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Statecraft and Self-Government: On the Task of the Statesman in Plato's *Statesman*

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In this paper I argue that, according to Plato's *Statesman*, true statesmen directly control, administer, or govern none of the affairs of the city. Rather, administration and governance belong entirely to the citizens. Instead of governing the city, the task of the statesman is to facilitate the citizens' successful self-governance or self-rule. And true statesmen do this through legislation, by means of which they inculcate in the citizens true opinions about the just, the good, the fine, and the opposites of these.

1. Introduction

Plato is often accused of advocating totalitarianism.[1] The reasons for this accusation typically involve the idea that, for Plato, an ideal political arrangement requires rulers overseeing and directing nearly all aspects of society, including the private lives of citizens. And while many have scoffed at these accusations (especially at those leveled by Karl Popper), the scoffing tends to be directed at the tone of the accusation, or at the specific details of the reason given in support of it, but *not* at the accusation itself. Indeed, many of the most prominent commentators on Plato's political dialogues level the same accusation, interpreting Plato as an advocate for totalitarian or autocratic rule.[2]

1. Some of the most notable accusers to level such a charge are Karl Popper (1945), Bertrand Russell (1945), R.H.S. Crossman (1937), and Otto Neurath and J.A. Lauwerys (1944). See Demetriou (2002) both for an account of the history of such accusations and for a more complete bibliography of them.

2. For example, see Taylor (1999: 281–82), Blackburn (2006: 54–58), and Schofield (2006: 292). The word 'totalitarianism' has several meanings, and I shall not be concerned with all of them nor with precisely defining the term itself. Whatever else may be true of them, totalitarian regimes are authoritarian; that is, the rulers in such regimes make all the political decisions, leaving individual citizens politically powerless (cf. Taylor 1999: 280). It is this feature of totalitarianism that is pertinent for this paper.

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Of course, this is not the only general view of Plato's political thought. Consider another. Some commentators have focused chiefly on what makes the ideal ruler fit for ruling. They claim that, in Plato's view, a ruler must have a certain kind of knowledge or understanding. Thus, Plato's ideal rulers are what we might call "scientific governors." They possess the expertise or knowledge relevant to the political sphere, and it is precisely because they have such knowledge that they are suited to control and to administer the affairs of the city. John Stuart Mill is perhaps the most famous proponent of this view of Plato.[3] Mill seems to think not merely that such an interpretation of Plato is correct, but that what it says about ideal rulers is true; that Plato thus understood is, by and large, *right*.[4]

While these are certainly not the only general views of Plato's political thought, they are commonplace, with many commentators adhering to one or both of them (they are compatible). Now whether commentators focus on his alleged totalitarianism or on his alleged advocacy of scientific governors, they agree that Plato conceives of statecraft as a matter of directly controlling and administering the affairs of the city. This paper challenges this claim. In my view, the above-described views of Platonic statecraft are incompatible with the account of statecraft developed in the *Statesman*. As I shall argue, that account maintains that the true statesman directly controls, oversees, administers, and governs *none* of the affairs of the city. Rather, administration and governance belong *entirely* to the citizens.[5] Such a political system obviously bears little resemblance to totalitarianism, but it also clearly diverges from Mill's vision of scientific governors.[6]

To be fair, most commentators derive their view of Plato's political philosophy primarily from the *Republic* and not from the *Statesman* (though Mill is an exception to this). And so even if the argument of this paper is sound, these commentators might nonetheless be correct, at least with regard to the *Republic*.

3. See Mill (1978: 423–39). See Schofield (2006: 138–40) for a discussion of Mill's interpretation of Plato.

4. See Mill (1977).

5. Thus my interpretation of the political theory of the *Statesman* is at odds with any interpretation according to which the statesman directly manages or oversees any of the affairs of state. There are many such interpretations. Many of them claim that the statesman will directly supervise craftsmen telling them when and when not to engage in their crafts. For example, see Lane (1998: 142–45), Cooper (1999: 180–81), Klosko (2006: 206), and Zuckert (2009: 733). My interpretation is in closer agreement with Marquez (2012), for he argues the statesman will engage in direct regulation only very rarely (see 2012: 308–10). However, insofar as he holds that the statesman does indeed directly regulate (at least some things at some times), our views are at odds. On the question of who directly governs the affairs of state, my interpretation comes closest to that of Lane (1995). For a discussion of the differences between Lane (1995) and Lane (1998), see n. 29.

6. Such a view of the political theory of the *Statesman* also obviously conflicts with views according to which the statesman is an "absolute monarch" (as is claimed by Grote 1875; Barker 1918; and Skemp 1952).

I grant as much. Nonetheless, if the argument of this paper is sound, that should give us considerable pause with regard to ascribing the views described above to Plato. After all, while the *Republic* is Plato's masterpiece, it is but one of his political dialogues. Further, if the argument is sound, we should consider whether what the *Republic* claims about the task of the statesman (in the *Republic*, the philosopher-king) is compatible with what we find in the *Statesman*. If it is not, which view of statecraft is superior? Which, if any, is Plato's considered view? These are questions and tasks for another time, however.

Now if statesmen do not govern or control the affairs of the city, then what exactly do they do? I shall argue that the answer found in the *Statesman* is: the statesman is responsible for facilitating the citizens' successful self-governance or self-rule. And the statesman does this, as we shall see, by inculcating true opinions about the just, the good, the fine, and the opposites of these in the citizens.

To see that this is indeed the answer offered in the *Statesman* and to understand exactly what it means, we will need to examine several of the apparently disparate elements of the dialogue—in particular, the Myth of Kronos (268d–74e), the discussion of the art of measurement (283c11–7b2), the discussion of law (294a6–303b6), and of course the final account of statecraft (305e8–11c8). A point in favor of the interpretation of statecraft offered in this paper is that it unifies these various discussions; it shows how, despite initial appearances to the contrary, these passages are mutually informative.

I shall begin by examining the myth of Kronos (Section 2). The important political upshot of the myth is often overlooked or, at the very least, not fully appreciated. As we shall see, the myth naturally dovetails into the final and definitive account of statecraft with which the *Statesman* closes. Having examined the myth, I shall next turn attention to the discussion of the art of measurement (Section 3). Similar to the myth, the political ramifications of the art of measurement are often neglected. With an account of the art of measurement in hand, I shall then turn to explicating the final definition of statecraft (Section 4).

2. The Myth of Kronos

The purpose of the myth is to correct a mistake that people commonly make concerning statecraft, a mistake that I suspect Plato would think most human beings throughout history—including us today—have made. That mistake is to confuse the statesman with a so-called "divine herdsman" (about whom more shortly). Central to the myth is a division between two ages: the age of Zeus, which is the

present age, and the age of Kronos, which occurred in the distant past.[7] During the age of Kronos, Kronos accompanied and guided the cosmos, helping it to move in a circle (269c4–5). Similarly, each species of animal was helped or tended to by a divine spirit (271d5–7). These divine spirits provided for all the needs of those they tended, and as a result, animals did not prey on each other, nor was there any strife or fighting (271d7–e3). Most importantly for the myth, human beings were just like the other animals in this regard; they too were shepherded by a divine spirit—this spirit is the aforementioned divine herdsman. Because the divine herdsman provided for all of our needs, human beings did not need to toil or to labor (271e4–5, 272a3–b1), nor did they form communities—neither families nor "political constitutions [πολιτεῖαι]" existed during the age of Kronos (271e8–2a1). Inasmuch as we were helped in this way, human beings imitated the cosmos (273e11–4a1, 274d6–e1): just as the cosmos was taken care of by Kronos, so too were we taken care of by our divine herdsman.

