fail to see the extreme that sometimes lurks within the mean. This failure sets the limit to their wisdom (cf. § 65.1).

63 (1257–1300). 63.1. The Chorus still regard Creon as their lord despite Tiresias' address to them (cf. § 51.2); and so they hesitate to lay Haemon's death to his error. Their et θέμες εἶπεῖν allows Creon the chance of pleading not guilty; but he obliges them with a confession.140 They behold the killer and the killed (Haemon is in his arms), the consequence of his imprudence, but not, we must supply, of his impiety (φρενάδων δυσσεμῶν). His ill-conceived plans have led to his own unhappiness and the early death of his son. That he blasted his son's happiness as well does not occur to him, for Antigone's death is not one of his errors. The justice he sees too late are the miserable toils of

140 Cf. Andocides II.5–7, 15 for the way in which Creon expresses his regret for his crimes.
mortals, which, as his own overturned and trampled joy illustrates, the
gods savagely inflict. Creon admits his guilt without accepting his
punishment, for he had unwillingly killed Haemon and Eurydice
(1340), and even Tiresias argued that error was common to all men. He
does not suggest what punishment would have been fitting; and once
he learns of Eurydice's death, he thinks fate, not a god—he never
names any god but the unappeasable Hades—caused his suffering
(1345–6). Creon bewails the unwilld effects of his impiety but not their
willed cause. He must be silent about Antigone and piety if he is to take
part in a kommos, for he cannot lament what he does not understand.

63.2. Creon mentions something that is almost as surprising as was
the cremation of Polynices. He says to Haemon that in his death he was
released (ἀπελυθης), and as if to confirm that his choice of words is not
casual, he later asks the second messenger how Eurydice was slain and
released (1314).141 Perhaps Creon means no more than that they have
"passed away"; but since the verb is unknown this early as a euphe-
mism, and a euphemism joined with ἔθανες in Haemon’s case and with
ἐν φωναῖς in Eurydice’s hardly qualifies as such, one wonders whether
Creon, holding the corpse of his son and confronted with that of his
wife, does not mean that their souls are now separated from their
bodies. Creon would thus be opposed to Antigone to the end, for whom
the separation of body and soul in death would have made her devotion
to the law impossible. Creon, on the other hand, has to be reminded of
his duty to bury the dead (1334–5; cf. 1101). The restoration of the
established laws, to which Antigone contributed nothing (cf. § 17.5),
can only lead once more to their being forgotten (cf. § 26.1).

63.3. Sophocles allows Creon just one strophe to grieve over Haemon
alone: but this is not because Creon feels more deeply about Eurydice
than about Haemon; indeed, he never calls her his wife or himself her
husband (cf. §§ 1196, 1282). She is in his eyes a wretched mother and
nothing else. Yet the unexpected shock of her suicide does force Creon
to drop all thought of his deficient counsel and the miserable toil of
mortals (cf. § 1317).142 Tiresias had asked Creon what proof it was of
his courage to rekill the dead (τίς ἀληθὴς τόν θανόντα ἐπικταχνεῖν, 1030); and
Creon now tells the messenger that with this news he has reexecuted a
dead man (ἀλωλότ’ ἀνδρ’ ἐπεξειργάσω). Creon speaks of himself as a

141 Read ἄπελυσας; see Müller.
142 The frequency with which the same sounds occupy the same place in
strophe and antistrophe, accompanied as it is by slight dislocations of the same
word and by contrasting words or phrases in the same place, alerts us to the
shift Creon undergoes (cf. § 46.8): δυσφρόνον (1261)—δυσκάθορος (1284); (1262)
—(1285), ὅπως (1266)—τις ὕψος, ὅ πως (1289); see § 38.1; νέος νέω (1266)—νέον
(1289); ἀπελυθης (1268)—ἐπ’ ὀλίσθῳ (1291); (1273)—(1296); ἐπισεισέν (1274)—
μὲν ἐν (1297); ἀντρέποντα χάριν (1275)—ἐναντ. προσβλέπω νεκρόν (1290); (1276)—
(1300). See also Müller. For an example of a shift in thought accompanying close
symmetry between strophe and antistrophe, see Aesch. Eum. 155–68.
second Polynices (cf. 1077): the crime that he mistakenly thought in Polynices’ case could never be atoned for would be his own. Creon thought, however, that his crime was the death of Haemon, not the prohibition of Polynices’ burial; and he does not now admit his guilt on either count when he envisions his unending suffering. He does not put together ἀφενόν δυσφρόνον ἁμαρτήματα with ἢ δυσκάθαρτος Ἀδων λιμήν, let alone his rekindling of Polynices with Hades’ rekindling of himself. Mistaken as to his crime, Creon cannot see his suffering as his punishment, for even on his mistaken view, in terms of which his crime should double as his punishment, Creon still attributes his suffering to either a god or fate, but never to himself. As agent he is guilty, as patient he is innocent (cf. OC 266–7).

64 (1301–46). 64.1. The messenger answers Creon’s question of 1296, though Creon perhaps did not expect that anyone could answer it. Eurydice prayed at the altar of the house just before her suicide for the ill-success of Creon.\(^1\) She did not think that Haemon’s death, let alone Megareus’, would adequately punish Creon. Not the ἐξουσιωτὸν πάθος (1316) of her son, which brought on her own death, but only κακαὶ πρᾶξεῖς in the future can affect him. Eurydice seemed to have understood Creon’s incapacity for the punishment of suffering. He now, at any rate, becomes terrified and for the only time speaks of his pain (cf. § 27.2). The fear of punishment takes the place of remorse and prompts Creon to ask for his death (cf. §§ 15.2, 29.1). Fear, which should be part of his punishment, makes him want to escape from it, for he seems to have no fear, as Antigone had, that he will be judged in Hades (459–60, 925–6), and he hardly thinks he will meet his wife and sons there. His immediate death would be the most beautiful of fates, for he then would not have to undergo another day of fear. Creon’s fear, however, alternates with his guilt, and his guilt suggests to him another way. To the messenger’s report that Eurydice held him guilty for both Megareus’ and Haemon’s deaths he responds with a question about the manner of her suicide. Creon thus avoids extending his guilt to include the death of Megareus, for he senses that it would ill become him to protest in the name of the city Eurydice’s blanket condemnation. He prefers instead to admit his guilt for Eurydice’s death, even though no one charges him with it and he himself is aware of the extravagance of his admission (φάμ’ ἐτύμον). He wants his servants to take him out of the way now that he is not even as much as a no-one. He is too empty to suffer any more. He is unable to atone. Creon is in his life less than the dead Polynices, for he has no one to pity him; but he does not complain, as Antigone did, of his lack of friends. He has too much

\(^{1}\) Nothing seems certain in 1301 except βωμὰ; but I should be inclined to accept Seyffert’s reading at 1303 because of 424–5.
self-pity to miss them;\textsuperscript{144} and he seems to believe that if he is out of sight his guilt is out of mind. So little does his crime against the city mean to him that he does not think of exile or any other public punishment. The Chorus, therefore, are not ready to comfort Creon: the sooner his misfortunes are out of the way the greater is their own gain. They want to forget Creon in his troubles as they must have once forgotten Oedipus in his; and they renounce their loyalty to Creon in words that could equally have served against Oedipus. Indeed, their advice to Creon, not to pray for anything since the future does not properly concern mortals who must stick to what is before them, suits Oedipus far more exactly than Creon, whose fate scarcely deserves the name of destitute (cf. \textit{OT} 1518–20).

65 (1347–53). 65.1. The Chorus draw a conclusion that they apparently did not need the play to learn (cf. § 57.1). Man, according to the first stasimon, taught himself speech, thought, and civility, all three of which are morally neutral; but if, they now say, thought is good it is wisdom, if speech is bad it is boasting, and if civility is good it is piety (cf. § 52.3–4). Yet there seem to be two kinds of wisdom. Wisdom consists solely in not acting impiously against the gods, and this non-Antigonean piety is the chief ingredient in happiness; and wisdom comes in old age solely through suffering, and happiness is thus impossible, for Creon can now be called wise but not happy (cf. § 52.5). The Chorus, however, see no difficulty, for the precept that the wisdom of innocence trusts in from the start is the same as that which the wisdom of suffering learns late, and to the Chorus nothing matters but the precept, however learnt: Creon must do \textit{τὰ προειρήματα} and disregard \textit{τὰν ποσὶν κακά}. They never understand that civility is not self-taught but piety already in decay, the piety of precept. That one could live the precept, so that \textit{χρῆ τὰ γ’ ἐς θεοὺς μηδὲν ἀστετεῖν} be transformed into Antigone's \textit{ὅσια πανωργῆσαι}, is wholly beyond them. They therefore can only regret that Creon, who had he followed the precept would have kept clear of trouble, forced them to confront the \textit{τέρας} Antigone.

\textit{Corrigendum}: in Part II of this article (vol. 5/1, p. 42, line 10), for "city. Justice must be grounded . . .," etc., read "city as the issue. Creon calls Haemon totally bad in separating, as he"

\textsuperscript{144} Cf. 34.2.1. Antigone never calls herself \textit{μελέτη} or \textit{δεκάλα}, each of which Creon uses thrice (977, 1319, 1341; 1272, 1310–1). The one trait they have in common is tearlessness; but in \textit{Antigone}'s case it comes from her greatness of soul, in \textit{Creon}'s from his emptiness. \textit{Antigone} is \textit{ταλαίφως}, not Creon.
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF
PLATO'S LACHES

MARK BLITZ

Plato's Laches is a discussion of courage, but the thematic discussion of courage does not begin until the dialogue is half over. It is named after the Athenian general Laches, one of the interlocutors, but why it is named after him and not after the other chief interlocutor, the Athenian general Nicias, is unclear. It is therefore necessary to attend carefully to the speeches and action of the dialogue from the very beginning in order to understand the significance of the long preparation for the arguments later conducted by Laches, Socrates, and Nicias, and it is necessary to attend to the whole dialogue in order to understand why the only word said by Plato in his own name, the title, is "Laches."

The Laches begins with a preface spoken by Lysimachus. He (with Melesias) has called Laches and Nicias to observe the display of a man fighting in armor, but he has not told them for the sake of what he has done so. But he will say now. He believes it is necessary to speak frankly to them. Some laugh at this, he says, and if someone asks their advice do not say what they think, but guess at the advisee and speak something against their own opinion. But he believes they know sufficiently and, knowing sufficiently, would tell their opinion simply; accordingly, he has taken them for the counseling about what is to be communicated.

The preface is a preface to communicating the reason for the advice, and its subject is the conditions of advice. The requirement of frank speech suggests the need to speak freely rather than dissembling the reason for the advice. The reason for the advice comprises both the conditions through which the advisee needs advice but cannot provide his own guidance and the subject for which he seeks advice. But the subject of a consultation usually appears to be the means discussed only for the sake of the end. When a man seeks a physician's advice on diet for the purpose of his health, that "for the sake of which" there is a consultation is basically health; proper diet may or may not be the sufficient means. But why does he wish health? Health is necessary for the things a man can do with a healthy body, for happiness. Therefore this happiness is the basic purpose for the advising, and health is the immediate purpose which may or may not be sufficiently useful in meeting this end. There is therefore a complicated relationship of means and end, of the useful, the beneficial, and the noble, in advising. But means and end is too strict a distinction because the same things are both means and ends. More fundamentally, the full discussion of
something as means, the contribution of health to happiness, for example, may be no different from a discussion of it as beneficial or as an end. Both discussions attempt to elucidate its power, its ability, its qualities; both discuss what it is. In this sense, the subject of the advising is the final purpose toward which the advisee's immediate wish points, since to discuss fully what is wished for as a means is also to discuss it in itself, i.e., as aid to, part of, or instance of the final purpose. But if such are the reasons for frank speech, it is possible that the advisee is partially ignorant of the subject for which he needs advice. This is especially true when we consider the possible apparent differences between what is wished for in advice and the final subject to which it may point only obscurely. And it is also possible that he cannot grasp or be ashamed of his true need for advice about a subject and his inability to provide his own guidance. Thus, to speak freely the advisee must know what he is speaking about, and this is a difficult requirement.

But even if the advisee can speak freely in this sense, his speech will be useless unless the advisor knows sufficiently. What he must know sufficiently is precisely what the advisee must know in order to speak his need knowingly, and, in addition to this, he must know whatever it is that the advisee does not know. But to know the reason for the advice sufficiently would be to know it fully, to know everything on which the reason or subject is dependent for being what it is, or to know it in its independence: to know the reason, the "for the sake of which," the subject sufficiently would be to know it in its self-sufficiency. Yet this is a requirement that may be difficult, if not impossible, to meet: who, after all, has sufficient knowledge of courage? Still, even if an advisor has sufficient knowledge, this does not guarantee that he will speak it simply to the advisee. He might "laugh" at him or "guess" at him and for these reasons speak duplicitously, for the advisor's intention may not be the same as the advisee's. The advisee therefore has reason to distrust; the grounds on which he could expect simple speech would need to be assured before his own speech could be altogether frank. Moreover, for a speech of advice to be "simple" even if the advisor wished to speak simply would require that it be about something itself simple, unchanging, single, undistorted, and incapable of being properly understood in more than one way, and that it be said in a context where it could not have more than one meaning for the advisee. But though a simple speech on the basis of sufficient knowledge seems so difficult, perhaps this is not so. Perhaps the speech can be simple praise or blame, assent or dissent; and perhaps it can be based upon mere observation. For by their deed Lysimachus and Melesias suggest that looking at Stesilaus' display, not hearing about it, is crucial. But even such observation is no guarantee of sufficient knowledge because it can be countered by other observations in other circumstances. Moreover, assent and dissent, whether or not based on
the observation of actions, of deeds, is ambiguous. Therefore, the problem of sufficient knowledge and simple speech, for the advisee as well as the advisor, is deepened, not solved, by the possibility that sufficient knowledge is of, or in, deeds, not speeches, and that the required simple speech need be nothing more that a vote, or word of praise.

After his preface, Lysimachus proceeds to tell Nicias and Laches the reason for the consultation. He and Melesias are concerned with caring for their sons Aristeides and Thucydides. They will not allow them to do what they wish, as the many allow their sons. They know that Nicias and Laches also have sons, and believe that they are concerned with how to train them to bring about the best. But if they have not paid attention to this they are to be reminded that it is necessary not to neglect it; they thus call them to care for the sons in common.

Lysimachus is concerned with how to train the sons to bring about the best. By best, here, Lysimachus means aristocratic, unlike the many; he reminds the company of his fine lineage. But he gives no indication of the content of the "best" ways, save to suggest that a youth could not become best by being allowed to do what he wants, since this is the way of the many. But why are Laches and Nicias called to advise? Lysimachus suggests that since they too have young sons they are likely to share his concern, but he reminds them that they need to pay attention to this subject whether or not they already have sons. He has therefore not yet shown that they know sufficiently; he even suggests that they do not. At most he has indicated why they can be trusted to speak simply: common need and common concern with what is best make possible a "community" in which there can be frank speech. But this could at best be partially true, for parents, especially such parents, are competitive. Lysimachus leaves unexplored the precise concern with what is better than the many and the precise common need of those with such concern.

Lysimachus continues. As he said at the beginning, he will speak frankly to them. He and Melesias each have tales about their own fathers to tell the boys, tales of noble deeds in war and peace when they managed the city's and the allies' affairs. But Lysimachus and Melesias have no deeds of their own; they are ashamed of this, Lysimachus continues, and blame their fathers, who allowed them to live luxuriously when they were young, while they did others' business. And they tell their sons, who are persuaded by them, that if they do not care for themselves they will become unhonored, but if they do care perhaps they could become worthy of their names. They are thus looking for those studies and practices by which the sons could become the best, and someone praised both this study, since it would be noble for young men to fight in armor, and the man whose demonstration they have just seen. And they opined it necessary to go and to take along Laches and Nicias as fellow spectators, advisors, and participants. Lysimachus concludes that they should now advise
whether they think this study is necessary to learn or whether they would praise some other; they are also to say what they will do about the community.

This section of the dialogue consists of Lysimachus’ report of the conditions leading Melesias and him to seek advice. Lysimachus speaks frankly of these conditions, which means here that he says what one says only to a trustworthy man; he is incompetent to judge because his father educated him poorly. His speech in general reveals both the measure of his incompetence and his wiliness. His disparaging of his father would suggest that the generals Nicias and Laches would be unconcerned about their own sons, and therefore incompetent spectators. But unconcern does not necessarily mean incompetence; therefore, Lysimachus must force the generals to become concerned, and he achieves this. But their station does not guarantee competence either, and nowhere in the dialogue does Lysimachus tell why he thinks the generals know sufficiently. But Lysimachus does show here how he is influenced by praise, and Nicias and Laches are men with names, with reputations; therefore their own bestowing of praise is important. The question thus arises of the worth of praise and its connection to knowledge. But Lysimachus demonstrates his unclarity even more fundamentally. He uses the terms “noble,” “worthy of one’s name,” and “best” interchangeably to designate what he has persuaded his son to become. But these are not obviously identical; to use them interchangeably is to be unconcerned with the distinction between merit and the reputation for it. This unclarity, too, is not set right by Lysimachus. Moreover, he sees no distinction between the immediate reason or condition for the advice and the final purpose. Does he seek advice on becoming the best in order that his son may perform nobly, or is the final subject of the advice—nobility, or a worthy name, or becoming the best—not different from the immediate subject about which he seeks advice? Finally, Lysimachus indicates that the subject of the advising is the usefulness of the art, the means, for meeting his wish for his son; that is, he does not indicate that he needs advice about that for the sake of which the advising is, but only about the studies and practices which might bring it about. But the interchangeable use of noble, best, and worthiness of name suggests that he lacks knowledge here as well; and his own story of his luxurious upbringing strengthens this suggestion.

