FROM CONFLICT TO UNITY: PLATO ON WELL-ORDERED WHOLES

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Declaration of Originality

I, Stephan Stephanides, confirm that this thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

This thesis is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

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Abstract

Recent literature has shown an increasing interest in issues pertaining to the theme of ‘parts and wholes’ in Plato. One classic example is Verity Harte’s 2002 monograph *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (OUP), which revisits the mereological question of what constitutes a ‘whole’ in the philosophy of Plato. The main achievement of Harte’s investigation rests in the notion that structure is ‘irreducible’ to the characterisation of a whole. To be a whole, therefore, is already a normatively value laden concept in Plato, insofar as it presupposes an ordered structure or arrangement of internal parts.

Many of Plato’s works are strongly preoccupied with complex wholes. Unlike the objects of the intelligible realm, however, Plato assumes that complex items are prone to internal conflict and stand in need of proper direction. Importantly, complex wholes are able to function better as the kind of entity they ought to be when they acquire their own unique structure and order. Given this normative requirement, Plato is left with the task of explaining exactly how complex wholes are optimally ordered or structured so as to become whole. Whilst recent literature has focused mainly on the ‘mereological question’ in Plato, these aspects of Plato’s engagement with the theme of parts and wholes seem to have gone underappreciated.

This thesis aims to fill that gap by exploring the different models Plato puts to work in different dialogues for conceptualising the well-orderedness of complex wholes, with special focus on the city, the soul, and the cosmos. By critically examining Plato’s presentation of these structures in dialogues placed within a chronological framework, this thesis asks whether Plato’s account of ‘well-ordered wholes’ improves over time. This question will be examined with particular attention to the psychological, ethical, and political implications of the different conceptual models of structure Plato offers across the dialogues. In the light of these questions, this thesis will propose that Plato’s later dialogues contain his most successful account of well-ordered wholes by promulgating a holistic conceptual model which offers a more integrated and less hierarchical account of the well-orderedness and unity of complex wholes.

*Stephan Stephanides*
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For my father, who has not read one word of Plato, but with whom I have often tasted the true spirit of Socratic discussion

‘If you are a Platonic philosopher, you have found the meaning of your life, your true vocation, in faithful service to the Forms of Justice, Beauty, Goodness, and the rest. You are possessed by a transcendent love beside which earthly passions pale. You have discovered bliss which turns the prizes of this world into trash.’

Vlastos (1977: 33-4)

πρὸ τῶν προθύρων τῶν αὐτοῦ γράψας ύπῆρξε Πλάτων ὑπὲρ Μηδὲς ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω μου τὴν στέγην·
toutéstin, ἄδικος μηδεῖς παρεισερχέσθω τῇδε·
ἰσότης γὰρ καὶ δίκαιον ἐστὶ γεωμετρία.

John Tzetzes (Chiliades, 8.94)
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**Introduction: Sketching Plato’s Interest in Well-Ordered Wholes**

A desire for order to prevail over disorder pervaded the various disciplines we standardly associate with ancient Greek thought and culture.¹ In the domain of medicine, for instance, it was a commonplace idea that the health of the body is secured when its potentially conflicting internal parts are restored into an ordered, dynamic equilibrium. Likewise in the political sphere, the city was thought to be composed of distinct elements each of which had to be in concord with the other for the harmony of the whole city to prevail.² This attention to the notion of order amidst complexity is also consonant with developments in ancient science. The natural philosophers of the day began to conceptualise the world increasingly in terms of an ordered structure or system made up of hostile opposites, whence the universe came to acquire the name ‘order’ (kosmos). The unique worldviews of the pre-Socratics purported to explain the kosmos of the world, suggesting ways in which it is held together in order rather than chaotic disorder.³ As these examples illustrate, the ancients showed an acute interest in the well-orderedness of complex structures, that is, with well-ordered wholes.

This thesis explores how Plato’s attention to this concern is articulated across a range of dialogues. First, we may observe that some of Plato’s most well-known works are strongly preoccupied with complex wholes. In the *Republic*, the ideal ordering of the city and soul is our primary topic of focus, while in the *Timaeus*, the main candidate for discussion is the ordering of the complex world into kosmos. In these contexts, among others, the driving force of discussion for Plato is to take items which are by nature complex (principally the soul, the city, the cosmos) and to explain how, despite such complexity, they may become well-ordered.