We, of course, do not live in such an age. After a set period of time, Kronos "lets go of the handles of the steering-oars [πηδαλίων οἴακος ἀφέμενος]," retiring to his "observation-post [περιωπήν]" (272e4).[8] Thus begins the present age, the age of Zeus. Being deprived of Kronos's guidance, the cosmos tries to imitate as best as it can the circular motion that Kronos had imparted to it. Being bodily, however, the cosmos cannot imitate that motion perfectly. The best it can do is to rotate in the opposite direction (269d5–70a8). And while it initially imitates the divinely imparted motion quite accurately, over time the imitation becomes much less accurate, again owing to the bodily nature of the cosmos (273b2–7). Particularly pertinent for present purposes is a point that the Stranger stresses, namely, that during the age of Zeus the cosmos rotates *as a result of its own efforts*. The cosmos "itself takes charge of and masters itself [ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κράτος ἔχων αὐτὸς . . . ἑαυτοῦ]" (273b1–2, cf. 274a5, 274d5–6). This is the age in which we live.

In the same way that Kronos lets go of the cosmos, so too do the divine spirits leave their herds. Consequently, the needs of human beings are no longer provided for by the divine herdsman. And just as human beings imitated

7. The view that there are just two stages to the myth of Kronos (the first stage being the age of Kronos, the second stage being the age of Zeus in which the cosmos rotates in the opposite direction) is widely accepted among commentators. It has not gone unchallenged, however. In particular, Luc Brisson, Christopher Rowe, and Gabriela Roxana Carone have argued that there are *three* stages to the myth—first, the age of Kronos; second, an age of upheaval in which the cosmos rotates backwards; and third, the age of Zeus, in which the cosmos rotates in the same direction as it did during the age of Kronos (Brisson 1995; Rowe 1995a; and Carone 2005). Criticisms of this view are numerous. See Erler (1995), Ferrari (1995: 394), Lane (1998: 103–05), and Marquez (2012: 123–29). I will assume the two-stage interpretation is correct as I recapitulate the myth. Later there will be occasion for a novel argument against the three-stage view (see n. 9).

8. All translations and citations of the Greek text of the *Statesman* are from Rowe (1995b) though I have modified many of the translations.

the cosmos during the age of Kronos, so too must they imitate the cosmos now during the age of Zeus (274d6–e1). Thus human beings must now take care of and provide for themselves. And so human beings begin using fire, practicing the crafts (274c6–d1), and (we may infer) form communities. In the age of Zeus, human beings are in charge of themselves. They themselves must take care of their needs; they should not look for someone else (e.g., a divine herdsman) to do so.[9]

Human beings in the present age, however, do still look for such a person. To be sure, we do not look for a god or divine spirit to see to our needs. Instead, we look for a great ruler, a king, or (to put a modern spin on it) a president to do so. The primary point of the myth is to expose the error that we human beings make in so looking—the error, that is, in thinking of our rulers as our (hopefully) beneficent managers and overseers. By looking to our rulers or statesmen for this kind of governance, we are thinking of them as though they are divine herdsmen, and we are thinking of ourselves as helpless herd animals. But, of course, neither we nor they are these things. They are human beings just like us (cf. 275b9–c4).

The problem with the error is not merely that it is a mistaken judgment, though it is certainly that, according to the Stranger. The chief problem is the pernicious consequences of this error. By looking to our statesmen to oversee, to manage, and to take care of our needs, we entrust to them a task that they cannot possibly accomplish successfully. They are incapable of providing for all of our material needs, incapable of establishing lasting peace, and more generally, incapable of recreating the golden age. More importantly, by falling into this error we demean ourselves. We treat ourselves as helpless sheep who are unable

9. It is crucial to Brisson's three-stage interpretation of the myth that, during the age of Zeus, the god steers the universe (just as he did during the age of Kronos), but divine shepherds no longer tend to humans beings or to the other creatures of the earth. Thus, human beings must take care of themselves during the age of Zeus, "imitant en cela l'autonomie qui est désormais celle de l'univers" (Brisson 1995: 359–60). But despite Brisson's saying this, the universe *cannot* be autonomous during the age of Zeus on Brisson's reading, for it is still steered by the god. Thus, on Brisson's reading, human beings during the age of Zeus must not imitate the universe as it is *now*, but rather they must imitate it as it was during the previous age, the age where the universe was abandoned to itself. But the Stranger never claims anything like this. Indeed the Stranger claims that human beings must always imitate the universe as it is. He claims that, during the age of Zeus, human beings must "take care for themselves, just like the universe as a whole, which we imitate and follow for all time, now living and growing in this way, then in that way [τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοὺς αὑτῶν ἔχειν καθάπερ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος, ᾧ συμμιμούμενοι καὶ συνεπόμενοι τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον νῦν μὲν οὕτως, τοτὲ δὲ ἐκείνως ζῶμέν τε καὶ φυόμεθα]" (274d5–e1). We must always imitate the universe. Now (νῦν), we imitate it by living and growing in this way (οὕτως)—that is, by taking care of ourselves—whereas in the past (τοτὲ), we imitated it in that way (ἐκείνως)—that is, by being taken care of by a divine being. Brisson's reading thus runs afoul of the primary upshot of the myth, namely, that we must always imitate the universe and that such imitation requires that we today take care of ourselves.

to take care of themselves. But we are not helpless in this way. We are rational creatures who have developed various sciences and crafts and who have formed communities. And when we treat our statesmen as though they were divine herdsmen, we act as though we have not developed or formed these things, for it is just these things that enable us to take care of ourselves.[10] In this sense, insofar as we look to our leaders as our beneficent overseers, we abandon our rational capacities and we cease looking to those capacities to supply human flourishing.

However, some commentators have claimed that, despite the apparent upshot of the Myth of Kronos, the Stranger maintains through the rest of the dialogue that the statesman is best thought of as a kind of herdsman.[11] One such commentator is Roslyn Weiss. Consider two of her reasons for this view. The first is that "the Stranger asserts that the first diaeresis provides a true—if inadequate—definition of the statesman" (1995: 218). But in the relevant passages, the Stranger does not claim this; he claims merely that the first diaeresis was true inasmuch as it revealed the statesman as a "ruler of the whole city" (275a4). Such a claim gives no reason for thinking the herdsman paradigm is not abandoned. Indeed, immediately prior to this claim, the Stranger states that "we went very greatly astray" (275a2) when we answered the question of who the statesman is by giving the divine herdsman.

Her second reason is that later developments in the dialogue are "clearly assigned the role of filling in or coloring in the sketchy but correct outline provided by the first diaeresis (277c2–3)" (see Weiss 1995: 219; cf. Rowe 1995a: 14). But again, the text she cites does not say this. All the Stranger says is that "our account, just like a portrait, seems adequate in terms of its superficial outline, but not yet to have received its proper clarity." Such a claim is consistent with that account being subsequently abandoned, and there is good reason to think that it is. If the initial set of divisions were not abandoned, then the things divided off later as contributory causes (287b–9d) must have satisfied the initial set of divisions. Otherwise they would not need to be divided off. But *cooks* (288e–9a) and *decoration-makers* (288c) (two of the contributory causes that are divided off) are clearly not practitioners of *theoretical knowledge* (one of the initial divisions; see 258e). Nor for that matter are either *slaves* (who are divided off at 289c–e) or *heralds* (divided off at 290b) *self-directors* (αὐτεπιτακτῶν) (one of the initial divisions; see 260e). And so those initial divisions must have been dropped.[12] In sum, there is no good reason to think that, according to the Stranger, the statesman is best

10. Cf. Marquez (2012: 85).

11. To be sure, many commentators claim or argue that the statesman is *not* best thought of as a herdsman or shepherd. See Campbell (1867: xiv), Skemp (1952: 57), Marquez (2012: 110), and Miller (2004: 73).