The next part of the dialogue consists of Nicias, Laches, and Socrates entering Lysimachus’ community. Nicias speaks first, praises Lysimachus’ purpose, and readily joins. Laches then joins also, approving of Lysimachus’ remark that men concerned with the public carelessly place apart what is private. But he wonders why Socrates was not invited to join, for he belongs to Lysimachus’ deme and always spends his time in what he is searching for, a noble study or practice for youths. Nicias then adds his endorsement: Socrates has recommended
Damon as teacher for Nicias' son, and the graceful music teacher Damon has proved to be as valuable a companion as one could wish for. Lysimachus then apologizes for not knowing about Socrates. Age prevents him from knowing the younger men, he says, but it is necessary and just that good advisors advise their fellow demesman. Moreover, Socrates chances to be his friend because Lysimachus and Socrates' father Sophroniscus were friends and had no differences. And he must be that very Socrates whom the boys praise so vehemently at home when dialoguing with each other. Therefore, "by Hera," Socrates and Lysimachus must begin to be familiar. Laches then speaks again. Socrates must not be let go, he says, for he does right by the fatherland as well as the father. Laches has observed him in the flight from Delium; if others had been willing to be such as Socrates, the city would not have met disaster. Lysimachus then speaks again. He finds this praise to be noble, he says; it is praise from a man of trusted value and he is pleased by Socrates' good reputation. Socrates should justly have been frequenting his home, but at least from now on Socrates must do nothing but be with Lysimachus and Melesias, become acquainted with the youths, and preserve the friendship. He then asks Socrates his opinion about the study of fighting in armor: is it suitable for lads or not? Socrates then accepts Lysimachus' invitation, but, as we will see shortly, does not immediately give his advice.

This section of the dialogue concerns the necessary requirements to be met in order to trust an advisor. Lysimachus has invited Laches and Nicias into a community, a community based on common necessity. The bases for community and the problem of the relation between the city and the communities inferior to it therefore become the mode in which the question of trustworthy advisors is pursued. Nicias' statement following Laches' indicates the questionability of Lysimachus' and Laches' understanding of the separation of public and private. Nicias, the leading man in the city, found time to find a teacher and to learn from him himself. In fact, we see later that he has attempted to secure the services of Socrates, but Socrates refuses. The question of the grounds for the true separation of public and private is therefore raised, and it is raised in several other ways as well. Laches reminds Lysimachus that Socrates belongs to his deme, and Lysimachus takes this fact alone as constituting the justice of Socrates' advising him, if he has good advice. But why should fellow members of the deme have a justice among them, presumably differentiating them from fellow citizens? Lysimachus then reminds Socrates that he and his father were companions, but, even more, friends, a reminder which further differentiates him from other citizens as well as from fellow members of the deme. But Lysimachus is not likely to have been Sophroniscus' only friend, and he is no friend of Socrates, as his ignorance of him and his own need to remark that he and Sophroniscus did not part with differences suggest. He therefore further specifies Socrates' relationship to
what is Lysimachus' by mentioning the boys' praise of him. Finally, he swears the dialogue's first oath, the only one to Hera, an oath more appropriate to a woman than the usual "by Zeus" of a manly man, and invites Socrates into the closeness of the family.

Lysimachus' speech to Socrates indicates important grounds of trustworthiness. Socrates can be expected to speak simply because he belongs to Lysimachus' deme and because he would advise Lysimachus out of friendship, out of family ties, and not for another reason, such as money. But why could Socrates be expected to join the consultation at all? The others have a common necessity, but there is no indication that Socrates has a young son. Laches mentions Socrates' concern with education, and Nicias also testifies to it, but the grounds for Socrates' peculiar concern are not clear. But perhaps Socrates can be expected to join, to help, and not merely to refrain from hurting, because of friendship. Lysimachus expects this but is uncertain of it, or is uncertain of the friendship Socrates shares for him. He therefore mentions the boys' praise; Socrates will receive, and has been receiving, praise, something Lysimachus considers fine, and therefore something more than love of what is almost his own should motivate Socrates. But, then, Lysimachus once more suggests doing right by his father and reverence for Hera as what should motivate Socrates, and it is not clear whether these motivations are necessities or beautiful in themselves. Moreover, Lysimachus has just slandered his own father as the cause of something base, namely, Lysimachus, while at the same time revering him by seeking to make his son worthy of him. In general, then, while private familiarity is a guide to trustworthy advice it is an ambiguous guide because the private, one's own, is not identical with the noble or good.

Private familiarity is also no certain guide to knowledgeable advisors. Nothing said so far shows that Socrates knows sufficiently, though what Laches and Nicias have said suggests it. And Lysimachus' failure to recognize Socrates demonstrates Socrates' lack of public reputation, and, therefore, for Lysimachus, may well raise a question about Socrates' competence in the matter at hand. Therefore, Lysimachus does not ask Socrates for his advice until after Laches' interjection. Laches' praise for Socrates' actions on behalf of the city is sufficient to guarantee his reputation; it is therefore, for Lysimachus, apparently sufficient to guarantee his competence. Praise remains Lysimachus' guide, but not praise simply, for the sons' praise did not persuade Lysimachus to seek out Socrates; but Laches' praise is a noble praise, a praise for that same thing which makes Laches' value trustworthy. But it is unclear whether noble praise is distinguished from ordinary praise because of what is praised or because of who praises. It is also unclear whether Lysimachus believes there is or can be anything noble which lacks reputation. Thus, the grounds on which Lysimachus judges competence and the grounds and connection of the nobility, worthiness, and goodness he wants for his son remain unclear.
No distinctions among these qualities are suggested, and Lysimachus persists in identifying opinion and knowledge.

Laches' statement about the war and Lysimachus' mention of his trustworthiness also develop the theme of the connection between trustworthy advice and the division between public and private. Socrates' public trustworthiness is as necessary as his private trustworthiness: Lysimachus can hardly contain his pleasure at the news. But effort for the city may detract from concern for the private, and there is no reason to believe this is less true for Socrates than for Lysimachus' father. Lysimachus speaks of the justice of Socrates' behaving as kinsman to Lysimachus, but he nowhere speaks of the justice of Socrates' manly retreat in war, nor of the justice of his father Aristeides' management of the affairs of the city. But the city is necessary to protect the family. Perhaps Lysimachus believes that from proper devotion to what is private a noble devotion to the city can emerge, though the reverse is not true. Something like this might appear to be the case with Nicias. But Socrates' place as an advisor, the status of his knowing and his motivation for simple speech, is especially ambiguous because his concern with the young is not a private concern and its connection to his willingness to retreat correctly for the city, an unusual act in the circumstances but no shining display of daring, is altogether unexplored.

Socrates has consented to try to help Lysimachus as far as he is able. But, he continues, in the next part of the dialogue, Laches and Nicias should speak first, for this would be just, and he who is younger and less experienced will learn from them. Only if he disagrees with them will he attempt to teach and persuade. He then asks Nicias that he or Laches speak.

Socrates here unobtrusively sets the terms of speech and order of the speakers. The advising will be by speeches, not question and answer; Nicias will speak first because Socrates manages it that way. Even less unobtrusively, Socrates lays down conditions for knowledge. It is just that the older and more experienced speak first. Now, one might think that the claim to knowledge on the basis of age is no different from the claim based on experience; the older are more experienced, and if they are not, as they need not be, their claim is faulty. But the old might claim knowledge on the basis of greater acquaintance with ancient statesmen and events. In this sense, justice means deferring to claims of age, which, in the last analysis, are claims of knowledge. But age might be a detriment to genuine acquaintance; in particular, the old are forgetful. The claims of age therefore receive a silent disclaimer in the dialogue, and here it is primarily the claim of experience which is advanced. This claim is suggested in what Lysimachus says, but it is not identical with it since experience does not guarantee renown, but it is with renown that Lysimachus is primarily concerned. Yet while Socrates stresses this claim, he points to a rival. Socrates might disagree with Laches and Nicias, but if he does so intelligently it could
not be on the basis of greater experience since he is less experienced. Moreover, if he does disagree with what he has learned, he says he will attempt to teach and persuade. But persuasive speech is not identical to experience; experience is not sufficient for persuasive speech and may hardly be necessary. Moreover, persuasion itself is not identical to teaching; teaching may also involve force, the bodily, violence. But more than this, a teaching for which experience is at best necessary but not sufficient is possible even if we ignore rhetorical persuasion and habituation through punishment. Think, for example, of mathematics. Since the precise character of the present subject matter is unclear, the explicit claim to knowledge which Socrates sets up is immediately weakened by the implications of his passing remarks. This question of the connection between teaching and the claims to knowledge will become thematic later in the dialogue.

Nicias' and Laches' speeches in response to Socrates comprise the next part of the dialogue. Nicias' opinion is that this is a useful and noble study. It is useful for the young because by studying it they will not spend time in the other things young men love to do; they will have good bodies through it, as with other exercises, but this exercise is more fitted to free men because for the contest before them now and for athletic contests this training is a training in the instruments of war. The study is beneficial for fighting in the ranks, in order with many others, but its greatest use is when the ranks are broken and one fights alone with another, pursuing and fleeing. Whoever knows it would not suffer under one, or perhaps under many, but would hold more everywhere. Moreover, Nicias continues, this study invites us to desire other noble things. Learners here would desire to learn more about order, and loving honor in that would be inclined toward all things concerning generalship. Indeed, all studies and pursuits connected to this one are noble and valuable to the man who pursues this, and this study leads to them. In addition, this science would make each man in war more courageous and bolder than he is, making us well formed where we need to appear well formed, and at the same time appearing more terrible to the enemy. Therefore, Nicias concludes, it is his opinion that it is necessary to teach this; if Laches has another opinion it would be pleasant to hear it.

Nicias' speech divides roughly into four parts: a young man spends his leisure usefully with this study; it is useful in war in several ways; it leads men to desire what is noble; it increases courage. The center of the speech is the movement from what is useful to what is noble, and the first and fourth and second and third parts are parallel. The speech contains the dialogue's first mention of courage, but the fact that courage is useful for the city is hardly hinted at, let alone said. The speech contains a long discussion of war, but the fact that war is for the city is hardly hinted at, let alone said. While Laches immediately mentioned the battle of Delium in discussing Socrates, and while, as
we will soon see, he can hardly speak without mentioning Athens and Sparta, Nicias makes only an offhand reference to the present "contest" set before them. The stress in Nicias' speech is on distinguishing oneself individually, on forming one's own body, on fighting well when one is alone with another, on holding more everywhere, on loving generalship and all that is honorable and noble. None of this, even the last, is said to be done for the city; rather, it is done for a nobility which is equated with, perhaps even for the sake of, honor. The least important use of the study is fighting in the ranks; the finer use, and what is no longer called useful but merely fine, is concerned with individual distinction.

The form of Nicias' speech is also significant. He uses no specific examples. He points to no particular experience; his speech could have been made as easily by a man with little experience. In fact, his speech could as easily have been made about any number of studies: it is abstract—in this sense an imitation of philosophy—sophistic—and in this sense powerful. Nicias is a man who enjoys listening, a man who respects what is music; what he hears is more important than what he sees. Indeed, Nicias appears to think of the noble things as themselves subjects to learn: no example of what is noble is given that is not what Nicias now calls a "science" or a knowledge. And Nicias nowhere discusses the possibility that a man holding a science can fail to use it or use it basely; the sciences are noble, and to have them is to be noble. The reason for the consultation is thus further complicated, for this study is said to lead to all noble studies, and it is studies which are noble; they are at once ends and means. But what constitutes nobility? In particular, is the noble equivalent to the valuable and honorable, superior to them, or inferior? If, as Nicias says, we continue to desire the noble because we love honor, honor—individual honor—is the cause of noble learning. But honor is dependent upon those who grant it, perhaps even the many from whom Nicias, as well as Lysimachus and Laches, wishes to be separated; it cannot be obtained by our efforts alone. Nicias does not in any way discuss the status of this ultimate reason for studies in his speech. Yet, if he means desire for the noble and the love of honor to be equivalent, his understanding of both is unclear, not least because he would believe in their equivalence. Moreover, although Nicias seems to develop a hierarchy of noble studies, leading to generalship, he in fact speaks of none as nobler than the other, and he apparently reduces them to equivalence. His discussion thus raises the problem of the order of the noble studies, the relation of ends and means. It is a problem also suggested in his abstraction from the public basis of war and his emphasis on man-to-man fighting as opposed to fighting in ranks. Furthermore, Nicias' speech also raises problems concerning the question of sufficient knowledge. He explicitly calls the studies "sciences," but we are not told what knowledge is, as opposed to, say, opinion; and Nicias offers his own
speech as an opinion. Moreover, Socrates and presumably Laches performed well in retreat without having this art of fighting in armor. What, then, is the status of a science which is noble and sufficient for honor in various contests but is apparently not necessary? Nicia's speech does not deserve to win the day because it raises problems of which he seems not to be sufficiently aware. These very problems later prove to be a source of the difficulty in his argument about courage, and here as well his mention of courage and boldness is ambiguous. Courage is not itself called noble but is discussed as an addition after he speaks of what is noble; it is something this study could bring to every man in war, not merely the few. Furthermore, it is connected to the body, bringing us back to the lower considerations at the beginning of Nicia's speech. The science makes men more courageous than they are by giving them better bodies; they therefore appear more fearful to the enemy. Courage thus appears to exist at least partially in the realm of appearance: to appear fearful to enemies is to become more courageous to them. But the better body is real, and the science forming it is not a sham; Nicia intends no slight by connecting courage to education rather than nature. Yet Nicia does not call courage itself a science, and therefore does not, as later, call it knowledge of the terrible. It is decisively related to fear, however, and it is caused or enhanced by a science, and the better body the science gives us presumably could not make us more courageous if we did not see our better form and our enemies' increased fear of it. Still and all, Nicia does not say what courage is, its relationship to fear and science is only hinted at, and it is not itself the noble outcome of this science they are observing, although this science leads us to other noble things. Courage is not the theme of Nicia's speech but is an afterthought, whose relation to the theme is unclear.

Laches speaks next to this assembly. All knowledge is reputed good, and if this with arms is a study they need to learn it, but if its trustees deceive them and it is not a study, why learn it? If it is something, the Spartans would have noticed it since the Spartans' only care is searching for and practicing the studies which enable them to hold more than others in war. But if the Spartans have not noticed it, the art's teachers know that the Spartans are the most serious Greeks about this; to be honored by them would bring much money from the other Greeks just as it does for the tragic poets honored by Athenians. Therefore a tragedian who believes he poetizes beautifully does not circle around Athens and display to the other cities, but goes straight to Athens to display. But, continues Laches, he sees that these armor-fighters believe Sparta to be an inviolable temple; they circle around it and display to all, chiefly to those who agree that many others are ahead of them in the things of war. And furthermore, Laches continues, he has been next to several of these men in the deeds themselves and has seen what they are. They can look and see that none of these men has be-
come renowned in war, but in all the other cases the celebrities come from among the practitioners. And he has observed Stesilauus himself—whom they have just observed displaying in the crowd and saying great things about himself—elsewhere, in truth, displaying truly where he was not willing. He was on a ship which struck a transport, holding his spear-scythe, a weapon which differed just as he differed from the others. As he was fighting with this "sophism" it became entangled in the transport. The results were ludicrous; those on the transport laughed at his figure, and, finally, those on his own ship could not restrain their own laughter. So, continues Laches, as he said from the beginning, it is not valuable to try to learn this study which is of little use, if not a pretense. Moreover, if a man who supposed he knew this were a coward he would become bolder, only bringing what he is to light; if he were courageous, men would watch him and slander him if he made the smallest mistake. The pretense to such knowledge is liable to envy, and if someone said he had this knowledge he could not escape ridicule unless he were wonderfully greater than the others in virtue. This is his opinion, Laches concludes, and it is now necessary for Socrates to give his advice.

Laches begins by questioning the worth of studies which are either pretenses or lack seriousness. He then gives a reason for doubting the seriousness of this study, namely, the Spartans' unconcern with it. He next shows us that it is a pretense by displaying the foolishness of its leading practitioner when practicing it. He then reminds us of what he said at the beginning, and ends with a speech about its connection to courage. What is immediately striking in Laches' speech is its contrast with that of Nicias. While Nicias did not mention a single name, other than that of Lysimachus, Laches mentions several names and several examples. The worth of an art is not determined in a general speech; it is found by looking at the authorities and at the practitioner's work in the field. All the speeches in the world could not change the foolishness of Stesilauus in action, performing his deeds. And all the speeches in the world could not change the significance of Sparta's silent rejection. The speeches must fit the deeds, not the deeds the speeches. One reason the dialogue is named after Laches is that Socrates' eventual opening of Laches to the genuine priority of speech is the central deed of the dialogue. It is Laches, not Nicias, who first wonders why Socrates has not been included, and it is Laches, not Nicias, who testifies to what appears to be Socrates' courage in action and for the city. But what Socrates' opening of Laches tells us about the problem of courage must be discussed later.

Laches understands learning as valuable only if it is useful, only if it is serious. He does not mention the nobility of study, and he unfavorably contrasts the Athens which welcomes tragedians and their beautiful poetry with Sparta, whose concern is war. In fact, he does not mention nobility or honor in this speech at all. His horizon appears to
be the public, the common good, what is useful for the city; we remember his approval of Lysimachus' remark about the private neglig-
fulness of the public man. But several things Laches says force us to doubt whether the city is his true horizon. His praise of Sparta clearly must have a basis other than love of Athens, and this is also true of his doubts about Athens' openness to sophists and poets. Moreover, he dislikes the many and can therefore be no partisan of Athenian democ-

racy. Thus, it is not so much democratic Athens as Athens the father-
land which is his horizon, the traditional, the non-innovative. Yet even here there is a question, for Laches' own story points out the fact that not only poetry and science but laughter is trans-political, and one cannot always help laughing even at one's friends. Still, Laches fears laughter, fears ridicule. His virtue is not wonderfully greater than the others but is subject to the city's ridicule. We may say, provisionally, that Laches fails to give a proper place to what is universal, beyond the city, playful, because he is insufficiently concerned with standing alone, with the private. Still, he somehow recognizes that the city cannot be the final horizon. And as we see later, he is motivated by a love of victory, but this love of victory, rather than enabling him to withstand ridicule, is a cause of this fear.