¹ As Burnyeat (2000: 76) once eloquently observed: ‘[I]n the cultural climate of the time it was not idiosyncratic to regard concord, attunement, proportion, order, and unity as important values. They are values that crop up constantly when Greeks talk about art and beauty, and about the things and people they admire’.

² On which, see Schofield (2006: 218), who writes of the political atmosphere of Plato’s day: ‘[A]nxiety about stasis in Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War seems to have been the catalyst which made of homonoia, unanimity or consensus, a key expression in the vocabulary of politics and political philosophy’.

³ In one famous passage from the *Gorgias* (507e6-508a8) discussed further in Chapter 1 below, Plato refers to the world as kosmos in the sense of ‘world-order’ and suggests that this view was widespread among his ‘wise’ predecessors. The classic interpretation is that Socrates is referring to the Pythagoreans, on which see Dodds (1959: 338-9). This is bolstered by Socrates’ appeal to the value of geometry at 508a7-8, which was widely associated with Pythagorean thought. While the Pythagoreans may have put particular emphasis on the world as kosmos, however, it is also plausible that Plato had a much broader view of his predecessors as positing that the world was a complex system of interrelations which had to be somehow held together in order. Kahn (1960: 219-30) suggests that kosmos in the sense of ‘world-order’ originated in the thought of Anaximander, while Horky (2019: 22-41) submits that kosmos came to mean ‘world-order’ by at least the first few decades of the 5th century BC. These accounts at least suffice to show that Plato was responding to an existing tradition which conceived of the world as kosmos. Exactly how Plato himself explained the kosmos of the world (and thus how he sought to improve on the accounts of his predecessors) is an issue that will emerge as we examine his engagement with well-ordered wholes.
Complex wholes are manifestly ubiquitous. Since a principal assumption of the dialogues is that complex items have an innate tendency towards conflict, however, that is even more reason for Plato to come up with explanations of how to mitigate disorder in such items and bring them into order. For when a complex whole lacks order, I argue, it cannot perform its peculiar function as the kind of entity it really is. Given this claim, a significant normative assertion presents itself: insofar as complex wholes are comprised of a plurality of potentially hostile parts which exist as some one entity and which stand in need of proper direction, they ought to become well-ordered. This enables each entity to function as the kind of entity it is, and thereby to achieve its distinctive good. These considerations secure an inextricable link between well-orderedness and functionality, with order being a key criterion of functionality and the well-functioning of an item serving as a significant indication of how well-ordered something is. To this end, the notion of functionality will be doing important work in my examination of the theme of well-ordered wholes in Plato.

Significantly, numerous puzzled are raised by speaking of ‘well-ordered wholes’ in Plato. For instance, what does it mean for an item to be a ‘whole’? This question is made all the more problematic by appreciating that the coherence of complex items is often expressed in different ways across the dialogues. One way that Plato might want to capture the coherence of complex items is to speak of them as being whole (holoi). Yet another way is to describe them as being...
Is it the same thing for an item to be both *holon* and *hen*, or do the two terms signify different features of complex wholes? To this end, Aristotle seems to offer a promising definition of a whole as ‘that which so contains its contents that they are a unity (*hen*)’ and whose contents ‘all together make up a unity (*hen*)’.

In the *Parmenides* (145a5-b1), Plato seems to make an analogous connection between wholeness (*τὸ ὅλον*) and unity (*τὸ ἕν*) insofar as both are comprised of the same parts (beginning, middle, and end), which also suggests that an item which is whole will also be a unity. However, this connection is made in a decidedly *dialectical* context, and Plato’s dialogues generally lack the conceptual precision which is characteristic of Aristotelian works. For this reason, careful analysis will be given to the different metaphysical terms Plato deploys in different contexts when conceptualising the normative dimension of well-ordered wholes, along with the different implications that such terms might indicate for the wholeness or unity of such items. By speaking of well-ordered *wholes*, nevertheless, this thesis will be putting the emphasis on *part-whole* relations as such, with particular focus on how the structured relations of parts produces a well-ordered whole or unity.