12. Thus, there is not one continuous division running throughout the dialogue, as is claimed by many commentators, including Marquez (2012), Rowe (1995a), and Delcomminette (2000).

thought of as a kind of herdsman. The upshot of the Myth of Kronos is that we are mistaken when we treat our political leaders as though they were herdsmen.[13]

This mistaken view of the statesman requires correction not only because it hinders the Stranger's search for the statesman, but also because it is so widespread. To view the statesman as a herdsman or shepherd seems to have been a commonplace in ancient Greek thinking about politics.[14] Homer, for example, often uses the formulaic phrase 'shepherd of the people [ποιμὴν λαῶν]' to refer to kings or statesmen.[15] And while we today would not describe our favored politicians as shepherds, we nonetheless tend to favor them precisely because we think they will manage and oversee us and our needs well. We evaluate candidates on the basis of what they will (or will not) do and who they will (or will not) help in their management and oversight of the affairs of state.

Given that the Stranger thinks this view is mistaken, how exactly does he conceive of statecraft? The myth points us in the direction of answer. Recall that regardless of which age we are in, we are meant to imitate the cosmos. In the age of Zeus, such imitation requires taking care of and managing ourselves, for taking such care is what the cosmos does. The statesman, then, will not take care of or oversee us, but rather he will help us to take care of ourselves. This is the direction in which the myth points us.[16] But how exactly does the statesman do this?

13. Weiss's third reason is that the Stranger occasionally uses the terminology of 'herd', 'grazing', and so on later in the dialogue. Focus on just one example of a use of such terminology: 295e6–7. The fact that the Stranger refers to the citizens as "herds [ἀγέλαις]" who "graze [νομεύονται]" according to the city's laws seems insufficient on its own to establish that the herdsman paradigm remains active through the end of the dialogue, especially in light of the above arguments. But even so, the problem revealed by the myth was not that human beings were referred to as herds. The problem was in thinking that there is a herdsman for them. Referring to human beings as a herd does not entail that one believes the statesman is the herdsman for them, any more than referring to animals as creatures entails that one believes there is a creator of them. Moreover, at 295e6–7, the Stranger seems to be making a play on words, insofar as the word for 'graze' shares a similar root (νομ-) with the word for 'law'. Despite our mistaken tendency to think of ourselves as relevantly similar to herd animals, the Stranger's use of herding terminology serves to emphasize just how different we are from them. Far from needing someone to see to our daily needs, human beings find true nourishment in living according to laws—laws which, as we will see later, consist in true opinions about the good, the fine, the just, and their opposites. If human beings are a herd animal, the fact that their grazing consists in following laws about the good, the just, etc. shows how radically different they are from any other such animal, and so shows the insufficiency of the herdsman paradigm for understanding statecraft. The subsequent reasons Weiss gives seem insufficient on their own to establish her claim.

14. The phrase is regularly used by both Homer and Hesiod as a way of referring to rulers. Homer uses it as an epithet for rulers, and it appears over fifty times in the *Iliad*. Hesiod uses it less frequently, but it can be found at *Theogony* 1000 and *Shield of Heracles* 41, in addition to being found in various of the Hesiodic fragments.

15. See Miller (2004: 40–41) for further discussion of the statesman-as-divine-shepherd in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

16. For further discussion of the myth as pointing toward treating the task of statecraft as enabling self-government, see Lane (1995: 283). However, Lane seems to retreat from treating the

This question is not answered by the myth. If there is an answer to this question in the *Statesman*, that answer would show that the myth of Kronos, despite the Stranger's worries (see 277a–c), is not in fact too long or too great. For that answer would show that statecraft is fundamentally concerned with helping people to take care of themselves. And that this is essential to statecraft is only established through the myth in all of its grandeur (cf. 277b3–6). Thus, the myth in its entirety would indeed be necessary for understanding statecraft. In my view, the Stranger's complaint that the myth is too long is actually a signal to the reader to try to connect the myth with the subsequently developed political theory in precisely this way. It is the Stranger's invitation to prove that his worries are unfounded and, in the course of doing so, to realize the unity of the Stranger's vision of politics.[17]

I do think there is an answer to the question in the *Statesman.* It is found in the final pages of the dialogue; in the Stranger's final account of statecraft. But in order to understand that account, it will prove helpful first to examine the discussion of the art of measurement. For according to the final account of statecraft, the performance of the characteristic task of statecraft crucially involves the art of measurement.

3. The Art of Measurement

The Stranger and Young Socrates have just finished defining the craft of weaving, and the Stranger raises the worry that their discussion of it might have been too long. Young Socrates assures the Stranger that he does not think so, but in order to allay such worries were they to arise again, the Stranger embarks on a discussion of "excess and deficiency in general [πᾶσαν τήν τε ὑπερβολὴν καὶ τὴν ἔλλειψιν]" (283c3–4). The art of measurement, the Stranger says, is concerned with excess and deficiency in general (283d1–2), and thus a discussion of it is in order.

The Stranger promptly divides the art in two (283d4–5). The first art of measurement is said to measure the greater relative to the smaller and vice versa (see 283d7–8, 283d11–e1, 283e8–11, 284b8–9, and 284d5–6). The variety of terminology used to describe it suggests that the first art encompasses not only measurements that explicitly involve the qualities of *greater* and *smaller*, but also any measurement that non-normatively compares two things with regard to some

task of statecraft as enabling complete self-government in her later work, inasmuch as she comes to assign the statesman an active and on-going role in managing the city (see Lane 1998: 178).

17. Cf. Marquez (2012: 122).

variable quality.[18] Paradigmatic examples of such measurement include "that army is bigger than this one," "this path is longer than that one," or "she is driving faster than him."

In contrast, the second art measures the greater *not* relative to the smaller (or vice versa), but rather relative to *due measure* (τὸ μέτριον) (283e3, e11, 284a2, a8, c1, d6, e6). The μέτριον is what is fitting, proportionate, appropriate, sufficient, or, as I shall continue to translate it, it is what is in due measure.[19] Thus, if something is greater than due measure, it is greater than is appropriate, or, as we might say, it is *too* great, or *excessive* (cf. 283e3–6). (The same holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, for something being smaller than due measure.) In a later formulation of the second art, the Stranger uses other words in addition to μέτριον: we find πρέπον, καιρόν, and δέον (284e6–7). The various connotations and meanings of these Greek words overlap considerably, suggesting that the Stranger is not listing a series of standards against which the second art measures, but rather that he is trying to show us the wide range of the second art. Whenever we judge something as excessive, as deficient, or as being neither of these—as being, in other words, appropriate, or fitting, or something like that—we are using the second art. Thus examples of the second art include, "that army is of a greater size than is appropriate," (or, as we might put it, "that army is excessively large") and "this piece of wood is the appropriate length."

The second art of measurement is essential to the crafts, including statecraft. As the Stranger says, if the greater and smaller cannot be judged, and do not exist, in relation to due measure, then statecraft, weaving, and other such crafts (τέχνας) (284a5), along with their products (τἆργα) (284a5), would be "destroyed [διολοῦμεν]" (284a6) and would "disappear [ἀφανίσωμεν]" (284b3). For all such crafts "guard against exceeding due measure and falling short of it, not as something nonexistent but as something hard to deal with in their practice [τὸ τοῦ μετρίου πλέον καὶ ἔλαττον οὐχ ὡς οὐκ ὂν ἀλλ' ὡς ὂν χαλεπὸν περὶ τὰς πράξεις παραφυλάττουσι]" (284a8–10). And it is by "preserving measure in this way that everything good and fine is produced [τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ μέτρον σῴζουσαι πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται]" (284a10–b1).

In other words, a good product is a measured product, and its being measured is responsible for its goodness. Likewise, a bad product is excessive or

18. The Stranger uses not only 'greater' (μεῖζον) and 'smaller' (ἔλαττον) (283d11–e1, 284d5), but 'greatness and smallness' (μεγέθους καὶ σμικρότητος) (283d7–8), 'the great and the small' (τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ σμικροῦ) (283e8–9), and 'the more and less' (τὸ πλέον . . . καὶ ἔλαττον) (284b8).