Laches makes clear both the grounds on which he offers advice—the evidence of his own eyes—and the grounds of trustworthiness: is the advisor obviously authoritative, and has he proved himself in deed? Laches follows Socrates' criterion of experience. But perhaps Stesilaus' failure is due to chance; and perhaps his failure does not show his foolishness in every other martial art. Laches does not consider this; he does not show why Sparta's greater concern necessarily leads to greater competence; nor does he indicate who would be preferred if Sparta's authority and his own eyes had clashed. Moreover, the evi-

dence of his own eyes is ambiguous, at least to the following extent: Laches relies upon the universal ridicule which Stesilaus generates rather than upon independent judgment, but we know that he could not believe all ridicule to be justified. For these reasons, then, the sufficiency of his knowledge and the trustworthiness of advice based at least partially on untrustworthy ridicule are questionable.

There are also problems with Laches' understanding of the precise purpose of the advice. Indeed, Laches is very vague. He tries to prove the art useless in war, but is success in war equivalent to value or no-
bility or being the best? He tries to show that the science makes the cowardly more obvious and the courageous more envied; it does not enhance virtue. But is becoming courageous the purpose of the advice? Lysimachus has not said so, and Nicias gave it a subordinate position. If Laches seeks to suggest that courage is the ultimate purpose, he has hidden his intention well; his remarks seem designed primarily to counter Nicias. Moreover, he is even less enlightening than Nicias about what courage is, though he suggests it is a virtue, as Nicias had
not. He nowhere indicates how one knows courage sufficiently; if becoming courageous is the goal of the advising, he has not suggested credentials for teaching it. In general, we might suspect that Laches could never say that courage is knowledge or that knowledge necessarily enhances it: whereas it is possible to mistake Nicias for a man who believes knowledge is noble, for its own sake, no one would so mistake Laches. Yet his criticism of this study centers on its being a sham study; whether or not a true study would necessarily be closed to cowards and would give no cause for ridicule by allowing no mistakes is an open question. Still, Laches explicitly divorces courage and virtue from genuine possession of that knowledge to which Stesilaus only pretends, for he can still speak even of the man who is wonderfully great in virtue as pretending to this knowledge. But if courage is not knowledge, or if knowledge is not even necessary in bringing it about, what sort of thing is it and with what does it deal? Laches' fear of envy and ridicule seems to be a form of cowardice, an inability to stand against common fears, though perhaps it is justified. And Laches' earlier speech and others' speeches as well have been filled with references to fleeing, separating, letting go, pointing to a possible connection between courage and proper division. Moreover, Laches' remark that Stesilaus displays himself in truth where he is not "willing," while Socrates earlier is differentiated from others in the flight from Delium who were not "willing" to do as he did, points to some unexplored connection among courage, knowledge, and consent. What courage is, therefore, remains uncertain, and Laches' understanding of the status of the purpose of the consultation remains obscure.

The next part of the dialogue begins with Lysimachus. He asks Socrates with whom he would vote; if Nicias and Laches had agreed, this would not be needed. Socrates asks Lysimachus whether he will do whatever most of them praise, and Lysimachus asks what else anyone can do. Socrates then turns to Melesias. He asks whether he would be persuaded by the many or whether he would be persuaded by someone educated and trained by a good gymnast if he were looking for necessary exercise for his son's contest. Melesias says he would be persuaded by the coach, but hesitates to say he would be more persuaded by the coach than by the four of them. Socrates then says, and Melesias agrees, that knowledge and not the greater number should judge if noble judgment is the expectation. They therefore need to look for someone artful concerning what is consulted about and must be persuaded by him even if he is alone, for Lysimachus and Melesias are venturing that possession which chances to be their greatest—the management of the house depends on whether the boys become useful or not, and they must give the matter much forethought. Melesias agrees, and agrees as well that to look for the most artistic concerning contests they should have looked for someone who has studied and practiced and been well taught.
This seventh part consists of the irresolution, the failure to solve the problem. It is then followed by seven more parts which parallel the first seven. Lysimachus cannot choose among the speeches because he is concerned not with their reasons but with their conclusions. The assembly's vote is tied, and Socrates must break the tie. It is entirely possible that Socrates would have been silent if Laches and Nicias had agreed; the disagreement of the experts is the opening through which Socrates the questioner enters. Lysimachus sees no way to decide other than by majority vote, which Socrates equates with the majority's praise: what Lysimachus had said at the beginning about sufficient knowledge proves to mean no more than the praise of the well reputed. Socrates therefore returns to the connection of advice and knowledge, in a new preface where Melesias replaces Lysimachus. But Socrates turns to Melesias not to show what knowledge is, nor yet to demonstrate that they do not know the subject of the consultation, but simply to bring out the ordinary view that where an art is concerned the artisan, who is the knower, must be listened to, and not the persuasive many. Knowledgeable advice is the advice of the artisan, not the advice of the famous. From this point of view, everyone who is artless belongs to the many, and the reputation of Laches, Nicias, and Socrates and the friendship of Lysimachus count for nothing. Socrates achieves Melesias' agreement to this by abstracting from, looking away from, several problems. First, it has not been demonstrated that what they are searching for is a subject for an artisan. Nicias had indicated this, but Laches had indicated the opposite. Socrates covers this difficulty by acting as if they are concerned with "contests" at a crucial moment in the argument, shortly after he was won agreement that there is an artisan in gymnastic contests. But though contests have been mentioned, they have hardly been emphasized as the point of the consultation, and Lysimachus has not discussed them. Moreover, Socrates' next line of questioning concerns the very problem of the unclarity about the purpose of the consultation, and finally issues in a decision that courage, not contests, or even victory, is that purpose. But courage is not by any common view a subject of the arts; there is no obvious maker of courage and physician to the cowardly. The law appears to direct us toward courage and to punish cowardice; perhaps the gods do so too, but neither is obviously an artisan. Second, Socrates does not explicitly discuss the problem of the reliability of the artisan, his simple speech, but he hints at it. We are to be persuaded by the artisan, not the majority. That is, we are still to be persuaded because we are not skilled ourselves. But this makes possible the artisan's duplicity, and we could sketch reasons why he might indeed be duplicitous. Socrates' discussion of the management of the household suggests some of these reasons. The future of their sons may be Melesias' and Lysimachus' great concern, but it is not the artisan's great concern, since artisans have their own households; even the poets take payment.
And the use of the sons in managing the house may be Lysimachus' and Melesias' great concern for them, but it is not everyone's great concern for them. The law, or the artisan concerned with their performance in the city's contests, will direct them to the city's business, perhaps even to managing its affairs. Finally, Socrates for the moment ignores both the difficulty in a non-knower's knowing who an artisan is, and the distinguishing marks of knowledge or skill in and of themselves. He even treats them as the same. Presumably it will be easy enough to see who has studied, practiced, and been well taught. And presumably these three qualities comprise the basis of the artisan's skill; the example of the gymnastic coach could hardly make us doubt this. But whether these signs to the non-knower are always accurate or easily interpreted, and whether these qualities comprise knowledge, is a difficult matter, and the difficulties are more immediately before us if we think of courage as the subject under discussion. By abstracting from these problems Socrates has won agreement to his simple point.

But he does not now pursue them. Rather, he asks a different question of Melesias, a surprising one because Socrates' previous questions seemed to take its answer for granted. Before looking at which of them is skillful, Socrates says, what is it that they are searching for of the teachers? Melesias does not understand. Socrates then clarifies by offering his opinion that there was no agreement at the beginning about what they advise about and are looking for, no agreement about that for the sake of which one of them is artful and possesses teachers. Nicias asks whether they are not looking to see whether youths need to study fighting in armor. Socrates agrees. But, he asks, when someone asks whether a drug is needed for the eyes, is the consultation about the drug or about the eyes? Nicias says it is about the eyes, and similarly agrees about horses and their bridles. Therefore, Socrates concludes, in one speech, when someone looks at what is for the sake of something, the consultation is about that for the sake of which he looks, not the reverse. Nicias agrees, and he agrees to Socrates' further remarks that they are looking for an advisor skillful in treating that for the sake of which they are looking; in particular, they are looking at a study for the sake of the soul of a youth; they therefore are looking to see if one of them is artful about, and has come under good teachers concerning, treating the soul, and treating it nobly. Laches then asks Socrates if he has not seen some become more artful without teachers than with them. Socrates says he has; but one would not trust them merely because they claimed to be good craftsmen if they did not show some work of their art, worked well and often.

This part of the dialogue concerns the subject or reason for the consultation. Socrates replaces the vagueness we have noted all along with a specific question: what is it that they are searching for? And he provides and wins Nicias' agreement to an answer: they are searching for one who is skillful in treating the souls of youth; the consultation is
for the sake of young men's souls. Why Nicias agrees that this is the subject is unclear, for he himself had not believed it to be the subject, nor does he mention it once in the entire dialogue. Indeed, the soul is never discussed, and the specific difference between the souls of the old and the young is similarly shrouded. But the examples Socrates uses once more suggest the possibilities. An eye is part of the body, and therefore parallel to part of the soul, if the soul has parts, not to the whole soul. But the eye is treated by the same physician who treats the rest of the body. Is there, then, but one physician for the soul? Moreover, the physician is not the only one who deals with the body; the gymnastic trainer has already been discussed. Perhaps the trainer is concerned with the body's excellence, while the physician is a therapist who restores the body to its natural state. But the trainer too can be a therapist, and health itself might be the body's excellence. Moreover, the trainer brings about many excellences, not just one. In this he is similar to the bridle-maker, whose bridles would be adjusted not merely to the horse's nature but to the different uses to which the horse is put: a pack horse is not a fast horse and neither is necessarily the most fertile horse. But Socrates does not even mention the excellence of the eye or of the soul except to note that their search is for what treats the soul nobly. He will soon discuss the problem of the soul's excellence thematically, but never in a way which explicitly deals with the problems we have raised.

Socrates' discussion of artisans here is also problematic. He suggests that the test of an art is equally the production of results and the teaching of the art to others, to students. In fact, Socrates does not clearly differentiate the two; there is scarcely a hint that there can be one without the other. But a physician who restores health cannot necessarily teach his art; he cannot even necessarily teach his art to the same man he has restored to health. The two activities work with different materials. The same is true of the trainer. Moreover, the trainer who can prepare athletes cannot necessarily use his art to make himself outstanding if his gifts are limited. Even the physician cannot necessarily cure himself. There is therefore a difference between having and teaching the art and having or producing the good the art can bring. Socrates at best alludes to this distinction, but it is an important distinction for the subject they are beginning to discuss. For it is questionable whether anyone can care for the soul who does not have a soul. In particular, it is questionable whether a vicious man can teach or produce virtue, or a coward teach and produce courage. But men tend horses, our ophthalmologists always seem to wear glasses, and superstars are reputed to be poor managers. Therefore, the identification of the subject of their consultation with the product or object of an art and the identification of its teacher with an artisan cannot be as simple as Socrates is suggesting that it is. What he says is sound advice on the trustworthiness of advisors, but it continues to skirt the
problem of what knowledge is in and of itself, what it is insofar as it is originally discovered as such. In sum, the examples Socrates uses point to a number of questions about the precise status of the “for the sakes of which,” the ends, and of the arts dealing with them, questions which must be continually raised in order to understand the rest of the dialogue.

Socrates has said what they are searching for. He now proceeds. Since they have been invited to advise, he says, they ought to display the goodness, successful treatment of souls, and teaching of the teachers they might say they have. If one of them says he has his own works, he is to show those Athenians, strangers, slaves, or free men who agree they have become good through this. Otherwise, they are to search for another to invite and not risk their comrades' accusation that they have corrupted their sons. He himself, Socrates continues, was not generated by a teacher in this; though he has desired it from youth, he has not had the money to pay the sophists, who alone claimed to be able to make him noble and good. And he has not yet discovered the art. But he would not wonder if Nicias or Laches had discovered it. Indeed, says Socrates, it is his opinion that they are able to educate human beings; they would not have let go so fearlessly about the needful practices and labors for the young if they did not trust that they knew sufficiently. He trusts them, he continues, yet he wonders that they differ. Therefore he is inviting Lysimachus not to let Laches and Nicias go, but to ask them, saying that Socrates says he does not profess the knowledge about the thing to be a sufficient judge of which of their claims is true. And Laches and Nicias are to tell who is the cleverest man they have known concerning the nurture of the young, whether they know from learning or discovering, and, if from learning, who the teacher and similar artisans are so that they can go to these if Laches and Nicias lack leisure because of the city's affairs. They are to persuade these with money and favors so that the boys disgrace neither themselves nor their ancestors. But if they are discoverers, they are to give an example of someone they have changed from base to noble and good; if this is their first educating they need to consider that they are risking their sons and their friends' boys, not some Carian.

This part of the dialogue consists of Socrates' claiming that and why he lacks the necessary knowledge, just as Lysimachus had done earlier. His discussion of his lack develops several of the problems we have been discussing. The teacher's goodness is to be displayed, with the implication that this goodness is something other than successful treatment of others but that both are always found together; the same is true of the teacher's teaching. Treatment of the soul is still discussed, but this treatment apparently is to make men noble and good, gentlemen. But if this is so, nobility and goodness, and not the soul, ought to be the subject under discussion. Moreover, if the art is therapeutic,
nobility and goodness would be a state as common as health, not a rare excellence. Socrates suggests this by speaking of the goodness of Athenians, strangers, free men, and slaves: the art’s application is not restricted to the Athenian oligarch. He further suggests this by speaking of the education of “human beings,” not the education of a manly man. But manly men have been the subject up to now. At the same time, he reminds us that wealth, or at least leisure, is necessary for education: how could a slave become a gentleman? Socrates’ remarks therefore once more suggest the difficulties in the discussion of art and the problems in considering art alone to be the soul’s therapy. Moreover, they suggest the necessity of clarifying what state the treatment of the soul seeks to generate in it. What is the connection of the noble and the good, what are they in themselves, and how are they related to the soul, whose treatment appears to bring them about?

Socrates’ speech also develops the problems of trust and of the non-knower’s recognition of the artisan. The advisee does not know, but he need not know in order to see that, when two advisors contradict, at least one cannot be a knower. Unfortunately, this does not tell him which one knows. But Socrates also suggests that the claimant to knowledge show his good works, and have them testified to. If a man can produce men whose eyes he has restored to health, and if they confirm him, this proves his skill. But this relies on our knowing what eyes, or good eyes, are; advisees are not always ignorant of what the art ought to produce even if they cannot produce it themselves. But is what a soul is, particularly a good and noble one, so obvious that the knowledge of who has one is common knowledge? Indeed, is it such that a man so easily knows he has one himself and therefore can testify for its producer? This becomes a decisive problem in what follows, and it is exacerbated by the fact that the distinction between a thing and its excellence, between sight and the eye, between the soul and the good and the beautiful soul, has not yet been explicitly made.

But even if the advisee can ultimately judge the outcome, it may be too late. It therefore remains necessary to make certain that the advisor is trustworthy. But the usual way of engaging advisors on these matters is to “persuade” them with money or gifts. This by its very nature cannot ensure perfect trustworthiness. And even friendship, as we have suggested, will not ensure simple speech where a common good is lacking. Socrates hints at a solution when he speaks of accusations of corrupting the young: the law is concerned with its citizens; education cannot be a private matter. This would imply that the law is the guide to what an uncorrupted or healthy or excellent soul is. But the law is made by assemblies such as their own, not by artisans as such. The law’s accusations and penalties are therefore useful only if the law understands the soul and its nobility, but such an understanding would be accidental, if it existed at all, precisely because assemblies are not as such composed of the knowledgeable. Still, the law
is the great teacher and guide for the development of character. This whole problem of the law, knowledge, and the soul is never treated thematically in the *Laches*, but is hinted at in various places, and is of crucial importance the one time "law" is said. The abstraction from "regime," which is never mentioned, and "law," which is mentioned only once, governs the dialogue most clearly in the section where Nicias equates virtue with knowledge.

Lysimachus now speaks to Laches and Nicias. It would please him, he says, if they would demonstrate in speeches what Socrates would question. He invited them in the beginning because he believed they had or would have to care for their boys' education. If they do not differ they are to consider this question by speaking to each other in community with Socrates. Nicias then tells Lysimachus that it indeed is true that Lysimachus has not been with Socrates since he was a boy unless he followed him in the temple or was near him in some other gathering of the deme. For he does not know that whoever converses near Socrates necessarily converses about something other than that on which they first began, not stopping his speech until he gives a speech about how he himself passes his life. Once Socrates has burst in, he will not release him until he has tested this well and beautifully. Nicias continues that he knows that one necessarily experiences this with Socrates and that it pleases him to be near him; it is not bad to be reminded of what one has done or is doing that is not noble, and it is necessary to take much forethought in order not to be blameworthy for the life afterward. As Solon says, one must be willing to learn to think rightly as long as one lives. Indeed, says Nicias, he pretty much trusted that with Socrates present their speech would turn out to be about themselves, not the boys.

Laches then speaks. He is simple, he says, concerning speeches, or double, a lover and hater of speeches. He is supernaturally pleased when a man who is a man and worth the speech he speaks converses about virtue or wisdom or truth; for he observes whether the speech and the speaker fit and harmonize, and such a man in his opinion is the musical one who harmonizes beautiful harmonies, not on some childish instrument, but a harmonizing in life, a symphonizing of his speeches to the deeds of his own life, harmonizing in the only Greek manner—artlessly, Dorically, not Ionically, Phrygically, or Lydically. Anyone would opine him to be a lover of speech because he accepts what such men say so eagerly; but the opposite pains him more the better he speaks, and makes him seem a hater of speech. He has not experienced Socrates' words, but he has experienced his deeds and discovered him to be worth beautiful speech and completely frank. It would also please him to be examined by Socrates; he is also willing to be taught as he grows older, though only what is useful. But the teacher must be good, or he will appear to be a difficult learner, though he does not care if his teacher is younger or has little reputation. Socrates must
teach and question him, and also learn what he knows; in this way, Laches concludes, he has been disposed to Socrates from the day when Socrates was in great danger with him and gave proof of his virtue. Socrates replies that they cannot be accused of not being ready to advise and look, and Lysimachus then interjects. The deed belongs to all of them and Socrates is one of them; Socrates is to take his place and advise by conversing with them, for he forgets the questions he intends to put because of his great age, and if the speech becomes another one in the middle he does not remember at all. Therefore, they are to speak among themselves, and he and Melesias will do whatever they advise. Socrates then tells Nicias and Laches that they are to obey Lysimachus and Melesias.