One further puzzle is the following. What might be the connection between a term like *harmonia*, which I will demonstrate denotes a state of well-orderedness for complex structures in the *Republic*, and terms such as *holon* and *hen* which have more bearings on the wholeness and unity of complex items? This raises the further question concerning the direction of explanation when thinking about the relationship between well-orderedness and the wholeness or unity of complex structures. Since structure is essential to what constitutes a whole (on which, see fn. 5 above), I suggest that terms which are *symptomatic* or *express* the well-orderedness of complex items (such as *harmonia*, and in the later dialogues, *summetria*) take priority in the explanation of what makes a certain item whole. Another way of making this point is to say that well-orderedness is that which creates or enables wholeness in complex structures and thus gives them their unity.

In addition to clarifying what is meant by a well-ordered whole, and the various conceptual terms Plato uses to indicate this state, one pertinent question which constitutes a major strand

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6 When Plato comes to discuss the unity of the city in the *Republic*, by contrast, he uses the language of ‘one’ (*mian*). In Chapter 2 Section 2.1, I will try to explain what implications this language might pose for the unity of the city.

7 See here especially *Metaphysics* Δ 1023b26-29. See also *Poetics* 1451a1-2, where Aristotle speaks of ‘τὸ ἕν καὶ τὸ ὅλον’ in the same breath in the context of a discussion regarding the proper structure or order of parts within a whole. While Aristotle also offers several other definitions of ‘one’ (1015a16-1017a6) and ‘part’ (1023a12-25), Plato is never as clear-cut with his metaphysical definitions, which only emerge partially *via* discussion between the interlocutors in a given dialogue. This discrepancy between teacher and student can, in one sense, be explained by their different philosophical methods.
in this thesis is how complex items are best ordered to qualify as being coherent in the first place. Since recent scholarship has put the spotlight on the mereological question of what constitutes a whole in Plato, this more conceptual question seems to have gone under the radar. In this thesis, I will fill this gap in the literature by elucidating the different conceptual models Plato puts to work in different dialogues to explain how specific complex wholes of parts such as a city, a soul, or a cosmos are optimally ordered. This task will not be possible, nevertheless, without also attending to the mereological issues highlighted in recent literature, with which this thesis frequently engages.

I will begin by showing that the Gorgias offers some foundational remarks on the normative dimension of order, whilst drawing attention to ways in which the dialogue is underdetermined in important respects. Some of the questions left open by the Gorgias, I then demonstrate, receive clarification in the Republic through the introduction of a specific conceptual model (the model of a tripartite harmonia) for well-ordered complex wholes. I reveal certain tensions with that model and offer a critique of the Republic in general, arguing that the later dialogues resolve the tensions of this dialogue through the emergence of new metaphysical concepts such as to metrion and summetria. These concepts, I will argue, provide Plato with a consistent analytical framework for the production of well-ordered wholes and offer a conceptual model which holds the most promise for the well-orderedness of complex structures based on the notion of the right measure among potentially conflicting opposites.

The direction of this argument is compatible with a developmental narrative. This development is not an assumption to be taken for granted, however, but shall be bolstered by putting into productive dialogue a range of texts in which the normative dimension of order is given explicit reflection. In particular, I aim to reveal some of the tensions associated with models of well-orderedness in earlier dialogues and show how these are remedied in subsequent works through the establishment of new conceptual tools. Dialogues for selection in this thesis are therefore discussed sequentially in each chapter to reflect a chronological approach to reading Plato. Adopting this methodology will, I endeavour to demonstrate, put us in the best possible position to see how the later dialogues resolve tensions which were generated in earlier dialogues.