19. Translations of τὸ μέτριον vary, though 'due measure' seems to be most common. For example, it is translated thus in Skemp (1952), Rowe (1995b), Plato (1997), Annas and Waterfield (1995), and Sayre (2005).

deficient in some way, and its excess or deficiency is what makes it bad. The Stranger offers a helpful illustration of the relationship between measure and goodness when he explains his worry about what went wrong with the myth of Kronos. He says that he and Young Socrates acted "just like sculptors who sometimes hurry inappropriately and add to the work, making several parts larger and greater than is required [καθάπερ ἀνδριαντοποιοί παρὰ καιρὸν ἐνίοτε σπεύδοντες πλείω καὶ μείζω τοῦ δέοντος ἕκαστα τῷ ἔργῳ ἐπεμβαλλόμενοι]" (277a6–b1). Two of the standards of the second art are used here, τὸ καιρόν and τὸ δέον, and the Stranger's use of 'larger [πλείω]' and 'greater [μείζω]' brings to mind the great and the small. In a rush, a sculptor may not take sufficient care to ensure, for example, that the nose is of appropriate proportions or that the left arm fits the statue. Let us say a sculptor is trying to make a statue of Zeus, but that the nose is too wide, and the left arm is too long. In that case, the nose and arm are greater than is appropriate; they both exceed due measure. Now insofar as the statue is excessive in these two ways, the statue is disproportionate. And for the ancient Greeks at least, that would mean that it is ugly and bad. Successful statues are those that exemplify beauty, and such exemplification is primarily a matter of proportion.[20]

Were the sculptor to narrow the nose and shorten the arm to the appropriate degrees, the arm and nose would then "fit" into the statue, and the statue would become "measured" in the sense of being proportionate. And so long as the sculptor preserved proportion throughout the production process, the resultant statue would itself be measured and proportionate and, thus, beautiful and good. This is the sense in which the sculptor "produces something good and fine" by "preserving measure."

Every craft is concerned with at least one measurable dimension of something: sculpting is concerned with, among other things, the amount, length, depth, and width, of clay (or marble, or wax, etc.), house-building with the length of lumber, singing with pitch of the voice, drawing with the thickness and shade of line, and so on. In all of these cases, it is possible for the object of the craft to be either excessive, or deficient, or of an appropriate degree in the dimension(s) with which the craft is concerned.[21] The realization of the appropriate measures in the relevant measurable dimensions is responsible for the goodness of the objects of the crafts; the failure to realize those measures, for the badness of those objects. The relevance for statecraft seems obvious, even if the details are as of yet unclear. Let us now turn to those details.

20. See, for example, the extant fragments from Polykleitos's *Kanon*.

21. For example, an artist might make a line too thick or too thin, or too dark or too light. Good artists, however, make their lines the appropriate thickness and shade. And by making such lines, a good artist creates a good drawing. Similar details could be given *mutatis mutandis* for the other crafts mentioned.

4. The Account of Statecraft

The myth of Kronos corrects the error of treating the statesman as a divine herdsman. The myth also points toward what the task of the statesman is: the statesman helps citizens take care of themselves. But how exactly does the statesman do this? What specifically does the statesman do? For answers, we must turn to the final, culminating account of statecraft with which the *Statesman* closes.

In brief, the Stranger's answer is that the task (ἔργον) of the statesman is to "weave" the citizens together, thus producing a harmonious social fabric (310e7–1a2, see also 311b7–c6). What exactly this weaving is and how exactly it helps citizens to take care of themselves will be addressed in due course. But first let us consider an apparent problem with this answer. 'What is statecraft?' is the driving question of the dialogue. And Plato depicts this question as satisfactorily answered only once the Stranger defines and describes statecraft as a kind of weaving. Once the Stranger does this, the dialogue ends, with Socrates applauding this "most excellent portrait" of the statesman (311c7). The problem is that while this answer is put forward as the final and definitive answer to the question of the dialogue, the Stranger describes the statesman as performing two *other* tasks—legislating (294a6, 294e8–5b5) and directing the crafts (305c9–d4)[22]—and it is not immediately clear how these two other tasks are related to weaving. Why does the stranger claim that the statesman does these other things if the final definition of statecraft—the definition to which the dialogue has been explicitly building since the definition of weaving some thirty Stephanus pages earlier—maintains only that the statesman weaves citizens together? If the statesman's weaving does not somehow require, entail, or consist in both legislating and directing the crafts, then the *Statesman*'s account of statecraft—and thus the political theory of the dialogue—would be unsystematic. It would be a patchwork, cobbled together from more or less unrelated elements. Perhaps this is indeed what that account is, but such an interpretation should be resisted absent compelling evidence.

In what follows, I shall argue that good sense can be made of the exclusive focus on weaving in the Stranger's final definition. For the statesman performs the other two tasks either by, or as part of, weaving the citizens together.[23] I

22. Also see 305e2–6, where the Stranger describes the statesman as the one who "controls all of these [i.e., the crafts], and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, and weaves everything together in the most correct way." While 'caring for every aspect of things in the city' can plausibly be taken as something achieved as a result of performing the other three tasks (controlling crafts, controlling laws, and weaving), it is much less clear how these three other tasks relate to one another, and 305e2–6 offers no guidance.

23. The account of the unity of weaving and directing the crafts that I will give is similar to the account given by Lane (1995: 281–82). (Lane, 1998: 172, likewise claims that weaving and directing the crafts "come together" but she presents less direct detail about this unity there than she does in

will first discuss what the Stranger says directly about the statesman's weaving. Then, I will proceed through each of the two tasks—legislating and directing crafts—showing how they relate to the statesman's weaving.

4.1. Weaving

In describing statecraft as a kind of weaving, the Stranger means that the task of statecraft is to "work courageous and moderate characters closely into each other as if with a shuttle [σώφρονα . . . τῶν ἀνδρείων ἤθη συγκερκίζοντα]" (310e9) through the sharing of opinions about the good, the fine, the just, and the opposites of these things. In other words, the statesman's task is to produce "a fine-woven fabric out of them [εὐήτριον ὕφασμα . . . ἐξ αὐτῶν] [i.e., the courageous and moderate characters]" (310e11–1a1).

There is much to unpack here. Let us start by considering the two different kinds of characters that are woven together by the statesman. According to the Stranger, there are strong, vigorous, quick people, on the one hand, and calm, slow, and soft people, on the other. Both sets of qualities are capable of being exhibited in praiseworthy ways. When people are calm or soft or slow in a praiseworthy way, we call them orderly or moderate (307a–b). Likewise, when people are vigorous, quick, or sharp in a praiseworthy way, we call them courageous (306e).

This raises the question of what makes vigorous or calm action praiseworthy. The answer is revealed in what the Stranger goes on to say about blameworthiness with regard to these two sets of qualities.

> Things which turn out sharper than is appropriate and appear faster and harder than is appropriate [are] excessive and manic, and things which turn out deeper and slower and softer than is appropriate [are] cowardly and lethargic [ὀξύτερα μὲν αὐτὰ γιγνόμενα τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ θάττω καὶ σκληρότερα φαινόμενα [καὶ] ὑβριστικὰ καὶ μανικὰ . . . τὰ δὲ βαρύτερα καὶ βραδύτερα καὶ μαλακώτερα δειλὰ καὶ βλακικά]. (307b8–c2)

To act more vigorously or calmly than is appropriate is to act in a blameworthy way (also see 307b4–6). The implication, which is suggested at 307a10–b2, is that to act with an appropriate degree of vigor and an appropriate degree of calmness is praiseworthy.

Lane 1995.) In the subsequent discussion of law and legislation (Lane 1995: 283–87), however, she does not give an account of the unity of weaving and legislation.