This section of the dialogue is parallel to the section in the first part, where Nicias and Laches vouch for Socrates and all agree to advise Lysimachus. The change in the community in the second part is demonstrated by Lysimachus' asking Laches and Nicias to advise now by speaking in community with Socrates, answering his questions. But what Lysimachus says indicates that he does not fully understand the meaning of Socrates' process of replacing displays of presumed knowledge with a questioning search for knowledge. Yet Lysimachus knows his inability, and he therefore sees that he must be replaced; the best he can hope for is that this new search will bring some result. A search through questioning, through dialogue, makes greater demands than a consultation through speeches, and the greater the demands, the lesser the claims of age. If questioning and answering is the test of knowledge, then age, whose claim is based on memory of the oldest, fails this test. Questioning which, as such, opposes tradition points up age's failing in the faculty which is the basis of its claim, memory. Socrates' procedure dissolves the usual grounds of knowledge and reliability, age and reputation, as Laches himself sees. Only "experience" remains as a counterclaim to speech in dialogues.

Nicias' and Laches' speeches are about Socrates in relation to nobility and virtue. The guiding thought in Nicias' speech is that Socrates himself is a teacher of nobility and right thinking. The guiding thought in Laches' speech is that Socrates is virtuous and that therefore it is suitable that he speak about virtue. But neither of them has established that he himself knows what is noble or virtuous; therefore their testimony is no guarantee of the truth. Indeed, it one can learn or be helped in learning right thinking and noble deeds from Socrates then Socrates either has lied when he said he neither has learned nor discovered the art of treating souls, or he is silent about some third way of acquiring it. And if he is truly virtuous, as Laches suggests, then Socrates has either lied or become virtuous without the aid of a taught or discovered art. Moreover, the speeches of Laches and Nicias, particularly that of Laches, once more raise the question of whether the skilled artisan must himself possess the quality his art can produce. Laches in effect trans-
forms art to speech and forces speech to harmonize with deeds: virtue is at least a necessary, if not the necessary and sufficient, condition for fitting speeches about virtue and wisdom. This need not require that a virtuous man cannot attain his virtue through speeches, but the speeches must belong to a virtuous man: neither students nor a diploma, but whether you yourself possess what you are discussing, is central. Virtuous men can still learn things of use from each other's speeches, perhaps useful, though not novel, techniques, but speech is secondary: a musical man such as Nicias' teacher Damon is a discordant sophist.

Laches' speech reveals that Laches is hardly the bumpkin some take him for. He subtly suggests the inferiority of speech by reminding us of its duplicity, which contrasts unfavorably with the admirable simplicity of Socrates' deed. And he effectively contrasts his own view of harmony and learning with what he can guess comes from Nicias and his music teacher. Laches is revealed here as a man who cannot resist seeing Nicias as an opponent, and therefore deserving of defeat, as a man who can be quick to attack, and as a man who is hardly stupid. He continues to demonstrate his admiration for manly and Doric things and his concern for what is Greek. His horizon appears to be Greece and what is pre- eminent among the Greeks. It is therefore beyond the city but short of the universality of knowledge. Art is worth learning only if it is useful, and whether or not it is useful seems to depend on whether it contributes to the serious and manly Greek business, pre-eminence among the Greeks in war, victory for the sake of victory. Virtue itself, to judge from this example of a virtuous act, seems more useful than shining. For these reasons Laches can remain attached to the fatherland and fearful of men's envy and ridicule, for it is as a citizen that he participates in the greatest of Greek affairs, yet can criticize his city's legislator and the many who rule it, if not to their faces. Still, this remains only a provisional understanding of Laches because we do not yet possess all the evidence about his nature, his understanding of courage, and their connection.

Nicias' speech presents Socrates as a man who converses for the sake of the nobility of his partners; it tells us of Socrates the teacher of righteousness. To the extent that Socrates converses for the sake of wisdom, his own wisdom, Nicias' understanding of Socrates reveals Nicias' limits. He does not love knowledge for its own sake, but seeks it for the sake of the life afterward; forethought and what he learns from Socrates are necessary, but not fully beautiful in and of themselves. Yet, what Nicias had called noble earlier was hard to differentiate from knowledge, although love of honor appeared to be the cause of the desire for noble science. And he will soon say that virtue is a kind of knowledge, though courage earlier was among the useful, not the noble, things. Therefore we would be forced to say that if Nicias is concerned with knowledge for its own sake, it is in a way different from
the Socrates we see in this dialogue itself, who questions the inter-locutors' opinions, not their lives. Somehow, even if knowledge is noble for Nicias it remains subordinate. One hint in the direction of a solution is offered by Nicias' ambiguous remark concerning the life afterward. This could mean the rest of his years or his life after death. If it means his life after death, then what is noble is primarily instrumental for what it can ensure, virtue is for the sake of obeying the gods, and the problems of knowledge, virtue, the city, nobility, and the soul, of whether the knower and teacher of souls is himself virtuous, are further complicated. Nicias is concerned for his private wellbeing, whatever this may be, and, unlike Laches, has nothing to say of Socrates' public service.

Socrates, Nicias, and Laches will obey Lysimachus and Melesias. It would not be bad, Socrates now continues, to examine who taught and educated them. But looking at something else would lead to the same, and be more nearly from the beginning. For if they chanced to know about this, what by being alongside would make what it is beside better, and if they could join this to that, they would clearly know how this could be best and most easily acquired for what they are advising about. If they chanced to know that sight makes the eyes it is beside better, and if they could join this to the eyes then they clearly know what sight itself is, and it is about how this could be most easily and best acquired that they have become advisors. If they did not know what sight or hearing is, they could hardly become advisors or physicians of valuable speeches about eyes and ears, about the noblest way of acquiring hearing or sight. Laches agrees. Therefore, Socrates says to Laches, they are invited to advise what way would bring virtue beside the souls of the sons to make them better, and they should begin by knowing what virtue is, for if they did not chance to know virtue, how could they become advisors about how to possess it nobly? Laches agrees. They therefore say that they know what virtue is; but of that which they have known they can doubtless say what it is. Laches agrees once more. But, Socrates continues, they should not look straightaway at the whole of virtue, but at some part, to see whether they have sufficient knowledge about it. And they should choose the part of virtue which fighting in armor seems to tend to, what the many opine to be courage. Laches agrees that many opine it to be this. Therefore, Socrates concludes, they must attend to saying what courage is and afterward look at the way the young can be brought beside it insofar as this can be done through studies and practices. He then asks Laches to say what courage is.

In this section Socrates sets the terms for the rest of the discussion. If they know what sight or virtue is, they can say what it is, and, presumably, if they cannot say they do not know. But Socrates gives no criteria of what an adequate definition would be, nor any other criteria for knowing virtue. Here there is no call to point to a teacher
in speech or to evidence of their own training of adequate definers. There is also no call to show that they are sighted or virtuous and no call to show their teachers in virtue. Adequate speech has replaced the other criteria; it is therefore possible for Laches to speak first here because reputation and experience are irrelevant. Laches agrees to this because of, not in spite of, his understanding of the superiority of deed to speech; there ought to be no difficulty in harmonizing speech to deed if the deeds are virtuous; and who, in any event, does not know what sight is?

Socrates' return to the primacy of the question of what is forces us to consider again the relationship between the final end of the advice and how the end is achieved. Originally, what they needed to know was the soul and how to treat it; now they need to know what virtue is. What is the connection between these two? Socrates at first makes it seem that the knowledge of what makes something better is no different from the knowledge of how the thing can actually acquire its perfection. He later distinguishes the two, and finally indicates that one is necessary, but not sufficient, for the other. If we do not know what virtue is we cannot advise about how to possess it nobly. The difficulty here concerns the intermediary: the need to know the eye or soul is passed over, but how can one know what makes the soul better unless one knows what the soul is? Perhaps knowledge of the soul is included in the knowledge of its perfection, or in the knowledge of how to bring it its perfection, or in some combination. Yet, in the earlier discussion, the eye or soul was the explicit end for the sake of which the consultation was taking place; an advisor who did not know it could not succeed. But this understanding collapsed into the discussion of therapists for the soul, a discussion in which the problem of the soul's nobility and goodness could not help arising. The issue is therefore confused; the inadequate discussion haunts the dialogue. In particular, although courage is only part of virtue, it is never connected to any part of the soul, which, indeed, is never said to have parts. The possibility that the parts of virtue may be differentiated in terms of their different objects is in effect abandoned by Socrates later in the dialogue. So, if the soul does not have parts, why does its perfection have parts? But sight is the perfection of the eyes, and as the perfection of part of the body it is only part of health. Socrates, of course, sometimes teaches that the soul has parts, notably in the Republic. But there is no mention of them as parts here. Indeed, there is no mention in the Laches of thumos; yet in the Republic courage was the virtue of thumos. We may also assume this abstraction to be deliberate because the disproportion between sight/eye:virtue/soul in the precise neighborhood of 'a discussion of virtue's parts is so obvious. But its meaning for the understanding of courage can, of course, not yet be clear.

The outstanding result of this section is the transformation of the discussion to an examination of virtue and, in particular, of courage.
This transformation is hardly obvious. Virtue has been mentioned, but so has nobility and goodness. Why, then, is the discussion not about this? Virtue will make souls "better" by being beside them and in this way substitutes for the goodness or becoming the "best" for which the interlocutors are searching. Virtue has primarily been understood as useful by Laches and Nicias in their earlier statements about it and about courage. And to compare virtue to sight is to imply once more that it is not so much an outstanding as an ordinary excellence. Laches himself had earlier distinguished between wonderful virtue and a not wonderful but still courageous man. Indeed, their very discrimination of courage is done with the help of the opinion of the many. All this suggests that the virtue Laches and Nicias will be discussing here is of a lower order, or that the relation of what is noble to virtue is problematic. Part of Socrates' refutation of Laches will depend on this difficulty. In any event, virtue is not the obvious topic for discussion. And, beyond this, Socrates' discussion here once more suggests difficulties in the relation between virtue and knowledge. The abandoned search for teachers is also an abandoned search for someone who has made them better; having the art is the same as having what the art brings. But this, as we have argued, is questionable. Yet virtue is a perfection of the soul, and knowledge itself appears to be a perfection or faculty of the soul. If this is so, then perhaps having knowledge and being virtuous are more intimately connected than being a physician and being healthy. Indeed, if the soul's virtue is itself some form of knowledge, then it is possible to understand how finding what virtue is can substitute for a search for what can bring it about: the knowledge that brings it may be the same as the knowledge which it is, and the knowledge which it is may be or may include knowledge of the soul. In fact, this search itself that they are about to conduct will reveal itself as an instance of virtue in action. The name for such possibilities would, to judge from the Republic, be philosophy. But philosophy is not mentioned, let alone discussed, in the Laches. The ensuing discussion with Laches leads up to, but falls short of, the explicit understanding of philosophy as the one thing needful.

Socrates' selection of courage is also not inevitable. There is a clear connection of courage to war, and both Laches and Nicias mentioned it in their speeches, but justice has also been mentioned by several speakers, and it too has an obvious connection with war. Wisdom or prudence is another candidate but less likely, it seems, to be accepted by Laches. Perhaps, then, the implication in the dialogue so far that virtue need not be out of the ordinary is particularly suitable to courage, though it is not clear why this should be. The fact that courage is introduced under the aegis of the many does not prove that there is no more outstanding courage; Laches' distinction in his speech of advice in fact appears to concern ordinary as opposed to wonderful cour-
age. Rather, courage is selected on account of a reason connected to this appearance of lowness: of all the virtues it is the one which seems least in need of wisdom or prudence or knowledge. For this reason Laches can be driven to a full dissociation of courage and prudence; genuine courage can plausibly appear to be the very opposite of knowing, but this is not as clear with the other virtues. The theme of the relation of searching and knowing to virtue and politics is therefore seen in a peculiarly fundamental or original light when courage is what is being discussed. The dialogue is therefore about courage for the same reason it is called Laches.1

Socrates has asked Laches what courage is, and Laches replies that it is not difficult: if someone is willing to stay in the order to repel the enemy and not flee, one would know he is courageous. Socrates replies that his own unclarity may be the cause of Laches' having distinguished something other than what Socrates intended. He too could say that someone is somehow courageous who would stay in order fighting the enemy. But what of one who would fight the enemy fleeing? How fleeing, Laches asks? Just as the Scythians are said to fight, Socrates replies, not less fleeing than pursuing; and Homer praises Aeneas' horses for knowing how to pursue swiftly, and be afraid, and he speaks an encomium of Aeneas for his knowledge of fear and calls him the contriver of fear. And he spoke beautifully, Laches replies, for he spoke about chariots, and Socrates is speaking about Scythian horsemen; this is the way of fighting with horses, but the Greek way of fighting in arms is as he, Laches, says. Except for the Spartans, Socrates replies, who are said in Platea to have fled, not being willing to stay and fight the Persians in wicker shields; rather, they turned around and fought like cavalry and won victory in the fight. Laches agrees that this is true. Therefore, Socrates continues, he wished to hear not only about the courageous in arms, but also in horses, and in the whole class of war, and not only in war, but in relation to sea perils, illness, poverty, the political, and not only in relation to pain and fear but also about those who fight cleverly about desires and pleasures, standing or turning. For some are somehow courageous in all of this; some have acquired courage, some cowardice. Laches very much agrees to this. Socrates then asks him to say what courage is in all of this, but first helps Laches learn more clearly what was said. It is just as if Socrates had asked what quickness is, as it happens for us in running, harp playing, speaking, and many others, and is nearly the same possessed by arms, legs, mouth, and voice. If someone asked Socrates what it is which he says is named quickness in all of this he would answer: the power which in less time accomplishes much. Laches remarks that Socrates has spoken correctly; Socrates then asks Laches to try to tell

1 Compare the number of uses of courage and its derivatives with the number of speeches made by Laches.
of courage in this way, what power it is which is the same in pleasure, pain, and all they spoke of and is therefore called courage. Laches replies that it seems to him to be some endurance of the soul, if he is to tell of the natural concerning courage through all. But, Socrates replies, he believes that all endurance cannot appear to Laches to be courage. For he almost knows that Laches believes courage to be among the noblest things. Among the noblest, Laches replies. And therefore, Socrates continues, endurance after prudence is noble and good, but after imprudence it is the opposite, harmful and mischievous, and thus Laches cannot say it is noble. But then he cannot agree that this endurance is courageous since it is not noble and courage is noble. Therefore, according to his speech, courage is prudent endurance. Laches agrees to each step, including the final one. But, then, Socrates continues, in what is it prudent, in all great and small? Would Laches call courageous one who endures in prudent spending, seeing that by spending he would possess more? Or is the physician courageous who endures and does not bend in not giving food or drink to his son or someone else who begs for it, but suffers from a lung inflammation? Laches would not, in either case. Would Laches say that when a man endures in war and is willing to fight, calculating prudently, knowing that others will assist him, that the other fighters are lesser and weaker, and that his position is better, he, enduring prudently and with equipment, is more courageous than the one in the opposite camp willing to stand and endure? No, says Laches, it is that one in the opposite camp. But he then agrees with Socrates that the endurance of the first is at least not more imprudent than that of the other. And he also agrees that he who endures in horsefighting knowing horses is less courageous than he who is without knowledge, and similarly with slinging, archery, or some other art. And he also agrees, reluctantly, that the many who would be willing to dive into a well and endure in this deed without being clever are more courageous than the clever, but that they are more imprudent than those who venture such a deed by art. Yet, continues Socrates, they had said that imprudent boldness and endurance are base and hurtful and that courage is something noble, but now they are saying that base imprudent endurance is courage. They are thus not speaking nobly; somehow they are not harmonized Dorically, the deeds not symphonizing with the words. For by their deeds it would likely be said that they participate in courage, but by their speech it would not, and it does not seem noble that they are disposed this way. Laches strongly agrees at each step. But perhaps, continues Socrates, they wish to be persuaded by the speech which commands endurance, at least to the extent that they will be persistent and enduring in the search in order that they not be laughed at by courage itself for not being courageous in their search for it, if mostly this endurance itself is courage. He is ready, Laches replies, not to desist. Yet he is not used to speech such as this. But some love of victory takes hold and he is truly
irritated that he is not saying what he understands. He is of the opinion that he understands what courage is, but does not know how it escaped just now so he could not grasp it and say it in speech. But the good hunter needs to chase after and not release, replies Socrates; therefore, he suggests, and Laches agrees, that they invite Nicias to the hunt if he has better resources.

Socrates' discussion of courage with Laches and Nicias comprises one part of the dialogue, parallel to the speeches of advice Nicias and Laches gave. Laches' first opinion reflects what he has said about Socrates' virtue: a courageous man is one who is willing to stand. Socrates shows the inadequacy of this opinion on the most narrow ground: those who turn around are also called courageous. And he later elicits Laches' acknowledgment that divers can be courageous—direction is irrelevant. Socrates' argument is immediately persuasive, but what is said by both Socrates and Laches must be discussed in more detail. First, Laches speaks of staying in order. But Socrates shows that infantry order is not the only order, and that the conventional order sometimes needs breaking. It needs breaking for the purpose of victory. What Laches forgets both here and in the ensuing argument is the relation of courage and order to victory. Laches proves to be a lover of victory, but the love of victory is at odds with an understanding of courage here and later which sees courage as dissociated from victory; the prudent general cannot be courageous. What courage is for, and therefore the full being of courage, is not understood. Second, Socrates uses examples drawn from Homer and the Spartans in this first section. Laches' distrust of tragedians does not extend to Homer; Homer is a traditional teacher. But Homer is insufficient; the example from Homer is not decisive for Laches and is valid because it harmonizes with Laches' own experience of cavalry. But the Spartan example clinches the argument. Yet, when we examine the content of this example, we see that it should have taught Laches that the Spartan victory was achieved through a reasonable flight, not blind determination, and through an innovative, not reckless, action. But Laches' final defeat is tied to his very inability to properly connect courage, caution, and boldness; the cause of this is his inability to fit courage and courageous actions into a whole, such as victory in war. Third, Laches' opinion is that courageous action is one in which there is no fleeing. Socrates shows that there can be flight. The flight Laches has in mind must be headlong disorder, since Socrates' virtue was displayed in what Laches calls a flight, a retreat. The connection of courage to proper or improper separation, letting go, flight, is therefore once more suggested, but it is not explicitly developed in the rest of Laches' argument with Socrates. Rather, flight and standing are absorbed in "endurance." Finally, Socrates connects courage to fear and knowledge of fear in the example from Homer. By implication, courage could neither be fearlessness nor action which is without knowledge
and contrivance. Laches will later founder on these points as well as on the others; how courage is to be connected to knowledge is something he cannot properly grasp, but that it somehow must be is what he is taught.