8 In her focus on this mereological question, for instance, Harte (2002) bypasses the different conceptual models Plato offers across the dialogues to explain the ideal structuring of complex wholes (her thesis, nevertheless, provides the necessary metaphysical foundations for being able to undertake such a project in the first place).
9 Further explanation regarding the distinction between these concepts and the different senses of each (particularly summetria) will be given early in Chapter 3, where I discuss these concepts in greater detail.
10 The possibility of any ‘development’ in Plato’s thought implies a chronological reading of the dialogues. For this reason, I operate with the traditional dating of dialogues first promulgated in Kahn (2002: 93-128), which
Some sensitivity may also be given to the unique context and *dramatis personae* of individually distinct Platonic dialogues. For instance, it is worth remembering that Socrates is the principal interlocutor in many of Plato’s early and middle dialogues, who voices ideas in more ‘otherworldly’ contexts which will be subjected to criticism in this thesis (such as Book 10 of the *Republic*, which I will show offers an account of psychic unity similar to that offered in the austere context of the *Phaedo*). In the later dialogues, which I argue offer Plato’s most successful account of well-ordered wholes, the character of Socrates becomes increasingly peripheral and the context of each dialogue markedly less esoteric. This evidence might be taken to suggest that Plato is developing ideas he inherited by Socrates and seeking to improve on such accounts in the nuanced context of the late dialogues. While this remains a genuine possibility and should be kept in mind when navigating our way through this thesis, the material examined across various parts of this thesis will be treated as part of one continuous and overall narrative, where I take Plato to be using his interlocutors mainly as a vehicle for ideas which he was at the very least experimenting with in different phases of his thought, even if those ideas undergo subtle revisions in later dialogues for reasons which will become clearer in what follows.

The *Gorgias* (Chapter 1) is one important early dialogue that raises problems which receive a clear response in subsequent Platonic dialogues.\(^{11}\) In that dialogue, Plato promulgates for the first time a substantive normative framework for the production of well-ordered complex wholes. This finds its clearest expression in the dialogue in one famous passage (503d6-504a4) where Plato suggests that all good craftsmen aim to harmonise the potentially conflicting parts of their material with purposeful intention into order (*taxis*) and structure (*kosmos*) by looking towards some external model, thereby producing well-ordered functional wholes.

While this passage puts forward ideas at least in outline which Plato will find helpful in subsequent dialogues when returning to the theme of well-ordered wholes, it also leaves us with certain open questions. For instance, the notion of a demiurgic craftsman responsible for the ordering of a complex whole by design is *suggestive* of an intelligent agent, but Plato provides no clear statement on the place of intelligence (or *nous*) within this framework.

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\(^{11}\) Apart from a few fleeting references to the dialogue, the *Gorgias* is largely absent in Harte (2002). This may be explained by the fact that the *Gorgias* does not directly touch on the ‘mereological question’ of what constitutes a ‘whole’ in Plato. As I suggest, however, the dialogue still offers a substantive normative framework for complex wholes of parts, as well as offering some important remarks on the technical steps required in the process of generating well-ordered wholes. As a result of our rather different purposes, dialogues which bear on the theme of parts and wholes from a more metaphysical perspective, and which are central to Harte’s exposition (such as the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Parmenides*), are scarcely discussed in this thesis.
Similarly, while Plato advocates the use of an external model for the production of well-ordered wholes, the status of this model is ambiguous, making it difficult to determine how the model is supposed to aid craftsmen in the creation of a well-ordered whole. These are some of the issues that Plato will look to clarify in later works.

The main complex wholes of parts under consideration in the *Gorgias* are speech (*logos*), the soul, and the ordered *kosmos*. A *logos* is a complex whole comprised of distinct parts which requires a certain ordering to properly function as a speech. One immediate reason why speech forms a major focus of the dialogue is because Plato voices genuine concerns over its ethical value in the habituation of souls. The better a speech embodies values such as *taxis* and *kosmos*, the greater benefit it will have for the soul. Significantly, this is suggestive of a *causal mechanism* according to which one well-ordered complex item, if applied correctly, will also engender good order in some further complex item (incidentally, this may also be seen as a variant of the ‘like-to-like’ principle frequently adopted by the ancient philosophers). In the later dialogues, this causal mechanism becomes expressed on three main levels: the *kosmos* is placed above lower structures like the city and individual human being as being our highest paradigm of well-orderedness, to which we must assimilate ourselves. This sort of isomorphic relationship between the ordered *kosmos* and lower complex structures is suggested, but not made an explicit object of reflection, in the *Gorgias*.