Central to the Stranger's comments is the terminology of the second art of measurement. In particular, the Stranger mentions the καιρός, which I have translated as 'appropriate'. It is a matter of dispute, however, whether during Plato's time καιρός was primarily a temporal word, as in 'the right time', or 'opportune moment,' or whether its primary meaning was something like 'due measure' or 'appropriate'.[24] Melissa Lane has argued that, in the *Statesman*, καιρός is indeed a primarily temporal word and that its being so is crucial to the Stranger's account of statecraft.[25] In my view, this is wrong; the primary meaning of καιρός in the *Statesman* is something like 'due measure' or 'appropriate'.[26]

Consider the passages where καιρός is used. At 307b8–c2, the Stranger remarks that we call "things that are deeper and slower and softer than the καιρός 'cowardly and lethargic' [τοῦ καιροῦ . . . τὰ δὲ βαρύτερα καὶ βραδύτερα καὶ μαλακώτερα δειλὰ καὶ βλακικά]." While it is perhaps intelligible to claim that something is slower than the opportune moment, it makes no sense to say that something is softer or deeper than the opportune moment. Times or moments are not the kinds of things that can be deep or soft, and so they are not the kinds of things than which something might be deeper or softer. Likewise, when the Stranger claims that things can be "harder [σκληρότερα]" and "sharper [ὀξύτερα]" than the καιρός (307b8–9), his claim would be unintelligible were we to understand καιρός in a temporal sense. For again, times or moments are not the kinds of things that can hard (as opposed to soft) or sharp.

24. Some of the key contributions charting the changes in meaning of καιρός over time include Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (1880), Fränkel (1975), Wilson (1980), and Race (1981). There is widespread agreement that, in its earliest uses, καιρός does not have a temporal aspect. The earliest recorded use of the word is from Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 694) who uses it to mean something like 'due measure' (cf. Wilson 1980: 178–79). And most scholars agree that up until around the 4th century B.C., due measure seems to be the primary meaning of the word (a notable exception to this way of using καιρός is Homer, who uses it to refer to a part of a body to which a wound would be lethal; cf. *Iliad* 8.84). Most scholars further agree that by the late 4th century B.C., καιρός had acquired a primarily temporal meaning. Thus, Aristotle's use of καιρός is typical of his time (i.e., the late 4th century) when he claims that the good as it relates to time is the καιρός (*NE* I.6 1096a23–7). The main ground of dispute is the period of transition from the archaic usage of καιρός as 'due measure' to the late 4th century-and-beyond usage of καιρός as 'right time.' Scholars are divided on when, and in which authors from this period, καιρός comes to have a primarily temporal meaning (see LSJ s.v. "καιρός", III for a list of passages, including passages from this disputed period, in which authors arguably use καιρός in a primarily temporal sense). Plato, of course, belongs to this period over which there is considerable debate. Accordingly, how we should understand καιρός in the *Statesman* is an open question, waiting to be settled by a close examination of the passages in which it is used.

25. See Lane (1995: 280) and Lane (1998: 146).

26. To be clear, in claiming that its meaning is not primarily temporal, I do not mean to suggest that καιρός is never applied temporally. The word 'appropriate' can be applied temporally (e.g., "now is not the appropriate time") despite its not having a primarily temporal meaning. The same is true of καιρός in the *Statesman*.

Accordingly, in this passage, καιρός should not be understood to have a temporal aspect. Rather, it must mean something like 'appropriate' or 'due measure'.[27]

There are several other passages that also use the terminology of the second art of measurement in describing the two different kinds of characters. At 307e6–7, calm people are described as having a "passion [ἔρωτα]" for calmness that is "more importunate than it should be [ἀκαιρότερον . . . ἢ χρή]"; this passion, in other words, is stronger than is appropriate. At 310e2 the souls of the calm people are said to "grow more sluggish than is appropriate [νωθεστέρα φύεσθαι τοῦ καιροῦ]" when they reproduce only with one another and not with vigorous souls. Turning to the vigorous people, we find the Stranger using a standard other than the καιρός for describing a failure of theirs when he claims that "their desire for a life of this sort [τῆν τοῦ τοιούτου βίου . . . ἐπιθυμίαν] [i.e., a life of war]" is "more vigorous than is proper [σφοδροτέραν τοῦ δέοντος]" (308a6). Recall that τὸ δέον is one of the other mentioned standards relevant to the second art. And though δέον typically connotes necessity or compulsion, the close association the Stranger draws between δέον and other terms such as μέτριον, καιρόν, and πρέπον should incline us toward treating δέον as 'fitting' or 'proper,' both of which are acceptable translations of the word.

While these various remarks clearly demonstrate that the second art is relevant to statecraft, they do not tell us how exactly. For it is not as though the statesman is meant to go tell the vigorous or calm people what degree of calmness or vigor they should act with, or what degree of desire or passion they should feel, in each and every situation. Indeed, this possibility is explicitly ruled out at 294a–5b, where the Stranger defends the statesman's use of laws on the basis that it would be practically impossible for the statesman to go about telling everyone how to act.

The link between these remarks and the statesman's weaving is suggested in the discussion running from 309a–10a. There, the Stranger discusses the bonds with which the statesman brings the two kinds of people together. The most important is the "divine bond [θείῳ . . . δεσμῷ]" (309c2) of "true opinion [ἀληθῆ δόξαν]" concerning "what things are fine, just, good, and the opposite of these [τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων . . . καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ των τούτοις ἐναντίων]" (309c5–6). Calm people who are given these true opinions become "genuinely moderate and wise [ὄντως σῶφρον καὶ φρόνιμον]" (309e6), and a courageous soul with

27. Moreover, Lane's argument for why we should understand καιρός to have a primarily temporal sense is unconvincing (for her argument, see Lane 1998: 133–35). It is correct, and indeed uncontroversial, to hold as she does that in the *Statesman*, καιρός is a norm to which actions and speeches ought to conform. Likewise, it is correct and uncontroversial to hold that actions and speeches occur in time. From these facts, however, Lane concludes that καιρός must have a primarily temporal sense in the *Statesman*. This seems to me to be a *non sequitir*. Just because actions are in time does not mean that the norms that govern action must be temporal norms.

such opinions will be "tamed [ἡμεροῦται]" (309e1) and will be "thus especially willing to share in what is just [τῶν δικαίων μάλιστα οὕτω κοινωνεῖν]" (309e1–2). By weaving together the two kinds of people by means of true opinions, the statesman moderates excessive and inappropriate manifestations of vigor and calmness. (More will be said about the statesman's use of laws and the divine bond shortly.)

To be clear, the statesman does not repress inappropriate manifestations of vigor and calmness by restraining or explicitly directing individual citizens. As mentioned above, it would be impossible for the statesman to do that. Rather, the proper exercise of statecraft produces a citizenry that will, *of itself*, not fall into excess or deficiency. The vigorous people, for example, will themselves no longer excessively desire war, but rather, sharing in what is just, they will only desire war when justice demands it. And calm people will no longer foolishly and cowardly avoid action, but rather will act in accordance with wisdom. The citizenry *itself* avoids being inappropriately vigorous and inappropriately calm.[28]

Now in order to produce such a citizenry, presumably the statesman must know what would be inappropriately vigorous and inappropriately calm, for otherwise it would be unclear how the statesman could take as his goal the production of a social fabric that avoids both of these extremes. But more importantly, the statesman must also know which kinds of character are "fitting [πρέπον]" in relation to his weaving, for not all are (304e4–8). Making such judgments about the citizens' characters is analogous to a weaver judging whether or not the warp and woof is suitable for weaving. Presumably, the Stranger's idea is that just as some warp might be too rough (or not rough enough), or some woof too soft (or not soft enough), so too might some characters be too vigorous or too calm. Those characters that are not fitting will be banished from the city (308e4–9a2), for they cannot be woven in such a way that the resultant fabric avoids extremes.

