

POLITICAL IMITATION IN PLATO'S *STATESMAN*

by

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(Under the Direction of Charles Platter)

ABSTRACT

In Plato's *Statesman*, the Eleatic Visitor claims that the city in which unchanging law rules imitates the true city in which the political expertise of the statesman rules. The imitation, as I argue, lies in the likeness between the agreement about what is just in the two kinds of cities. The agreement that the law is just enables a kind of harmony between the parts, namely the opposing groups of citizens, of the whole city in the city where law rules. Law, in so far as it prescribes what is good for the whole city rather than a part, takes the place of the statesman in this city. The agreement between the opposing parts of the city makes the law effective and so gives unity to the city in imitation of the statesman's rule.

INDEX WORDS: Plato, *Statesman*, law, imitation

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CHAPTER 1

I. Introduction

The nature of the “second best” city is an important issue in Plato’s political thought, and for good reason. As the Eleatic Visitor says in the *Statesman* regarding the ranking of non-ideal cities, “perhaps everything that all of us do is for the sake of this sort of thing” (302b).¹ After all, the best that we can reasonably expect to accomplish politically *here and now*, rather than an unlikely ideal, is of interest to the whole city, including the philosopher. It is therefore no surprise that the relation between the best and the second best arises in the *Statesman*, especially given the unphilosophical disposition of Young Socrates, the Visitor’s interlocutor, with his need for transcendence of mere opinion. But the second best does not seem to fare well when compared to the best city. The Visitor claims that the city ruled by the expert ruler, i.e. the statesman, is the only city that is ruled correctly and justly, and in fact only this city possesses a real constitution (πολιτεία). All cities not ruled with knowledge fall short of justice and are somehow not really constitutions, but rather are imitations of the city ruled with knowledge.² Those that are lawful and well ordered imitate the best constitution properly, while unlawful and disordered cities do so poorly. The sovereignty of law, rather than of any one individual or part of the city, is what makes the cities second best.

The Visitor therefore acknowledges that there is justice in cities that are ruled by law, while nonetheless claiming that such cities are not genuine constitutions. When he claims that

¹ Translations given are from Rowe (1999), unless otherwise indicated.

² Plato does not use the terms πολιτεία, πόλις, or νόμος very strictly. Sometimes the Visitor speaks of constitutions imitating, and sometimes laws (297c, 300a, 300e-301a) imitating, the best constitution. I will focus in this thesis on law in a broad sense, including written prescriptions, but also more generally in the sense of political custom that determines the nature of the constitution of the state. This reflects the use of the terms in the text.

the best thing for a city that is not ruled by the statesman to do is to abide by its laws, he in effect endorses laws of actual, non-ideal cities, with the qualification that a constitution ruled by law is not a genuine constitution. What the qualified endorsement of law amounts to is debated, with some scholars arguing that the Visitor (and through him Plato) is expressing a relativist stance toward actual, historical cities and assigning value to consent as such, or that he is giving a more realistic political theory with the implication that he has discarded an absolute standard of justice since writing the *Republic*. Some take it that he is in fact not even discussing actual cities in the *Statesman* when he says that cities should retain their laws. I will argue that all of these views fail to do justice to the *Statesman*. The Visitor is presenting a view on which actual cities are just to the extent that they imitate the rule of the statesman, and that they do so through their laws. Previous commentators have failed to investigate how lawful constitutions imitate the true constitution, and so they have misunderstood the nature of law in the *Statesman*. Since that which is imitated is genuine and therefore a standard by which to measure that which imitates, we can only account for what Plato says about lawful constitutions by considering what they imitate, and how they imitate it. This will likewise shed light on why lawful constitutions are superior to unlawful constitutions. My attempt to solve this difficulty in the politics of the *Statesman* will therefore involve some discussion of the statesman's rule as well as law.³

To determine how exactly law imitates the genuine constitution I will look closely at the description of law in the *Statesman* in relation to the best city as presented in the dialogue. In general terms, the statesman's wise rule over the ideal city involves weaving together the

³ There are obvious reasons for thinking that a state with law is better than one without law on a practical level. Law (whether written or unwritten) is publicly known, with the result that individuals can expect certain forms of behavior to be punished in the judicial system; laws provide economic regulation and therefore increased economic efficiency; they provide a political order of some kind or other that makes political activity possible at all, as well as preventing the arbitrary decisions of office holders for their own advantage. They provide at least minimal fairness. It is another question why the laws established on the basis of opinion should imitate the true constitution ruled by knowledge. This is the question I hope to answer.

contrary natures of the citizens, particularly the courageous and the temperate characters, and guiding the subordinate arts of the general, orator, and judge so that they apply their skills in a timely manner. Law, given that it is an imitation of the genuine constitution, must contain some likeness to the order that the statesman puts into the city through his weaving of the citizens and his authority over the subordinate arts. The Visitor is not explicit as to how this imitation works – the entire discussion of law takes place within the more important task of distinguishing the statesman from the sophist from 291a to 303c. The Visitor’s primary goal is to show that the political knowledge of the statesman is rare and that the leaders of most cities do not have this knowledge, and therefore are sophists, makers of images. There is no satisfying, explicit answer to the question in the text.

In my first chapter I will explain the problem of how law imitates the genuine constitution more fully. Young Socrates is told that the sovereignty of law is inferior to the sovereignty of the statesman, and so law on its own does not provide for a truly just city, but at the same time the Visitor affirms that cities that are not ruled by a statesman should abide by their laws strictly. There is therefore a tension between the inadequacy of law – even laws given by the statesman are not always universally just and good, due to the complexity of human nature – and its value. Seeing this tension and holding both the value of law and its inherent limitation is necessary for grasping how law imitates the true constitution. The Visitor does not express a simplistic contrast between the ideal city and every other city, which, not being ideally just, has nothing to recommend it at all. The imitation of what is true and best is *only* imitation, and therefore not true and not best, but given that it is an imitation, it is in some way like the true and best. If law is an imitation, we can only understand the value of law as the Visitor, and

Plato,⁴ presents it in the *Statesman* when we keep this tension inherent to imitation in mind. I will also show in this first chapter how commentators on the *Statesman*, when they have addressed the problem of law an imitation, have failed to acknowledge the tension and have therefore not explained *how* law is an imitation, or what makes it imitate the true constitution.

In my second chapter, I will argue that, for the Visitor, a balance in the offices of the city between two opposing political groups is essential to both kinds of constitution. The Visitor describes the statesman as a weaver of woof and warp, which are metaphors for opposite natures of the citizens in the true city. His expertise is to unify opposites. As I will show, balancing the city between the opposite natures of the citizens is a metaphysical necessity. The Visitor claims that any expert who produces anything, including the statesman and his product, the city, does so by looking to a “due measure” between two extremes (284a). He does not explain what this means for the city, and so Plato leaves it to the reader to consider the city in light of the Visitor’s brief digression from 283b to 287b. The metaphysics of production has implications for the lawful city as well. If we consider the *Philebus*, we see that for anything to come into being, it must have a limit within an unlimited. The limit is a definite measure between two unlimited extremes. Socrates in the *Philebus* therefore reinforces what we find in the *Statesman*, and makes it clear that Plato’s metaphysics has political implications for both the ideal and the non-ideal cities. Politics necessarily involves a complex unity of opposites.

The Visitor also suggests in his thought experiment on the establishment of law that the lawful city will involve a balance between opposites, although that balance is less than perfect. He describes the city that is based on the rule of law instead of the rule of the statesman as one that involves the cooperation of the rich and the poor. His use of verbs like συμβαλέσθαι (298c)

⁴ While I do not assume that Plato’s main speakers (usually Elder Socrates) always express Plato’s thought when they seem to support some philosophical doctrine, I can see no reason not to suppose that the Visitor speaks for Plato in this case.

and references to *τινῶν συμβούλων* (300b) suggest that the establishing of the lawful city is not based on the rule of one group alone to the complete exclusion of the other, but that there is a measure of cooperation between them. This is what we should expect both from the metaphysics that the Visitor provides, i.e. that there is an imperfect balance between opposites in the lawful city. The allusion to Solon at 295c, who was supposed to have balanced the rich and the poor in Athens against each other, also supports the reading of the passage on law. Without some such reconciling of opposites, the city will not only not be just, it will cease to exist.

In my third chapter, I will show how the necessary balance between the opposing political groups comes about in both kinds of city. In doing so, I will show that the lawful city imitates the true city through the citizens' agreement that the law determines what is just. The first step in this chapter, since the true city is the model that the lawful city imitates, will be to show more clearly the nature of the true city. The Visitor uses weaving as an analogy for the statesman's guidance of the constitution. The statesman, he says, weaves together the opposite characters of the courageous (*ἀνδρεῖος*) and moderate (*σώφρων*) natures through education, intermarriage, and shared office-holding. This brings unity to the city psychologically and therefore practically. The citizens share the same views about what is just and good, and they act together in harmony in realizing justice and goodness in their city, through the statesman's leadership. The agreement in political activity is possible because the citizens agree on what is just. One of the statesman's roles as statesman is to oversee the education of the citizens so that they will come to be more like those who are opposite to them in nature. Through this likeness, as well as the balancing of offices, all the citizens are able to share true agreement on how the city should act. The statesman's education of the citizens and the resulting agreement about what is just is therefore a defining feature of the ideal city.

I will argue that the rule of law imitates the true city in so far as it also contains a balancing of offices between opposites, and that this balance is based on agreement. The agreement in the lawful city is that the law determines what is just. The balance between the opposing groups of citizens is less perfect in the lawful city than it is in the true city, and the agreement among the citizens of the lawful city is not the stable true belief that the citizens of the true city share, but nevertheless law allows the citizens to cooperate in governing the city to some extent, thereby limiting strife. Law therefore also unites the city psychologically and practically as one unit rather than as separate factions fighting for sole sovereignty of the city. Because its purpose is to preserve the good of the whole city, as the Visitor implies in his thought experiment, when the citizens agree that it is just, they will not seek to rule for their own self-interest. The agreement in the lawful city that the law is just is what makes the lawful city imitate the true city. Agreement about justice is necessary for the unity of the true city, and it is not only necessary but the source of unity in the lawful city. Agreement in the lawful city makes the law effective, and so the law takes the place of the statesman as that which preserves the good of the whole.

II. Dramatic Context

In order to clarify the problem of law and imitation, I should give some description of the complex stage-setting for the *Statesman* and the Visitor's comments about non-ideal constitutions. The broader context that the dialogue is placed within connects directly to the problematic nature of law, as I will show here. The *Statesman* is the last in a trilogy of dialogues, the first and second of which are the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. All three are ostensibly concerned with knowledge or types of knowledge. The *Theaetetus*, an inquiry held by

Socrates and Theaetetus into the nature of knowledge generally, takes place on the day before both the discussions of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* occur (although strictly speaking, the discussions are narrated to Euclides and Terpsion by a slave).⁵ The discussion apparently takes place at the gymnasium where Theaetetus and his friends have been exercising (144c).

Theodorus the geometer is present and occasionally enters, sometimes unwillingly, into the inquiry. Although they fail to give a complete account of knowledge, the same group of characters meets again the next day at Socrates' bidding (*Theaetetus* 210d).

On the next day, the discussion is to be of particular kinds of knowledge, namely those that characterize the sophist, the statesman, and the philosopher. The same characters are present, including Socrates, Theodorus, and Theaetetus, but so also are Socrates, a young friend of Theaetetus, and an unnamed visitor from Elea whom Theodorus introduces, and who is simply referred to as the Eleatic Visitor. After a short debate between Theodorus and the Elder Socrates over the real nature of the Visitor (Socrates playfully asks whether he is not a god come to spy on them) and the ways in which the philosopher appears to most people (namely as sophist, statesman, or madman), Socrates asks the Visitor at *Sophist* 217a whether the sophist (σοφιστής), the statesman (πολιτικός), and the philosopher are one, two, or three different kinds (γένη). Everyone agrees that distinguishing these three should be the problem for discussion. The *Statesman* is accordingly the second part of a proposed three part discussion, although there is no dialogue named the *Philosopher*.⁶ The Visitor then begins a discussion with Theaetetus on the

⁵ See *Theaetetus* 142a-143c

⁶ Miller (2004) argues that the Visitor is acting as a mean between two non-philosophical groups and Socrates, the philosopher. On the one hand, the Visitor's project is to distinguish the sophist, statesman, and philosopher, and it is the first two for whom the majority mistake the philosopher. Socrates' trial is imminent, and the hostile citizens of Athens constitute one group of non-philosophers. On the other hand are the not-yet-philosophical students of the Academy, symbolized by Young Socrates, who is too eager to defer to the Visitor's suggestions. On this account, the philosopher must remain hidden to the non-philosophical. Plato's dialogues are pedagogical, and so there can be no dialogue *Philosopher*, which would take place between the Elder Socrates and the Visitor.

expertise that belongs to the sophist, famously involving an explanation of how there is non-being.

The *Statesman*, which dramatically follows the *Sophist*, is an inquiry into what kind of knowledge the statesman has. The Visitor is the main speaker here as well, but this time the dialogue is between him and Young Socrates (whom I will refer to simply as Socrates, except when it is ambiguous as to which Socrates I mean), a friend of Theaetetus. They assume that the statesman has knowledge of how to rule (258b), but describing precisely what this knowledge consists in is the project of the whole dialogue. Along with the *Sophist* and in accordance with the method of inquiry that Socrates refers to as a “gift of the gods” in the *Philebus* (see 16c ff.), the *Statesman* exhibits the systematic division (διαίρεσις) of forms.

Late in the dialogue, after a mythic digression, and discussions on the proper method of such inquiry, the Visitor argues that the statesman’s knowledge is sufficient for ruling a city well, and that this justifies his authority. The statesman knows what is just and good for the city, so he cannot fail to do what is best for the city. This gives the search for the statesman an important place in a complete account of the best kind of rule. The *Statesman* therefore, in so far as Plato recognizes that there is an ideal form of rule over cities, holds an important place in his political thought. Although, as the commentators frequently point out, the dialogue has long stretches that are on the surface tedious (the Visitor himself is aware of this tediousness, and encourages Socrates to keep inquiring despite the length of the discussion), it also contains much immediately engaging material in the digressions and on the kinds of political rule. The explicitly political doctrine is my primary subject here, but this political doctrine is not isolated from the divisions of forms, the myth on the cycles of the cosmos, and the reflection on how to

properly conduct an investigation into statesmanship or any form. I will therefore discuss various other parts of the dialogue as well as the explicitly political.

There is also one notable connection to the previous discussion of the *Sophist* that partly motivates the Visitor's discussion of law. This should not be surprising. Although the *Statesman* can be read independently of the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, given that the *Statesman* shares a dramatic framework with the other two dialogues, we should expect there to be some continuity in characters and themes. In relation to the nature of law, continuity between the dialogues is perhaps most evident in the identity of those who rule over non-ideal cities. At 291a-b the Visitor claims to have come across "a class mixed out of all sorts... For many of the men resemble lions and centaurs and other such things, and very many resemble satyrs and those animals that are weak but versatile; and they quickly exchange their shapes and capacity for action for each other's." Separating this "chorus" of sophists from the statesman means separating all those constitutions that are not genuine from the one that is, i.e. the one that is ruled by the statesman. The necessity of separating the sophist from the statesman prompts the discussion of non-ideal cities and the criteria that are typically used to evaluate them. One such criterion is lawfulness, or whether a city maintains the law or not. It turns out by the end of the digression into non-ideal constitutions that they are all ruled by sophists, since law is an imitation (303c). In the *Sophist* the sophist had been defined as one who imitates the truth by means of speech, creating false appearances (266d-268d). So the city in which law is sovereign is ruled by sophists, and the constitution ordered by law is also one produced by the sophist: those who "participate in all these constitutions, except for the one based on knowledge... turn out to be the greatest sophists among sophists" (303b-c). The context with which the discussion on law is set therefore sets limits on the value of law.

III. Law and Imitation

I will now clarify how law is, despite being an imitation, nonetheless politically valuable and even indispensable, according to the Visitor. Law as an imitation is necessarily false and unjust, yet still bears an important relation to the true constitution, and so we can neither simply dismiss law as worthless nor accept it as the essence of political justice. Its imitative nature is difficult to grasp properly because it limits the value of law, but is at the same time the very thing that makes law necessary for the non-ideal city. It is because law is an imitation that it has these seemingly contradictory features, and so seeing precisely how law is an imitation of the true constitution, i.e. how law is like and yet different from the true constitution, will make clear how the sovereignty of law can contain these apparently contrary features.

The limitation of law comes out clearly in the discussion on the correct standard by which to judge constitutions. The difficulty of separating the sophist from the statesman beginning at 291a is partly a matter of showing that the only criterion of what counts as a true and just constitution is the knowledge of the ruler. This is asserted against various other criteria that were current in Greek political thought. The Visitor and Young Socrates initially agree at 291d that constitutions are distinguished according to the number of rulers, so that constitutions ruled by one person are monarchies, those ruled by few people are aristocracies, and those ruled by many people are democracies.⁷ Furthermore, they acknowledge conventional criteria used to judge whether constitutions are ruled correctly or not. Those criteria are “force and consent, poverty and wealth, and law and lawlessness” (291e). The Visitor takes it upon himself to argue that these are in fact the wrong criteria by which to judge constitutions, and that the only true standard of correct rule is knowledge. This conclusion is compelled by the first hypothesis in the account of the statesman’s knowledge, namely that he has knowledge of how to rule (258b).

⁷ Cf. Herodotus *Histories* III.80-82.

Furthermore, knowledge of how to rule is held by very few individuals (292e-293a). The statesman is posited as the only true ruler because he has knowledge of how to rule *for the good of the city* (293c-d). His knowledge of what is good and just guarantees that he will govern well and justly. All the other criteria for judging constitutions therefore have to be subordinated to the single criterion of knowledge (293a-e). Since cities without the statesman as ruler are ruled by leaders who are ignorant of how to rule justly, all these constitutions “we must say are not genuine, and not really constitutions at all, but imitations of this one; those we say are ‘law-abiding’ have imitated it for the better, the others for the worse” (293e).