While there are also open questions about how a speech should be ordered so that it can have the most benefit for the soul, and how that works exactly, more pressing issues are generated by the underdeveloped psychology of the dialogue. Although Plato seems to offer intimations of a complex psychology of distinct parts within the soul, his remarks on the soul are made equally intelligible within an intellectualist framework. Since Plato provides no explicit statement on the internal constitution of the soul, our task of understanding just how values such as *taxis* and *kosmos* are to be cultivated in the soul is made difficult by the fact that it is not clear what aspects, or items, in the soul are given structure.

In the light of these tensions, the *Gorgias* will be shown to play a vital role within the wider trajectory of Plato’s engagement with well-ordered wholes. On the one hand, the dialogue opens up a profound interest in the normative dimension of well-orderedness which Plato will frequently return to in later dialogues. However, the *Gorgias* ultimately presents its ideas at such a level of generality as to leave us with more questions than answers.

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12 I will briefly mention the last of these complex wholes, the *kosmos*, on p. 9 below when I come to discuss the importance of ‘geometrical equality’ for the ordering of complex structures in the later dialogues, of which the *Gorgias*’ famous ‘cosmological’ passage (507e6-508a8) provides a vague mention.
The *Republic* (Chapter 2), I suggest, is where Plato begins to clarify some of these unresolved issues. It does so, first, by making the internal complexity of the soul explicitly clear through the division of the soul into three distinct parts. This tripartitioning of the soul, second, enables Plato to provide a specific conceptual model for the well-orderedness of the soul. Within the purview of the *Republic*, the *taxis* and *kosmos* of the soul is explained through the conceptual model of a tripartite *harmonia*, central to which is the notion of a hierarchical relation between distinct parts (esp. 443c9-e2). Plato hopes that the *harmonia* model will give him the tools for mitigating any conflict (*stasis*) that might arise among the disparate parts of the city-soul by securing the well-orderedness and unity of these structures. Whether the *harmonia* model is successful in producing these results is, however, precisely the sort of question this thesis shall ask.

In the *Republic*, the conceptual model of a tripartite *harmonia* is supported by a more developed metaphysics where Plato clarifies the models which good craftsmen look towards. Within the context of the dialogue, one of the most important objects of contemplation for the well-orderedness of the city and soul is the Form of Justice, which appears as a *harmonic* relation of parts where each is kept in its proper place and both ‘has’ and ‘does’ its own. Notwithstanding this connection between the Form of Justice and the structure of the city and soul, however, Plato is not clear in the *Republic* on exactly how the transcendent Form becomes instantiated in complex structures. While there is much focus on philosophers contemplating the external Forms, other than one interesting passage where Plato likens philosophers to painters ‘mixing’ and ‘blending’ their material (501b1-7), not much further is said about how philosophers instantiate the transcendent Form in their well-ordered creations from a more metaphysical standpoint. This is, again, an issue Plato will look to clarify in subsequent works.

It will be argued that the *harmonia* model is open to significant objections as an explanation for the coherence of complex structures such as the city and soul. As I will demonstrate, one inevitable outcome of this model is a top-heavy emphasis on the rational element, creating a severe divide among the relations that are supposed to hold the disparate parts of the city-soul together. This divide generates a sort of dominant and inflexible hierarchy which I will suggest is ultimately incompatible with the well-orderedness of complex structures including the city and soul, leaving us, consonantly, with unfortunate ethical, psychological, and political consequences which will become clearer in my analysis of the dialogue.

The tensions latent in the *harmonia* model resurface in Book 10 of the dialogue, where Plato provides his clearest statement on the supremacy of the rational element at the marginalisation of other parts. There, Plato harks back to a polarising distinction between composite (*suntheta*)
and incomposite (asuntheta) items made prominent in the Affinity Argument of the Phaedo. This distinction places supreme emphasis on incomposite items, of which the transcendent and self-same Forms are our most available paradigms. Within the context of the Phaedo, this distinction leads Plato to an austere conception of the soul as a rational and incomposite unity which becomes good when it eschews the body it forms a composite with. And here is where I will suggest that the Plato of the Republic runs into difficulties. For in recapitulating this distinction in Book 10 of the dialogue, Plato seems to leave us with the same sort of impression of the soul that he gave us in the Phaedo. Although the main books of the dialogue attempt to offer a conceptual model which can account for the well-orderedness of structures, this model is open to significant objections, and the radical presentation of the soul proffered in Book 10 of the dialogue seems to obscure this enterprise altogether.