After Laches' first attempt, Socrates clarifies his intention. He broadens the field of objects of courage, as if Laches' narrow focus caused his difficulty. The objects appear to split into two types, pains and fears and desires and pleasures. The status of war is ambiguous. Socrates gives examples of the pains, but none of the pleasures, and he does not make up this defect in the later discussion. This forces us to question the precise status of desires and pleasures in relation to courage. Laches has spoken of a willing standing and will soon speak of endurance; it is therefore unclear how courage, given his understanding, can deal with desires and pleasures. Nicias' understanding also centers on the fearful; the things which can be dared, that about which we can be confident, are difficult to differentiate from what is merely not fearful. Perhaps courage deals with pleasures and desires by being the virtue displayed in giving up the ones we already have. In this way courage deals with desires and pleasures from the standpoint of fear or difficulty. But Socrates will soon teach Laches that courage deals with the search for courage itself; this search would appear to deal with a knowledge of courage that is worthwhile in itself. Provisionally, we may say that their understanding insufficiently grasps courage as itself noble or attractive, because it fails to fully account for the courage in seeking courage.

Socrates also introduces the word eidos in this section, but only for the things of war, not to designate his intention concerning courage itself. The effect of this is to separate war from politics, although both may be treated as painful or fearful. This separation is in accord with what we have seen before; although Laches is concerned with the city, war and its purpose is insufficiently connected to the city, and for this reason courage is not properly understood. Moreover, Socrates' grouping politics with sea perils, illness, and poverty accords with what we have seen of Laches' understanding of it. He fears ridicule and envy; he will soon guardedly approve sophistic twists in a law court which he cannot approve in a discussion such as this. Part of Laches' inability to connect war and the city properly is caused by the understanding of politics which Socrates suggests here. The victory he loves in it consequently is limited; Nicias later accuses him with reason of primarily wishing that he (Nicias) look as foolish as he has.

The second way in which Socrates helps Laches meet his intention is by giving him an example. Why, of all the possible examples, is this the example selected? Quickness is connected to courage because courage is related to boldness and decisiveness. Within this dialogue, rashness is for a moment understood by Laches as courage, and it is understood by Nicias as a defect which masks as courage. Courage thus has
two vices, cowardice and rashness, and one, if not both, concern speed. But if this is so, courage must account for the power which rashness exemplifies; it must be a form of daring quickness as well as stolid endurance. Socrates' example therefore points to what is missing in Laches' definition, but is somehow grasped in Laches' understanding. The example also suggests a way to remedy the defects in Nicias' understanding, which also does not appear to grasp the daring properly and which, in any event, says nothing about the soul or nature. Now, the definition itself speaks of accomplishing much in less time; that is, it does not account for the too quick and too slow, the quick measured by what is fitting; but a definition of quickness as such must account for this. It is as if quick harp playing could be measured completely without reference to the music it is producing, or as if quick speech could be measured completely without reference to what the speech understands and is trying to speak. Socrates' definition of quickness deliberately abstracts from this other measure, though the examples he gives suggest it. The abstraction would indicate that Laches' understanding of courage, if not Nicias' too, makes a similar abstraction, if unwittingly. Concretely, it means that courage is improperly connected to what is fitting in a particular time and place; courage as understood by Laches at first appears more useful than noble, but turns out to be less useful than calculation; the nobility which it then attains is thus very ambiguous because it, as imprudent, becomes dissociated from the other noble things, prudence and victory. Finally, Socrates understands quickness as if all that is quick participates in quickness equally. Whatever does more in less time is quick; the differences consist of having more and less of an equally divisible substance, but any instance of quickness could fully exemplify quickness. This also seems true of the relation of the eidos of the things of war to its members as Socrates presents it. But not all members need participate in their class or definition in this way. Nicias' speech gave an example of participation through the progressive desire for what is noble; precisely what is lacking in nobility, the yearning for nobility, is the ground for the imperfect participation in it. But it did not seem that Nicias himself understood any of the noble studies as more perfectly noble than the others. What this means for the dialogue is that the proper way in which its members participate in courage, and in which courage itself is a participant, will be an unsolved problem in Laches' understanding and in Nicias' as well. We have already discussed this for Laches in terms of the improper union of war, courage, and victory. In the case of Nicias, his failure to properly discriminate courage as a part of virtue is decisive; the possibilities for such discrimination and therefore the meaning of Nicias' difficulty become more apparent when we consider this example than when we merely consider that section, or the first mention of the parts of virtue.

We can now turn to the definition which Laches offers and Socrates'
refutation of it. Laches is asked for the "power" which is the same in all: the "what" is a beginning and a power. But Laches also says that he is speaking of the natural concerning courage; he is giving its nature. Laches appears to mean by natural not only or primarily general but untaught, not artificial, for this is the kind of thing he takes endurance to be. Moreover, he later approves very strongly of a Socratic question to Nicias based on the natural animals: Laches and not Nicias is the one who speaks of nature and seeks to save it in his understanding of courage. Laches' definition also speaks of the soul: courage is a power of the soul; it is a power of the soul which is natural. Laches' understanding therefore points to the problem of the soul and its parts in relation to courage, but Laches does not develop this, and is not given the opportunity to develop it. But Nicias' understanding, which speaks of knowledge and the fearful, does not speak of the soul. Socrates' refutation of him is not explicitly based on this neglect, but centers on animal courage and the parts of virtue, i.e., it is connected to this problem. The proper understanding of courage would need to combine what is in Laches with what is in Nicias, but not in any simplistic way, for both Laches and Nicias are defective on their own grounds.

Laches' definition appears to be a generalization on the level of the soul of his opinion that a courageous man is willing to stand and fight. Just as fighting earlier was made a function of standing, so here quickness, aggressiveness, and their purpose are not mentioned. Socrates, however, chooses not to imitate his earlier refutation on this different level. Rather, he focuses on the question of prudence: what is the connection of courage to knowledge? In the course of his dialogue with Laches, Laches' failure to properly account for what is bold, and the connection of this to his insufficient reflection on the place of knowledge, becomes clear. But if the refutation of Laches is explicitly based on the element alien to Laches, knowledge or prudence, the key is Laches' agreement that prudent endurance is noble and that courage is noble. His agreement may seem strange. But the entire dialogue has moved unsystematically among what is good, valuable, and noble. Thus this is not a Platonic sleight of hand which makes Laches speak out of character. Courage is indeed noble and good by all common opinion; the question is whether Laches' understanding of its nobility in his definition rises above an ordinary understanding of nobility hard to distinguish from the "nobility" of sight or of health. It is likely, further, that it is from this vantage point that he considers the physician's and moneymaker's endurance not to be noble; the object of the endurance is too low, and the endurance is too petty or calculating. These grounds also lead him to agree that prudent endurance is noble; but beyond this, he can agree because prudence is necessary or useful to avoid ugly disaster, and victory is something he loves. This agreement nonetheless proves his downfall. This occurs because Socrates is able to identify prudence with calculating forethought; but calculating
forethought destroys the conditions of danger and difficulty which Laches apparently believes necessary for courage. Moreover, Socrates is then able to identify prudence with arts, but Laches thinks ill of artisans. Laches fails to see that his own example of courage, staying in the ranks, is worthy because it contributes to victory or prevents disastrous defeat; the activities of war have been separated from their end, and the things of war as a whole have been separated from their political purpose; he has failed to discriminate what is courageous in the light of what actions are for, and, therefore, any genuine grounds by which he could reject some difficulties as too petty to be courageously endured slip away. Yet, there is truth in his understanding: how could there be courage where there is no risk? But calculating forethought need not itself end the possibility of risk; it may uncover its necessity, or enable grander risks of the army as a whole. Still, a lack of prudence about troop strength and disposition does not itself appear to be a danger to the soul which one overcomes through calculation; and a general's imprudence might even expand the opportunities for courage in the face of disaster. In and of itself, such forethought does not appear courageous, for its thinking does not endure in what, as material for thought, is dangerous. Moreover, Laches' example in a sense saves the truth that if we are to see courage itself as a virtue in itself courageous things must somehow stand on their own. But the examples discussed in fact are always of actions dependent for their importance on the whole to which they contribute; not only has Laches forgotten this, but he has not attained the realm in which courage and being courageous need serve nothing else. But Socrates' discussion with Laches of what they might still be persuaded by in Laches' definition points to this realm. For the search for courage itself must be courageous. But this search is an attempt to say what courage is; it is a courageous activity directed to courage in itself as it stands above all, capable of laughter. But search itself seems to be a form of knowledge or of knowing; Laches does not "know" how courage escaped them. This suggests that courage, insofar as we are courageous in knowing it, is the limit which might replace the sources of the ridicule Laches fears as the final horizon; courage's ridicule is in this sense the source of "wonderful" virtue beyond the ordinary courage which bows before more ordinary ridicule, and courage's flight or escape is the thing to which we must be directed. Speech about courage replaces deeds of courage in grasping courage because it is the field of action most fully oriented to courage as the peak in itself. Saying what courage is therefore becomes the new object of Laches' love of victory, but for Laches it is victory over courage and it is fear of ridicule other than courage's own ridicule. It is only with Nicias that the possibility that courage is knowledge is developed.

Socrates asks Nicias to assist them, to say what courage is and set them free. Nicias replies that Socrates has not been separating courage
nobly, and has not been using a beautiful speech he has heard from him. For he has often heard Socrates say that each of us is good as he is wise and in what he is unlearned bad. Therefore, if the courageous is good clearly he is wise. Socrates say this is true; in his opinion Nicias says courage is some wisdom. But Laches asks what sort of wisdom; Socrates then asks Nicias what sort of wisdom courage would be according to his speech. Not that of flute, nor of harp playing, they agree. But what is this knowledge, or of what, Socrates asks, with Laches' approval? Nicias replies; it is the knowledge of the terrible and those to be dared in war and in all the others. Laches says this is strange, for surely wisdom is divided from courage; Nicias speaks nonsense. Socrates tells Laches not to abuse Nicias. Nicias replies that Laches desires to reveal him to speak the nothing he himself just appeared to speak. Laches replies that he will bring to light that Nicias has said nothing, for physicians know what is to be dreaded in diseases, but does Nicias opine that the courageous know this? Or does he call physicians courageous? Nicias replies that he does not. Nor, Laches continues, the farmer, yet he knows what is to be dreaded in farming, and all the other craftsmen see what is to be dreaded and dared in their arts, but they are not more courageous in this way. Nicias concedes that Laches says something but not that it is true, for Laches believes that physicians know something more about the sick than how to say what the healthful and diseased are. But does he believe that the physician knows whether health is more to be dreaded than sickness? Does he not believe that it is better for many not to arise from sickness; is it better for all to live and not better for many to be dead? Does he believe the same is to be dreaded by those who are to live as those who are for the death that is due? He does not, Laches replies. But, Nicias continues, does he give the physician or any other craftsman knowledge of this, except the knower of those dreaded or not dreaded, whom he, Nicias, calls courageous? Socrates asks if Laches understands. He does, Laches replies. Nicias calls the seers courageous, for what other knows who would be better alive than dead? But does Nicias agree to be a seer, or neither a seer nor courageous? Nicias replies that knowing the dreadable and the dareable belongs much more to the one he speaks of than to the seers, for the seer only judges the signs of what is to be, whether death, sickness, loss of money, victory, or less in war or another contest. But whether it is better to suffer or not suffer these does not belong more to a seer to judge than to another. Laches replies, to Socrates, that he is not learning what Nicias wishes to say, for Nicias shows that neither the seer nor the physician nor any other is the one he says is courageous, if it is not some god. And it appears to him that Nicias is not willing to agree that he is saying nothing but turns up and down to conceal his resourcelessness. But he and Socrates could have done this, and if they were speaking in court there would be an argument for doing this. But why would someone in a gathering such as this one speak emptily and
adorn himself this way? Socrates replies that they should see whether Nicias believes that he is saying something; if he clarifies his understanding and appears to say something they will separate with him, otherwise, they will teach him. Laches then agrees to question in community with Socrates, although he thinks he has asked sufficient questions. Socrates and Nicias then agree that Nicias says courage is knowledge of that to be dreaded and dared, that not all men know this since neither the physician nor seer knows this, nor are men courageous if they do not have this in addition to their other knowledge, and, that, as the proverb says, this is not what all pigs know and they would therefore not have become courageous. But then, Socrates continues, Nicias could not trust that the Crommoyonian sow could have become courageous; he does not say this playfully, but necessarily this is to say that no beast shows courage or that a beast is in some way wise where few men know because there is difficulty in knowing. Either Nicias is saying that lions, leopards, and boars know or one who places as Nicias places necessarily says lions, deer, bulls, and monkeys are all alike naturally with regard to courage. Laches swears by the gods that Socrates speaks well and asks Nicias to answer truthfully whether the beasts whom everyone admits are courageous are wiser than we or, whether, opposing all, he would boldly call them not courageous. Nicias replies that he does not call beasts or children who do not fear through mindlessness courageous but fearless and moronic, for the fearless and the courageous are not the same; very few participate in courage and forethought, but very many men, women, children, and beasts in rashness and boldness and fearlessness through lack of forethought. What Laches and the many would call courageous he calls rash while the courageous are prudent. Laches then tells Socrates to observe how well the speech adorns Nicias, who attempts to deprive of their honor those whom all admit to be courageous. Nicias tells Laches to be confident; if he and Lamachus and many other Athenians are courageous they are wise. Laches says he will not reply to this in order not to appear truly Aexonic. Socrates interjects that Laches has not perceived that their comrade has received this wisdom from Damon, who is near Prodicus, opined to be the noblest of the sophists in division of names. Laches replies that it is more fitting for a sophist to so adorn himself than a man valued by the city to command. Socrates replies that it is somehow fitting for the greatest commander to participate in the greatest prudence; Nicias seems to him worth looking at, and they will see where he places the name courage. He will not release Laches from their community in the speech, and Laches agrees, since Socrates opines it useful. Socrates and Nicias then agree that courage was looked at as part of virtue, according to the beginning of the speech they are looking at, that Nicias separated it as a part, there being other parts which are called virtue, moderation, justice, and others. Socrates and Nicias next agree that the terrible would be what produces terror, that
those of the daring would not produce fear, and that terror is not produced by the evils that have become or are becoming but by those expected; terror is thus the expectation of future evil; the fearful are the expected evils and the dareable the future goods and not evils. It is the knowledge of these, Socrates and Nicias agree, that Nicias would call courage. Socrates then continues. It seems to him, concerning how many knowledge is, that there is not one which, concerning what has become, is knowledge of how it became, another, concerning the becoming, of how it becomes, and another, concerning what is to become and has not become, of how it would most nobly become, but that these are the same. Concerning the healthy, in all times it is medicine that looks at the becoming and the having-become and the to-be-becoming, how it is to become, and it is the same in farming concerning the things growing from the earth. And, continues Socrates, Nicias would surely testify that concerning war generalship forecasts nobly and knows what is expected, knowing that it should be the ruler, not servant, of the seer’s art since it more nobly knows what is becoming and what is to become in war. And the law orders that the seer does not rule the general but the general the seer. Nicias then agrees that the same knowledge concerns the same, professing to know the to-be, the happening, and the having-happened. But, continues Socrates, courage is knowledge of the terrible and dareable: they have agreed that what is to be dreaded and what is encouraging are future goods and evils, and that the same knowledge is of the same in the future and all. Therefore, courage is not only knowledge of the dreadable and dareable, but, just as the other knowledges, it professes to know of the happening and of the having-happened in all, not merely future goods and evils. Nicias has therefore separated only a third part of courage, not the whole, and his speech must be that courage is not only knowledge of the terrible and dareable but is almost something concerning all goods and evils in all. Nicias agrees to this change. But then, Socrates continues, is there something lacking in the virtue of one who knows all the goods and evils in their becoming, their to-be-becoming, and their having-become? Is one needy in moderation, justice, or holiness to whom belongs the careful guarding against what is and is not terrible concerning gods and men, and the provision of the goods, knowing the right association with them? But then, Socrates continues, what he is saying now would not be a part of virtue but all of it. Yet they said courage is one of the parts of virtue, and therefore they have not discovered what courage is.