Here we have a stark separation of ideal and non-ideal constitutions which overturns the usual way of thinking about good and bad constitutions: there is one kind of constitution that is superior to all the rest, namely the one that is ruled with knowledge, and all other constitutions (which are somehow not really constitutions) are imitations of the best constitution. The rule of law is therefore unjust. That the best constitution is one in which law must not be sovereign unsurprisingly strikes Socrates as a rather misguided view of political authority, and he objects: “that ideal rule may exist even without laws was something harder for a hearer to accept” (293e). It is only after the Visitor points out the instability in human affairs and the impossibility of giving a simple, general principle that will always be good for the entire city that Socrates admits that law is inferior to knowledge of how to rule. The characters of individuals within the city differ, and so do their relations with each other. Therefore “it is impossible for what is perpetually simple (i.e. law) to be useful in relation to what is never simple” (294c). A question that remains, on which the Visitor is not explicit, is how much of a gap there is between the true constitution and the imitations. Are these imitative constitutions *mere* imitations, and hence of little or no value, as some scholars suggest? Or does imitation make even false constitutions

valuable in themselves? Or where between these two extremes does the Visitor stand? The proposed likeness between law and the best constitution leaves open many possibilities as to the value of law, and precisely what is good about lawfulness.

The claim that constitutions that are not ruled with the expertise of the statesman are not really constitutions at first glance seems to put a huge gap between all historical constitutions and the ideal constitution. The ideal and actual cities will be as far removed from each other as the true from the false, or the thing itself from an imitation of it. If the language of imitation in this political context reminds us of the context that Plato often uses the concept of imitation in, i.e. the metaphysical relation between the forms and the things that imitate them, the gap seems very wide indeed. But does this mean that Plato gives no thought to the preservation or improvement of historical cities because they are so far removed from the only city that matters, the ideal city? It is not immediately clear how we should answer from an initial reading of the *Statesman*, which is after all concerned first with defining ideal rule.

And yet the Visitor says that “perhaps everything that all of us do is for the sake of this sort of thing (302b),” “this sort of thing” being the determination of which is the best of the lawful constitutions. The rule of law cannot be entirely worthless. After all, law puts order into a city, even if it is an inferior and relatively unjust order. Political order of some kind seems necessary for sustaining a genuinely human life free from constant danger and for a structure in which economic and social, not to mention political, interaction can take place. The order that exists in non-ideal political communities therefore must have value, and so it seems wrong to absolutely condemn all such political order. This at least gives us some reason to doubt that the imitative nature of law makes the city that is ruled by law completely unjust. At the end of the

day, we may have to say that the difference between the ideal constitution and all others is wide, but what the consequences of this are remains undetermined.

In fact, leaving the ideal city aside, lawfulness turns out to be the factor that determines how just a city is. The Visitor claims that all lawful constitutions are superior to all lawless constitutions, i.e. constitutions that do not always abide by their laws but are without the leadership of the statesman. He therefore endorses law strongly, going so far as to argue that if cities are not to be ruled by the statesman, they ought to abide by their laws without exception. The best condition for a city to be in is to be ruled by the statesman's knowledge, but given that a city is not ruled by the statesman, the best thing for the city is the strict rule of law, both written and unwritten law:

“[Visitor:] given that this constitution we have talked about is in our view the only correct one, do you recognize that the others ought to employ the written documents that belong to this one, and save themselves in that way, doing what is now praised, although it is not the most correct thing to do? [Young Socrates:] What are you referring to? [Visitor:] The principle that no one in the city should dare to do anything contrary to the laws, and that the person who dares to do so should be punished by death and all the worst punishments. This is very correct and fine as a second choice” (297d-e).⁸

⁸ The laws that the Visitor refers to here are not only the laws that the statesman establishes and which would be guided by his knowledge, but also traditional law. He must have in mind here law that is established by opinion as well as law that is established by knowledge, since in order to illustrate his point he goes on at 298a ff. to describe a scenario in which the leaders of a city reject the authority of the statesman, and establish some other set of laws. The “second best” mentioned here is the rule of law, whether it is the law that a statesman has written for a city from which he is absent (a possibility implied by the Solon-like figure of 295c) or, as will more often be the case, the laws established according to ancestral custom. Rule by the statesman's law would then be better than rule by customary law, although both fall under the “second best” rule of law. Law can be better or worse, imitating the statesman's knowledge more or less. Furthermore, the Visitor's description of law here might seem to contradict the ranking of constitutions given at 302e ff., since on the one hand the Visitor says that constitutions, which come in a variety of forms, and in Greece of the 5th and 4th centuries were mostly oligarchies or democracies (reflected in the Visitor's

This is a strong endorsement of law. The Visitor suggests that rule of law separates just cities from unjust cities, thereby assigning a high value to the rule of law.

Nonetheless, the unphilosophical character of traditional law as the Visitor describes it is pronounced, making his endorsement of law all the more surprising and complicating his endorsement of law. The Visitor makes it clear starting at 298a that the kind of law that imitates the best city is the law established by some kind of majority that does not respect the statesman as an expert in ruling. This is not meant to be an historical account, so much as a psychological account of the reasons for the rejection of autocratic rule, including that of the statesman. The people mistrust the statesman and fail to distinguish him from a tyrant. They establish the law that comes about through “much experiment” (300b) and the unwritten customs of a city. The Visitor imagines the people of a city coming together and, since they do not trust the expertise of the steersman or the doctor (i.e. of the statesman), out of fear of an autocrat they set up their own laws which a majority of them agrees to abide by: “And once there was a record, on kurbeis or blocks of stone of some sort, of what the majority had decided, whether with the advice of some doctors and steersmen or of those who had no specialized knowledge of medicine or steersmanship, then all our sailing and caring for patients for all future time would have to be done according to this, along with certain other rules established as unwritten ancestral customs” (298d-e). This is the overthrow of political expertise by the ignorant mass of citizens. No art, including that of politics, can be conducted on the basis of strict and inflexible rules, but the logical outcome of rule by law is the replacement of all the arts by unchanging rules. In

own description of the establishment of law), should always abide by their laws, while at the same time he says that monarchy is the best form of lawful constitution. If this is correct, then why does he not say that all lawful constitutions, given that they do not have the statesman as a guide, should be lawful monarchies? The answer is presumably that cities are better off following the weight of their traditional laws than in importing alien laws, but that those cities that happen to have monarchical law will be best off. This emphasizes the importance of a city following not the best laws in general, but *its own laws*, according to which it will best imitate the best constitution. So imitation of the best constitution really comes about through those ancient customs of a city, despite their non-philosophical origin and limitation with respect to justice

comparison to the rule of the statesman, who is an expert at ruling and always rules for the good of the whole city, the rule of law seems absurd.

As the Visitor's scenario unfolds his endorsement of this anti-philosophical traditional law becomes even more striking. He seems to suggest that the rule of law, which is the next best form of government for a city after the rule of the statesman, will (or at least has the potential to) result in the outlawing of inquiry into correct political order, and indeed philosophy itself. The Visitor continues to use the arts of medicine and steersmanship as an analogy for statesmanship. The Visitor claims that "it will be necessary to establish a law against... steersmanship and seafaring, or health and truth in the doctor's art" (299b). He then describes what will happen to someone who engages in such activity, alluding to the trial and execution of Socrates. The rule of law entails that such a person will have to be regarded as "a star-gazer, some babbling sophist" and that someone would have to "indict him" who is "corrupting other people younger than himself" (299b-c). The failure to recognize the philosopher as a philosopher, to distinguish him from the sophist, is sometimes a matter of life and death. It seems that the rule of law, as the Visitor understands it, cannot tolerate the practice of philosophical inquiry, "for (so the law will say) there must be nothing wiser than the laws" (299c). The laws are unable to conceive of any justice that they do not embody themselves. This is in stark contrast with the wisdom of the statesman, whose knowledge recognizes the limitations of law and its inability to comprehend the good of the city in all possible circumstances, and which is directed rather at that same good while using law as a flexible tool for bringing justice into the city. Somehow, even despite the inferiority of law to the statesman's expertise, the rule of law is necessary for cities which lack a statesman, but at the same time it is hostile to the practice of philosophy, the highest human activity. Philosophical inquiry could determine how the city should be ruled so that it is stable

and just, but the rule of law, followed absolutely, will forbid investigation into what is really best for the city.

The tension between the hostility of law to philosophy, and the claim that non-ideal constitutions ought to follow their laws, is strong in the *Statesman*. As an imitation of the best constitution, law puts into a city an order that is somehow *like* true political justice, but it is simultaneously hostile to the understanding of justice. How can law imitate justice if it is hostile to justice? Again, I believe the proper way forward toward an understanding of how Plato can accept law is to consider more carefully how law imitates the best city. This approach to the issue will enable us to see the likeness of law to the statesman's leadership, and at the same time the difference between law and the true constitution.

IV. Scholarship on the *Statesman*

The imitative nature of law has been generally misunderstood or simply not discussed by scholars. For example, Julia Annas in her introduction to the *Statesman* focuses primarily on the development of Plato's thought, and sees the *Statesman* as a transitional dialogue from Plato's earlier and less realistic views expressed in the *Republic*, to his later and more reasonable views expressed in the *Laws* ("as often in the later dialogues, he is rejoining common sense").⁹ In the *Statesman*, she says, Plato still holds on to the idea of an expert ruler, but now the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of that expertise have been pulled away. She argues that since the statesman's knowledge is directive, unlike mathematics, Plato's political thought is moving away from the highly intellectualized philosopher kings of the *Republic*. The "common sense" that Plato expresses in the *Statesman* lies in the separation of the ability to rule justly for the good of the whole city from knowledge of the forms as they are presented in the *Republic*.

⁹ Annas and Waterfield (1995, xiii).

Annas assumes that the philosopher kings of the *Republic* somehow rule through their knowledge of mathematics, but while mathematics is indeed necessary for their education in so far as they must be able to engage in thought (διάνοια) in order to grasp the forms and the form of the good (509d-511e), we should not assume that even according to the Socrates of the *Republic* knowledge of mathematics is itself the knowledge that makes the philosopher kings able to rule well. Annas also assumes without justification that by not addressing the education of the statesman in the *Statesman*, Plato is rejecting views that he put forward in the *Republic*, rather than simply pursuing a different project in the two dialogues. Finally, the nature of statesmanship in the *Statesman* is, if not a branch of mathematics, nonetheless dependent on an art of measurement (μετρητική [τέχνη] (283d)). The Visitor says that there are two forms of the art of measurement, one of the more and the less in relation to each other, and one of the more and less in relation to “what is in due measure” (τὸ μέτριον) (284a). The arts (τέχναι), including statesmanship, rely on the art of measurement in relation to what is in due measure: “For I imagine all such sorts of expertise guard against what is more and less than what is in due measure... It is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all the good and fine things they do produce” (284a-b). This does not entail that statesmanship is itself mathematics, but it suggests that the statesman would need a strong grasp of the proper mathematical proportion between the parts of the city that he weaves together. The fact that the education that the statesman must go through to be a statesman is not described in the text does not mean that Plato thinks a statesman would not require education in mathematics. There are certainly questions as to whether and how the two dialogues are consistent with respect to ideal rule according to knowledge, but my goal here is to first take the *Statesman* on its own terms, not to compare it to the *Republic* or the *Laws*.¹⁰

¹⁰ The supposed inconsistencies between the *Republic* and the *Statesman* are overstated by scholars, for example

Annas also makes a rather implausible conclusion that does not give political imitation its proper place because of her focus on Plato's supposed development. According to Annas, while giving us something much more plausible, Plato is at the same time moving toward relativism: "Plato is on the way to the almost Burkean reverence for tradition and established custom that we find in the *Laws*. He has come to see law, however rigid, as expressive of what a community has agreed on, and, just as such, having some status as against the desires of particular people to alter it. It is remarkable that a community's consensus should, just as such, have any rationally defensible status for Plato."¹¹ This view does not do justice to the claim that law *imitates* the best and truly just city. For Plato, agreement that the law is just brings about a likeness to the true city, but the statesman's knowledge remains the absolute standard of good and just rule. Consent to the law has its value apart from the citizens' understanding of that value. The essential point is not simply that in lawful cities the people consent to the law, but that law imitates the best state.

Christopher Rowe argues alternatively that the *Statesman* does not present a fundamental transition in Plato's thought regarding the nature of proper political rule from the *Republic* to the *Laws*, but rather that the three texts are consistent.¹² So he argues that, despite the fact that the statesman's knowledge is not mathematical, we should not assume that the statesman does not need a grasp of the form of the good just as the philosopher king does according to the *Republic*. The knowledge that the philosopher king has as philosopher king, as Rowe points out, is not mathematics but a grasp of the good. The divided line passage in the *Republic* shows that what

regarding the metaphysics of the two dialogues. There is debate over whether the "forms" (εἶδη, ἰδέα) or "classes" (γέννη) of the Statesman are the forms of the *Republic* and *Phaedo* given that in the *Statesman* the classes that are divided are not described as unchanging, divine, themselves by themselves. See Samaras (2006, 138-143) for an argument that "Forms are in all probability present in the dialogue" with 285d-286b and 269d-e as evidence for this claim, although Samaras does not argue that the classes of knowledge that the Visitor and Socrates divide are the forms of the *Republic* and *Phaedo*.

¹¹ Annas and Waterfield (1995, xx).

¹² Christopher Rowe (1999).

defines the philosopher king is a higher order of knowledge than mathematics, which is a matter of διάνοια, although knowledge of mathematics is necessary for achieving knowledge of the good through νόησις. Rowe thus argues correctly that the statesman as defined in the *Statesman* is not necessarily different than the philosopher king of the *Republic*.

However, Rowe's understanding of the relation between the lawful constitution and the true constitution is mistaken. He argues against Annas that in fact Plato is not endorsing any consensus to law apart from the statesman's expertise, on the basis that Plato "usually attaches no value to consensus."¹³ The laws that imitate the best city are, according to Rowe, not the laws that actual cities establish, but only the laws that the statesman himself establishes. In support of this view, he offers an alternative translation of the Visitor's claim at 300c that law imitates the constitution that the statesman rules over. On his reading of the passage, the Visitor says that imitations of the genuine constitution are laws that are established by "those who know that have been written down so far as they can be."¹⁴ Those who know are of course statesmen themselves, and so the laws that the Visitor says are an imitation of the truth are the statesman's laws, not the laws that are established by non-statesmen as described in the scenario 298a-299e. He suggests that the "advisors" that are said to persuade the citizens to accept certain laws for their city at 300b are statesmen as well. On this reading of the passage and the Visitor's claims that law imitates the best constitution, Plato does not endorse the laws of actual, non-ideal cities in any way. The laws that imitate the best city are the statesman's laws, established on the basis of knowledge. They still fall short of the best city, since law will inevitably, in some cases, prescribe what is not just or not good for the city: the simplicity of law is inadequate for the

¹³ Ibid. xv. Rowe gives expresses the same view in *Plato: Statesman* (1995, 16-17).

¹⁴ Rowe (1999, 76).

complexity of human affairs, and so even the statesman's laws are on their own only second best. If Rowe is right, then the discussion of law has nothing to do with historical cities and their laws.

But Rowe's interpretation is problematic. First of all, the Greek at 300c is ambiguous, as Rowe admits.¹⁵ The imitations of the truth are τὰ παρὰ τῶν εἰδότην εἰς δύναμιν εἶναι γεγραμμένα. The Visitor's language is ambiguous as to whether the limiting εἰς δύναμιν ("as far as possible") is to be taken with τῶν εἰδότην or εἶναι γεγραμμένα, i.e. whether the imitations are the things written by those who *know as far as possible*, or whether they are *written as far as possible* by those who know.¹⁶ On the former reading, the understanding of those who give the laws is limited, suggesting that they are not statesmen. On the latter reading, the writings are limited (presumably a reference to the earlier discussion at 294a-b on the impossibility of law embracing the complexity of human affairs), while the lawgivers are statesmen. Both readings seem awkward, since non-statesmen simply do not have knowledge at all rather than having limited knowledge; on the other hand, the law should be easy to write, regardless of its inability to always prescribe what is best.

Nonetheless, it is better to take εἰς δύναμιν with τῶν εἰδότην, since otherwise the text is inconsistent. Rowe's reading does not account for the way that the Visitor makes the distinction between the best city, which the statesman rules, and the second best city (297e).¹⁷ The Visitor suggests that he and Socrates describe how the second best city comes about, and then immediately goes on to give the scenario in which the citizens of an imagined city establish law

¹⁵ Rowe (1999, xiv-xvi).

¹⁶ Skemp gives "copies based as far as possible on the instructions received from those who really possess the scientific truth on these matters" (Skemp 1992, 77).

¹⁷ As I read the passage, the Visitor takes the best constitution to be that in which the statesman rules without having to rely on the imprecision of law, but simply uses his knowledge. "Second best" includes all lawful cities, those in which the statesman establishes law and in which the citizens set up their own laws without the statesman's guidance. There will then be significant variation of the quality of rule in second best constitutions since some of them have laws that, although having the imprecision inherent to law, are at least established by the statesman, while others just have laws that have only the ancestral customs (which themselves are presumably of varying quality) of the citizens as guidance and so are less just.

by consensus and in accordance with their ancestral customs. The citizens are explicitly said to reject the statesman, and he is at best taken as no better than any other citizen in regard to political wisdom (298a-e). The scenario is a description of how the second best city, i.e. the lawful city, arises, and so the “second best” must include lawful constitutions that do not have the statesman’s laws. The Visitor follows this at 300a-b with a condemnation of lawlessness, the overturning of traditional law by someone other than the statesman for his own benefit. The illegitimate usurpation of authority in the city is contrary to the laws written on the basis of “much experiment” (πείρας πολλῆς) with the help of “some advisers” (τινων συμβούλων), and is “a mistake many times greater than the other” (ἁμαρτήματος ἁμάρτημα πολλαπλάσιον). “The other” mistake is of course the initial rejection of the statesman as the sole authority. We therefore have a ranking of the best city ruled by the statesman, the second best ruled by law, and the worst ruled by someone who is politically ignorant and self-serving. But on Rowe’s reading, the “advisers” who persuade the citizens to adopt certain laws are statesmen, and so the laws are the statesman’s laws, not laws established by a majority of average citizens. This interpretation does not give any place to the establishment of traditional law as just described, nor does “much experiment” fit the context as Rowe understands it, nor does the “other mistake.” On Rowe’s reading the Visitor’s thought is incoherent, and his description of how law arises in cities has no connection to what comes before.