By reconsidering the conceptual model of a tripartite harmonia model in the Republic, I hope to reveal some of the tensions posed by that model for the way that Plato conceives of the well-orderedness and unity of complex structures such as the city and the soul. On balance, I will argue that while the dialogue fills a gap in earlier dialogues by offering a precise conceptual model of well-ordered structure for complex wholes, it does so at the cost of opening up further tensions of its own.

In the later dialogues (Chapter 3), Plato’s account of well-ordered wholes significantly improves. This improvement becomes possible, I argue, with a new metaphysical framework for elucidating the well-orderedness of complex structures. In the dialogue Statesman, the concept of to metrion is introduced as an end to which all good craftsmen aim. To metrion, often translated as ‘due measure’ or ‘due proportion’, occurs when the right measure is found between two potentially opposing and hostile extremes. This measure or proportionate ratio, it will be argued, has its origins in intelligible Forms (an interpretation I substantiate below), but is also struck when intelligent craftsmen consider other existential factors in acts of production such as the right time (ton kairon), the appropriate (to prepon), and the necessary (to deon).\footnote{This connection between Forms and proportionate number or ratio will require much further clarification and argument, which I provide in Chapter 3. Variants of this interpretation exist in the current literature. See, for instance, Miller (2003; 2004; 2007), whose analysis of the role of Forms in the later dialogues will be helpful for my purposes in what follows. This interpretation of the metaphysics of the Statesman will also be compared with the metaphysics of the Philebus later in the same chapter, on which see pp. 10-11 below.}

In conceptual terms, to metrion is designed to counteract the possibility of any one part within a complex whole receiving too much weight, which might otherwise lead to an excess of powers or a general imbalance in the whole. In fact, this is precisely the sort of danger that the harmonia model of the Republic might have been thought to create, where that model will
be shown to generate a stark divide between the reasoning element and the other parts of the city-soul. In the Statesman, by contrast, the metaphysical concept of to metrion enables a more balanced relation between the different parts of the city where a fusion of two different psychic predispositions—the virtues of courage and moderation respectively—forms part of the dialogue’s stance on well-ordered wholes. This synthesis of two different extremes functions to instil to metrion both within the souls of citizens and in the city at large, ensuring a bond which is truer to the well-orderedness of these structures.

The merits of to metrion for Plato’s theory of well-ordered wholes will be shown to produce two main outcomes. First, the metaphysical framework connected to the concept of to metrion equips Plato with a consistent methodology for articulating the production of well-ordered wholes, which will be frequently taken up by Plato in other late dialogues. Second, the concept of to metrion offers a less strictly hierarchical conceptual model of well-ordered structure which is more able to accommodate for diversity, plurality, and fairness in complex wholes of parts. As I will flesh out in the rest of the chapter, this model becomes the primary explanandum for how Plato conceptualises the well-orderedness of the city, the individual, and the universe in Plato’s other late dialogues Laws, Philebus, and Timaeus.

Central to the politics of the Laws is the notion of due measure (to metrion) between two potentially opposing extremes—freedom and slavery. In order for a political regime to flourish, Plato says, it must necessarily partake of both these features. Of particular importance here is the function of ‘equality’ (isotēs) in ensuring that to metrion is achieved in the city. In classical antiquity, equality held a privileged association with justice, and was thus deemed to be an important principle for civic unity.14 I will show that the place of equality is ambivalent in the Republic, and opens up important tensions for the way the way that we conceive of the unity of the city there.15 By contrast, Plato explicitly writes in the Laws that one principal cause of political conflict (stasis) is an absence of equality (757a). What is more, we also get a precise specification of equality in the form of the geometrical equality, something which was said to