Socrates’ inviting Nicias to assist them gently teaches Laches that assistance, resources, and equipment need not detract from courage, for inviting Nicias’ assistance is their immediate way of delaying Courage’s ridicule for their insufficient courage in searching for him. Nicias comes to their assistance by reminding Socrates of one of his own beautiful speeches; Socrates has not been separating nobly. But this
suggests that separation or distinguishing can itself be noble; if there is courage in search this courage could be noble separation, or separation of what is noble. But the chief problem in Nicias' understanding is precisely that knowledge or wisdom is not for its own sake; virtue or courage might be knowledge, but this knowledge is not fully noble, or of what is noble. Therefore, he cannot completely grasp or overcome the paradoxical nature of the assertion that virtue is knowledge. Moreover, Nicias never precisely answers Socrates' question concerning what this knowledge is, but only of what; that is, Nicias does not tell us what knowledge is as opposed to opinion or ignorance, nor does he say how we might tell who has this knowledge. One way of determining this is to consider the difference between those with an art and those without it. But Nicias does not grant that any artisan has this knowledge which courage is. But if it is not the knowledge which artisans have, what kind of knowledge is it? Indeed, when Nicias discusses physicians it is unclear whether he wishes to say that physicians know as physicians what health and disease are, how to bring these about, or both. But almost everyone usually knows what health and disease are; this is the basis of their knowing when to consult physicians. Moreover, as the argument develops, it becomes less clear that the courageous man's knowledge is the final knowledge. If, for example, he knows whether death is to be dreaded when it is not always to be dreaded, he must know something other than death's fearfulness; he must know why or for the sake of what it is now fearful. But Nicias does not discuss of what this is knowledge or how it is attained. What precisely are the grounds on which death is or is not "due," and how are they known? What is the relation between what is to be feared or dared for the sake of one good and for the sake of another? Courage seems to be limited to the knowledge of what is to be dreaded and dared in the light of something which is not made clear. In this sense it is not fully noble or self-sufficient knowledge, but is also in the last analysis useful or beneficial. But if courage is this knowledge, then its objects and possibility have not been clarified. Moreover, Laches' guess that only a god could be courageous and Nicias' silence about this, combined with Laches' and Socrates' discussion of the seers, leads in this same direction. Not only a god but one who listens to the gods, a pious man, might know when death is due, or when defeat is preferable to victory. But how is this determination made: do the gods themselves know, or do they merely will? If the former, the courageous or pious man's knowledge is not the final knowledge nor the final blessing, but a secondary and useful knowledge, though the use is high. If the latter, knowledge and courage is not the noblest good, not the highest activity. Nicias' horizon is belief in the gods and concern with the afterlife, not love of wisdom, and therefore the nobility of courage as knowledge is provisional. Indeed, we have already seen that love of honor rather than the noble knowledges themselves would be the prime
mover in a young man's movement from Stesilau's art to generalship. And Laches accuses Nicias of the wish to strip others of their honor here; he in effect accuses him of wanting all the honor for himself, just as he thinks Nicias claims the knowledge that only a god could have. It is as though he is accusing Nicias of wanting to be a god. But the reason behind Socrates' reminder to Nicias of the relative rank of seers and generals indicates rather that Nicias seeks to obey them. He wishes to receive the gods' praise or honor, or to have a good name in their eyes for doing what they know or will must be; knowledge or courage, therefore, is instrumental to this. This wish, moreover, is ultimately a private wish, a wish for himself, not his city—indeed, a wish in which political activity might not even be central. In spite of his love of the honor that comes from the public things, Nicias is therefore free from fear of ridicule in a way that the more public Laches, whose chief concern is victory, and who lacks the graces of a private education, is not. But Nicias' understanding of courage also prevents him from giving full due to the public. Socrates must remind him that the generals rule the seers and that the law commands this as well. But the law commands for the city, and the general should seek victory for the city. What Nicias is in danger of ignoring, then, is the good of the city; his courage is his knowledge of what is to be dreaded and dared, but this knowledge is most immediately for his fate, not the city's. Nicias has separated himself too drastically from the other Athenians, incorrectly understanding the fearfulness of this separation; his courage is lacking because in the last analysis it is too private.

Nicias also fails to consider the relation between the knowledge that courage is and the knowledge which he himself professes of what courage is. He has learned what courage is from Damon, but its status as knowledge is unclear, as unclear as Socrates himself leaves it. But Socrates indicates that such knowledge is discovered, which need not mean that it cannot be taught; they have failed, he says, to discover courage. Moreover, Socrates also indicates that the search for this courage is itself an act of courage, while Nicias does not discuss courage in knowing about courage at all; he will just return to Damon, who will set things right. This suggests that Nicias does not understand the unique status of courage itself as an object whose pursuit is the virtue perfecting the soul. This is developed in Socrates' discussion of knowledge. Socrates seeks to show that the knowledge of what has become, is becoming, and will become is the same and that therefore the knowledge of goods and evils as they will become is all knowledge of goods and evils in all. But he never speaks of knowledge of that which never becomes, which is always, which has no past, present, and future. He understands the knowledge of which Nicias speaks to be knowledge of what is changeable. But does courage itself change, or would not Nicias agree that everywhere and always it is knowledge of what is to be dreaded and dared? If courage is an object of a courage which is
knowledge, this knowledge would be a knowing or an attempt to know what never becomes because it always is. But then the goods with which courage deals at least in the most pure case can never change. This is what Nic.ias neglects. Moreover, even the things of which Socrates speaks, health and war, for example, belong to becoming only in a partial sense; what they are does not change. Yet what they are is not independent: the health of the body is impossible without the health of the soul; the healthy eye is for seeing, i.e., for knowing. And war is for the city; what it is, its purpose and order, is dependent on law, and law changes. Thus, what in its permanence governs what is good for itself may also be good for that on which it is dependent; but then, as Nic.ias suggests with health, its goodness is ambiguous or changeable. The good would need to be placed within an unchanging whole in order to be strictly good and an object of courage as simple and sufficient knowledge. Nic.ias does not see that knowledge is ultimately directed by what does not change, and he therefore does not clarify what it or courage is or the exact status of its objects. He even, at this point in the argument, concedes that generalship has the knowledge of what is good in war, while what he said earlier could not allow this to the general, who, as such, does not know whether defeat or victory is to be preferred or whether the war is to be fought at all. This belongs to the law, as Socrates indicates, but Nic.ias would not wish to say that the law is the knower of courage, or that we are courageous insofar as we know or make the law, because the knowledge that courage is belongs to very few. Yet his opinion could make the law courageous or, more precisely, could make the law that which determines the grounds on which one knows whether, say, death is to be dreaded or dared; his imprecision about what knowledge is and about the setting of limits within which courage knows opens this possibility. Yet, as we have said before, it is rarely clear to what degree the laws can reflect knowledge or furnish a stable horizon. The entire question of the regime or best regime is unmentioned in this dialogue because the proper relation of the parts of the city to the city and of the city to more permanent goods, to virtue which is knowledge, is not discussed, and it is not discussed because Laches and Nic.ias misunderstand the relation of their own virtue to politics. Nic.ias himself passes beyond the law to the gods who set the limits, but how they know or decide such things as when death is due, whether this is permanent or arbitrary, is, of course, unexplored. Nic.ias has failed to understand how courage can be knowledge of what does not change, for example, courage itself, and how necessary this is if there is to be knowledge at all of what is good. Otherwise, what is good is also not good.

That Nic.ias does not genuinely understand how virtue might be knowledge is also demonstrated in his mistaken partitioning of courage and his failure to account for the soul and its powers. Nic.ias' understanding of courage in fact makes courage indistinguishable from jus-
tice, moderation, and piety, not to say wisdom. One might say that this is a gain, not a loss, for we now know what all of virtue is, namely, knowledge of good and evil. But this is not so: we have seen that Nicias does not clearly say what this knowledge is, and exactly of what. Moreover, failure to know the parts as parts makes knowledge of the whole impossible. This need not be so if the whole is merely the addition of "parts" which are only artificially discriminated amounts of what is the same virtue, and Nicias' mistaken division of courage as a third of knowledge treats virtue as a whole of this type. Therefore we must assume that the parts of virtue are not of this type. But we cannot say whether they are like parts of the face or parts of the city or parts of "animal," or like the participants within each virtue itself. Moreover, we can see that the failure to discuss parts of the soul also hinders the discussion of the parts of virtue. For Nicias' understanding of courage as knowledge is hindered by the complete failure to account for virtue in its relation to the variety of activities of the soul, and Socrates' example of animal natures indicates the truth that remains in Laches' view. If courage is the virtue, the excellence, of the soul, we must understand how it can be the excellence of the powers of the soul. But reason is not the only power; souls do not obviously do nothing but know and err; if they did we could hardly understand animals to be gentle or fierce. If courage as knowledge is the soul's virtue, then this knowledge must perfect its powers. Knowledge or knowing must itself perfectly express endurance and quickness and not merely be added to them in such a way that what is the same enduring from the standpoint of the endurance itself is called virtuous or vicious merely in relation to what is prudent for the situation. Yet, since any enduring or fearing by a soul is what it is only within some more complete activity, its perfection must be similarly dependent, and it cannot be seen solely from within itself. In this sense, for example, endurance cannot be an excellence in war if it is not ordered and directed by its contribution to the excellence, the victory, of the whole. Such an ordering can be called prudent or knowing endurance, the more so the more the whole to which it contributes is itself a self-sufficient or independent good. In this way, the fullest expression of endurance or quickness can also be the most prudent if the greatest enterprises are also the least dependent, the ground by reference to which everything else is good. Socrates' suggestion that there is courage in searching for, in coming to know, courage precisely if courage is, in a way, endurance suggests the possibility of a knowing which is of the largest scope, which deals with the permanent goods and which is both the fullest expression and most perfect use of the soul's natural powers. But this can be so only if knowledge is the one thing needful and noble, and not if, as with Nicias, it remains subordinate. In any event, the suggestion and the questions it raises cannot be developed, for the dialogue does not systematically discuss the soul's powers and leads up to but does not mention philosophy.
Laches then tells Nicias that he thought Nicias would discover what courage is because he despised Laches' answers; he had great hopes that he would discover it by Damon's wisdom. Nicias replies that Laches thinks nothing of the fact that he was just shown to know nothing concerning courage, but looks only at Nicias' having also been shown to be this way; it makes no difference to Laches that neither knows what it is fitting for a man to know. In this Laches works the human being's thing, looking in relation to others, not himself. But he, Nicias, has spoken fairly, and if it is not sufficient he will correct it with Damon, whom he knows Laches laughs at without even having seen him. After it is settled he will teach Laches without envy, for Laches very much needs to know. Laches replies that Nicias is wise, but he still advises Lysimachus and Melesias to dismiss the two of them and not release Socrates, as he said from the beginning. He would do the same if his boys were of age. Nicias agrees that if Socrates were willing to care for the youths he would not search for another, but would be pleased to trust him with Niceratus if he were willing. Yet he is not willing, and always recommends another when Nicias reminds him. But perhaps he will listen more to Lysimachus. Lysimachus replies that that would be just because he would be willing to do much for Socrates that he would not be willing to do for many others. He then asks Socrates if he will listen together and venture about how the boys would become the best. Socrates replies that it would be terrible not to be willing to do this, and if in the dialogues just now he had been shown to know and the others not to know it would be most just for him to be invited to the deed. But they were all alike led into resourcelessness; why should one be chosen over another? But it is needful, Socrates continues, in a speech he says is not be divulged, that they all in common are chiefly to search for a teacher who is best for themselves, and only later for the sons, and they are to spare neither money nor anything else. If someone laughs at them for going to school at their age, they are to put forward Homer, who says that shame is not good to be with for a needy man. They are to renounce what someone would say, and make a community in their own and the boys' care. Lysimachus replies that he is pleased by what is said and is willing to have studies such as these; as he is the eldest he is the most eager. Socrates is to come to his house at dawn and do no other so that they may consult about this. For now they can dissolve. Socrates replies that he will do this; he will come tomorrow if the god is willing.

This section concludes the dialogue. It consists of the irresolution—they do not know what courage is—and the proposal of a next step to meet the difficulty: they are to search for a teacher. The chief results of this section are the unique priority of Socrates and the victory of a certain type of privacy. All but Socrates agree that Socrates is the single indispensable man. But though the others see Socrates' priority, they fail to understand him because they do not clearly grasp the
meaning of his search for knowledge. For this reason, they also fail to grasp the reasons why he does or does not grant consent, why he is or is not willing. What will means is difficult to say from within the dialogue because there is no systematic discussion of it, but we can attempt to gather the evidence. To be willing is to assent or consent. In particular, it appears to be the assent to what is not rational. Lysimachus, for example, is pleased by what Socrates says, and therefore he is "willing." And Laches had talked of courage as willingness to stand before prudence entered the argument. But it also seems to concern circumstances which reflect our dependence. Stesilaus is shown in truth in circumstances which he did not desire, chance circumstances in war. Lysimachus defines justice as reciprocal willingness or mutual dependence. And Lysimachus, pleased by what the Socrates he needs has said, most likely because it means that Socrates will not pass him on immediately to Damon, is now "willing" to do what he ordinarily would not have wished to do. Socrates is willing to stand in battle; he must be willing or not willing to educate Nicias’ son, and he will come tomorrow if the god is willing. We may say, then, that will is the assent of what is non-rational, the desiring or not fearing, in chance circumstances or circumstances in which we are dependent. Its exact relation to the rest of the soul is as unclear as the soul’s structure is unclear; in Laches’ definition, endurance appeared to replace both it and standing, yet Socrates spoke of willingness to endure. But it can be directed by what is rational, since consent can be prudent or not. Moreover, to judge from Socrates’ remark in the speech before us, it can itself be an instance of the terrible and therefore an object of courage. The problem of consent brings us to the same problems we have dealt with before. In Socrates’ case, his consent or lack of consent is mentioned in the context of war and education, education of those clearly not so attractive in themselves as to attract him. The problem of consent in Socrates’ case therefore appears primarily to mean the problem of his dependence on the city and on friends, a dependence caused by what is not, as such, rational in him, and a dependence the honoring of which is not equivalent to the search for knowledge which is naturally attractive to him. The problem is therefore raised of the connection between the one who searches for knowledge and political life. Socrates himself suggests this problem here by suggesting that justice would require that the deed belong to the knower; this replaces Lysimachus’ criterion based on consent. But Socrates himself says that the dialogue proved that he is not a knower. The disproportion between the inclination towards knowledge and political life is thus indicated by the importance of “consent” in this section, but it is not discussed. Nicias’ and Lysimachus’ difficulty in even beginning to understand Socrates’ non-consent thus shows how far they remain from seeing what knowledge and the search for it mean. This is also shown by the fact that Nicias, who most persistently advances the claim of knowledge,
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nonetheless still believes that Damon can set him right. Nicias' form of concern with knowing takes the shape of a wish to be near and to learn from the knowledgeable, rather than a wish to do the work of seeking to know himself. But Nicias' discussion here does suggest one more decisive aspect of knowledge: it can be shared without envy. Knowledge of the type we spoke of in the previous section is the only fully public good, the only good all could enjoy all of. At the same time, it is the most strictly private good because it is most fully pursued out of shame before one's own ignorance and out of fear before one's own mortality. This characteristic indicates once more how the pursuit of courage itself can be an unambiguously virtuous activity.

The second result of this section is the victory of what is private. Their search for a good teacher will be protected from ridicule by Homer's authority, but the grounding of this search in their need for what is best for themselves must be a secret. Laches is in this way taught, to the extent that he is teachable, that the priority of what is private is a protection against ridicule. Laches' natural love of victory has not issued in full courage because he understands courage incorrectly. His understanding chains him to the city and its needs, not to the good city, not even to the city in peace. He therefore cannot serve the city as it needs to be served by its generals, those who go beyond it in their judgment or hopes; he cannot properly credit the possibility and usefulness of the childish and playful. The inadequacy of his power to stand alone and develop his prudence, his aims, and his skills therefore deprives the city of the full use of his gifts. One might say in general both that he is unsuccessful in separating men from animals, in seeing their mere likeness to us, and in seeing our likeness to what is higher. But the priority of what is private, the shame before ignorance, is also that which is most fully public, that which is remedied by the most universal of goods, and this is what Nicias neglects. Nicias' shame is a shame remedied by what would be his alone, honor and the "life afterward." He almost seeks to be a god among men, and though he does not seek to replace the gods, he also does not indicate that they are wonderful or mysterious. Nicias rebukes Laches for doing what human beings do, and dissociates courage from children, animals, women, and almost all men. One might say that he is ashamed of being human, that he is too elevated, that he seeks to forget our kinship to the animals at the same time that he fails sufficiently to separate us from the gods. But for these same reasons, he does not grasp what fully stands alone, the full peculiarity of knowledge, or the full height of the human being.
Locke's theory of property has been both attacked and defended. Sometimes the attacks as well as the defenses have been based, at least in part, upon a misinterpretation of precisely what his theory is and a misunderstanding of its implications. In particular, both those who have attacked it and those who have defended it have too often assumed that his theory constitutes a justification of the special economic interests of the landholders of the late seventeenth century, of the rising capitalist class, or of both these classes. It is possible that the presentation of a philosophical justification of the economic interests of either or both of these classes may have been one of the motives animating Locke as he developed his theory of property. Into this question, interesting as it may be for the historian or biographer, I shall not enter here. Instead, in what follows my concern is limited exclusively to a philosophical consideration of Locke's explicit treatment of property in his Two Treatises of Government. This treatment is concentrated primarily in Chapter V of the second Treatise and in sections 41–43 and 86–90 of the first Treatise.

I shall argue that the treatment of property presented in these places, rather than constituting a philosophical defense of the special economic interests of landholders and of the rising capitalist class, is in fact incompatible with such interests when they are prosecuted in ways inconsistent with the implications of Locke's theory. Put more generally, my aim is to present an exposition, interpretation, and development of what Locke says in the passages cited, in order to establish that the substance and spirit of his theory can be formulated in contemporary language and applied to contemporary economic problems in such a way as to reveal that it is a more reasonable and practicable theory than is sometimes supposed. In particular, I shall attempt to show that his theory, rather than constituting a defense of laissez-faire capitalism, contains elements which can provide at least the beginning of a philosophical justification of what is sometimes referred to as "social welfare capitalism" and perhaps also even of certain modest forms of socialism.

I. The Concept of Property

As is well known, Locke speaks of three rights—life (including health), liberty, and property. These rights may be referred to as "natural" rights because they are not merely customary, positive, or civil rights;
instead, they are rights which men possess regardless of whether they live in civil or political society or in the state of nature, which is a situation in which there is no established civil law. These rights, therefore, do not depend for their existence upon being recognized by or conferred upon men by the positive law of the state; rather, they are rights which ought to be recognized by the state, regardless of whether it does in fact do so. To say, however, that these rights are natural in this sense is not to say that they are absolute or indefeasible, so that a person's right to life or liberty or property can never be overridden by the competing rights of some other person or group. It is to say only that they are rights which ought to be recognized by the positive law of the state.\(^1\)

Although Locke speaks of three rights—life, liberty, and property—he sometimes uses the term "property" to cover all three rights. He therefore uses this term in both a broad and a narrow sense. In the narrow sense it is equivalent in meaning to his use of "estate"; in the broad sense it applies to life and liberty as well as estate. Thus when Locke is interpreted as saying that the purpose for which governments are instituted is the protection of property, such an interpretation is correct only if "property" is understood in the broad sense. He does not mean that governments are instituted only for the protection of estate; they are instituted for the protection of life and liberty as well as estate. Most of the second Treatise is devoted to an explication of the concept of liberty and to a development of the implications of the claim that men possess a natural right to liberty. Here, however, we are concerned only with Locke's notion of estate and with his claim that there is a right to estate, and so with his use of "property" only in the narrow sense, referring to estate alone. Accordingly, I shall use the term "property" only in this sense.