The awkwardness in the discussion implied by Rowe’s reading is easily avoided, as long as we recognize that the Visitor is discussing a wide range of non-ideal and historical cities. The Visitor says that law arises when the “people” or “the rich” come together (298c). The “people” of course represent democracy, and “the rich” represent oligarchy, both of which are imagined as lacking the statesman’s knowledge. Furthermore, the Visitor separates these lawful cities from

lawless cities, lawless not in the sense that the statesman is the highest authority, but in the sense that those who rule ignore the laws for their own advantage or to do “some personal favor” (300a-b). Lawlessness for the sake of private gain is the worst form of government. On Rowe’s reading of the dialogue, this discussion does not seem to fit the context. The dialogue is more coherent on the understanding that Plato’s view is that all these lawful and lawless cities imitate the best city, some better and some worse. Rowe’s reading of the text, driven by the assumption that Plato “attaches no value to consensus” is not helpful for understanding the relation between actual cities and the best city on the Visitor’s view.

Melissa Lane’s interpretation of how law imitates the best city as she explains in her article “A New Angle on Utopia” is similar to Rowe’s.¹⁸ She also reads the Visitor at 300c as saying that the laws that imitate the best city are only the laws that the statesman establishes, not traditional laws. The second best city is that which adopts the statesman’s laws and does not change them, and the worst city is the one that changes its laws in an attempt to imitate the statesman’s art. She takes the Visitor’s distinction between better and worse imitations of the best city at 300d-e as support for her view. This analysis does not give a place to the Visitor’s account of how traditional law is established (298a-299e). Lane nonetheless acknowledges that actual cities imitate the best city. Her understanding of the imitation between the actual cities and the best city has to do with the static law of the second best city and the dynamic ruling activity that the statesman has in accordance with his grasp of the right time (καιρός) for applying the subordinate arts. She does not try to answer the question of how it is that actual laws, static or not, could imitate the best city. Lane’s analysis of the imitation of the best city by law in *Method and Politics in Plato’s Statesman* is also lacking. She says that the similarity between lawful cities and the statesman’s city is that both refrain from changing their laws

¹⁸ Lane (1995, 287).

without the advice of the statesman. The best city only changes its laws when the statesman commands that it do so, and the lawful cities simply never change their laws given that they do not have a statesman to advise them or that they are unwilling to respect his authority. This is a surface similarity that does not bring to light the unity of either city, nor therefore how the lawful city imitates the unity of the true city.

Seth Benardete gives only brief comments about how lawful cities imitate the best city. He suggests that there are two ways in which imitation occurs. One kind of imitation is “purely formal,” in so far as those who attempt to act unlawfully will make the same argument that the statesman makes, that in the best form of political organization, law is not the highest authority (cf. 301b-c). The apparent necessity of acting contrary to law would seem to justify the tyrant’s actions, but the average citizen lacks political expertise and therefore the ability to discern the statesman from the tyrant, both of whom act contrary to law. The tyrant would imitate the best city by acting unlawfully. The lawful cities on the other hand “lay it down that no one should violate the law. The unchangeableness which this prohibition tries to maintain on the level of action corresponds to the constant goal of political science. It therefore is an imitation of that goal, for on the level of action the true statesman is always altering his course.”¹⁹ The stability of the true city is therefore imitated by the “unchangeableness” of the law in the city that never changes its laws. But why should static laws give stability to the opposition internal to the city? We still need an account of how law brings stability to the city, rather than a description of surface similarity.

Stanley Rosen’s *Plato’s Statesman* is a helpful discussion for drawing out the implications of the weaving metaphor that the Visitor uses as a model for statesmanship. Rosen highlights the impossibility of completely separating theory from practice on the terms set by the

¹⁹ Seth Benardete (1984, III.135-136)

dialogue itself. The Visitor's description of the statesman as a producer undermines any strict isolation of theoretical knowledge from practical knowledge. But Rosen's suggestion that there is no real difference between the two is not justified, nor is his claim that the forms and classes referred to so frequently in the dialogue, the εἶδη and γένη, have no reality. The process of dividing is as he argues guided by the goals of those in discussion, but they can hardly on this basis be said to create conceptual reality. The *Statesman* has a robust metaphysical realism underlying the basic framework of division, brought out for example in the discussion of the two kinds of measurement at 283b ff. and the "finest and greatest" (κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα) (286a) things for the sake of which the entire discussion is conducted.

In order to gain a better understanding of how Plato views the nature of law, and its relation to true political justice, we should consider Plato's attention to historical circumstances and his appropriation of contemporary political thought and Greek political tradition. Christopher Gill offers a helpful analysis of the Visitor's strategy for convincing Socrates of the superiority of knowledge over law at 291a-303d, in which he points out both the conventional status of Socrates' "constitutionalism," a view that was already present in Greek thought prior to Plato.²⁰ He argues that the Visitor in effect refutes Socrates' "pre-theoretical constitutionalism," his view that law is necessary for just government, but ends up giving that constitutionalism a new foundation within a broader political theory in which knowledge of what is best and most just for a city is the highest form of political rule, and should take precedence over law.²¹ This account of the discussion clarifies the way in which, while not rejecting traditional law entirely and the ways in which other Greeks conceptualized law, Plato subordinates it to knowledge-

²⁰ Christopher Gill, (1995).

²¹ Ibid., 292-295. Gill summarizes his point: "Socrates is led by the argument from a type of pre-theoretical constitutionalism to a post-theoretical constitutionalism, in which his original reservations are transformed rather than reinforced."

based rule. Gill does not make an attempt to explain how exactly ancestral custom is subordinated to the statesman's knowledge, or in other words how ancestral custom imitates that knowledge, but he does help us to see the historical features of that discussion. Furthermore, as Gill points out, Socrates' constitutionalism has precedence elsewhere in Greek political thought, as we can see in Herodotus' *Histories* (III.80). There Otanes defends law as a necessary check on power, and endorses the *ισονομία* of democracy. This feature also shows the extent to which the discussion of law in the *Statesman* is embedded in Greek political thought prior to Plato's own analysis. I will take into account such features of the Visitor's discussion of law, particularly with respect to his thought experiment on the establishment of law and the relevance of his allusion to Solon.

In addition, there are a number of features of the discussion about non-ideal cities worth pointing out. The Visitor uses language (e.g. at 298d-299a) that alludes to Athenian constitutional practice. The leaders of the city are imagined as writing laws on *κύρβεις* (wooden tablets) or *στῆλαι* (blocks of stone), on which the actual laws of Athens were displayed. The choice of officers by lot or by pre-selection (*προκρίσις*) also echoes the practice of actual Greek cities. The action of examining the conduct (*εὐθύνειν*) of those who have just left office was a part of Athenian practice. The leaders are imagined as the majority of the rich or of the people generally, i.e. the leaders of the two most prevalent forms of constitution, oligarchy and democracy. As Rowe notes "the whole discussion is in principle wholly general" and meant to apply to all cities that establish laws as the highest authority, but nonetheless these descriptions reveal Plato's attention to historical practices within Athens at least.²² Some scholars point to the

²² Rowe (1995, 228).

contemporary dichotomy between the courageous and the moderate in Thucydides, an issue that seems to have potential for understanding law and imitation.²³

My approach to the text will give attention to the historical features of the dialogue, as well as to the way that the dialogue develops dramatically. Mitchell Miller's *The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman* is an excellent work with regard to dramatic development. Miller's characterization of Young Socrates as deficient at philosophical conversation because of his reluctance to criticize claims put forward by the Visitor is basically right. His argument that the Visitor acts as a mean between the younger, unphilosophical Socrates and the older, wiser Socrates is also an example of the degree of subtlety that the dialogue displays, and supports my goal of reading parts of the dialogue, which so far have not been compared in depth, against each other. Scholars who have called attention to these dramatic and historical features of the dialogue have not answered the question of how law imitates the true city. I will use some of their insights in order to do so.

²³ Cole (1991, 203); Lane (1995, 280-281); North (1966).

CHAPTER 2

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I will show that balance between two opposing groups of citizens is an essential aspect of the true constitution and the lawful constitution. Without a balance there can be no city at all. The imitation between the two constitutions lies in the similarity between the balancing of opposites and, more fundamentally as I will show in the next chapter, the agreement that holds among the citizens of each constitution. Furthermore, since the true constitution is the standard by which we are to measure the lawful constitution, the balance in the lawful constitution must somehow reflect the balance that is in the true constitution. In this chapter, I will argue for the *necessity* of balancing opposites in both constitutions, while saving a fuller explanation as to *how* each balances opposites for the next chapter, although I will touch on this issue to some extent here as well. Other commentators have not addressed the issue of balancing opposites in the *Statesman*, and so I will focus simply on the importance of balance for both kinds of constitution before showing the exactly how each performs this essential role.

I will make this argument in three sections. First I will briefly discuss the true constitution as the Visitor describes it. He claims that the statesman creates the constitution by weaving together the courageous and the moderate citizens, whose natures which are opposites of each other. The weaving consists in producing a sharing of offices by both kinds of citizens. The Visitor leaves certain questions unanswered, for example how education and the agreement about justice that it creates relates to the sharing of offices by the citizens, and I will come to this

question in the last chapter. I will show that the statesman actually makes the two characters more like each other, and thus turns their pseudo-virtues, their courageous and moderate characters, into real virtue, thereby approaching the true virtue that the statesman himself must have.

In the second section of this chapter I will argue from the Visitor's description of the lawful city that for Plato the lawful city as well must balance opposites. The balance that holds in lawful cities is not the full unity of opposites that belongs to the true constitution, so it is correspondingly less clear that there is a balance in lawful constitutions. The balance is not complete as it is in the true constitution. Therefore more work has to be done in order to show that there is a kind of balance of opposites in the lawful constitution as well as the true constitution.

While the Visitor is not explicit on this point, he does suggest strongly that a sort of balancing goes on in the lawful constitution as well as the true constitution. The idea of balancing opposites in a political context was so to speak "in the air" in fourth century Athens, and so we should understand the discussion of law at 298a-299e in terms of balancing opposites. The Visitor alludes to Solon at 295c, shortly before the passage concerning the establishment of law, thereby putting the idea of balancing opposites in the mind of Plato's reader. It is clear that he is alluding to Solon. The Visitor asks Socrates whether the doctor or gymnastic trainer who would soon be "out of the country and away from his charges for what he thought would be a long time" (μέλλοντα... ἀποδημεῖν καὶ ἀπέσσεσθαι τῶν θεραπευομένων συγχρόν, ὥς οἴοιτο, χρόνον) would leave reminders for his patients or those in training of his instructions. The doctor and gymnastic trainer are analogies for the statesman in this context, and the reminders are the rules they would leave behind, are analogous to the statesman's laws. The Visitor is

thinking of a lawgiver, like Solon, who is described in Herodotus' *Histories* I.29 ff. as giving laws and taking a journey abroad from Athens: "he went abroad for ten years" (ἀπεδήμησε ἔτεα δέκα) (I.29). The statesman here is also thought of as a lawgiver who takes a long journey, and so the careful reader would think of the famous lawgiver Solon.

The value of the allusion is brought out by a comparison to the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia*, which presents Solon as balancing opposites, namely the rich and the poor. It seems therefore that the current way of understanding Solon's laws was of a balance of opposites, at least in a philosophical context. The effect of the allusion to Solon therefore would be to bring to mind the same view of law for a 4th century B. C. Greek reader, and so we too should suppose that the passage is meant to be read in terms of balancing opposing political groups.

In the passage on the establishment of law itself, the Visitor discusses the two groups Solon was supposed to have balanced, the few rich and the many poor. The Visitor uses terms that show that he thinks of a broad basis for the discussion in this imaginary assembly, a basis that includes both rich and poor. He claims that both "private individuals" (ιδιωτῶν) and "craftsmen" (δημιουργῶν) "together contribute" (συμβalέσθαι) their judgment on the laws (298c), and that it is in an assembly of such people giving counsel together (τινῶν συμβούλων) that law originates (300b). The Visitor implies that the opinions that go into making the laws of the city in which law rules come from both the rich and the poor. The allusion to Solon along with the language that the Visitor uses to describe the establishment of law strongly suggest that the lawful city must in some way balance opposing groups of citizens, especially when seen in the light of the nature of the true city.

Finally, in the third section of this chapter, I will argue that the metaphysics of the *Statesman*, which is the same metaphysics that we see more clearly in the *Philebus*, supports my

claim that both constitutions balance opposites, and that in fact they must for there to be political order. At 283d ff. the Visitor gives an account of two kinds of arts of measurement. One of these arts is a matter of finding the proper measure between two extremes. It includes all arts concerned with things that come to be, including the art of statesmanship. Statesmanship is a productive art, and the city is something that comes to be, so the true constitution must have due measure between extremes in the city. In fact, the constitution is the due measure that balances the opposites in the city. The discussion of the four kinds of entities in the *Philebus*, which is consistent with the passage on the arts of measurement in the *Statesman*, entails that anything that comes to be, not just what is produced by a craftsman, is composed of a limit in the unlimited. The unlimited is a set of opposites, and is equivalent to the extremes between which the craftsman finds the due measure in the *Statesman*. The due measure is a limit in the terms of the discussion in the *Philebus*. It must be the case therefore that the order in any city, not just the true city, is a limit between opposites. The constitution of each is the limit – for the true city it is the proper measure referred to in the *Statesman*, for the lawful city it is some inferior limit. The metaphysics in these two dialogues therefore supports the claim that the city is essentially a balance between opposites, whether it is a correct balance or an incorrect balance. What remains to be determined is only what precisely the balance is for each, which I will come to in my last chapter.

The discussion of the lawful constitution precedes the discussion of the true constitution in the dialogue, but my argument will be clearer if I reverse the order, since the nature of that which imitates will be seen more clearly once we have a clear conception of that which it imitates. I will therefore begin with the nature of the balance in the true constitution.

II. Balancing Opposites in the True Constitution

At 305e the Visitor returns to the metaphor of weaving to complete the description of the statesman. Following the final distinction of the statesman from the other crafts (rhetoric, generalship, and judging), this discussion is central to the characterization of the statesman, and concerns his defining function. What he weaves together are two opposite natures in the citizens, one “courageous” or “manly” (ἀνδρεῖος) and the other “moderate” (σώφρων). The Visitor argues that courage (ἀνδρεία) and moderation (σωφροσύνη), although both parts of virtue, are somehow opposed to each other (306b ff.). In the political sphere, the opposition between the manly citizens and the moderate citizens causes great problems. When either of the two groups rules the city by itself, the city is enslaved or even destroyed because of the excesses that follow from the nature of whichever is ruling (307e-308a). The citizens with moderate natures are too desirous of living a quiet life, “carrying on their private business on their own by themselves” (αὐτοὶ καθ’ αὐτοὺς μόνοι τὰ σφέτερα αὐτῶν πράττοντες) (307e). This is a natural result of their orderliness and their reluctance to engage in activities that call for force. Because their desire for peace is “more untimely” (ἄκαιρότερος) than is proper they and their children become so unwarlike that they are at the mercy of surrounding peoples, and sooner or later are enslaved. The manly citizens on the other hand are too vigorous and eager to act, and so have the opposite tendency to be too forceful and aggressive. Because of their own character, they will at some time make so many enemies of their neighbors that their city will be enslaved or destroyed.

The Visitor claims explicitly that the two parts of virtue are opposed to each other. The view that the parts of virtue are at odds with each other is surprising, as the Visitor admits, and so he has to expound their opposition to Socrates. Somehow, he says, they have “hostility”

(ἐχθραν) and an “opposing stance” (στάσιν ἐναντίαν) toward each other (306b).²⁴ In relation to things that are “fine” (καλά), the Visitor and Socrates “place them in two classes that are opposed to each other” (εἰς δύο δὲ αὐτὰ τίθεμεν ἐναντία ἀλλήλων εἶδη) (306c). The two parts of virtue are here attributed to things, or actions, rather than directly to the characters of the citizens. We give praise for appropriate vigor and courage, or restraint and moderation, not for both at the same time. People with these opposing characters also favor that which is like themselves, so that courageous individuals praise what is done with force, and moderate individuals praise what is done gently. The statesman, in order to make a just and stable city, takes both kinds of citizens and puts them together into one constitution, rather than allowing them to stand apart. Their own natures are destructive to themselves and the city when followed in isolation from their opposites. Therefore the statesman unites the different and opposing natures, “both like and unlike – together into one, and so producing some single form with a single capacity” (ἐκ τούτων δὲ καὶ ὁμοίων καὶ ἀνομοίων ὄντων, πάντα εἰς ἓν αὐτὰ συνάγουσα, μίαν τινὰ δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν δημιουργεῖ) (308c).²⁵ The metaphor of weaving is particularly apt for the statesman’s function because it joins opposite kinds of thread, the soft and thick woof together with the firm warp. The moderate citizens are the statesman’s woof, and the manly citizens are the warp, which he orders by weaving together these “two natures with opposite tendencies” (ἐναντία δὲ τεινούσας ἀλλήλαις) (309b). The true constitution therefore unifies two opposing natures.

The opposition between these natures is brought out powerfully by the political consequences of their separation. It is worth discussing further because it also determines the statesman’s activity. The Visitor provides a vivid illustration of the necessity of uniting them.

²⁴ Taking ἐχθραν instead of Campbell’s ἐχθρὰ (cf. 308b4). Note the use of στάσις here, which appropriately for the context carries a political connotation.

²⁵ I translate ἰδέαν as “form” instead of Rowe’s (1999) “kind of thing.”