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14 On this association, which will be fleshed out further in Chapter 3, see Vlastos (1977: 18-19).
15 As Schofield (2013: 287 fn. 8) notes, Plato does not explicitly mention equality of any kind in the Republic. Nevertheless, I will offer a more subtle account of different ways in which equality might be operative in the dialogue. Commentators have often seen an intimation of geometrical equality in the Republic. Whilst this may be the case, I will show how the dominant hierarchical model of the Republic complicates the application of geometrical equality in other important respects. It will be suggested, tentatively, that the harmonic proportion-equality is perhaps the most likely candidate for any equality in the Republic, but that this opens up a conception of civic unity which is open to significant objections. On the distinction between different models of proportional equality, see the footnote below.
bind the kosmos together in the Gorgias (507e6-508a8), but which was left frustratingly underdeveloped there.16

Expressed politically, the most natural exemplification of the geometrical equality-proportion is to give more opportunities to participate in the functions of government to the more politically competent and less to the less politically competent. While this secures ‘true’ civic justice in the city—where an appreciation of each individual’s merit takes priority—it also ensures that absolute rule and authority is always curtailed by a more moderate hierarchy where the intrinsic freedom and worth of the less politically able is equally valued. In this way, the concept of to metrion among distinct extremes is supported by the notion of geometrical equality to produce an improved account of well-orderedness for the complex whole that is the city.

The Timaeus is continuous with the Laws in getting us away from a dominant hierarchical model of complex structures and closer towards what I call a holistic model for well-ordered wholes. Within the explanatory framework of the dialogue, the concept of summetria is paramount to the way that Plato conceptualises the well-orderedness of three main complex structures: the cosmos, the individual soul, and the whole human being conceived as a composite of body and soul. This gives us a way of understanding better the structural isomorphism between these different complex structures, whilst also shedding light on the way that the well-orderedness of each is being conceived in the late dialogues.

Consonant with the Laws, and developing a suggestion from the Gorgias, one key reason why the cosmos is held together in the best possible order is because it was bound together by the geometrical proportion. As I argue, for Plato this proportion is well suited to join parts which are potentially unequal (such as the four bodily elements) into the best possible order and harmony. This is arguably why the cosmos possesses the property of summetria (the right measure between its parts) superlatively, where the good order of the whole prevails over the intrinsic good of any one part within the complex body of the world.

The world can only have been bound by the geometrical proportion, however, by being put together through the agency of an intelligent craftsman. This clarifies more vividly than the Gorgias the identity of the agent that is responsible for creating well-ordered wholes, namely, intelligence or nous. One further way in which the Timaeus builds on the model of craftsmanship promulgated in that dialogue is by suggesting that this intelligent agent looked

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16 The distinction between different types of proportional equality (the harmonic, the geometric, and the arithmetic) will be made clearer in Chapter 1, when I come to discuss in greater detail the Gorgias’ notoriously vague mention of ‘geometrical equality’ (ἡ ἱσότης ἡ γεωμετρική) in connection with Archytas’ Fragment 2.
towards an external paradigm. In the *Timaeus*, Plato calls this external paradigm ‘Intelligible Animal’, which is made up of a certain group of Forms. However, this raises the vexed question of how the intelligible model the Demiurge turned to is related to the proportionate ratios he instantiated in the body of the world, which creates its *summetria* and makes it well-ordered. To spell out the problem, what is the relation between a Form and the Form’s causal efficacy in the creation of proportionate ratios, or the *summetria* of a complex whole? To this end, the relationship between a Form and its causal role in the production of well-ordered wholes will be an important question in my discussion of Plato’s late dialogues.

In response to this question, I will offer a re-examination of the metaphysics of the *Philebus* which has its origins in my interpretation of the metaphysics of the *Statesman* (on which, see p. 8 and fn. 13 above). In the *Philebus*, well-ordered mixtures are generated when Limit has been imposed on the Unlimited, thereby producing a definite ratio which secures the right measure (or *summetria*) in a complex whole. However, Limit has often been associated with the Forms characteristic of Plato’s middle-period dialogues, which are not an explicit feature of the dialogue. One pressing metaphysical question here, then, is whether or not there is a metaphysical source prior to Limit which is responsible for the *summetria* of harmonious mixtures. This question is put into sharper focus by the assumption that Forms are causally responsible for the well-orderedness of complex structures.