Property is to be distinguished from possession. I possess something if and only if I control it. To control something it is not necessary that I have actual physical possession of it, as when I have an apple in my hand. It is sufficient that I be able to obtain physical possession simply through choosing to do so. I may possess a house even though the house is in one city and I in another. Property, on the other hand, is rightful possession; my property is what I own, as distinguished from what I merely possess. I may own something even though I do not possess it, and I may possess something even though I do not own it. I may own an automobile which I do not possess because it is in the possession of someone who has stolen it. The thief who possesses it does not own it, because I own it. The essential difference between possession and ownership is that the mere fact that I possess something does

\(^1\) For a more detailed interpretation of Locke's notion of natural right, see my "Two Concepts of Natural Right," The Southern Journal of Philosophy, XII (1974), pp. 55-64.
not mean that others have an obligation not to attempt to deprive me of it, whereas the fact that I own something does imply this obligation. The concept of property is thus an essentially moral, legal, or normative notion, whereas the concept of possession is essentially factual, descriptive, or naturalistic, in the sense of being non-moral, non-legal, or non-normative.

To say, then, that someone owns something is to say that others have an obligation not to attempt to deprive him of it. This, however, is an explication only of ownership, not of the right to property. Everyone, according to Locke, has a right to property, even though some men may in fact own little or nothing. Moreover, ownership, or the right to retain what one possesses, presupposes the right to acquire property. Others have an obligation not to attempt to deprive me of what I possess only if, in the first place, I had the right to acquire whatever it is that I do possess. The right to property therefore includes two rights: the right of someone who already owns something to retain possession of that which he already owns, and the right of someone who as yet owns nothing to acquire ownership of something. In the first case, the right to property is the right to retain that which I already own, and entails an obligation on the part of others to act in a way compatible with my retention of it. In the second case, the right to property is the right I have to acquire property, and entails an obligation on the part of others to act in a way compatible with my doing so. Thus the right to property is the right both to acquire property and to retain the property acquired. As a natural right, it is possessed equally by every man simply by virtue of his humanity. There is a sense, however, in which only those who possess property have a right to retain it, for those who have no property cannot retain the property they do not have, and in this sense can have no right to retain it. But everyone has a right to acquire property and, once acquired, to retain it.

From the preceding it follows that the concept of property is exclusionary in character, for the right to acquire and to retain something is the right to exclude others from its use without permission. To say that someone owns something is to say that others may use it only if he gives them his permission. Locke grounds this right on the fact that certain parts of nature, the use of which contributes either to one's preservation or to one's well-being, cannot be used in common. The earth, including land, water, and air, and everything on or in the land and in the water and the air, belongs in common to all men. But whereas some parts of nature, such as the air we breathe, can be used in common by all men, there are other parts, such as the food we eat, which cannot be used in common. Although I can eat a part of the same apple which you are eating, you and I cannot both eat the same part. If, then, nature is to be of any use to men, those parts of it which cannot be used in common by two or more persons must be used pri-
vately by individual persons. The question therefore arises: how does an individual acquire exclusive ownership of something, so that others have an obligation to act compatibly with his retention of it?

Locke's answer is that it can be acquired originally only by means of labor. Suppose that an apple tree, neither planted nor tended by anyone, is growing on land owned by no one, and that a certain individual, Abraham, picks an apple off this tree. The picking of the apple is an expenditure of energy by Abraham, and entitles him to the apple he picks. Through picking the apple he has mixed his labor with nature, and the product of this mixture of nature and human labor is his possession and ownership of the apple he picks. Having acquired ownership of the apple through expending energy, others have an obligation to act in a way compatible with his retention of it. If some second person, Isaac, should knock Abraham down and take the apple from him, he has wronged Abraham and deprived him of his property. Although Isaac now possesses the apple, he does not own it; Abraham still owns it. Since Isaac does not own it, others have no obligation not to attempt to take it from him. Abraham still owns the apple even though he no longer possesses it. As the owner, he has the right to attempt to get possession of it again, and others have the right, and indeed perhaps the obligation, to assist him. (In this example we are assuming, of course, that Isaac's preservation of his life does not depend upon his taking the apple from Abraham. Should Isaac be in a situation such that he can preserve himself only by depriving Abraham of all or part of his property, he may do so without wronging Abraham. Certainly Isaac's right to preserve himself would override Abraham's right to retain the apple. Fortunately, however, situations in which one person can preserve himself only by taking from another that which the latter requires to sustain himself are relatively rare.)

From this simple example several aspects of Locke's theory of property can be derived. First, when Locke says that property, as distinct from possession, can be acquired only through mixing one's labor with nature, the kind of labor he has in mind is honest labor. Indeed, he uses the term "labor" in such a way that the expression "dishonest labor" is a contradiction in terms. For what he means by "labor" is an expenditure of energy, directed toward the acquisition of something, which does not violate the rights of any other person. Thus all labor is essentially, by definition, honest labor, so that the expression "dishonest labor" is a contradiction in terms and the expression "honest labor" a pleonasm. Accordingly, the concept of labor, like the concept of property, is an essentially moral notion. Thus although Isaac expends energy in attempting to acquire possession of the apple and, indeed, may even expend more energy than Abraham, his expenditure of energy violates Abraham's rights, and thus does not constitute

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2 *Two Treatises of Government*, II, 6.
labor. Labor does not violate the rights of others, and it results in the acquisition of property and an obligation on the part of others to respect the property thus acquired. But an expenditure of energy which violates the rights of others can result only in the acquisition of some possession, not in the acquisition of property. Others have no obligation to respect the possessions of someone if that person has acquired them by means of an expenditure of energy that violates rights, and they have a right—indeed, perhaps even an obligation—to assist the owner to regain possession.

Second, given (1) the distinction between an expenditure of energy which does and one which does not violate rights and (2) the distinction between ownership and possession, it follows that the actual distribution of goods among men is not completely just. To some extent, at least, the possessions of some of the rich are the result of expenditures of energy which have violated rights, and some of the poor have been reduced to their poverty as a consequence of such violations. Thus to some extent the inequalities of wealth that actually obtain are not completely just. But, as we shall see, these inequalities are not completely unjust either, and some inequalities would exist even if no violations of rights occurred.

A third point arising from the simple example of the apple has to do with the so-called labor theory of value. Locke can be said to hold this theory, if at all, only in the sense that he maintains that the only way in which property can be acquired is through labor. It is true that he says that labor "puts the difference of value on every thing" and that an acre of cultivated land is, say, ten, a hundred, or even a thousand times as valuable as an acre of uncultivated land. But all he means by this is that something upon which labor is expended may, as a result of this expenditure of labor, be transformed and become considerably more valuable than it would be had no labor been expended upon it. This, however, does not mean that the value of something is determined solely by the amount of labor expended in producing it, and is quite compatible with the view that the value of some commodity is determined by the extent to which it is desired and thus by what people are willing to do or to exchange in order to obtain it.

The view just referred to, as contrasted with the so-called labor theory of value, is a naturalistic theory. Given that labor is an essentially moral or non-naturalistic concept, a labor theory of value is also an essentially moral or non-naturalistic theory. But the position just referred to is strictly a theory of economic value, not of moral, religious, or aesthetic value. The proponent of such a theory can readily admit that one thing can have greater moral, religious, or aesthetic value than another even though it has less economic value, and vice versa.

3 Two Treatises of Government, II, 40.
4 Two Treatises of Government, II, 37, 40, 43.
Thus on the view in question, to say that one thing has greater economic value than another is to say nothing at all about its moral, religious, or aesthetic value. Although moral, religious, and aesthetic values may be non-naturalistic, economic value is not. The economic value of something is determined strictly by the extent to which it is desired, and thus by what people are willing to do or to exchange in order to acquire and retain it. Economic value is therefore closely related to supply and demand.

Accordingly, although two men may equally desire objects of the same kind, one may be able to acquire the object of his desire with far less expenditure of effort than the other. Yet if the objects are the same in kind, and each is desired equally by the two men, they are equally valuable, even though one person must expend far more energy to satisfy his desire. Moreover, two men may labor with equal diligence for the same length of time, and yet one may succeed, either through better luck or greater skill, in producing something of greater economic value than the other produces. In this case, the greater value of what the one produces cannot issue from a greater expenditure of labor by him than by the other, for they have both expended the same amount of labor. On the contrary, the economic value of their labor is determined by the economic value of what they produce, so that, instead of their labor determining the value of what they produce, it is what they produce that determines the value of their labor.

None of this is denied by Locke, and all of it, I believe, he would find acceptable. He does not, therefore, accept a so-called labor theory of value, if by this one means that the economic value of something is determined by the amount of labor expended in its production, but would, I believe, accept the polar opposite of the labor theory of value, this being the view that the economic value of labor, rather than determining the value of what it produces, is itself determined by the economic value of what it produces. All he intends to say, in his discussion of the effects of the expenditure of labor upon nature,⁵ is that, through the industrious and intelligent expenditure of labor upon it, nature can be made more productive than it would otherwise be. This is such an obvious point that Locke, rather than elaborating a novel theory such as a labor theory of value, is belaboring the obvious: he is not presenting a labor theory of value but a labor theory of property. He is maintaining that the only way in which property or ownership, as distinct from possession, can be acquired is through labor.

We saw, a moment ago, that Locke’s theory of property is such that to some extent the actual inequalities of possessions among men are unjust, since they may result from violations of right rather than from labor. This, however, does not mean that his theory requires that there be an absolute equality of property. On the contrary, the implications

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⁵ Two Treatises of Government, II, 37–43.
of his theory are such that inequalities of possessions may arise legitimately. Although he does not explicitly say so, there would appear to be at least three ways in which this can occur—through differences in industriousness, differences in skill, and differences in luck. Other things being equal, if one person is more industrious, more skillful, or luckier than another, he will probably acquire more property than the other. In many instances the degree to which a person is skillful or industrious is, at least to some extent, under his own control. But a person's luck, as contrasted with his skill or industriousness, is determined strictly by what befalls him or by the circumstances in which he finds himself, either at birth or at some time after birth, independent of any action he performs or which, given his circumstances, he could perform. It is, I think, obvious that inequalities of wealth sometimes arise legitimately, i.e., independent of violations of rights by anyone, because one person is blessed with good luck and another is afflicted with bad luck. The ways in which one can have either good or bad luck at various times in his life are innumerable. But in addition to the good or bad luck one has after birth, one may also have good or bad luck at birth, depending upon the circumstances into which one is born. Thus one person, strictly through the accident of a lucky birth, may inherit considerably more property than another.

To this last point, however, one might object that Locke explicitly maintains that the only title to property is labor, so that the only inequalities of wealth that can legitimately arise are those that issue from one person's laboring more industriously or skillfully than another, and not those that arise from luck. If one person acquires more property than another through laboring more industriously or more skillfully, it is still through his labor that he acquires his property, whereas if one person acquires more wealth than another through luck, it is not through his labor that he does so. Thus no inequalities of wealth that arise from differences in luck are justifiable and, if possible, are to be eliminated or at least minimized.

It is true that Locke does explicitly state that labor gives a person title to property, and that luck is not labor. But this point can be overemphasized, and can be countered by at least two considerations. First, one might maintain that the possession of property includes, at least within limits, the right to give it to whoever one chooses. This position is taken by Locke himself, for he says that men have a right "to bestow their Estates on those, who please them best."6 Second, Locke admits, at least by implication, that inequalities of wealth can arise legitimately through differences of inheritance, for he maintains that "Every Man is born with a ... Right, before any other Man, to inherit, with his Brethren, his Fathers Goods."7 Thus if one person inherits more

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6 Two Treatises of Government, II, 72.
7 Two Treatises of Government, II, 190; cf. also I, 88–90.
Locke's Theory of Property

property than another he thereby legitimately acquires greater wealth, not through greater industriousness or skill, but simply through the accident of a lucky birth. These considerations mean that, according to Locke, there are two other ways, in addition to labor, in which property may be acquired—through inheritance and through gift.

II. The Limits of Property

But although Locke admits the legitimacy of an inequality of property, he also places limits upon the amount of possessions which may legitimately be acquired. In one place he says this: "As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils; so much he may by his labour fix a Property in. Whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others." Elsewhere he says that a man has a right to acquire as much property as he can, provided that "there is enough, and as good left in common for others." He therefore places two limits upon the amount of property a person may acquire: first, he may acquire only so much as he can use before it spoils, and, second, he may acquire only so much as does not prevent others from also acquiring property. He does not, however, define these limits as precisely as one would like, nor, in fact, as precisely as can be done within the spirit of his theory of property. We now attempt to define them more precisely in accordance with the spirit of his theory, through spelling out in some detail what seems to be implicit in what he says explicitly.

The more important of the two conditions is the second. If a person lived in a solitary condition, so that regardless of the quantity of possessions he acquired he would not thereby prevent others from acquiring property, he would be free to accumulate as many possessions as he pleased, regardless of whether he could use them before they spoiled. If, then, his acquisition of possessions does not prevent others from acquiring property, it is a matter of indifference how many possessions he acquires. If a man were in a solitary condition he would be free to gather as many apples as he pleased. He would not thereby prevent anyone else from gathering apples, and although he can eat only so many before they rot, those he cannot eat will rot whether he gathers them or not. This means that the important limit on the amount of property that may be acquired is the second. Indeed, it means that "spoilage" is to be defined in terms of the second limit: something spoils if and only if it is not used by its possessor before it rots or is otherwise ruined yet could and would be used by someone else were it not for the fact that the first person possessed it. The concept of spoilage is therefore essentially social in nature.

8 Two Treatises of Government, II, 31.
9 Two Treatises of Government, II, 27.
The preceding, however, is a definition only of "spoilage," not of the second limit. It is possible that someone may possess something which he does not use, that his possession of it prevents someone who could and would use it from doing so, and yet the thing in question does not rot or is not ruined through its possessor's not using it—examples are a plot of land or a house. Locke's second limit, then, on the amount of property that may be possessed is not to be defined in terms of spoilage but as follows. A person has a right to possess a given object if and only if (1) he labors for it or inherits it or has it given him by someone who has labored for it, and (2) either he uses it or, if he does not use it, his possession of it does not prevent anyone else who could and would use it from doing so. If either of these two conditions is not satisfied, then, although someone may possess a given object, he has no right to do so and thus does not own it. But if it is not his property, it might seem that others have no obligation to respect it as his property and, indeed, have a right to take it from him and use it themselves or give it to someone else who will use it.

Before considering this matter, however, it is necessary to clarify the notion of use. I shall begin with a simple example. Suppose that there are two men, Matthew and Mark, who each own forty acres of land. Matthew has an apple orchard on his land, Mark a pecan grove on his. Matthew grows more apples than he can eat, Mark more pecans than he can eat. But this does not mean that Matthew grows more apples than he can use or that Mark grows more pecans than he can use. Matthew wants things other than apples, Mark things other than pecans. Through exchanging what they have for what they do not have they can each obtain what they want but do not have. In this way Matthew uses the apples he cannot eat, Mark the pecans he cannot eat. Suppose also that men have come to recognize that a system of bartering is too cumbersome and have instituted a standard medium of exchange. In this way Matthew and Mark can exchange their apples and pecans for money. However, Locke says, there is no limit upon the amount of money one may legitimately accumulate, for money does not spoil.10

Locke's assertion that one may legitimately possess an unlimited quantity of something provided that it does not spoil in his possession seems to be incompatible with the second limit he places on the amount of property one may possess. This limit, again, is that no one has a right to possess something he does not use, regardless of whether or not it spoils in his possession, if his possession of it prevents others who could and would use it from doing so. Obviously, money is something that men can use, and if one man possesses more money than he uses he may thereby prevent others from acquiring possessions that they could and would use. Despite Locke's contention that they differ, the

10 Two Treatises of Government. II, 46-47.
situation with respect to money is essentially the same as that with respect to immediately useful objects. Just as one person may possess more apples than he uses and thereby prevent others from acquiring apples that they could and would use, so one man may possess more money than he uses and thereby prevent others from acquiring money that they could and would use.

Now it is obvious that a person can possess more money than he in fact does use. This would happen if he simply hoards his money, and makes no use at all of it. Here, of course, the contemplation or the counting of the amount of money one has, which is undoubtedly a source of delight to some, does not count as a use of one's money. But it is doubtful that anyone ever has more money than he can use. Although he may not have sufficient needs or wants to enable him to use up all his money to satisfy them, there are always others with needs and wants which could be satisfied through the use of his money. This he could accomplish by gifts or loans to those in need, by investing it as capital to make employment possible for those in need, or even by simply placing it in a savings account in a bank, which in turn uses it to make loans or investments. Similar considerations apply also to forms of possession other than money. If a man possesses more land than he can cultivate alone, he can still make complete use of it by giving part of it to someone lacking land who can and will use it, through renting part of it, or through hiring others to work it. As is obvious, most such uses of money or land to satisfy the needs of others will result in an increase of the wealth of the person who possesses the object used.

Given these considerations, we may specify further the limit Locke places on the amount of property one may acquire. A person has a right to acquire only as much property as he does in fact use, either to satisfy his own needs and wants or those of others. In order for one to use one's property it is not necessary that it be used to satisfy only one's own needs. On the contrary, there is nothing in Locke's theory of property that would forbid us to regard the use of one's property to satisfy the needs of others as being precisely what it is—a use of one's property—even though the result is often an increase in the wealth of the person whose property is used, as well as the satisfaction of the needs or wants of others. This is to say that the use of one's property to increase one's wealth is not necessarily incompatible with the use of it to satisfy the needs or wants of others. Indeed, in many cases the use of property to increase one's own wealth can be achieved only through using it to satisfy the needs of others.

We turn now to a brief clarification of the notion of need. The term "need" obviously, in contexts such as the present one, refers to whatever is necessary for the maintenance of life and health, such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. We have seen that Locke maintains that each person has a natural right to life and health. From this it
follows that no one has a right to accumulate so much wealth that others are deprived of either life or health as a consequence. But there is another sense of "need"; in recent times it has referred, not simply to whatever is necessary to maintain life and health but also to whatever is necessary to enable one to lead what is sometimes called a "decent" life or to enjoy a "decent" standard of living. It is possible to define "need" in the first sense in absolute terms. Leaving aside minor variations occasioned by differences in physical size, age, health, and physical activity, the amount of food which all human beings require to sustain life is more or less the same. But "need" in the second sense varies from society to society, depending upon its wealth and population.