Both groups on their own can only see the good in living the kind of life that suits their peculiar nature. Given the power over the city to decide its “organization of life as a whole” (ὅλην... τὴν τοῦ ζῆν παρασκευήν) (307e), each group of citizens will lead the city as they see fit and give the whole city its own character.²⁶ One of the two groups will inevitably hold more power in the constitution than the other, and neither will seek a proper compromise with the other. Too often the moderate will be unwilling to do what is necessary to defend their city because they see peace as in itself superior to war, while the manly citizens conversely cannot see the value of peace in various circumstances. Neither vigorous action nor passivity is in itself good or bad, but both groups tend to see one as inherently superior, and will choose to act in a way that does not fit the circumstances that their city finds itself in. They are unable to grasp the appropriateness of acting in different ways that go against their nature in various political conditions. Worse yet, the destructive tendency of both will only increase with each generation. They will both seek to marry with their own kind, and so the moderate or manly rulers, whichever happens to rule the city, will end in complete lassitude on the one hand or mad aggression on the other (310d-e). The moderate citizens will be unable to see the value of force under any circumstances, and the manly will be unable to see the value of peace.

The unification of the two opposing natures of the citizens is therefore an essential feature of the true constitution, and presumably of all constitutions since the two opposing characters exist in whatever kind of city they happen to live before the statesman comes along to reconcile them. Since the character of an individual is determined by which of two opposing parts of virtue he or she shares in, excessive aggression or lethargy are the two extremes that humans in general will tend toward. The natural occurrence of the characters ensures that one or the other will always share in the constitution, and so the tendency for each to destroy the city

²⁶ Cf. *Republic* 435e-436a; 544d.

when left to itself will continue unless one person can somehow direct them for their own benefit. As the Visitor says in the long cosmological myth, in the age of Zeus the whole cosmos tends toward unlikeness (273d), and in the political realm we come to see at the end of the dialogue that this means a tendency among the citizens to approach the extremes of character, becoming more and more unlike each other.²⁷

As I have said, it is the inability of the citizens to always correctly determine in the countless circumstances that a city will find itself when it is appropriate to be passive and restrained or active and forceful. Neither of these kinds of behavior is in itself good or bad, but it is difficult for the citizens, who tend to favor what is like their own natures, to always know which is best. The opposition between the moderate and the manly citizens will apparently always be a problem for the city. Some kind of wisdom is needed in order to prevent the harmful tendencies of the citizens. The statesman alone has the wisdom to establish a political order that utilizes both kinds of citizens so that the actions of the city are balanced between them by making sure that offices consisting of several individuals are composed of both courageous and moderate citizens, and that any office filled by only one person is held by someone who has a share in both parts of virtue (311a). The city as a whole will then choose the appropriate course of action in any given situation. The statesman, as an expert, puts his knowledge into the constitution and the city as a whole so that it can correctly see when different and contrary actions, both restraint and aggression, are appropriate.²⁸

²⁷ I will return to the cosmological myth in my last chapter and show how it relates to the different constitutional forms.

²⁸ If this is right, then it seems that the statesman must grasp the form of beauty itself, the form of justice itself, and the form of the good. If the city gets its knowledge of how to act appropriately in any given situation from the statesman, then he himself must have this knowledge, but such knowledge would entail knowing these forms because they are what make the different actions fine, just, and good. Knowledge of the cause would explain why contrary actions, i.e. actions that use restraint and actions that use force, are fine, just, and good. The citizens on the other hand tend to equate restraint with justice, or force with justice.

Furthermore, the Visitor presupposes that both natures will continue to exist even in the city with a true constitution. The opposition will not be removed by the statesman's knowledge, although he will ensure that neither gets out of hand. He will unify them in the constitution, but without completely eliminating the opposition between them. Since these two characteristics are opposed to each other, and being natural will exist even in the city that is ruled well, the statesman must somehow control them and prevent their tendency to destroy the city on their own, rather than to do away with them entirely. The unity of the city will therefore even in the best of cities be a complex unity that involves internal tension.

The statesman unites the opposing natures of the citizens through education and intermarriage, which are for the sake of having both characters take part in office holding. The first of these, education, is a "divine bond" that gives the citizens true beliefs about what is fine, just, and good (309c). By sharing true beliefs about these values, the citizens are more unified, less inclined to act in an extreme manner, and better able to see how actions that go against their characters can be beneficial. Through the divine bond of education, as I will argue in my next chapter, the statesman makes the natures of the citizens more like each other, although they only rarely can be completely united in any human soul (most notably in the statesman's soul). The statesman also controls the marriages of the citizens so that neither character becomes too pronounced through intermarriage over generations between those citizens of the same nature. A proper pattern of reproduction therefore has a role to play in providing good citizens. The eugenics program of the true city and the education of the citizens ensure together that the various offices of the city are distributed properly between the two kinds of citizens, the eugenics by providing good natures and the education by cultivating those natures. The sharing of offices between the two types of nature is necessary because the statesman, who himself must be both

moderate and manly, cannot direct all the affairs of the city. Since he is only one man, and since we cannot expect him to have a successor, he will have to give the city laws to make the constitution just, leaving behind him the appropriate laws about education, eugenics, and office sharing. The other citizens take part in ruling, although they are always under the authority of the statesman, or his laws when he is absent. Together, the different citizens by obeying the statesman and his laws determine the appropriate time for when to act with force and when to use restraint.

III. Balancing Opposites and Solon

If indeed the statesman's unification of the opposing natures of the citizens according to knowledge is what makes him a statesman, then the lawful constitution must also somehow unify opposed elements. I will now argue that the Visitor's discussion of law in the lawful city, apart from the nature of the true constitution, supports this view. I will first discuss the allusion to Solon at 295c and what it means for how we should understand the discussion of law that follows. The allusion has the effect of putting the concept of balance in the reader's mind so that the reader should interpret the Visitor's discussion of law accordingly.

Solon, in his role as lawgiver for Athens, was thought of in the fourth century as balancing opposing political groups against each other. The fourth century *Athenaion Politeia* (which I will refer to as the *Ath. Pol.*) describes the constitution of the late 7th and early 6th century in terms of a struggle between two parties, namely the few rich and the many poor. The writer tells us "The constitution was in all respects oligarchic, in particular in that the poor, together with their wives and children, were slaves of the rich" (ἤν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἡ πολιτεία τοῖς τε ἄλλοις ὀλιγαρχικὴ πᾶσι, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐδούλευον οἱ πένητες τοῖς πλουσίοις καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ τέκνα

καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες) (II.2). This description points to the logically exclusive categories of the rich and poor: πλούσιοι and πένητες. The opposition between rich and poor mentioned at II.2 sets the terms for how Solon's reforms and his poetry are understood. Although in the *Ath. Pol.* the opposition is sometimes between the "few" and the "many," or between the κακός and the ἀγαθός (XII.4), the few are the few rich and the many are the many poor. The writer thinks of the opposition as being fundamentally one of wealth rather than birth or number, as is suggested by the general nature of the claim at II.2 and the fact that it precedes the description of Solon, but at any rate the basic opposition between the two groups therefore remains, whatever terms are used.

The *Ath. Pol.* interprets Solon's reforms and laws in terms of the opposition stated above. We are told that in the pre-Solonian constitution "the land was under the control of a few men" (IV.5). The author says that Solon was appointed as archon "when the majority were the slaves of the few, the people opposed the leaders of the state" (τῶν πολλῶν δουλευόντων τοῖς ὀλίγοις, ἀντέστη τοῖς γνωρίμοις ὁ δῆμος.) (V.1-2). The στάσις (V.2), which is to say the opposition, is put in terms of two categories, the many (πολλοί) who compose the people (δῆμος), and the few (ὀλίγοι) who compose the "leaders of the state" (γνώριμοι). The many are the poor, and the few are the rich. The terms here follow the earlier general description of the constitution, where the fundamental feature that defines these two groups that Solon mediated between is wealth.

Solon's poetry is also interpreted according to the opposition of rich and poor in the *Ath. Pol.* A fragment (fr.5) is given in support of the claim that Solon refused to take power for himself, but chose rather to defend both the rich and the poor against the other. Solon is quoted as claiming that he gave the people (δῆμῳ) "as much privilege as was sufficient" (τόσον γέρας ὅσον ἐπαρκεῖν), and that for those who had power (δύναμιν) and were "admirable for their

wealth” (χρήμασιν ἦσαν ἀγῆτοι), he made sure that they have “nothing unseemly” (μηδὲν ἀεικέες): “And I stood casting a strong shield around both, allowing neither of the two to be victorious unjustly” (ἔστην δ’ ἀμφιβαλὼν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι, νικᾶν δ’ οὐκ εἶας οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως). The image here reinforces the suggestion that Solon balanced opposites. The two (ἀμφοτέροισι) referred to here are of course the rich and poor, each of whom attempts to act unjustly toward the other. Solon is supposed to have held both of them back, preventing harm to either, thus in a sense balancing the one against the other. And again, when Solon says that he stood between them like a barrier, it is between the same groups, the rich and poor, that Solon put himself. So in the *Ath. Pol.* we are told that Solon’s justification for his reproach of “both parties” (ἀμφοτέρων) (XII.5) is that “I stood... [as] a barrier between them,” repeating the thought of Solon as one who restrained opposing political groups.

The allusion to Solon at 295c is relevant to how we understand discussion on law that follows. By bringing to mind the famous legislator who was known for balancing the constitution, Plato colors his own discussion of law, suggesting that the rule of law balances opposites. Although the *Ath. Pol.* is directed at a fairly restricted audience, a philosophically educated one, the writer makes his claims about Solon balancing opposites as if it does not need defending.²⁹ Apart from the contemporary view of Solon, the opposition between rich and poor was recognized as a crucial problem in Greek political thought. Therefore, we have reason to suppose that balancing the constitution was associated with Solon in particular, and more generally, that the idea of an opposition between rich and poor the idea was current in Greek political discourse.

Now I will turn to the discussion of law itself, in which we see that the law, by which I mean the law of the lawful city that is not ruled by a statesman or his laws, but by some other

²⁹ And of course the *Statesman* is directed at a philosophical audience as well.

law set up by the citizens, involves a degree of compromise between the opposing rich and poor. The discussion of law directly relates to how the lawful constitution is an imitation of the true constitution, although the Visitor does not fully explain how they are so. The Visitor claims at 297c that constitutions other than the true constitution are imitations, and Socrates asks for clarification. The best thing for constitutions, given that they are not ruled by the statesman, is that they be ruled by law, and that no one should be allowed to act contrary to the law, says the Visitor. Socrates agrees. Then the Visitor considers the kind of reasoning that leads to the rule of law in preference to rule by a statesman. Given the importance of this discussion, which is signaled by one of the few occasions on which the otherwise passive Young Socrates asks for clarification, we should pay close attention to what appears to be a fundamental opposition in the second best kind of city.

According to the Visitor, rejection of the statesman and the preference for law begins with the citizens' fear of the autocratic statesman, a fear that belongs to both the rich and the "people" (δῆμος). He begins by supposing "that we all (πάντες) thought of them [i.e. doctors and steersmen] as doing the most terrible things to us" (οἷον εἰ πάντες περὶ αὐτῶν διανοηθεῖμεν ὅτι δεινότατα ὑπ' αὐτῶν πάσχομεν.) (298a). The entire body of citizens (with the possible exception of the philosopher (see 299b ff)) rejects the statesman's rule, since they think of him as a tyrant who will abuse his power and harm the people he rules. It is "all" of us, i.e. we citizens of the imaginary city that the Visitor depicts, who think that the statesman uses his power for his own benefit alone.³⁰ The Visitor discusses the new authority in terms of rich and poor, and says

³⁰ As an aside, the Visitor later suggests that the very fear of the tyrant produces the tyrant: "Then it is in this way that the tyrant has come about... because people found themselves unable to put up with the idea of that single individual of ours as monarch... and refused to believe that there would ever come to be anyone who deserved to rule in such a way, so as to be willing and able to rule with virtue and expert knowledge, distributing what is just and right correctly to all. They think that a person in such a position always mutilates, kills, and generally maltreats whichever of us he wishes" (οὕτω δὲ τύραννός τε γέγονε... δυσχερανάντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἕνα ἐκεῖνον μόναρχον, καὶ ἀπιστησάντων μηδένα τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχῆς ἄξιον ἂν γενέσθαι ποτέ, ὥστε ἐθέλειν καὶ δυνατὸν εἶναι

that “we” will then decide to “call together an assembly with ourselves as members, consisting either of the people all together or only of the rich” (συλλέξαι δ’ ἐκκλησίαν ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἢ σύμπαντα τὸν δῆμον ἢ τοὺς πλουσίους μόνον) (298c). No one accepts the rule of the statesman, neither rich nor poor, but the new authority in the city will still be determined by these two groups. These two groups are apparently the most important factions in the imaginary city.

As will become clear, the principle which the citizens endorse in the Visitor’s thought experiment, namely that no individual should rule autonomously, implies that no single group of citizens should rule alone either. Rather, all should somehow share in ruling, and it is law that expresses this cooperation in ruling the city. The lawful city is a city in which, in a sense, all share in ruling. We should also note that at 298a quoted above, it is agreed by “all” of us to hold an assembly, whether oligarchic or democratic. There is apparently already at least some minimal agreement between the rich and the poor who make up the assembly. After all, they both have the same fear of the statesman. This point will be important for my argument that the law is based on agreement that the law is just.

The composition of the ἐκκλησία in the Visitor’s imagined city indicates how he conceives of the laws that are established there: the laws are established by one of these two groups, ultimately with the consent, even the assistance, of the other. The rule of the city will therefore belong to one of two opposing groups. Since the ἐκκλησία that is called together is assumed to be the legislating body and the central political institution in the imagined scenario, the Visitor is suggesting that the constitution will be ruled either by the rich or the δῆμος. The whole δῆμος, i.e. the “people all together,” that the Visitor refers to denotes the entire body of citizens, rich and poor. The Visitor therefore suggests that the ἐκκλησία could consist of both

μετ’ ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐπιστήμης ἄρχοντα τὰ δίκαια καὶ ὅσα διανέμειν ὀρθῶς πᾶσιν, λωβᾶσθαι δὲ καὶ ἀποκτείνονται καὶ κακοῦν ὃν ἂν βουλευθῇ ἐκάστοτε ἡμῶν (301c-d). One thinks of the Russian Revolution, in which the Bolsheviks took power partly through the fear of counterrevolution.

rich and poor if indeed it consists of the people all together, but rule of the whole δῆμος is in effect the rule of the poor who can be assumed to outnumber the rich. Therefore the ἐκκλησία is conceived of as either oligarchic rule of the rich or democratic rule of the poor. Either the rich or the poor will have greater say in the constitution than the other in the scenario that the Visitor imagines, although without completely dominating the constitution. Moreover, the ἐκκλησία that they institute brings to mind at least to an Athenian reader the Athenian ἐκκλησία, which was the organ with the highest authority in Athens. The constitution established according to law is not necessarily democratic, and this is not simply a recounting of the Athenian constitution. Nonetheless, the Visitor, and Plato, wants us to imagine that it is the most important organ in his imagined city. Rule of the ἐκκλησία by one of the groups therefore corresponds to the two most prominent types of constitution in fifth and fourth century Greece, namely oligarchy (rule of the few rich) and democracy (rule of the many poor). The composition of the imagined assembly points to the opposition between the rich and poor.

The two groups that the Visitor refers to, the rich (πλούσιοι) and the people (δῆμος), are juxtaposed to each other again at 298e-299a. The Visitor explains that once the laws regarding the manner of rule in the city have been determined in the assembly (298d-e), the election of magistrates will have to be addressed. The Visitor says that offices (ἄρχοντας) will be filled by the “mass of people, whether from the rich or from the whole people,” (εἴτε ἐκ τῶν πλουσίων εἴτε ἐκ τοῦ δήμου παντός) (298e). The courts too will be controlled by one of the two, either the rich (τῶν πλουσίων) or the whole people (σύμπαντος αὖ τοῦ δήμου) (298e-299a). The nature of the constitution that we are asked to imagine is therefore determined by the opposition between the rich and poor with respect to the central decision making organ of the assembly, the various offices of the city, and the courts.

So far I have shown that, whoever the rulers of the lawful constitution are, the opposing groups of the rich and the poor play a defining role in ruling. Finally, although the Visitor does not say so outright, the rich and the poor somehow establish the laws *together*. At 300b the Visitor says that the laws are established “on the basis of much experiment [or experience], with some advisers or other having given advice on each subject in an attractive way, and having persuaded the majority to pass them” (ἐκ πείρας πολλῆς κειμένους καὶ τινων συμβούλων ἕκαστα χαριέντως συμβουλευσάντων καὶ πεισάντων θέσθαι τὸ πλῆθος). The Visitor expresses here the joint nature of the project of establishing law. The citizens make their laws with some people taking counsel *together* with the words τινων συμβούλων. He repeats the thought of common counsel almost immediately when he describes what happens after they have taken counsel *together* (συμβουλευσάντων). And the counsel that they give is pleasing (χαριέντως) to the majority. The majority will be the majority of the whole of the citizens, and therefore a majority of both the rich and a majority of the poor. The majority could be a majority of the rich in an oligarchy, or the majority of the poor in a democracy, but this would almost be too obvious for the Visitor to bother mentioning. If the city is either one of these two kinds of constitution, then of course for the laws to be established, a majority of the ruling group would have to agree to them. The Visitor’s claim that the laws are pleasing to the majority is more relevant if we take him to mean that the majority of both groups will agree to them.

The use of the “συμ-” prefix is frequent throughout the discussion of law, and supports the claim that establishing law is a joint project. The contributors to the law are said to “throw together” (συμβαλέσθαι) their opinions (298c), the experts and the private individuals take counsel together (συμβουλευόντων) (298d), and the laws that are established are now frequently described as συγγράμματα (e.g. at 299d; 299e; 300c; 301e) whereas earlier they were simply

γράμματα. There is an obvious reason for this: the two opposing groups, which are the essential parts of the city, in some way or other work together in setting up the laws. Furthermore, this is consistent with the Visitor's claim that consent is one of the things that distinguishes lawful constitutions from unlawful constitutions. If the rich and poor both join together in making the laws, then of course they would each as a class agree to the laws.