The statesman thus uses the second art of measurement in a way similar to the other crafts discussed. Just as a sculptor aims to avoid making an excessively wide or excessively narrow nose, the statesman aims to avoid making a citizenry that is excessively vigorous or excessively calm, that is, a citizenry that acts with excessive vigor (e.g., by warring too much) or with excessive calmness (e.g., by not defending itself from unjust aggression). And just as sculptors know how to make statues that avoid excess and deficiency, likewise the statesman knows how to weave together the particular people that he rules over in such a way that the citizenry will avoid these extremes.

At the very end of the dialogue, the Stranger emphasizes that the citizens *themselves* will administer the affairs of state—will take care of themselves—when he describes the statesman as "entrusting the offices in the city [τὰς ἐν

28. Cf. Lane (1998: 177–79).

ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀρχὰς . . . ἐπιτρέπειν]" to the vigorous and the calm in common (311a1–2). The citizens themselves will execute the offices (general, judge, rhetorician, etc.), and, as a result of their being woven together by the statesman, will avoid excessively vigorous or calm behavior in the execution of their offices. By entrusting offices to members of each group, the statesman further ensures that the decisions reached by the city will not be too aggressive, keen, and vigorous, nor too passive, cautious, and calm. And, again, he ensures this not by monitoring each decision made by those in office but by entrusting the offices to citizens who will themselves keep one another from being excessive.

The fact that the Stranger claims the statesman "chooses [αἱρούμενον]" who will hold which office (311a4–6) has led some commentators to think that the statesman will have an active, on-going role to play in managing the city (namely, the role of choosing who will occupy an office whenever it is vacated).[29] But the statesman's choosing who will hold which office need not imply such a role. Near the beginning of *Laws* VI, the Athenian Stranger describes the tasks of the Guardians of the Laws who "are to be chosen *by us* [ἡμῖν ἡρήσθωσαν]," both "now and *for all time* [νῦν τε καὶ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα σύμπαντα χρόνον]" (754d4–6, emphasis added).[30] Clearly Megillus, Kleinias, and the Athenian Stranger's choice of Guardians in the far future cannot consist in the three of them selecting specific people to fill vacated offices (for of course the three of them will not be around for all time). Instead, their choosing of people for this office likely consists in what they had just recently finished establishing—namely, the qualifications necessary for, and procedures for election of, the Guardians of the Laws (see 751c–754d). Legislating qualifications and election procedures can plausibly be described as choosing who (i.e., what kind of person) fills which office, but it does not require the statesman or lawgiver to pick the specific person to fill each vacated office; that is to say, it does not require active, on-going management of the city.

Accordingly, the fact that the Eleatic Stranger describes the statesman as choosing who will hold which office likewise does not entail that the statesman will have an active, on-going role to play in managing the city. For the statesman's choosing might simply be a matter of legislating qualifications and election procedures. Similarly, were the statesman to fill the offices initially but then

29. This fact, along with the Stranger's later claim that the statesman "rules and directs [ἄρχῃ τε καὶ ἐπιστατῇ]" (311c6), is cited by Lane (1998: 178) as the reason for why she thinks her earlier view, according to which the statesman will only be only fitfully present in the city (i.e., the view found in Lane 1995: 192–95), is incorrect. As the argument of the present and following paragraphs makes clear, I do not think this fact warrants attributing an active, on-going role to the statesman. Accordingly, the interpretation of statecraft in this paper is in greater agreement with Lane (1995) than Lane (1998) with regard to how involved the statesman will be in managing the on-going affairs of the city.

30. Cf. *Laws* 763c3.

legislate subsequent election procedures,[31] the statesman could be described as choosing who fills which office but nonetheless would not have an active, on-going role in the management of the city. In short, the Stranger's claim at *Statesman* 311a4–6 that the statesman chooses who will hold which offices does not imply that the statesman has an active on-going role to play in managing the city. The Stranger's claim is consistent with the statesman's weaving producing a citizenry that regulates and governs itself.[32]

'Weaving vigorous and calm citizens together,' however, is a metaphor. And we might still like to know what this weaving amounts to in practice. What does the statesman actually (or we might say, literally) do? As was touched upon above, the statesman instills a so-called "divine bond." Let us now examine that bond in more detail. As we shall see the Stranger's discussion of the divine bond indicates how the legislative task of the statesman is related to the statesman's weaving.

4.2. Legislation

The divine bond is called "divine" because it unites the "eternal part of their [i.e., the citizens'] souls [ἀειγενές . . . τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν μέρος]" (309c1–2). The Stranger never analyzes the soul (either in the *Sophist* or in the *Statesman*), and so to hear him casually refer to an eternal part of the soul is a bit surprising. Nonetheless, such a reference has obvious resonances with other passages from the Platonic corpus,[33] and there is scant reason to think that the Stranger is diverging significantly from what we find in these other passages. Thus we can think of this eternal part as something like the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογιστικόν).

As was mentioned above, the bond consists in true opinions about what is fine, just, and good, and the opposites of these.[34] Such opinions are a bond of the eternal part of the citizens' souls in that these opinions are grasped by—are "in

31. A procedure similar to this is described in *Laws* VI. The initial group of Guardians of the Laws will be chosen by the Knossians and the colonists of Magnesia (see 752b–3a), but the Athenian Stranger establishes procedures detailing how Magnesia itself will fill subsequent vacancies (see 753b–d).

32. Likewise, the Stranger's claim that the statesman "rules and directs" (311c6) need not imply active, on-going management of the city. The architect who drafts the blueprints can intelligibly be said to direct and govern the building of the house, even if he or she plays no further role in the construction of the house. Similarly, the statesman who promulgates laws (that the statesman's weaving is carried out through legislation is discussed and argued for shortly) can intelligibly be said to rule and direct the city, even if the statesman plays no further role beyond setting down those laws. For those laws direct subsequent communal life in the same way that the architect's blueprints direct the subsequent building of the house.

33. Most notably, *Timaeus* 69c ff. and *Republic* 611b–12a. See Rowe (1995b: 243).

34. These opinions themselves belong to "the class of the divine [δαιμονίῳ . . . γένει]" (309c7–8), which supplies another reason for calling this bond "divine."

[ἐν]" (309c7)—this part of the soul. The statesman's task is to instill these opinions in the souls of all the citizens. For when the citizens share the same, true opinions, they come to be of "one mind [ὁμονοίᾳ]" (311b9), and thus their souls are "fitted together [συναρμοσαμένη]" (309c1).

This brief and intriguing discussion raises many questions. For present purposes, let us consider just three.

First, what are the contents of these true opinions about justice, goodness, etc.? In other words, according to these opinions, *what* is just, good, fine, etc.? The *Statesman* offers no direct answer to this question, but we shall see that a plausible guess can be made concerning the content of at least one such opinion.

Second, and particularly germane to the present inquiry, *how* exactly does the statesman instill these opinions?

And third, in what sense do these opinions *bond* citizens? An adequate answer to this question must explain why it is that shared true opinions about justice, goodness, etc. in particular bond citizens together while shared true opinions about other matters (for example, mathematics) do not. That is to say, the presence of mere unity of mind or agreement about something cannot be what the bond consists in. For surely shared opinions about mathematics do not bond citizens together in a way that is relevant to statecraft. And so another way of getting at the issue raised by the third question would be: Why should the opinions about justice, goodness, etc. bond citizens while those about, say, mathematics do not?

Let us tackle the second question first. For the Stranger's answer to it is relatively clear, and that answer holds the key to answering the first and third questions.