The limits which Locke places upon the amount of wealth which anyone may legitimately possess can reasonably be interpreted thus: not only has no one a right to possess so much that others are thereby deprived of what they need for the maintenance of life and health, in addition no one has a right to possess so much that others within his society are prevented from acquiring what they need to enjoy a decent standard of living, as established by the resources of the society. As was indicated above, what constitutes a decent standard of living for a given society cannot be specified without a consideration of its wealth and population. About all that can be said abstractly is that it must be sufficient, given the resources of the society, to allow each person within it the possessions and opportunities to enable him to live a happy life within that society and to develop whichever capacities are compatible with the happiness and the development of the capacities of each of the other members of the society. This is not to say that such a distribution of wealth would be sufficient to ensure the happiness of each member of the society. It would at most be only a necessary condition of living happily and of realizing one's potentialities. Even when opportunities for growth are there for all, doubtless there will always be some who do not avail themselves of them. And although at least some material possessions are a necessary condition of happiness for most men, they do not themselves ensure it.

If these considerations be sound, then the limits Locke places on the amount of property which anyone may possess require that no one within a given society may acquire so much wealth that he prevents others from acquiring those possessions necessary to enable them to live at the level of decency possible for all, given the total resources of the society. His theory of property can thus reasonably be used to justify the formation of associations of farmers and workers to strengthen their bargaining power and the enactment of social welfare legislation of various sorts, such as a graduated income tax, minimum wage legislation, and unemployment compensation. His theory may also be used to justify setting the minimum wage rate and unemployment compensation at such a level that everyone within a given society
would be guaranteed a decent income, as determined by the resources of that society. But it would also, I believe, justify the payment of unemployment compensation only to those unable to work and to those who cannot obtain work, either in private enterprises or in governmental projects of various sorts. If a man is able but unwilling to work, then others have no obligation to feed him. Locke would perhaps agree with Marx's dictum that "he who does not work shall not eat," as interpreted to mean that he who is able but unwilling to work shall not eat.

Thus far we have discussed the implications of the limits Locke places on the amount of property which may be acquired only insofar as these limits apply to individuals or groups within the same political society. Our discussion has admittedly been somewhat speculative, in the sense that Locke himself never draws these implications and in fact maintains that "in Governments the Laws regulate the right of property, and the possession of land is determined by positive constitutions." But if the limits he places upon the amount of property that one may acquire are to have any practical significance at all, they must apply to civil or political societies as well as to the state of nature, since we all live in political societies. If these limits have practical significance for us today, we must regard them as controls upon the ways in which the laws of governments may regulate the right of property and positive constitutions may determine the possession of land. Just as the right to liberty sets limits upon the ways in which governments and constitutions may regulate liberty, so the right to property sets limits upon the ways in which they may regulate property.

But if the limits on property which Locke specifies may reasonably be interpreted as applying to individuals or groups within the same political society, then perhaps they may also be interpreted, albeit speculatively (but, I hope, not wildly so), as applying also to independent states and to relations between them. Locke quite clearly states that no person has a right to enclose more land than he can and does use. But if no man has a right to do so, then it would seem that no society or state has a right to do so. I admit that the leap here is rather great, but let us make it, nonetheless. If we do, then three consequences would seem to follow, all important.

The first consequence can be illustrated by the example of the American Indians. They had no right to attempt to prevent Europeans from attempting to settle in the Americas so long as the Europeans restricted themselves to settling in areas not already occupied and used by the Indians. The Americas were not fully used by the Indians, and

11 Two Treatises of Government, II, 50.
12 Two Treatises of Government, II, 32–36.
there was room in them for the European settlers. The Indians therefore acted wrongly insofar as they attempted to prevent the settlement of Europeans in those parts of the Americas which were not already occupied and used. It must also be said, however, that the Europeans also acted wrongly, in terms of Locke's theory of property, in driving the Indians from those parts of the Americas which they were presently occupying and using.

If the preceding be admitted as a consequence of the limits Locke places on property, then a second consequence follows: residents of heavily populated states today have a right to settle in those parts of relatively sparsely settled states which are not being used. If this be too extreme a consequence to derive from Locke's theory, a less sweeping conclusion can be drawn—that sparsely settled states have an obligation to fashion their immigration policies in such a way that they admit larger numbers of immigrants from densely populated poor states than from sparsely populated rich ones. This could be done by determining the number of immigrants to be admitted in terms of the density of population and wealth of the countries from which the immigrants are to come, so that the more densely populated and the poorer a country, the larger the number of immigrants, in proportion to the total population of that country, admitted. If this be in fact a consequence of Locke's theory, and if his theory be sound, then certain states in the twentieth century have seriously failed to fulfill their obligations with respect to immigration policy and, in fact, have established policies almost exactly the reverse of those which ought to have been instituted.

Another consequence of the limits Locke places on property would seem to be the following. On his theory no one has a right to possess anything he does not use if his possession of it deprives others who could and would use it from doing so. But if this stricture applies to individuals, it would also seem to apply to societies. A situation might arise in which a technologically undeveloped society occupies a region containing valuable deposits of minerals or oil or other natural resources which that society, because of its lack of technological skill, is unable to appropriate and use and which more highly developed societies could use. (Of course, there have been many such situations in the past.) It would seem that the developed societies which can use these natural resources have a right to use them and that the undeveloped societies which are unable to develop them have an obligation to permit the developed societies to develop and use them. It would also seem that such undeveloped societies would act wrongly should they attempt to prevent the development and use of these resources by the developed societies and that the latter would act rightly in attempting to persuade the former to permit them to develop these resources—even, in some instances, using force, if necessary, to exercise their right to develop them. On Locke's theory the earth, and everything on and in it,
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is given by God to men for their use and enjoyment, so that no man and no society who cannot or will not develop and use fully some part of the earth it has enclosed has a right to prevent others who can and will develop and use it from doing so. Moreover, if his theory requires that compensation be paid to undeveloped societies for the development and use of the natural resources of the lands they have enclosed, then it would also seem to require that compensation be paid to individuals within a society for the development and use of any natural resources which may be discovered under the land they have enclosed. Both ought to be compensated at least for the damage done the enclosed land by drilling and mining and for the use of the land. How much more compensation they ought to receive would perhaps be determined, within the limits specified above, by considerations of supply and demand.

III. Objections to Locke's Theory

It may be said that Locke's theory applies satisfactorily to extremely simple economies in which there is no division of labor and no employer-employee relationship, but that it fails to apply to even the simplest economies in which there is a division of labor and an employer-employee relationship and even less to complex industrial economies such as those of the twentieth century. This objection is based both upon what Locke says and upon what he fails to say. First, it is based upon his contention that the labor of a man's body and the work of his hands belong to that man, so that everything he produces through this labor and work, within the limits specified above, is his property. Second, it is based upon Locke's failure to show how the employer-employee relationship can be justified; to show how the income received from the product of this relationship is to be distributed equitably among employers and their employees; and to show how the income received is to be distributed equitably among those who contributed their labor in its production. Since Locke fails to provide answers to these questions, his theory of property is so incomplete as to be inadequate.

It must be admitted that Locke's theory would be incomplete and consequently inadequate if, in assessing its completeness and adequacy, we limited ourselves to a consideration of what he says explicitly, without attempting to specify its implications. The real question is this: can Locke's theory be reasonably interpreted in such a way that it does, at least implicitly, provide answers to these questions? I believe that it can be and, indeed, that the answer is contained implicitly in the interpretation I have already placed upon it. In arguing, however, that

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13 Two Treatises of Government, II, 25.  
14 Two Treatises of Government, II, 27.
Locke’s theory, as developed, provides answers to these objections, I am not contending that it settles, even implicitly, every question that can legitimately be raised about the completeness and adequacy of a theory of property. All that one can reasonably expect from a theory of property is that it offer reasonable solutions to those problems that have arisen up to the time at which it is propounded, through its author’s reflection on the social, political, and economic conditions obtaining prior to and contemporaneous with the formation of the theory. One who formulates a theory of property cannot reasonably be expected to present definitive solutions to all problems which might arise in the future. Nevertheless, there were divisions of labor and employer-employee relationships prior to and during the latter part of the seventeenth century, so that it must be conceded that Locke’s theory should, at least implicitly, contain answers to the objections in question.

Turning, then, to the first objection, we must concede that Locke, unlike his successor Rousseau, does not explicitly attempt to account for the development of an employer-employee relationship. Rousseau, in his Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men, written some sixty years after Locke wrote the Two Treatises of Government, began by considering what the nature and condition of man would be in a hypothetical state of nature in which there is no private ownership of land, no division of labor, and no employer-employee relationship. He conceived the state of nature as a pre-agricultural stage in which men subsisted by hunting and fishing and gathering fruits and nuts and berries. So long as men subsist solely by such means as these, there can be no need for the private ownership of land, a division of labor, and an employer-employee relationship, and no significant inequalities of wealth can arise. The latter can come into being only after the stage of agriculture and metallurgy is reached. Once this stage is reached a division of labor appears—those engaged in metallurgy subsist by means of the hammer, those engaged in agriculture by means of the sickle. The development of this stage leads also to the private ownership of land, which in turn leads to the employer-employee (or master-servant or master-slave) relationship and to significant inequalities of wealth.

The development of agriculture and metallurgy, however, presupposes the existence of a society which, though its political development is not extensive enough to allow it to be regarded as a political society, is nonetheless an organized society. This is the case because, among other reasons, no individual by himself would possess sufficient power to make good his claim to any land he attempted to enclose. If any such claim is to be made good, it must be recognized and conceded by others. Accordingly, the private ownership of land presupposes the existence of an organized society the members of which recognize and permit such private ownership. Thus in the state of nature, conceived as the absence of any organized society, there can be no private
Locke's Theory of Property

ownership of land, no division of labor, no employer-employee relationship, and no significant inequalities of wealth.

Locke, on the other hand, conceives the state of nature as a situation in which men live in families and in which there is a master-servant relationship. Compatible with this, his discussion of property, rather than attempting to account systematically for the origin of (much less to justify) the private ownership of land, a division of labor, and the employer-employee relationship, presupposes them, or at least is presented in such a way as to take their existence for granted. It must therefore be admitted that Rousseau probes more deeply than Locke, both in his account of the state of nature and in his account of the origin of the private ownership of land, a division of labor, the employer-employee relationship, and significant inequalities of wealth. Whereas Rousseau attempts to account for their origin, Locke does not. In this respect Rousseau's theory is more complete. Nonetheless, given that Locke simply assumes the existence of an employer-employee (or master-servant) relationship, the question of whether and, if so, how, such a relationship can be justified in terms of his theory of property remains a legitimate one, and one which we must therefore attempt to answer in terms of his theory. Locke cannot be defended simply by saying that the development of this relationship is a historical matter, to be settled by historians. For one thing, the initial development of this relationship, like alleged states of nature, is pre-historical, in the sense that it antedates historical records. For another thing, we are interested here only in a justification of the development of such a relationship in terms of Locke's theory of property, not in a historical treatment of the actual details of its development.

The development as well as the justification of this relationship is provided, I believe, by various aspects and implications of his theory which have already been discussed, and especially by his admission that property can be acquired by inheritance and gift as well as by labor. Suppose that the agricultural stage of development has been reached, that there are two individuals, Peter and Paul, and that each owns forty acres of equally rich land suitable for the growing of wheat. Suppose also that Peter has ten sons and Paul only one, that Peter wills four acres to each of his sons at his death, and that Paul wills all his land to his son. In this case the son of Paul is born luckier than any of the sons of Peter, at least so far as the inheritance of land is concerned, for he is lucky enough to inherit, through an accident of birth, ten times as much land as any of the sons of Peter. Suppose, again, that the son of Paul marries a woman who has inherited forty acres from her father (wealth tends to marry wealth) and that each of the sons of Peter marries a woman who inherits no property. Suppose further that all the surrounding land within the society in which they live has been enclosed and is in use, and that four acres is not sufficient to enable any son of Peter to support himself and his wife and children.
But the eighty acres which the son of Paul controls is more than enough to enable him to support himself and his wife and children, and is also too large to enable him to make it fully productive solely through his own labor. Suppose, finally, that he is willing to hire one of the sons of Peter to help him work his land, and that one of Peter's sons is also willing to do so. In this way an employer-employee relationship comes into being legitimately, at least insofar as it arises independently of any act of conquest, theft, or fraud on the part of any individual or group.

But even if it be granted that the preceding, or at least something like it, can constitute at least the beginning of a justification of the employer-employee relationship in terms of Locke's theory, the second objection still remains: his theory fails to provide a means of determining what share of the product which is produced rightly belongs to the employer and what share rightly belongs to each of his employees. The third objection also still remains: his theory fails to provide a means of determining what share of the product produced as a result of a division of labor rightly belongs to each person involved in its production. We need not go into the question of how a division of labor can legitimately arise in terms of Locke's theory, for no one would question the legitimacy of a division of labor in the way in which someone might question the legitimacy of the employer-employee relationship. It is obvious that more wealth can be produced through a division of labor in which different persons specialize and become expert at different tasks than could be produced in the absence of such a division. But, given the existence of an employer-employee relationship and a division of labor, does Locke's theory of property provide a means of determining what share of the product produced rightly belongs to each person involved in the productive process?

At least part of the answer to this question has already been provided in our previous exposition of the implications of Locke's theory. We have seen that on his theory no person has a right to possess so much that he thereby prevents others from enjoying a decent standard of living, as determined by the resources of their society. We have also seen that his theory justifies the enactment of minimum wage legislation to ensure that every employee within the society receives a wage sufficient to enable him to live decently, the enactment of legislation providing for unemployment compensation sufficient to enable those willing but unable to find employment to live decently, and the formation of associations of workers and farmers to enable them to bargain more effectively than they would be able to do singly.

However, given the existence of a guarantee of a sufficient minimum wage, his theory would seem to leave the question of how much of the product produced by the employer-employee relationship and the division of labor rightly belongs to the employer and how much to the employee as one to be answered through a bargaining process. The
result would be a contract between employer and employee, the terms of which would be determined largely through such market considerations as supply and demand, including the supply of and the demand for various kinds of labor. It is important, however, to note that his theory does not require that the terms of the contract be fixed only by considerations of supply and demand. Because his theory implies that no man has a right to possess so much that others are thereby prevented from enjoying a decent standard of living, it seems clearly to imply that no employer has a right to make so large a profit that his employees are thereby prevented from receiving a wage sufficient to enable them to live decently and, therefore, to justify the enactment of minimum wage legislation and the formation of associations of workers to ensure that each employee does receive a decent wage.

It may be objected that the preceding still does not provide a means of determining an employer’s just profit on his investment—whether it is to be 5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, or what. This, however, is a silly objection. All that any theory of property can do is specify in general terms the conditions that must be satisfied if a profit is to be just. And this Locke’s theory does, for it implies that the profit of an employer is just only if it is not so large as to deprive his employees of a decent wage. In some situations a 5 percent return on one’s investment might be just in terms of this criterion; in others a 20 or even 100 percent return might be just. The notion of a just profit can no more be defined in terms of absolute fixed numerical percentages than the notion of a decent standard of living can be defined absolutely, independent of any consideration of the resources of a given society.

But, the objector might persist, profits on investments cannot be justified at all in terms of Locke’s theory of property, since he maintains that property can be acquired only through one’s own labor (or through inheritance or as a gift from someone who has labored for it), and someone who receives a profit on his investment does not labor for it. There are at least two replies to this objection. First, it is not impossible for someone to labor for the profit he receives on his investment: a person who works with his head in attempting to determine how best to invest his property also labors. Second, even if someone possessing property does not himself decide how best to invest it but hires someone else to do this for him, he is still running the risk of investment himself. He will profit to the extent that the manager of his property invests it wisely and fortunately, and will lose to the extent that it is invested unwisely or unfortunately. And unless he expects a profit on his investment, it is unlikely that he will risk his property.

The investor, however, as we saw above, is not the only one who profits from his investment. If successful, it increases the wealth of others as well as his own, and may create employment opportunities for those who need it. In this way the investment and risk of one’s
property benefits others as well as the investor, so that the latter performs a socially useful function in risking his property and merits some reward, just as the wage laborer who performs a socially useful function does. Thus the receipt of a profit on one's investment can be justified in at least two ways—as an inducement to invest and as a reward for the performance of a socially useful function.

The only alternative to providing such inducements would seem to be the confiscation and investment by society of one's surplus property (this being the amount of one's property that exceeds what one uses to satisfy one's own needs and wants). Locke's theory of property does seem to imply that no one has a right to hold possessions which he does not use if his doing so prevents others from attaining a standard of living which would be possible if these possessions were used, and would therefore justify their confiscation and use by society at large. But it does not require their confiscation if their possessor does use them; it requires only that their possessor be given an inducement to use them through allowing him to profit from their use. Indeed, one could argue that Locke's theory forbids the confiscation of one's possessions so long as they are being used in a socially beneficial way, since such confiscation would amount to depriving a person of his property without his consent, and would therefore constitute theft.

In this discussion of Locke's theory, of course, I have gone considerably beyond what he says explicitly. Throughout this discussion, however, I have sought to develop what seem, given his explicit statements, to be the implications of his words. I have especially endeavored to show that his theory is no mere antiquarian curiosity, applicable, at best, only to the simplest of economic situations in which there is neither a division of labor nor an employer-employee relationship. I have also attempted to show that it cannot be dismissed merely as a kind of simplistic ideology designed to justify either the economic status quo of late seventeenth-century England or the interests either of landed property or of the rising capitalist class. I have further sought to show that, rather than being compatible with laissez-faire capitalism, it is in fact incompatible with such a form of capitalism. Instead of justifying such a system of capitalism, his theory, I believe, constitutes at least the beginning of a philosophical justification of social welfare capitalism and governmental intervention in the economic process through legislation to ensure that no person is deprived of a decent standard of living as a consequence of the unfettered flow of economic forces. Indeed, as I think is evident from the interpretation I have placed upon his theory, it would not be difficult to develop it, without unduly straining it, in such a way that it would provide the beginning of a philosophical justification of at least certain modest forms of socialism.
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