The agreement between the rich and poor and their working together gives a basis for the imitative quality of the lawful constitution. I will explain why this is the case in the next chapter, but for now I will note that the Visitor implies as much when he says that the citizens of lawful constitutions "come together and write things down, chasing after the traces of the truest constitution" (συνελθόντας συγγράμματα γράφειν... μεταθέοντας τὰ τῆς ἀληθεστάτης πολιτείας ἵχνη.) (301e). This image of the citizens running behind the true constitution suggests that the lawful constitution do something fundamentally like what the statesman does, even if they lag far behind. Lagging behind beats turning off the path altogether. It implies that there is some kind of value in the lawful constitutions. Furthermore, what the image itself does not suggest but what the Visitor implies, is that the designers of lawful constitutions imitate, or "run after," the true constitution without intending to.

In this thought experiment (or σχῆμα as the Visitor calls it at 297e) regarding the mistake of rejecting the statesman's authority, the Visitor intends to give a general description of how law is established. While it is set in terms that are suggestive of the Athenian constitution as opposed to constitutions generally (as is shown by the mention of the ἐκκλησίαν at 298c, κύρβεσί τισι καὶ στήλαις at 298d, εὐθύνειν at 299a, and the allusion to Socrates' trial at 299b-c), it supplies the reasoning that lies behind any lawful constitution. Its generality also is shown by the use that the Visitor makes of it to separate all actual constitutions, rule of the many, the few,

and the one, into lawful and unlawful constitutions at 301a ff.. The fact that he uses terms that stand for two logically opposite categories (i.e. those who have much wealth and those who have little wealth) is therefore all the more significant. Furthermore, the ἐκκλησία, the Visitor says, will consist of one of the two factions, and he ignores all other possible forms of rule (e.g. rule of the well-born, rule of a monarch). The ἐκκλησία is where the new laws that will overturn the expertise of the statesman will be set down, and it is a place for either the rich or the poor to rule. If indeed this σχῆμα is a general account of actual cities, we must understand him as assuming that the opposites of rich and poor are the most important political elements in imitative constitutions. The thought experiment therefore addresses a conflict between two groups that is taken to be wide ranging, and in fact belongs to lawful constitutions as such. The Visitor also further affirms the importance of the discussion by claiming that “perhaps everything that all of us do is for the sake of” deciding which constitutions, although not correct constitutions, are the easiest to live under, a decision which presupposes that there is some value in law (302b).

IV. The Metaphysics of Production

The metaphysics of the *Statesman*, which is reinforced when read along with the *Philebus*, supports the claim that both the true city and the lawful city balance opposites. Every τέχνη aims at the due measure between extremes in regard to the coming-into-being of its product, claims the Visitor. The due measure is a “limit” in the terms that Socrates uses in the *Philebus*. A limit is a definite quantity that falls somewhere between opposites, and is therefore a kind of balance. Statesmanship is a τέχνη, and the city is its product, and so the true constitution balances opposites according to the metaphysics of the *Statesman*. The lawful constitution must also balance opposites since it is something that comes into being, although its

limit is not the due measure that the statesman puts into the city. The lack of due measure is why lawful constitutions are not true constitutions, but nonetheless, they have some limit between extremes, or else they would not exist at all.

The Visitor discusses the art of measurement (μετρητική), and its two kinds, at 283d ff. He divides measurement into one art dealing with the association (κοινωνία) of greatness and smallness in relation to each other, and the other with “what coming into being necessarily is” (τὸ κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν). The art concerned with greatness and smallness alone includes arithmetic and geometry, “all those sorts of expertise that measure the number, lengths, depths, breadths, and speeds of things in relation to what is opposed to them” (συμπάσας τέχνας ὅποσαι τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ μήκη καὶ βάθη καὶ πλάτη καὶ ταχυτῆτας πρὸς τοῦναντίον μετροῦσιν) (284e). The latter of the two arts of measurement, the one that has to do with coming-into-being, concerns whether a speech (i.e. the Visitor’s and Socrates’s discussion) is too long or too short, and is therefore part of the Visitor’s digression on the proper method of inquiry. This kind of art of measurement includes “all those [arts] that measure in relation to what is in due measure, what is fitting, the right moment, what is as it ought to be – everything that removes itself to the middle” (ὅποσαι πρὸς τὸ μέτριον καὶ τὸ πρέπον καὶ τὸν καιρὸν καὶ τὸ δέον καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀποκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων) (284e). It is concerned with both the coming-into-being of something, namely the product of a particular art, and of due measure (τὸ μέτριον) between excess and deficiency. It measures not just what is *between* the greater and the less, i.e. not only τὸ μέσον, but also what is *appropriate* for some purpose or product.³¹ The arts after all aim not just at producing something regardless of its quality, but at producing it well and producing a good product.

³¹ As Rosen (1995, 122) notes.

The Visitor claims that every expertise creates its product, or causes it to come into being, by looking to what is in due measure in relation to two extremes: “For I imagine all such sorts of expertise guard against what is more and less than what is in due measure, not a something which is not, but as something which is and is troublesome in relation to what they do. It is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all the good and fine things they do produce.” (ἅπασαι γὰρ αἱ τοιαῦται που τὸ τοῦ μετρίου πλεον καὶ ἔλαττον οὐχ ὥς οὐκ ὄν ἀλλ’ ὥς ὄν χαλεπὸν περὶ τὰς πράξεις παραφυλάττουσι, καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ μέτρον σφύζουσαι πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται.) (284a-b). The due measure is therefore only the due measure in relation to two extremes or opposites. It cannot be defined apart from them. The Visitor uses different terms to denote such extremes, using the quantitative terms “excess” (ὑπερβολή) and “deficiency” (ἔλλειψις) (283c), “greatness” (μέγεθος) and “smallness” (σμικρότης) (283d), “the more” (τὸ πλεον) and “the less” (τὸ ἔλαττον). It is clear that he has the same thing in mind in each case, although the Visitor uses different descriptions of the extremes for the two arts. “Excess” and “deficiency” suggest that the opposites are necessarily inappropriate, but this is only the case when a due measure is needed for a product. In relation to each other, the great and the small are neither good nor bad, and so arts that measure them without looking to due measure do not strictly speaking measure what is too much or too little. If there is no due measure, then there is no excess or deficiency, although there are still opposites to be measured. The great and small only become too much (excess) or too little (deficiency) in relation to the production of something the nature of which requires a proper measure between them. The practitioners of the arts produce good things by avoiding these opposites, since the extremes of the more and the less get in the way of the exercise of the art and threaten its product with excess or deficiency.

This is all very abstract. We must consider what excess and deficiency are too much or too little of. The art of measurement that is not concerned with what is suitable measures pure quantities: arithmetic measures numbers, geometry measures lengths, depths, and breadths, measurement of speeds measures speeds. None of these is concerned with the quantity of anything in particular. On the other hand, the arts that are concerned with what is suitable, since they are arts of production, must be concerned with quantities of materials of some sort. We therefore have to look at the different arts and determine what they measure according to the nature of the particular art and its product. So to take a concrete example, carpentry measures lengths of wood with the aim of getting the right length for each beam in the house in order to produce a house. Here great and small would include the dimensions of the wood: carpentry measures the quantity of length, width, and height, of wood. And if any one beam is too long or too short, then it will not function properly in holding up the roof or a wall. The house would therefore be defective. The art of carpentry must accordingly guard against the extremes the amount of wood that it uses, first in relation to each other, so that the house is stable on its own, and second in relation to the humans who will live in it. The house has to hold together and keep out the weather, but it could do this well enough and still be the wrong size for the humans who use it. As another example, weaving measures the size of the garment in relation to its intended wearer, and the proper amount of both woof and warp so that the garment is both firm enough but also thick enough to provide warmth.

The statesman's material, which he prevents from falling into excess and deficiency, are the courageous and the moderate characters of the citizens. According to the weaving metaphor, he produces a well ordered whole out of the warp and woof of the citizens. He must guard against using too much warp in his fabric and making it too firm or tough, but at the same time

he must guard against weaving with too much woof, thereby making the fabric too soft.

Excessive softness (i.e. cowardice) and firmness (i.e. aggression) are the dangers to the city that the Visitor describes at 307e ff. Using too much warp means giving too much authority in office to the courageous citizens, the citizens who on their own are too aggressive for the good of the city and who thereby lead it unnecessarily into war and destruction. Using too much woof on the other hand means giving too much authority to the soft natures of the moderate who are excessively fearful of war and who thus lead the city into slavery. In either of these cases, the fabric of the city would not turn out well. The relative quantities of too much and too little must be defined in relation to the opposite characters of the citizens. Furthermore, having too much warp means having too little woof and vice versa. Both excess and deficiency will exist in the city whether the courageous citizens or the moderate citizens have too much authority in relation to the other. Excessive power for one means deficient power for the other. Since the warp and the woof are the opposites that make up the constitution, by guarding against the excess of the one the statesman simultaneously guards against the deficiency of the other.³²

In the *Philebus* we see a strikingly similar metaphysics. Socrates and Protarchus divide everything in “the whole” into four kinds (εἰδῆ or γένη, 23d), namely the unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον), limit (τὸ πέρας), the mixture of these two, and the cause of the mixture. The unlimited is defined as an opposition between two extremes that by themselves do not have a limit. Examples are the more and the less (μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἥττον), the violent and the gentle (τὸ σφόδρα καὶ ἡρέμα), or just the excessive (τὸ λίαν) (24e). According to Socrates, one can always have more heat or cold

³² Rosen does not see this implication of the Visitor’s discussion, but rather claims that due measurement for the weaver means making the clothing neither too large nor too small (124-125). Of course this is true for the art of weaving, but I am concerned with how the Visitor is using weaving as an analogy for statesmanship. It seems reasonable that the statesman would weave together the citizens in a way that fits the particular state he happens to rule, analogously to the way a weaver makes a garment of the right size for an individual, but the right size of the state, or of the garment, is not the central issue in the *Statesman*. What is at issue is how the state can be one while consisting of different parts.

because hot and cold are unlimited (24b). The unlimited is the greater and the smaller of the *Statesman*. The unlimited does not by itself have a definite quantity, it only takes on a definite quantity when mixed with the limit. Although Socrates and Protarchus do not formulate the unity of the limit as they do for the unlimited, the limit is apparently ratio, which is definite: the equal, equality, the double, “whatever is related to number as number or to measure as measure” (πάν ὅτιπερ ἄν πρὸς ἀριθμὸν ἀριθμὸς ἢ μέτρον ἢ πρὸς μέτρον) (25a-b). The mixture of the unlimited and limit is a coming-into-being (γένεσιν εἰς οὐσίαν) such as that of health, harmony, “and moreover in souls very many other fine things as well” (καὶ ἐν ψυχαῖς αὖ πάμπολλα ἕτερα καὶ ἀγάκαλα) (26b). Finally, there is the cause of the mixture, that which puts a limit into the unlimited (26e). That which causes the mixture of the limited and the unlimited, says Socrates, also makes (ποιεῖν) the mixture (26e), and the crafting (τὸ δημιουργοῦν) of the mixture is the cause. This is the same metaphysical scheme that we see in the *Statesman*, where the Visitor and Young Socrates agree that a thing comes into being through the agency of an expert who aims at due measure. The unlimited of the *Philebus* is the greater and smaller of the *Statesman*. Furthermore, in the metaphysical terms of the *Philebus*, the expert strives for due measure by putting a limit on the unlimited. The limit of the *Philebus* is not mentioned by name in the *Statesman*, and the due measure of the *Statesman* is not the same as the limit, but certainly the due measure in the production of anything that comes to be must put a limit into the unlimited by using a definite quantity of whatever it works with. Due measure is therefore a limit which is in an unlimited. A craftsman must use a definite quantity when he produces anything, and he aims at not just any quantity, but the right quantity between extremes.

The discussion of the four kinds in the *Philebus* along with the discussion of productive arts in the *Statesman* shows that for Plato a city only comes into being when a definite limit is

combined with an unlimited opposition. Socrates tells Protarchus everything that comes to be does so through a cause that puts limit into what is unlimited (26e-27a). A political entity is something that comes to be, whether crafted from the ground up by a philosopher king or not. Non-ideal cities as well as the ideal are communities that come into existence gradually, and are made up of individuals who belong to it for a certain time. A city can also be destroyed. The Visitor talks about unfortunate cities that sometimes sink like ships because of the ignorance of their steersmen (302a). It follows that any city, whether it is well balanced between extremes or not, must have some kind of definite measure between the extremes. The Visitor gives us obvious candidates for what the extremes are in relation to both the true constitution and the lawful constitution. In the former, the extremes are the courageous and moderate characters of the citizens, both which on their own will destroy the city. When there is no limit between the two extremes, the city is destroyed. In the case of the lawful city, the extremes are the rich and the poor. We can also infer that the limit is the constitution that determines who controls which offices, or in other words who rules the city.

I should point out the Visitor's claim that good and bad people differ most in respect of excess and measure (*Statesman* 283e). Bad people, he implies, are bad because they are not moderate, therefore drawing out an ethical implication of the relation between the more, the less, and proper measure. Socrates makes a similar suggestion when he says at *Philebus* 26b that the mixture of limit and the unlimited provide very many good things in the soul. There is an explicit ethical dimension to the metaphysics of limit and unlimited in both dialogues which suggests a political dimension as well. The political dimension is left to the reader to interpret. Nonetheless, we might think that the application of the art of measurement in the *Statesman* to a political context is problematic. Although the discussion of the arts of measurement in the

Statesman is said to apply to statesmanship (as the Visitor claims at 284a), its primary purpose is ostensibly for correctly praising the length of discussions “like the present one,” says the Visitor (283c). He reminds us of what he said earlier about the excessive length of the myth (277b-c). More importantly, it bears on how we regard the practice of dialectic. Ultimately, the proper standard for the correct length of these discussions, which have as their end making us better dialecticians and understanding “the things that are without body, which are finest and greatest” (285d-286a), is this very end. We should not criticize long discussions for being long if they make us better dialecticians, nor shorter discussions if they serve the same purpose better (286d-287a). The political doctrine of the *Statesman* regarding law and the true constitution, including the discussion of opposing characters, comes only after the Visitor uses weaving to distinguish contributing causes from real causes (287b). The Visitor does not talk of an art of measurement here.

A more fundamental problem lies with the claim that the statesman’s art is productive. If the statesman crafts the city by putting a limit into an unlimited, then apparently his knowledge is not theoretical (γνωστική) as the Visitor and Socrates agreed that it is. The divisions of knowledge that constitute the framework for the dialogue begin with the hypothesis that statesmanship is closer to a theoretical art rather than a productive art: “Then do you want us to assert that the king is more closely related to the theoretical sort of knowledge than to the manual or generally practical sort?” (τῆς δὴ γνωστικῆς μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς χειροτεχνικῆς καὶ ὅλως πρακτικῆς βούλει τὸν βασιλέα φῶμεν οἰκειότερον εἶναι;) (259c-d).³³ Socrates agrees that they should

³³ The Visitor apparently does not distinguish between practice and production, so that he thinks of χειροτεχνική as a branch of πρακτική. By “practical” (πρακτικῆς) the Visitor means the arts that are concerned with the direct production of anything. He asks, in relation to these arts, whether “the sorts of expertise involved in carpentry and manufacture as a whole have their knowledge as it were naturally bound up with practical actions, and use it to complete those material objects they cause to come into being from not having been before?” (αἱ δέ γε περὶ τεκτονικὴν αὖ καὶ σύμπασαν χειρουργίαν ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνοῦσαν σύμφυτον τὴν ἐπιστήμην κέκτινται, καὶ

define the statesman as a theoretical rather than productive expert, but I have been discussing statesmanship as a productive art. This looks like a contradiction.

The tension between the claims that statesmanship is theoretical (γνωστική) and that it is productive (πρακτική) should not be overstated. It is clear that for Plato statesmanship is bound up with production, and that he has taken pains in the dialogue to show this. First, the distinction at 259c-d strictly speaking is that statesmanship is *more* (μᾶλλον) productive, not that it is entirely separate from production. Given that a city is something that comes into being, it should not be surprising that the statesman takes part in its production. As the Visitor says at 284a, statesmanship is an art that has to guard against the more and the less in order to *produce* (ἀπεργάζομαι) something fine and good, but by the end of the dialogue we know that he does this through other citizens (e.g. educators and nourishers (308d-e)). The productive aspect of his rule, even though it is an indirect production, follows naturally from the second division of knowledge, between that which directs that which only makes judgments (260a-b). If the statesman gives orders, then he is necessarily going to be involved with the production of the city, just as an architect is involved, although not directly, in construction.³⁴

The weaving metaphor, which is so important in the latter part of the dialogue, is somewhat more problematic than these claims, since it presents the statesman as directly and with his own hands weaving together and producing the city. By the metaphor alone, he is more a producer than a theoretician. However, we do not have to accuse either Plato or the Visitor of inconsistency. First, we should not try to extend the weaving analogy too far. It is pointless to

συναποτελοῦσι τὰ γινόμενα ὑπ' αὐτῶν σώματα πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα) (258d-e). The *πρᾶξις* that the Visitor has in mind is therefore productive *πρᾶξις*.

³⁴ Stanley Rosen seems to me to be someone who overstates the tension between productive and non-productive arts. He claims that there is a confusion in the art of statesmanship ("There is a central confusion in the analysis of the art of politics in the *Statesman*, whether or not intended by Plato," 20). The confusion is intended in the sense that Plato wants us to see that the arts are not entirely separate, but not this is not to say that there is no real difference between them.

apply the analogy as if there were a one-to-one correspondence between every aspect of statesmanship as Plato conceives it and weaving. The analogy is effective because it shows the connection between the wise ruler and the results of his rule in the unity of the city, but we gain nothing from pushing the analogy too far.³⁵

The metaphysics of the *Statesman* shows that the city, for Plato, is composed of a limit that gives a definite measure and proportion to opposites. When applied to the city, the constitutional structure is the limit in so far as it determines how the opposing groups will share in the city. The limit is a definite, quantifiable measure between indefinite extremes, and the structure of authority in the city provides definite rules that decide who among the two opposing groups of citizens controls what offices. The opposing groups in the true city are of course the opposite characters of the citizens, the courageous and the moderate natures. Furthermore, we have an obvious pair of candidates for the opposites that Plato takes to be most important in the lawful city, namely the rich and the poor. As I have already argued, Plato expects his reader to see them as opposites that have to be reconciled in some way, and the metaphysics provide an explanation as to what their unification amounts to. The constitutional structure unites the opposites in the sense that it brings individuals who are opposed to each other together into the same political structure so that they rule together. It is not a true unification, in contrast to the unity of the true city, because one of the opposing groups will dominate the constitution. It will either be an oligarchy with the consent and limited office sharing of the poor, or a democracy with some oligarchic features.