After giving the above description of the divine bond, the Stranger remarks that it belongs to "the statesman and *the good legislator* alone [τὸν . . . πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸν ἀγαθὸν νομοθέτην . . . μόνον]" (309d1–2, emphasis added) to bond the citizens in this way. By putting 'good legislator' in apposition with 'statesman', the Stranger suggests that the statesman's legislative role is particularly relevant to the bonding under discussion. This suggestion is confirmed when the Stranger later claims that the divine bond "is implanted through laws [διὰ νόμων ἐμφύεσθαι]" (310a2). Moreover, in the discussion of law from 293e to 301a, the Stranger describes the legislator as the person who has written down "what is just and unjust, fine and shameful, good and bad [τὰ δίκαια δὴ καὶ ἄδικα καὶ καλὰ καὶ αἰσχρὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὶ]" (295e4–5). In other words, the statesman instills true opinions concerning what is just, good, fine, etc. by promulgating these opinions in the form of laws. This is the Stranger's answer

to the second question.[35] Thus, while legislating and weaving may seem at first glance to have little to do with each other, the former is simply a part of the latter. For the weaving that is the task of statecraft is carried out in part through the passing of laws. By being subject to laws that state what is just, good, etc., the citizens come to adopt those opinions, thus sharing them. And thus the citizens are bonded, or woven, together.[36]

As a matter of practical necessity, laws are general. For, as was briefly touched upon above, it is impossible for a statesman to tell each and every citizen what would be just (or good or fine) for him or her to do in each and every situation (295b1–2). And so the statesman's statements about what is just, good, etc. will not be specific to each individual and his or her circumstances. Rather, the statesman will "set down the law for every one according to the principle of 'for the majority of people, for the majority of cases, and roughly, somehow, like this' [τοῖς πολλοῖς . . . καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καί πως οὑτωςὶ παχυτέρως ἑκάστοις τὸν νόμον θήσει]" (295a4–5). But despite their generality, the laws are still supposed to be action guiding. For they need to tell citizens "what is appropriate [τὸ προσῆκον]" (295a2) for them to do. Accordingly, it is unlikely that these true opinions about justice, goodness, etc. will resemble philosophical principles, such as 'the just is what is fair' or 'the good is what is beneficial.' For the practical implications of most such principles are not immediately obvious (which is not to say that they lack practical implications), and the statesman's laws should help the average citizen to act appropriately. If the laws are to do this, they should have more immediate and obvious practical relevance.

Furthermore, despite their inability to correctly instruct *all* people, in *all* circumstances, for *all* time (see 294a10–c8), laws are nonetheless useful and effec-

35. Though legislation and education are related both in Plato and in ancient political thought generally, in the *Statesman*, these true opinions of the good, the just, etc. are *not* implanted in the citizens primarily by their educators (as is claimed by Cooper 1999: 182–83). Rather, the Stranger likens education to carding: just as carders prepare the warp and woof for weaving, so too do educators prepare vigorous and calm souls for the statesman's weaving. The task of education, then, is to prepare the vigorous and the calm to accept these true opinions; to prepare them to be woven together by the statesman.

36. There is a vast literature on the *Statesman*'s discussion of law, but by and large my three questions are not considered in it. One reason for this is that most commentaries are concerned primarily with the Stranger's ideas concerning how and why non-ideal regimes are supposed to use laws (see 297b7–303d2). They are *not* concerned primarily with how and why laws will be used by a true statesman while he or she is present. Indeed, many commentators seem content either to ignore entirely, or to spend very little time discussing, the statesman's use of laws. And since the three questions that I am addressing are all aimed at better understanding the task of the statesman, the subjects that these questions inquire about tend not to be discussed.

tive sets of instructions for the citizens.[37] The analogy that the Stranger draws between laws and the instructions of a physical trainer is helpful (see 294d3–5b5). A physical trainer in charge of a large group of trainees will issue general instructions to the group, rather than give particular prescriptions to each individual. And while the trainer's instructions will occasionally lead a trainee astray (perhaps by being too strenuous for him or her, or by not being strenuous enough), by and large they do not; by and large they guide trainees effectively. Moreover, the benefit of having a personal trainer rather than being trained en masse seems rather insignificant, certainly at least when compared to not having training at all. Physical training is the kind of thing that can be done profitably in groups and with general instructions.[38] That the Stranger draws an analogy between a trainer's instructions and the statesman's laws suggests that this is all likewise true in the case of the laws.[39] That is to say, while laws do not give perfect guidance to each and every citizen, in every possible circumstance, and for all time, laws are nonetheless extremely effective at instructing the citizens. Moreover, they are effective at instructing them even after the statesman has left or passed away. The comparison of the statesman to the doctor who must be absent for some time and so leaves written instructions for his or her patients indicates as much (see 295b–c). Thus the statesman will legislate, not merely to instruct the citizens of today, but also to instruct those yet to come. And these laws will effectively (though not infallibly) instruct citizens about what is just, good, fine, etc.

To be sure, the statesman's knowledge would trump the law were the two to conflict, just as the physical trainer or doctor could modify or entirely do away with previously given instructions. Perhaps a situation arises in which the law, if

37. Many commentators emphasize the deficiency or inadequacy of law—that is, the fact that laws do not give good instruction in all circumstances—to the near total exclusion of its benefits. For example, see Stern (1997: 269–70), Marquez (2012: 281), and Bartlett (2017: 242). For the reasons given in this paragraph, I think this emphasis is unwarranted.

38. Some commentators claim that the statesman uses laws primarily, if not solely, to instruct citizens while the statesman is away (for example, see Marquez 2012: 258). But again, the analogy drawn with the instructions of a physical trainer suggests that this is not true. For physical trainers do not give general instructions primarily or solely for when they will be away (though they may indeed do this); they give such instructions while they are present. Such instructions are simply the best way for teaching a large number of people (even while the trainer is present). The same holds for the statesman's laws.

39. A further analogy between legislation and physical training is that while primary instruction in both cases is carried out through general instructions, nonetheless individualized instruction is possible. So the physical trainer might give an individual student instructions specific to him or her; likewise, the statesman might give individualized instructions to a citizen. But the Stranger's emphasis in this analogy is not on this individualized instruction, but rather on the fact that instruction in physical training (and in what is good, fine, just, etc.) suitably takes place at the group level. The primary task of the physical trainer and of the statesman is to instruct groups using general instructions.

followed, would result in injustice being done. In such a situation, the statesman may contravene the law.[40] More drastically, perhaps circumstances fundamentally change, and what once were effective guides concerning justice, goodness, etc. cease to be effective. In such a situation, the statesman may singlehandedly repeal the law and pass a new one in its stead. But in the Stranger's view, such situations are rare and do not significantly detract from the effectiveness of law.

Though the Stranger never gives an explicit statement of a law, he indicates that there will be a law concerning contracts; that the legislator will direct the citizens "in relation to justice and their contracts with one another [τοῦ δικαίου πέρι τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους συμβολαίων]" (294e10–5a1, cf. 305a–b). Inasmuch as such a law concerns contracts, it would not resemble a philosophical principle and it would likely have obvious practical implications. Furthermore, a law concerning contracts would be general and not tailored to each specific transaction or agreement. Thus a contract law would fit the criteria for laws discussed above. So what might such a law be?

While the Stranger never says what it might be, the ancient Athenians had such a law: whatever one party has agreed upon with another is legally enforceable, is just.[41] Accordingly, breaking an agreement was held to be unjust and the person who did so was subject to legal penalty. Given that this was the law of Athens, it seems likely that Plato's audience would have understood the Stranger's references to laws concerning contracts to refer to something like it. If the Stranger had a different contract law in mind, we would expect at least a hint of disagreement with the Athenian law. But there is no such hint; nothing that the Stranger says signals disagreement with this law. And so a good conjecture concerning the statesman's contract law is that it is simply this Athenian law. Thus, a speculative, though plausible, partial answer to the first question concerning the content of the divine bond would be: whatever one party has agreed upon with another is just.