³⁵ Rosen claims that “the example of weaving has brought out with great clarity the practico-productive nature of politics, and in this way exposed the error of the initial premise of the original diaeresis, namely, that gnosis can be separated from practice in a way that is useful for defining the statesman” (105) and that the distinction between “theory and practice, exists in name only, and as such it is an artifact of human judgment or intention” (117). These claims ignore the importance of the statesman’s oversight of the education of the citizens concerning what is fine, just, and good, which I will explore in my third chapter.

The importance of uniting opposites for both kinds of constitutions is directly relevant to the way in which lawful constitutions imitate the true constitution. The balance is essential to both cities, since they could not exist without having a definite limit between the extremes. Besides the metaphysical necessity of balance for their existence that we can see when we compare what are apparently unrelated parts of the dialogue – the digression on the proper method for inquiry and the political doctrine – the Visitor also characterizes each kind of city according to opposites, more obviously in the case of the true city but also for the lawful one as well. The next question to ask is precisely how these cities are balanced. So far we know what the relevant opposites for both cities are, and that the lawful city is deficient. But what causes the unification of opposites? The cause of the combination of limit and unlimited is the fourth kind of entity in the *Philebus*. The statesman is of course the cause of the unity in the true city at one level, but how does he go about making putting limit into the unlimited? The Visitor gives us a clue when he says that the statesman ensures that the citizens have shared true opinion (308d-e). In the next chapter, I will use this clue to argue that agreement concerning justice is necessary for both the true city and the lawful city. The imitation between them lies in the role that agreement about justice plays in harmonizing the citizens.

CHAPTER 3

I. Introduction

In this last chapter, on the basis of the claim that both the true constitution and the lawful constitution balance opposites, I will show how each does so, and in doing so I will show how the lawful constitution imitates the true constitution. In the true city agreement involves a likeness between the citizens such that their opposing characters become more like each other and more like genuine virtue itself. On the other hand, the agreement between the rich and the poor is that the law is just, and so their agreement about justice becomes the source of harmony in the city ruled by law. The agreement about what is just is different, but plays a necessary role in both constitutions. Agreement enables the citizens to rule the city justly in the true city, while in the lawful city it provides freedom from strife that is like the justice in the true city in so far as it prevents conflict between the opposing groups of citizens.

I will make this argument in two parts. First I will explain the nature of the balance in the true constitution, since as always this constitution is the measure by which we judge the nature of the lawful constitution. I have already shown that there must be a balance between the opposing groups of citizens, but there is more to be said about how they are balanced. I will show that the balance between the citizens means first that the citizens of courageous and moderate characters share the offices of the city equally between them, most notably the offices of the general, the orator, and the judge. But, more importantly, this sharing of offices is only possible because the two parts of virtue in the citizens, courage and moderation, become more like each other through

the statesman's oversight of the citizens' education, thereby lessening the opposition between them. They have shared true belief about what is noble, just, and good, which is reflected in the way the citizens share offices. The education that the statesman provides, through the subordinate arts of teaching and caring for the young, is the source of the agreement between the citizens, and through this agreement and the subsequent likeness between the characters of the citizens, the city becomes more one instead of many.

The unity of the city is grounded in a psychological likeness between the citizens. The Visitor, contrary to what his claim at 306b suggests, implicitly accepts the view that virtue itself is one, and moreover that it is knowledge. Most of the citizens do not strictly speaking possess virtue, as the statesman does, but only a part of virtue. However, through their agreement on what actions of the city are noble, just, and good, the citizens come to have a share in the part of virtue that they do not possess naturally, and so come closer to possessing the whole of virtue. In becoming more like their opposites, they are able to see actions that are contrary to their own natures as good in the circumstances where those actions are appropriate. The citizens can therefore rule the city together without conflict. The citizens also become more like the statesman, a god-like man, "one individual immediately superior in body and mind" (τό τε σῶμα εὐθὺς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διαφέρων εἶς) (301e), as the city itself is like a god in comparison to men (303b). So, paradoxically, the citizens who possess opposite natures are politically unified through a fundamental psychological similarity.

In the second part of this chapter, I will argue that the lawful constitution imitates the true constitution in so far as the former shares an essential feature with the latter, namely the agreement described above. In the lawful city, the citizens agree that the laws are just. In a sense, they believe that the law is not only just, but that it is justice: according to the Visitor's

description of their attitude toward inquiry into the nature of correct political rule, they do not recognize any standard for what is just outside of the law itself (299b-d). They are in fact similar to the citizens of the true city in their ignorance of the true standard of how a city should be ruled, i.e. justice itself, but whereas the citizens of the true city have true beliefs about what is just along with a guarantee that their belief will remain stable, the citizens of the lawful city have no such anchor for their beliefs. They certainly do not have knowledge, and even on the occasions when their beliefs are true, lacking support for that true belief, they cannot be expected to preserve it. The true city is therefore characterized by true belief about what is just, while its imitator, the lawful city, is at best characterized only by unstable true belief or even false belief.

The agreement about what is just in the two kinds of cities is what makes the lawful city imitate the true city. While the agreement is necessary for the unity in the true city, such that statesmanship involves education and persuasion of the citizens concerning the justice of his rule, agreement about the law is not only necessary but also makes the lawful city like the true city by bringing about harmony in the lawful city. The agreement is that the law is just, and since the law, as the joint legislation of the whole of the citizens, protects as well as it can the good of the whole city. It prevents the intentional rule of a part of the city for its own self-interest over the rest of the city. While this agreement as the Visitor thinks of it is merely formal and leaves open the specific content of the laws, the very fact of agreement will bring about a certain degree of harmony in the city ruled by law that is like the perfect harmony in the city ruled by the statesman.

II. Shared Offices in the True City

The sharing of offices between opposite kinds of citizens is implied by the Visitor's model for the statesman's knowledge, the knowledge of weaving. The Visitor draws out the political meaning of the weaving metaphor for the statesman at 310e-311a. He claims that the statesman weaves together the two kinds of citizens "through sharing of opinions, through honors, dishonor, esteem, and the giving of pledges to one another" (ὁμοδοξίας καὶ τιμαῖς καὶ ἀτιμίαις καὶ δόξαις καὶ ὀμηρειῶν ἐκδόσεσιν εἰς ἀλλήλους). The statesman "always entrusts offices in cities to these in common" (τὰς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀρχὰς ἀεὶ κοινῇ τούτοις ἐπιτρέπειν). There are three main components to the statesman's "weaving" as the Visitor describes it: inculcation of shared opinions (ὁμοδοξίας) for the citizens, the giving of honors and office holding (τιμαῖς καὶ ἀτιμίαις), and the oversight of intermarriages (literally "giving of hostages" (ὀμηρειῶν ἐκδόσεσιν)). Intermarriage, which the Visitor calls a "human bond," is important only in so far as it provides natures that are able to receive proper education and share in true opinion (see 308e-309b), and so, although it is an important part of the statesman's expertise, it requires little discussion here. What is more important is how the statesman mixes the offices between the citizens and how he gives them both true opinion (the "divine bond"). These two components of the statesman's weaving are closely linked, as I will show.

Of the two remaining components, I will discuss office sharing first since. Although in practice it presupposes agreement about what is fine, just, and good (in other words, the shared opinions mentioned at 310e), understanding it will help us to understand the content of the agreement. We already know that the offices in the city are to be balanced between the courageous and moderate citizens, but how should the offices of the orator, general, and judge (the most important offices in the city, which are related to statesmanship as other precious

metals are to gold (303e)) in particular be divided between them? To answer this question, we must ask whether one or more citizens are needed to fill these positions. The Visitor claims that “wherever” (οὔ) one officer is needed, he must possess courage and moderation, and where more than one is needed, that the offices should be mixed between courageous and moderate citizens (311a). If any office can only be filled by one citizen, then it must be a citizen who has both parts of virtue, but if several citizens are needed, then some of the citizens holding it will have to be courageous, and some moderate.³⁶ In either case, both parts of virtue will have to be present. This provides for a balance of offices between the two kinds of citizens, so that office holders by cooperating with each other will be neither too forceful nor too lax.

It is important to note here that the statesman’s essential function itself calls for the direct rule of the city by the citizens themselves. The statesman’s own role is to guide the other arts, especially the highest arts. The Visitor and Socrates agree that the statesman, who controls the subordinate art of persuasion, knows when the city needs to be persuaded to act in a certain way and commands the orator to do the persuading (304a-e). The statesman also controls the general, deciding when it is appropriate to go to war, and leaving the matter of how to wage war to the general (304e-305a). He also hands over to the judge the laws (305b-c), which are analogous to the prescriptions of the gymnastic teacher in so far as they are beneficial for the majority of people (294e) and which therefore must be in accordance with the due measure between the different kinds of citizens. Statesmanship is the controlling art, while the others are subordinate to it: “For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows when it is the right time to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities” (τὴν γὰρ ὄντως οὕσαν βασιλικὴν οὐκ αὐτὴν δεῖ

³⁶ The Visitor has in mind both offices held by only one citizen, and collective offices such as the Athenian βουλή, which consisted of five-hundred Athenians during the 5th and 4th centuries.

πράττειν ἀλλ' ἄρχειν τῶν δυναμένων πράττειν, γινώσκουσιν τὴν ἀρχὴν τε καὶ ὁρμὴν τῶν μεγίστων ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐγκαιρίας τε πέρι καὶ ἀκαιρίας) (305d). For the Visitor, the statesman's grasp of the due measure in these spheres is essential to the well being of the city, because he is the expert who knows when the other arts should practice their craft. The various arts do not themselves know when they should act and when they should not – it is not the part of generalship to know when to go to war but when it is appropriate to attack or withdraw once war has already begun. The inability of the arts to grasp the due measure in when they should use their arts is a lack of political expertise over and above excessive behavior of the different character types in the city. The citizens therefore fail to grasp the right time for action on two interconnected levels: on the one hand, they tend to rule the city with excessive force or restraint, while on the other hand as experts, they do not know when technical abilities are suitable.

The failure of the expert to know when to engage in his expertise is anticipated in the opening interaction between Theodorus and Elder Socrates. Theodorus, who by his reputation as a geometer and his name which calls to mind the divine gift of the arts in the myth (274c), symbolizes the arts. Referring to the just-completed discussion of the *Sophist*, Theodorus says to Socrates “your debt will be three times as great, when they complete both the statesman and the philosopher for you” (ὀφειλήσεις ταύτης τριπλασίαν: ἐπειδὴν τόν τε πολιτικὸν ἀπεργάσωνταί σοι καὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον) (257a). Socrates, mentioning Theodorus' knowledge of arithmetic and geometry, corrects him: “you assumed that each of the three were to be assigned equal worth, when in fact they differ in value by more than can be expressed in terms of mathematical proportion” (τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἕκαστον θέντος τῆς ἴσης ἀξίας, οἱ τῇ τιμῇ πλεον ἀλλήλων ἀφεστᾶσιν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τὴν τῆς ὑμετέρας τέχνης.) (257b). Theodorus does not recognize when it is appropriate to apply his knowledge and when it is not, and as the symbol of the arts, he

anticipates the point that the non-political arts, mathematics in the case of Theodorus, do not grasp when it is the right time for them to act and when it is not. Another art entirely is needed in order to judge when it is suitable for experts to practice their skills, namely the art of statesmanship.

The subordinate arts still retain autonomy within their proper spheres. The statesman is not a micromanager of every aspect of the city's life, and so the composition of the offices – what kind of citizens holds what office – is part of what gives the true city its harmony. In other words, the way that the offices are divided between the citizens is a defining feature of the true city. Let us consider how the sharing of offices applies to the offices of general, orator, and judge, starting with the general. The general will have to have courage, of course, but the Visitor's claim that individual offices should be filled by someone with both courage and moderation means that he will have to be moderate, or have at least a significant measure of moderation, as well as courageous.³⁷ This is surprising, since the two parts of virtue have been characterized as opposites and therefore as fundamentally opposed to each other. Any good general will be courageous, otherwise he will be unable to fulfill his function as general, which is to lead soldiers against the enemy, but the Visitor implies that he will need the opposing part of virtue as well. We thus arrive at a paradoxical view of the distribution of offices in the case of the general, but one that is at least in accordance with Socrates' claim in the *Republic* (374e-375c) that the guardians must be fierce and gentle at the same time. The Visitor's claim that individual offices as well as collective offices are to be balanced points toward the possibility of

³⁷ This would be the case at any rate if we are to think of generalship as an individual rather than a collective office. A city could no doubt have several generals (as Athens did in fact, and as is the norm in any large city), but there might be any number of cases in which a general acts alone. This office would then, even if there is more than one in the city, a case in which the same individual would have to possess both parts of virtue. There would be "need for a single officer" (311a).

overcoming the opposition between the parts of virtue. As I will show, the parts of virtue must be brought together if the soul is to have genuine virtue.

The office of orator points to the same conclusion. In order to be effective, an orator would need both parts of virtue as well as the general, since having both parts would enable him to articulate more easily the value of acting with courage to the moderate citizens, and the value of acting with moderation to the courageous citizens. Persuasive articulation of the usefulness of acting in these opposite ways would be greatly aided by, if not require, a genuine appreciation of their usefulness. The office of judge as well will have to consist either of one judge who has both parts of virtue, or an equal number of courageous judges and moderate judges. The Visitor claims that moderate people are particularly just (311a). The office of judge would then presumably be filled by moderate citizens, because they would be better than their courageous counterparts in overseeing the sphere of retributive justice. At the same time, judging would sometimes demand punishing criminals with force, and so the judges as well would need a measure of the part of virtue that is opposed to their nature.

I do not mean to claim that every individual office will be held by an individual who possesses both parts of virtue fully. Certainly the most important quality for a general is courage, and the Visitor is clear that the general and the orator are not to be confused with the statesman, who does fully possess the whole of virtue. Nonetheless it is clear that individual officers will have to have a significant measure of the part of virtue that they do not possess naturally. What this entails for the Visitor's understanding of virtue will become clearer below when I discuss virtue and its parts below.

III. Agreement in the True City

The education of the citizens is what makes them able to share the offices of the city and to rule for the good of the whole city. Left to themselves, the two character types cannot see the value in acting contrary to their natural tendencies, but education inculcates in them true beliefs about how they should rule in their offices, thus enabling them to see nobility, justice, and goodness in what goes against their nature. Recognition on the part of opposing character types of the value in contrary forms of behavior depends on their psychological likeness. Opposing characters that are close to the extremes in temperament are unable to understand how acting in a way that is contrary to their own nature is sometimes appropriate. The likeness between the souls of the citizens required for common understanding and action is completed in the unity of the parts of virtue and therefore in genuine virtue. A close investigation of the Visitor's discussion about the effect of education on the characters of the citizens shows that he thinks that virtue itself is unified. It will turn out that virtue is knowledge of how to act in any possible circumstances, whether those circumstances call for force or restraint. Complete virtue is not possible for the large majority of citizens to obtain, but a close approximation of virtue, brought about through education, is necessary if the citizens in the true city are to act in harmony.

The claim that the Visitor really accepts the unity of virtue (in the sense that virtue is a whole and that its parts alone are not virtue because they are not the whole³⁸) requires some defense since he seems to contradict the claim that virtue is one at 306b when he says that the parts of virtue are hostile to each other. The role of education in the city can only be fully accounted for on the basis of the Visitor's understanding of virtue as unified. In order to show

³⁸ More specifically, by unity of the virtues I mean the Unity of the Virtues ("Virtue is one thing and courage, justice, moderation and wisdom are its parts") that Bobonich (1995, n. 3) distinguishes from Reciprocity ("A person has one virtue if and only if he has all the virtues") and Identity of the Virtues ("Every virtue is the same virtue"). Bobonich suggests otherwise, but it seems that if the Unity of the Virtues is true, then so are Reciprocity and Identity, since according to Unity, virtue is just one thing.

that the Visitor does not make contradictory claims, we must recognize that what the Visitor calls “parts of virtue” are something like contrary character tendencies that are capable of becoming like genuine virtue, or complete viciousness. Neither the courageous nor the moderate characters (ἥθη) are genuine virtues apart from the other. The Visitor does not call the parts of virtue “virtues,” he calls them “parts” (μέρη or μόρια i.e. of virtue, 306a-b, 308b, 310a), “natures” (φύσαι 307c, 309a, 309e), “characters” (ἥθη 308e, 309b, 310b³⁹), “kinds” (εἰδῶν 307d, γένη 308b, 310d) from the claim that the parts of virtue are hostile to each other at 306a until the end of the dialogue. These parts are not themselves virtues.⁴⁰ Furthermore, they are opposed to each other when individual citizens do not possess both parts fully. The Visitor therefore does not explicitly contradict the unity of virtue. The parts of virtue may not harmonize with each other when they are isolated in different souls, but when brought together in the same soul, they may nevertheless come to compose genuine virtue.

Apart from the lack of explicit contradiction to the unity of virtue, the unity of virtue is entailed by the Visitor’s discussion of the relation between parts and wholes. That the parts of virtue, which define the two kinds of citizens, are not virtues follows from the Visitor’s claim that begins the discussion of the opposition between the courageous and the moderate. He says that a “part of virtue is in a certain sense different in form from virtue” (ἀρετῆς μέρος ἀρετῆς εἶδει διάφορον εἶναι τινα τρόπον) (306a).⁴¹ The form (which in this case is the whole of virtue) must be distinguished from its parts, a point that the Visitor is firm about earlier in the dialogue at 263a-b. There the Visitor’s point was that whatever is a part of some form is not necessarily itself a form in relation to that form which is being divided. So for example the form of human

³⁹ Robinson (1995) accepts Stallbaum’s ἥθη, rejecting the γένη of four manuscripts. The difference is irrelevant to my point here.

⁴⁰ This point is often overlooked (e.g. Lane (1998, 172) calls courage and moderation “virtues”).

⁴¹ Rowe translates εἶδει as “kind.”

is a part of the form of animal, but it is not one of the two forms that the form of animal must be divided into according to the rules of division (διαίρεσις). In the case of virtue, the general claim that part is different from form implies (counterintuitively given the ordinary understanding of virtue that Socrates expresses) that the parts of virtues are not virtues in themselves. Together they compose genuine virtue only when they are united with their opposing parts. Virtue is a whole which, although it can be divided logically into parts, cannot be divided in the soul.⁴² The two kinds of character, the “moderate” and the “courageous,” although they are not genuine virtue, are nonetheless capable through education of becoming more like virtue itself as they become more like each other. This view of the parts of virtue underlies the Visitor’s discussion of education.

Although on this view only very few individuals are genuinely virtuous (such as the statesman), nonetheless the citizens of the true city, suggests the Visitor, must have a measure of both parts of virtue to some extent in order to be citizens of the true city at all. The Visitor says that whoever is “unable to share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and whatever else belongs to the sphere of virtue” (καὶ τοὺς μὲν μὴ δυναμένους κοινωνεῖν ἥθους ἀνδρείου καὶ σώφρονος ὅσα τε ἄλλα ἐστὶ τείνοντα πρὸς ἀρετήν) (308e) will have no share in the city. Those whose natures are too extreme cannot be a part of the city, since they cannot benefit from education. Individuals with bad natures will simply be vicious and unable to participate in the ruling of the city. As the Visitor explains to Socrates, the true city is composed of citizens with both good natures and proper education. Together nature and education produce citizens which the statesman can use to complete the social fabric of the city. The education that the statesman oversees is only for those whose natures are able to benefit from it (which implies that for some

⁴² This view is contrary to Christopher Bobonich’s (1995) view. He assumes that courage and moderation are virtues, which is precisely what the Visitor denies.

natures education is ineffectual). The statesman, like any other craftsman, will not use bad material at all when making his product, but only that which is suitable (308c). He will remove the bad people by first testing them in play (παιδιᾶ) and then handing them over to the teachers. The bad natures are excluded from any important role in the city precisely because they are unable to share in both parts of virtue: they are unable to have a share of a courageous and moderate character (κοινωνεῖν ἥθους ἀνδρείου καὶ σώφρονος). Having a share in such a disposition does not mean having the whole of virtue by possessing all its parts, but it does require a measure of both parts. Of course, a courageous or moderate character that recognizes value in acting according to the opposing character – having a measure of the opposing part of virtue – approaches the whole of virtue.⁴³ A citizen of the true city, although not genuinely virtuous in the way that the statesman is, will nonetheless be far closer to achieving complete virtue than someone who is vicious by nature or who does not go through the education that the statesman directs. Although the citizens who do not share fully in both parts of virtue are not genuinely virtuous, they are genuinely benefited by education in so far as their characters come to be more like virtue itself.

If indeed the citizens of the true city are to be somehow courageous and moderate so that the offices can be balanced between courageous and moderate characters, then the Visitor must suppose that the two parts of virtue can come to be in the same soul. We have seen that the city needs some citizens who are able to possess both parts of virtue so that even offices consisting of only one individual are balanced, leaning neither toward aggression nor passivity. So in order to fill at least some of the offices, some citizens will have to be courageous and moderate at the

⁴³ The connection between virtue and proper judgment, which I will discuss below, is suggested at an early stage in the drama of the dialogue. Miller (2004, 24-25) points out that the Visitor criticizes Socrates' attempt at division as too brave (προθυμότητα καὶ ἀνδρειότητα), and needing balance by moderation. Socrates' mistake was therefore a mistake in judgment, and a result of his over-eagerness.

same time. On the other hand, offices such as judging in court (if we are to think of the office of judging as not individual but collective) requires that the citizens whose natures differ are able to see some value in acting contrary to their natures. If the offices of the true city were held by some citizens who cannot see any good in sometimes acting with force, and at the same time by other citizens who cannot see the good in acting with restraint, they would be intractably divided between citizens who are unable to come to agreement. It is difficult to see how people who are taken by “fits of madness” (i.e. courageous characters with no share of moderation) could associate at the level of office-holding with those who are “completely crippled” (310d-e) (i.e. moderate characters with no share of courage).

So far I have highlighted the reconciliation of the two characters within one soul, but the possibility of their complete alienation from each other is the other side of the Visitor’s psychological scheme. This possibility is presupposed at 310d-e where the Visitor discusses the intermarriage between the manly and the moderate over many generations ending in the one hand in madness, and on the other in lethargy. The Visitor indicates the increasing dissimilarity between the two kinds of character in the discussion of education as well. He claims that some people are driven by their natures into “godlessness, excess, and injustice” (ἀθεότητα καὶ ὕβριν καὶ ἀδικίαν) (309a). The picture here is one of violence, so that he presumably has in mind the active natures that under better conditions become courageous. In contrast to these, some people “wallow in great ignorance and baseness” (ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ τε αὖ καὶ ταπεινότητι πολλῇ κυλινδουμένους), perhaps we are to think because they are lethargic, like pigs wallowing in mud. The opposition between the two characters therefore increases as each becomes more and more

vicious, and less like virtue itself.⁴⁴ A city ruled by citizens with such extremely different, and vicious, characters could hardly be harmonized.

The Visitor is explicit in his view that the effect of education is to make the courageous and moderate natures more like each other, thereby giving them a greater share in virtue. The Visitor says concerning the courageous character that is properly educated, that it is “especially willing, as a result, to share in what is just” (τῶν δικαίων μάλιστα οὕτω κοινωνεῖν ἂν ἐθέλῃσειεν) (309e). And yet justice is supposed to characterize the moderate natures, not courageous natures, according to the Visitor’s claim at 311a: “the dispositions of moderate people when in office are markedly cautious, just, and conservative” (τὰ μὲν γὰρ σωφρόνων ἀρχόντων ἦθη σφόδρα μὲν εὐλαβῇ καὶ δίκαια καὶ σωτήρια). While on the one hand the courageous characters come to partake in “just things” and the moderate characters are naturally just, so that a difference between the two characters remains, the similarity that arises out of education is essential to the existence of the true city. The moderate soul that is educated becomes “genuinely moderate and wise” (ὅντως σῶφρον καὶ φρόνιμον) (309e).⁴⁵ The Visitor does not claim that the moderate natures come to share in courage, but he implies that the “moderation” that they have when it is entirely separate from courage is deficient, not just as virtue, but as moderation. Both the parts of virtue require the opposite part in order to become genuinely good character states. The Visitor here also points to the connection between genuine virtue and wisdom (the moderate character becomes φρόνιμον), which I will discuss further below.

⁴⁴ If my account of virtue and its parts in the Statesman is right, then it turns out that the Visitor’s view is not so “un-Socratic” as Mishima (1995) argues. The Visitor can associate courage with force and moderation with restraint (or gentleness, ἡσυχία, cf. *Charmides* 159b ff.) without calling into question the “moral” value of virtue because courage and moderation as he understands them are not virtues. So also, virtue is one (cf. Protagoras 332a-333b, 359a-360e).

⁴⁵ With the important qualification “so far as wisdom goes in the context of life in a city” (ὥς γε ἐν πολιτείᾳ). The well educated citizen is not necessarily a philosopher.

Education is the means which provides the “divine bond” of agreement about what is just by which the statesman unifies the city. This bond, says the Visitor, is the “opinion about what is fine, just, and good, and the opposites of these, which is really true and is guaranteed” (τὴν τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων περὶ καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν τούτοις ἐναντίων ὄντως οὕσαν ἀληθεῖ δόξαν μετὰ βεβαιώσεως) (309c). Education provides agreement that enables the citizens to see the value in acting against their own natures and according to the opposite nature. Education and the agreement it brings about are therefore the source of the unity between the opposing natures of the citizens and the balancing of offices.

We can see how agreement about what is just unifies the citizens on a more concrete level if we consider the content of the agreement. What that content is, is not immediately clear. The Visitor does not specify what the fine, just, and good things that he mentions are. Are they forms, or sets of fine, just, or good objects, or actions? The Visitor use of the plural suggests that they are not forms at least, and we cannot expect the citizens to be philosophers anyway. We can decide the question of the content of agreement by considering the office sharing in the city. The statesman’s weaving, including the three aspects of his weaving (intermarriage, education, and office sharing), is meant to provide a way for the opposing citizens to deliberate together rather than lead the city to destruction out of excessive aggression or passivity. The purpose of bringing about agreement among the citizens is for the sake of making the offices common between the opposing citizens so that together they can rule the city directly, while the statesman rules indirectly. The three aspects of the weaving are therefore tied together. If intermarriage is for the sake of education, and education is for the sake of balancing offices, then the governing role of the citizens will be the key to understanding the political value of agreement about what

is noble, just, and good. We can consider what the content of the agreement must be about in the light of the conditions that are necessary for the sharing of offices between opposing citizens.

The things that the citizens agree are political actions which they see as fine, just, and good. Although the statesman has the highest authority in the city as the possessor of the ruling art that controls the subordinate arts, the citizens also share in ruling. The necessity of weaving together the opposing citizens arises from the presumption that the statesman himself does not manage all the affairs of the city. If the city is to be just and if the good of the whole is to be preserved, then the citizens themselves must agree as to what kind of things they should do as officers of the city so that they can rule the city justly on their own, without the statesman's constant oversight. This is not to say that they are philosophers – but even if they do not have knowledge of justice itself, they will recognize just actions as just. I say *kind* of action because the citizens cannot be expected to agree exactly as to what should be done in various cases – they will differ for example on exactly how strict a criminal should be punished for a particular crime – but there will be a definite range as to what both kinds of citizens will consider acceptable.⁴⁶ Agreement on the kinds of actions that the city should perform through its offices has the result that the opposition between the citizens is mitigated, and that they will not refuse to work together through an inability to see any value in forceful or restrained official decisions.

On this view of the agreement about justice and virtue and its parts, it seems that virtue as a whole is a kind of knowledge. I have argued that the opposite characters in the city, the courageous and moderate natures of the citizens, are not genuine virtues, but instead that they are

⁴⁶ I take this view of the content of the agreement among the citizens to be consistent with John Cooper's (1999, 94) claim that the divine bond "involves the citizens' coming to see and accept good reasons for so regarding certain actions and dispositions". One thing worth noting is that those "reasons" do not amount to the conversion of true belief into knowledge, although their true belief comes close to knowledge, since it is secure (μετὰ βεβαιώσεως). It has a certain stability, presumably induced by the education that the citizens receive, that makes it better than the true belief that might sometimes obtain among the citizens in the lawful city.

tendencies to act either with force or restraint. Both characters approach viciousness as they become less and less like each other, becoming extremely “manic” or “lethargic” (306e-307c). Their actions are then determined by extremes. In order to avoid the disunity that vice on a large scale causes, the citizens are to be educated so that they can choose the due measure in action, in imitation of the statesman. The statesman’s knowledge is knowledge of when the other arts in the city, which are in charge of a part of the city’s affairs, should use their skills and when they should refrain. Exercise of this art requires recognizing when it is proper to use force or to use restraint in relation to other cities, or toward the citizens of the true city itself. The statesman’s knowledge is therefore the complete virtue that the citizens imitate. The cognitive aspect of virtue is implied by the characterization of the parts of virtue as judgments that one of two opposing kinds of action is appropriate. The possessor of only one part of virtue will tend to see either force or restraint as the best course of action even when it is not, but the possessor of both parts will be able to recognize when each kind of action is called for. Complete virtue is knowledge, rather than belief (even when it is true), of the due measure in action. The citizens come close to achieving virtue as they become more like each other and like the statesman, and to some extent are able to grasp the due measure on their own once the city is set in order by the statesman.⁴⁷

The political significance of the cosmological myth that runs from 268e through 274e shows why politics is necessary in the world as we know it, and why agreement between the citizens is central to the unity of the city. The existence of the city and, in the light of what we

⁴⁷ In her discussion of the *καίρως*, Lane (1995, 283) points out that the true city is conceived of as a product that the statesman does not necessarily continue to reside over after he has produced it. The Visitor’s last comment that the statesman after completing the fabric of the city uses it to cover the rest of the inhabitants of the city, slave and free (311c), seems to leave open the possibility that the city will have to do without him. This possibility was already envisioned at 295c and is suggested by the weaving metaphor. Such a city, initially set in order by the statesman but later without his presence, would have to retain the laws that the statesman gave if it is to be as happy as possible. This city would be the best form of lawful city, and its citizens would imitate the statesman by finding the due measure on their own.

learn about how the statesman rules, the agreement that harmonizes it are ways in which humans, in the absence of a divine shepherd, resist the increasing difference in the cosmos and imitate the similarity that divine rule gives to the whole cosmos and to the living things within it. The Visitor's myth ties together three themes of Greek mythology: the golden age of Cronus, the autochthonos origin of humans, and the cyclical reversal in the rotation of the cosmos. The life of the cosmos is separated into two phases, one of which is characterized by plenty and by the birth of humans from the earth.⁴⁸ During this phase, "the god" is in control of the cosmos, and everything necessary for life is provided for humans (271e-272b). There is no strife between humans or between humans and other animals. Political relations do not exist. During this time humans are also born from the earth instead of from each other: the dead come back to life as part of the general reversal of time. The age of Zeus on the other hand is characterized by divisions and humans have to fend for themselves instead of being governed by the gods, just as the cosmos now governs itself (274a). The arts are given to men so that they may survive in the midst of scarcity, and defend themselves from now hostile animals (274c).

The purpose of the myth in its immediate context is to show that the Visitor and Socrates, defining the statesman and true king as a herdsman (261e), have confused the statesman with the divine rulers of humans in the age of Cronus. The myth illustrates the fact that humans are self-ruling. The Visitor's true city is a city for humans as they exist in the current age of Zeus, not for the humans of the age of Cronus, who do not even have constitutions. The statesman's role is to unite the citizens by making them more like each other, against the general tendency in the age of Zeus toward increasing difference. The very reason why the god has to take control of the cosmos is that after a certain time of being by itself, it entirely forgets the "teaching of its

⁴⁸ I reject Brisson's (1995) and Rowe's (1999) reading of the myth as including three rather than two phases. This reading makes the myth unnecessarily complex. See McCabe (1997) for a discussion of and argument against their readings, and Ferrari (1995, n.17) for a refutation of Brisson's account.

craftsman and father” (τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδασχὴν) (273b) and is on the verge of complete destruction. The god’s rule restores its internal likeness (273d-e). The statesman takes the place of the gods, and in so far as he rules and enables the citizens themselves to determine their own conduct well in their various offices (in addition to the fact that he himself is human), he provides for the just self-rule of humans. Humans will always rule themselves in the age of Zeus, but they will do so properly only when the statesman, the one who has knowledge of how to rule well, does in fact rule the city. His rule ensures that the citizens themselves are able to rule in accordance with justice because they are able to see the value in fine, just, and good political activity. The agreement that the Visitor has in mind prevents strife between the different citizens in their governing of the city in an era that is characterized by strife, approaching “the boundless sea of unlikeness” (τὸν τῆς ἀνομοιότητος ἄπειρον ὄντα πόντον) (273d-e).

The similarity in the souls of the citizens that the statesman brings about reflects the metaphysics of the dialogue as well as the lesson of the myth about the purpose of politics. The kind of agreement that I have in mind brings about harmony in the city as a whole, the harmony that must be crafted by a self-ruling statesman (in the Visitor’s language an αὐτοκράτωρ (298c, 299c) in a time that is characterized by increasing disharmony. It turns out that the citizens themselves, because they see just actions as just, are able together to see the due measure in the affairs of the city. The statesman divides the offices of the city between the citizens so that together they will find the due measure on their own: the courageous and the moderate will balance each other, so that the city does not act too forcefully or with too much restraint. The self-rule of humans includes the self-rule of the various experts in so far as they are experts in the various arts, while still subordinate to the expertise of politics. This form of self-rule also

suggests that true agreement among the citizens concerning what is noble, just, and good means that together, as a whole, they grasp what is timely and appropriate, or the *καίρως*, in a particular situation that calls for their judgment. By weaving in accordance with due measure, the statesman enables the citizens to grasp what is in due measure in the various affairs in the city.

Here we see the relevance of the Visitor's discussion of due measure once again, this time in the political praxis of the citizens. The same metaphysical scheme underlies the souls of the citizens, as well as the statesman's knowledge and activity. Both are foreshadowed in the myth and the important role that similarity and difference play in it. The difference that increases gradually as the cosmos decays, slowly forgetting the rule of the god, turns out to be the difference between the opposite characters of the citizens. The statesman's role is to overcome this decay in the souls of the citizens. While the statesman in producing the city weaves together the opposing characters of the courageous and the moderate, the effect of true agreement about the noble, the just, and the good is that the citizens are able to correctly judge for themselves what the due measure between the extremes of force and restraint is. The metaphysics of the dialogue therefore inform both the statesman's knowledge and also the ruling activity of the citizens of the true city.

The agreement between the citizens about what counts as fine, just, and good is fundamental to the composition of the true city. Without it, the citizens could not share offices with each other, and so the city would not be self-ruling. If there were no agreement between the citizens of the true city about what kind of actions are just, the self-rule that the myth ascribes to the human species would at most be the despotic rule of the statesman. Although the ruler would now be the same kind of being as those he rules, contrary to the mistaken identification of the statesman with the herdsman and in accordance with the myth's distinction between human and

divine ruler, he would still rule *as if* he were a higher being. The difference between the divine herdsman and the human ruler, a difference that the Visitor takes pains to illustrate, would lose its significance. On this understanding of statesmanship, the statesman would perhaps be a slave master, but he would not be a truly political leader.

One difficulty with this interpretation of the statesman's rule, that it depends on an agreement which amounts to a kind of consent to his rule, is that it apparently conflicts with the Visitor's claims that the statesman does not rule on the basis of the consent of the citizens to his rule. And yet, one of the conclusions to be drawn from the myth, a conclusion that the Visitor expresses explicitly, is that the statesman does not rely on force – he is not a tyrant (276d-e). This is a problem that must be faced, since consent cannot be necessary to the statesman's rule and at the same time have no bearing on the justice of his rule.