In light of this answer, let us now consider the third question: how do these true opinions bond the citizens together? When citizens lack these opinions, calm people and vigorous people will disagree with each other over "actions concerning these sorts of things [ταῖς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράξεσιν]" (307c5), where the sorts of things in question are calmness and vigor. And as the Stranger goes on to make clear, both kinds of people are liable to err regarding these sorts of things, though in different ways given their different proclivities. For example, with regard to war, calm people are so averse to it that they end up at the mercy of those who would attack them and thus ultimately find themselves defeated and enslaved (307e1–8a2). By contrast, vigorous people are so inclined toward

40. And thus the Stranger is not a proponent of the rule of law.
41. See Cohen (2005: 296).

war that they make numerous powerful enemies and, like the calm people, ultimately find themselves defeated and enslaved (308a4–9). The Stranger's view seems to be that, absent the agreement that the divine bond begets, there will be hostility and disagreement between the calm citizens and the vigorous citizens. And whichever group happens to have the most power will not ease that hostility; rather that group will simply direct the city according to its own judgments. If the vigorous people have power, the city will wage war excessively; if the calm have power, the city will avoid war at all costs, to the point of not adequately defending itself. Either way, the decisions of the rulers will ultimately be detrimental to the city and its citizens.

Though the Stranger does not tell it, a similar story could be told regarding contracts. Vigorous people will be too aggressive in their business dealings, judging it appropriate to break the terms of a business contract if doing so will bring significant financial gain. As a result, such people lose many important business partners, which will ultimately lead to their financial ruin. Calm people, by contrast, will sheepishly let their trading partners break contracts and fleece them. They might judge that it is more important to avoid conflict with their business partners than it is to insist upon the terms of the contract. Developing a reputation for such behavior, they too would end up in financial ruin.

Now imagine that all of the citizens came to accept that whatever one party has agreed upon with another is just. The vigorous citizens would no longer break their contracts for the sake of financial gain. They would judge such behavior as unjust. Likewise, the calm citizens would no longer think it acceptable for their business partners to break contracts, and so would confront such violators, perhaps filing suit against them. As a result, the financial dealings in the city would be conducted with much less discord, disagreement, and injustice. For the citizens, be they calm or aggressive, would agree in large part concerning how dealings with contracts should be conducted.

The unity engendered by this agreement is particularly important to the communal life of the city. For disagreements about contracts (and about business dealings generally) are likely to give rise to hostility between the disputants, hostility which could in extreme cases lead to the dissolution of the community. And without agreement, whichever group happens to be in the majority will, as in the case of war, impose their mistaken view on the city. We can now see why the divine bond consists in true opinions about what is just, good and fine, as opposed to true opinions about, say, mathematics. For agreement about matters of justice is essential for the communal life of the city. Agreement about mathematics, by contrast, is not. The true opinions that the statesman puts into legislation bond the citizens not only in the sense that their souls share the same opinions, but also in the sense that they strengthen the bonds of the community—indeed, in the Stranger's telling, they *are* the bonds of the community.

Moreover, if citizens came to agree about how business dealings with contracts should be conducted, there would be much less need for oversight of, or direct intervention in, such dealings from a political authority. For there would be less strife and thus less cause for intervention. Citizens would be capable of taking care of such matters themselves. Thus, through legislation, the statesman helps the citizens to take care of themselves.

4.3. Directing the Crafts

Let us now return to the relationship between statecraft and the other crafts. As we have seen, the statesman aims to weave together a citizenry that will, *of its own accord*, avoid excess and deficiency. The Stranger's claim at 305c10–d4 that the statesman directs the crafts should be read in light of this fact. For just as it would be impossible for a ruler to go about the city telling the citizens how to act, so too would it be impossible for the ruler to tell all the various craftsmen when to perform their crafts.[42]

To be sure, the statesman must know when it would be appropriate for the various crafts to be used or performed, but he does not put this knowledge to use by giving directions to every cobbler, house-builder, and doctor. Indeed, in my view it would be a mistake to hold even that the statesman tells the generals when to make war.[43] For, as we saw in the above discussion of vigor and calmness, the aim of the statesman is to produce a citizenry that will, *of its own accord*, be neither excessively vigorous and war hungry nor excessively calm and war averse. If the statesman is successful at producing such a citizenry, then the citizenry will *itself* start and avoid wars at the right time. The statesman must know when the right time for war (and the other activities of the crafts) is only insofar as the statesman must weave a social fabric that will itself ensure that the city goes to war (and initiates the other crafts) only at the right times. In this way, statecraft does not require performing the practically impossible task of directing each and every craftsman. Nonetheless, statecraft still can be said to direct the crafts insofar as the statesman crafts the social fabric with a view toward producing a citizenry that will itself initiate the crafts at the appropriate times.

42. The view of the relationship between weaving and directing the crafts presented here can also be found in Lane (1995: 281–82).

43. Thus I disagree with Marquez (2012: 308–10). To be clear, the Stranger describes the relationship between the statesman and the various craftsmen (including generals, judges, and rhetoricians) that develops *only after* the statesman has legislated. So much is clear from 305b4–c2 where the Stranger describes the judge as 'taking over from the legislator-king all those things that are established as lawful'. *Prior* to the setting down of laws, however, it may very well be the case that the statesman intervenes more directly in the affairs of the judge or the general, but the *Statesman* is largely silent about this.

Interpreting the statesman's direction of the crafts in this way allows us to take the Stranger at his word when he ultimately defines statecraft as a kind of weaving. For on the account developed above, it is through the statesman's weaving that the statesman directs the crafts, just as it is through that weaving that the statesman ensures that the citizens avoid excessive vigor and calmness. And to perform this weaving, the statesman will use laws, as was discussed above. Thus, the Stranger's account of statecraft is indeed unified. The task of the statesman is to weave citizens together, and the other tasks assigned to the statesman are so assigned because of their relationship to weaving.

5. Conclusion

According to the Stranger, the true statesman helps citizens to take care of themselves. By contrast, a politician who attempts to satisfy the needs and desires of the citizens is, we might say, a false statesman. While this paper has focused on demonstrating that the *Statesman* puts forward this view of statecraft, in closing I would like to emphasize just how striking and original this view is. This view implies, for instance, that the nearly universally revered Pericles was a false statesman. For in Plato's view, Pericles was concerned primarily with satisfying the citizens' needs and desires (cf. *Gorgias* 519a). Accordingly, inasmuch as Athenians supported and approved of Pericles, they treated themselves as helpless sheep fit for herding, and they elevated Pericles to a status he did not merit (cf. *Gorgias* 516a–c).

Plato is not merely a contrarian, however. Not all politicians would receive an unfavorable judgment from the perspective of the *Statesman*'s political theory. For instance, I suspect that Solon would likely pass muster with Plato's Stranger; indeed, I suspect Plato may have had Solon in mind as he wrote about statecraft and legislation. For Solon was called upon to rewrite the laws of Athens because of increasing civil strife. His task was to put an end to it and to do so through legislation. In other words, his task was to weave the citizens together into a harmonious social fabric by means of legislation. And just as the true statesman is described as suspending the laws (295c7–6a2), Solon famously suspended the law in cancelling all debts; and just as the true statesman leaves the city after passing his laws (cf. 295b10–c8), Solon left Athens after his laws were promulgated.

The parallels with contemporary politics seem obvious, even if the details are obscure. Plato would likely think that most of us are guilty of the mistake identified in the myth of Kronos. We are guilty, that is, of treating our politicians as though they were divine shepherds. For many of us look to (especially national) politicians to implement that set of policies that we believe will lead to

the best management of the affairs of state and best see to the needs of the citizens. The problem, as Plato would see it, is that we too often think of administering the affairs of state as a business to be undertaken by politicians, and we too seldom think of it as something for which we are both responsible and equipped, given our rational capacities. And inasmuch as we do this, we abandon those very capacities.

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