The issue of consent arises in the context of law, specifically with the introduction of new laws. To fill out his claim that the statesman should not be bound by the laws of the city and that he ought to change them when he sees fit, the Visitor argues that his authority does not depend on persuading the citizens to accept the laws he legislates for them. Most people, acknowledges the Visitor, say that there is no problem with new legislation, as long as the one legislating persuades the citizens to accept them (296a).⁴⁹ The Visitor (elaborating on a point made earlier, 293a-c) draws an analogy between the doctor and the statesman in order to show that this view is false. When the doctor prescribes a certain course of action to his patients in accordance with his expertise, it would be absurd to say that he is doing something unhealthy toward them. His knowledge is of health and what brings about health, so whatever he does for his patients as a doctor will be for their benefit. So also the statesman, as an expert in governing the city, will

⁴⁹ This brings home the point that the thought experiment that the Visitor gives shortly after is not meant to be an exact allegory for Athens, in which the laws could be, and were, changed at times.

only do what is good for the city. Just as the use of force has no bearing on the benefit that the doctor's prescriptions have for his patients, the statesman's use of force in itself does not count against the benefit of his rule for the city, nor is it a reason to reject his rule. Knowledge takes precedence over the traditional criteria of consent, wealth, and number for distinguishing constitutions (296b-297b). These claims seem to tell against the view that agreement is necessary for the being of the true city.⁵⁰

Although in principle the statesman's authority is not based on consent or any kind of agreement among the citizens, he will have to persuade the citizens to follow his rule because of the constraints of human nature. The Visitor can therefore consistently argue that the legitimacy of the statesman's rule does not depend on the consent of the citizens, while at the same time denying that the statesman will in fact disregard their consent. Consider first the analogy of the statesman to the doctor. In the case of the doctor, we admit the legitimacy of the doctor's use of force because we recognize the doctor to be an expert in health. Children might reject the doctor's prescription of a nasty tasting medicine, or we might refuse to take a doctor's advice because we think he is a quack, but in both cases we do not recognize the doctor to be a doctor. In the case of the statesman, the statesman's expertise is exactly what is at issue in the minds of the citizens. The Visitor's imaginary lawful city arises because the citizens do not admit that the

⁵⁰ The Visitor also characterizes the statesman at 259d as a slave master (δεσπότης), who would have the right to use force. This claim is part of the Visitor's identification, with Socrates' concession, that statesmanship, kingship, household management, and slave mastery are all the same knowledge. Given that this appears to be a rather bad argument, and is contradicted later in the dialogue, it seems to be part of the Visitor's testing of Young Socrates. (I assume that Miller's (2004) characterization of Socrates as too eager to agree with the Visitor's intentionally misleading suggestions, testing his likeness to the elder Socrates (cf. 258a), at various points in the discussion is basically correct.). The identification smoothes the way toward the identification of the statesman with the herdsman, who rules over his herd with no regard to their consent, as a master does over slaves. This is an example of how Plato has his interlocutors assert claims that will later be denied. The contradiction lies not in the philosophical content that Plato seeks to express, but rather points to something further. Here it is the necessity of reflection on what the teacher puts forward, rather than the passivity that Socrates displays, as well as the insufficiency of mechanical conceptual analysis.

statesman is an expert (298a ff.). They do not believe that there is such a thing as a political expert, and in fact outlaw inquiry into the nature of correct political rule (299b ff.).

The difficulty for those of us who are not experts in statesmanship of distinguishing the statesman from the tyrant, both of whom are above the law, is not surprisingly an obstacle for the statesman to come to rule a city. He is such a rare individual and his commands, based on a knowledge that is far beyond most people, are contrary to the ancient customs that the Visitor repeatedly refers to. Non-statesmen, who are right to fear the far more common tyrant, in their failure to recognize the statesman will resist his authority so that he would have to use violence against the citizens. We might not use violence against a doctor we do not trust (to go back to the analogy), but violence would certainly arise between the citizens of a city and someone whom they take to be an unjust usurper. If the citizens do not recognize the statesman to be a true expert who would rule for their good, the statesman would have to use violence against the citizens whom he would rule, and the citizens would be compelled to resist him with violence. Such violence would be contrary to the statesman's rule for the good of the whole. (We should keep in mind here Socrates' claim at *Republic* 540e-541a that the philosopher kings might have to build the ideal city by beginning with children, while their parents are nowhere in sight: unjust force would be necessary in order to establish the ideal city.) It is no wonder that at the end of the day, the statesman must allow for the necessity of persuading the citizens to follow his commands.⁵¹ So although the statesman's knowledge, rather than consent of the citizens, is what makes him a just and good ruler for the whole of the city, that very knowledge will compel him to persuade the citizens to accept his rule rather than use violence against them. Consent to the

⁵¹ John Cooper (1999) argues beyond what I have argued that the statesman's knowledge "establishes this as the correct and just way [i.e. on the basis of consent] to rule." This seems a step too far, although I recognize that a city will be happier whose citizens participate in government than one in which they simply take orders. Nonetheless, the latter, if it were possible, would not on the Visitor's view be unjust.

statesman's rule is therefore necessary if he is to rule justly, but it does not what makes his rule beneficial.

IV. Agreement in the Lawful City

I will now show that agreement in the lawful city is the constitutional feature that makes the lawful city imitate the true city. Agreement in the lawful city is agreement that the law determines what is just. Those laws, whatever they happen to be in a particular city, are not established on the basis of knowledge, and so the agreement in the lawful city is not the true agreement that exists in the true city. It is nonetheless necessary for the rule of law in the lawful city and is what gives the lawful city its unity, preventing strife between the opposing groups of citizens. In this way, it is not only necessary for the unity in the lawful city but is also the source of unity in the lawful city, whereas in the true city the source of unity, the political form that provides unity, is in the statesman's rule. Although agreement plays a more fundamental role in the lawful city, the imitative relation that the Visitor posits between the two constitutions lies in the likeness between the agreement, in its content and function, in the two kinds of city. At the same time, agreement about what is just makes the two cities different: what is merely necessary for the true city is the source of unity in the lawful city. This difference makes what is a constraint on knowledge in the true city into the unifying factor in the lawful city.

The importance of agreement about what is just for the lawful city comes to light in the Visitor's description of the offices in his thought experiment at 298a ff. The Visitor gives an account of what judicial practice will be like in the lawful city at 298e. The first role of the judges is to call to account (εὑθύνειν) those officers who have been found guilty of acting unlawfully. In addition, a feature of the courts that recalls actual Athenian practice, anyone, rich

or poor, is allowed to charge an officer with failing to “steer the ships during the year according to the written rules or according to the ancient customs of our ancestors” (οὐ κατὰ τὰ γράμματα τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἐκυβέρνησε τὰς ναῦς οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰ παλαιὰ τῶν προγόνων ἔθη) (299a). But not only is official conduct to be punished, so is inquiry into how the city should be ruled. In the lawful city, says the Visitor, it will be necessary (δεήσει, 299b) to outlaw all investigation into steersmanship and the medical art that seeks to go beyond what is already written down as to how these arts are to be practiced. Whoever attempts to discover those factors on which seafaring and health depend, such as winds at sea and the bearing that heat and cold have on the body, will have to be discredited. Such a person will be regarded as merely a “star gazer, some babbling sophist” (μετεωρολόγον, ἀδολέσχην τινὰ σοφιστήν) (299b).

The reason for outlawing inquiry and for the off-hand dismissal of anyone who attempts inquiry arises from the citizens’ belief that there can be no knowledge of the ruling arts of steersmanship and medicine, and by analogy of statesmanship, that is not readily available to everyone. The law is assumed to be the only possible standard for what is just. The Visitor explains:

“For (so they will say)⁵² there must be nothing wiser than the laws; no one is ignorant about what belongs to the art of the doctor, or about health, or what belongs to the art of the steersman, or seafaring, since it is possible for anyone who wishes to understand things that are written down and things established as ancestral customs.”

⁵² Rowe’s (1999) translation suggests that it is the laws supplying the reasoning behind the prohibition against inquiry with “(so the law will say)”. A verb has to be supplied in the Greek, and Rowe apparently supplies φήσεται with the law as the subject, looking back to δεήσει θέσθαι νόμον at 299b. This translation obscures my point slightly, but φήσουσι with the citizens as subject (“so they will say”) could just as easily be supplied. Either way, the ease of consulting the law is the justification for the punishment of the inquirers.

οὐδὲν γὰρ δεῖν τῶν νόμων εἶναι σοφώτερον: οὐδένα γὰρ ἀγνοεῖν τό τε ἰατρικὸν καὶ τὸ
 ὑγιεινὸν οὐδὲ τὸ κυβερνητικὸν καὶ ναυτικόν: ἐξεῖναι γὰρ τῷ βουλομένῳ μανθάνειν
 γεγραμμένα καὶ πάτρια ἔθη κείμενα. (299c-d)

The practices that belong to knowledge, here referred to as τὸ ἰατρικὸν and τὸ κυβερνητικόν, as well as the objects of knowledge, τὸ ὑγιεινόν and τὸ ναυτικόν, are reduced to knowledge of the law. The expertise of ruling is therefore for the citizens no more than knowledge of the law and practice in accordance with it. The citizens have only contempt for anyone who tries to investigate into the nature of politics. On the grounds of their view that the law determines what is just, the citizens are right to disregard such inquiry. If indeed anyone can easily determine what is just and in accordance with good rule by looking to the law, which is publicly known either in the form of written documents or in ancient custom, then there can be no good reason for investigating what underlies a presumed “genuine” form of rule. Proper rule in the offices is simply whatever official activities are in accordance with, or at least not contrary to, what the law calls for, and there is nothing more to be said.

There are serious problems with the citizens’ view of law. First, the reduction of knowledge to a set of rules leads to the complete destruction of knowledge, a point that the Visitor makes shortly at 299d-e. When the Visitor asks Socrates what the result would be of such a reduction in the case of such arts as generalship, hunting, painting, carpentry, horse-rearing, and the mathematical arts, he immediately acknowledges that they would be ruined. It is obvious to Socrates that the rule of law in a wide variety of other kinds of knowledge, besides that which is concerned with the rule of the city, is disastrous. The Visitor’s inclusion of the mathematical arts brings his point home most forcefully for Socrates, a student of the geometer Theodorus. The Visitor does not however suggest that the citizens of the lawful city would think

it reasonable to apply the rule of law to other spheres besides that of politics. They do not assert the rule of law outside of politics: they do not see law as superior to knowledge in the case of spheres of activity other than that of ruling the city.

More surprising in the light of the Visitor's qualified endorsement of the rule of law is that it will also be necessary to punish anyone "corrupting people younger than himself and inducing them to engage in the arts of the steersman and the doctor not in accordance with the laws, but instead by taking autonomous control of ships and patients" (διαφθείροντα ἄλλους νεωτέρους καὶ ἀναπείθοντα ἐπιτίθεσθαι κυβερνητικῇ καὶ ἰατρικῇ μὴ κατὰ νόμους, ἀλλ' αὐτοκράτορας ἄρχειν τῶν πλοίων καὶ τῶν νοσοῦντων) with the "most extreme penalties" (τοῖς ἐσχάτοις) (299b-c). The law forbids investigation into the possibility of its own falsehood even with death. The Visitor's comment serves the purpose of bringing the elder Socrates, who is present at the entire discussion of the *Statesman*, into the foreground. The younger Socrates will think of the elder Socrates here, as will the reader. The Visitor's aim here is partly to make it clear that sometimes the law will support injustice. Recognizing this helps Young Socrates to accept that the rule of law is inferior to the rule of the statesman. What is more relevant to the citizens' view of law is that the citizens do not fully grasp the implications of their identification of law with the only possible standard of justice. They see neither the absurdity of the rule of law over what can only adequately be grasped by knowledge, nor that the law, seen as the only possible determiner of what is just, ought to include the destruction of philosophy. If the law is the only conceivable standard for what is just, then investigation into any other possible standard for action can only be subversive of justice and the city itself. Here we must raise the question of what exactly the Visitor is doing in giving this thought experiment. Despite the allusion to the elder Socrates' trial, it is certainly not meant to be an allegory for Athens, in which there was no

strict rule of law as the Visitor envisages it. Rather, the Visitor is showing what the consistent application of the rule of law amounts to, not only in the political sphere but in other areas as well. The Visitor illustrates for Socrates, and the reader, what it would mean for law to rule absolutely.

The agreement that the law determines what is just also has a positive role to play in the lawful city, apart from its exclusion of the rule of the statesman. Law in the Visitor's thought experiment is not only publicly known, it is also agreed upon by the citizens, and this will enable them to live together without strife. If the citizens think that justice is simply following the law, as the Visitor suggests that they will in the city where law rules, then they will of course agree to abide by it. It follows that the rule of law will preclude the rulers of the city from ruling for their own sake alone. The rule of the tyrant, and also that of the self-interested rule of the poor and the rich, is impossible if the citizens as a whole agree that the law is just.⁵³ The law is made for the good of the whole city, and the rulers are among the citizens who agree that the law is just. The rulers will therefore care for the good of the whole city to the extent that the specific content of the law allows them to. This is not to say that their rule will in fact always be the best for the city, since they do not have the knowledge that the statesman has, but at the very least they will not intentionally rule for the interest of only one part of the city.

I have focused primarily on comparing the lawful city to the true city. But understanding the character of the tyrant, who is the paradigmatic self-interested ruler, as the Visitor envisions him can also help us to see the value of law more clearly. The Visitor affirms the citizens' (and Socrates') fear of the tyrant because the tyrant attempts to rule for his own good alone, disregarding the good of the whole city. So he asks Socrates concerning the office holder, "what then if this person were to take no notice of what is written down, in order either to profit in

⁵³ At least for a while (see 301c ff.).

some way or to do some personal favor, and were to take it upon himself to do different things, contrary to these, when he possess no knowledge? Would this not be an evil still greater than the previous one?" (οὗτος δὲ μηδὲν φροντίζων τῶν γραμμάτων ἢ κέρδους ἕνεκέν τινος ἢ χάριτος ἰδίας παρὰ ταῦτ' ἐπιχειροῖ δρᾶν ἕτερα, μηδὲν γινώσκων, ἄρα οὐ τοῦ κακοῦ τοῦ πρόσθεν μείζον ἂν ἔτι τοῦτο γίγνοιτο κακόν;) (300a). The person that the Visitor describes intentionally disregards the law. He, like everyone, must know what the law says. But while the statesman is justified in changing the laws, this person acts lawlessly for the sake of some private interest, his own or someone else's. Socrates agrees that such arbitrary, self-interested rule would be even worse for the city than the strict rule of law. It is easy to see how the citizens will mistake the statesman for the tyrant. From the perspective of the citizens, every individual in the city, including the statesman, knows what is just because everyone knows the law. Given that the law determines what is just, the statesman's claim to a special expertise can only be an attempt to unjustly gain power for himself, which power he will of course use for his own advantage and against the interests of the citizens. The only reason anyone can have for wanting to be the sole ruler must be the overthrowing of the law and ruling for self-interest. The citizens' belief that the law is the only possible determiner of what is just makes them see anyone who would change the laws as a self-interested tyrant. The statesman therefore can only rule according to his knowledge of statesmanship if it is generally recognized that he has an expertise that the vast majority of people do not have, and that the law is not itself justice. But the citizens reject the claim that knowledge of how to rule is obtainable by only very few individuals, a claim that the Visitor has already endorsed. This exceptional ability to rule is what the citizens do not take to be real.

We can in contrast to arbitrary lawless rule see the positive benefit of law. The rule of law excludes the tyrant from rule just as it does the statesman. It will also prevent the arbitrary rule of those who would take the same attitude toward the whole city that the tyrant does, such as an oligarchic or democratic faction. The law does so because it is established for the whole city by both of the opposing groups of citizens, the rich and the poor, as I argued in my second chapter. If all the citizens, rich and poor, agree that the law is just, then neither group will consider its own interests alone. Agreement that the law is just therefore guarantees that the citizens will at the very least refrain from ruling simply for their own benefit, thereby preventing the most serious source of strife and the worst kind of rule. The Visitor, while not endorsing the rule of law on the basis that law in itself determines what is just, nonetheless acknowledges that law can have a valuable function in the city. He can recommend the rule of law for a city in which the statesman does not rule because the law, as the joint legislation of both opposing groups of citizens, is meant to provide for the good of the whole city.

The agreement about the law, as I argued in the previous chapter, is forged by the rich and poor together. This is not to say that both groups will have equal power in the city – they clearly will not – but neither group can completely disregard the interests of the other. Neither group would even want to entirely disregard the interests of the other, let alone make an attempt to rule for its own good, if both in fact agree that the law is just. The law sustains the cooperation of the rich and poor by preventing whatever would go too far against the interests of one or the other. Even if it is ultimately unstable and fails to grasp the true good of the whole city, law is far superior to the rule of a tyrant, or of a self-interested faction, because the citizens as a whole agree that it is just. If the citizens *agree* that the law is just, they will be willing to obey it and consider the good of the whole city in their political activities. Agreement is

therefore necessary for the rule of law in the lawful constitution. Unlike the agreement in the true city, it is not only necessary for harmony, but is also the source of the harmony that is in the lawful city. Consent to the law takes the place of the statesman as the source of the unity and harmony in the city.

We can now give an answer to the question of what makes the lawful city imitate the true city. In the true city, the statesman is the source of unity through his knowledge of when each of the subordinate arts ought to act. He rules the general, orator, and judge by deciding when they should use their different forms of expertise. By ruling the educators, he ensures that the citizens will have true beliefs about what is fine, just, and good, and this agreement enables them to live together and rule the city directly (in contrast to the statesman's indirect rule) for the good of the whole. The agreement among the citizens is therefore necessary for the harmony that obtains between the opposite kinds of citizen, especially in relation to the sharing of offices. In the lawful city, the agreement that the law is just takes the place of the true agreement of the citizens in the true city. This agreement is not merely necessary for the unity of the city, but is also the source of unity in the lawful city, because it is the fact of agreement, rather than the specific content of the laws, that prevents strife. The agreement about what is just causes the lawful city to be like the true city because it brings a kind of unity to the city, as the statesman with the consent of the citizens of the true city brings unity to the true city.

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