The working solution I shall propose to these problems is to suggest that, in their causal capacity, Forms ‘express themselves’ as the proportionate ratios that inhere in well-ordered complex wholes. The Limit of a complex whole in the *Philebus* may, therefore, be understood as the manifestation of a Form as it becomes embodied in the world, so that composite wholes become unified as far as that is possible to the extent that they take on the right ratio or measure. This interpretation also presupposes that there is some relation between the unity of a Form and the unity of a complex whole. While I will show that these are a unity of a different kind, and while the relationship between their respective unity raises several puzzles, seeing the proportionate ratios of complex wholes as the expressions of Forms in their causal capacity allows us to appreciate one way in which the unmixed unity of a Form can become embodied in the unity of well-ordered mixtures. In these ways, it will be suggested that the later dialogues produce a further advance on earlier dialogues by clarifying the connection between Forms and their causal role in the production of well-ordered wholes, which remained unclear there (recall my remarks on the role of the *Republic* here on p. 7 above).

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17 I touch on the question of the content of the Demiurge’s paradigm in fn. 226 below.
The concept of *summetria* is, finally, crucial to the way that Plato envisions the order of the individual human being in the *Timaeus*. Within the soul, *summetria* is suggestive of a less hierarchical model of order where the motions of the ruling principle must be tempered in light of the motions of the other parts of the soul, so that the good order of the whole takes priority over any of its individual parts. As I will demonstrate, the *Timaeus* concedes that even rational study can become a mode of excess and warns us against intellectualising to an extreme degree (88a8-c6). This positive attention to the typically ‘inferior’ aspects of embodied existence also finds its way into Plato’s analysis of the *whole* human being—soul and body included—where the rational activities distinctive of the soul must be made proportionate (*summetroi*) to the activities of the body (87c4-d8). This has the upshot of putting the onus on the good order of the whole soul-body compound rather than any one of its distinct parts, pointing once more strongly in the direction of a holistic account of well-ordered structure in the later works.

By offering a closer analysis of the different conceptual models Plato puts to work in different dialogues for explaining the well-orderedness of complex wholes, this thesis argues for a series of developments and modifications to the way that Plato’s response to this issue takes shape over time. As I will show, Plato’s answer to the question of how complex wholes of parts are optimally ordered is to offer a new model which resolves the tensions of earlier dialogues. Importantly, it is the novel notions of *to metrion* and *summetria* which I argue drive this model forward. With the increasing attention given to such concepts in the late dialogues, Plato is able to rehabilitate those parts of a city or soul which were marginalised in previous conceptual models and to offer a more holistic model for complex wholes which I argue does the most justice to the well-orderedness and unity of such items. In this way, the developmental arc of this thesis will also be shown to offer important reflections for the ethical, psychological, and political theories of Plato’s late dialogues.
Chapter I: The Theme of Well-Ordered Wholes in the *Gorgias*

In this chapter, I demonstrate how Plato’s engagement with the theme of well-ordered wholes began to take shape in one pivotal early dialogue, the *Gorgias*. I shall begin with one central passage (503d6-504a4) where a clear indication of the importance of values such as order (*taxis*) and structure (*kosmos*) for complex wholes is provided, and where Plato fleshes out significant details on the processes associated with good craftsmanship. While I suggest that this passage contains the kernels of ideas which inform Plato’s views on the construction of well-ordered wholes in subsequent dialogues, it also leaves open certain ineliminable questions which remain the task of later works to clarify.

In the light of this text, I will be examining separately three complex wholes which are the focus of conceptual analysis within the dialogue: *logos*, soul, and *kosmos*. Like other complex structures, it is assumed that these are comprised of distinct and potentially conflicting parts, which, since they exist in some one whole, function better when they are brought into order. This explanation suffices to deliver a significant normative claim in the *Gorgias* highlighted in the introduction to this thesis (p. 2). That is, complex items *ought* to be well-ordered. Consequently, the three complex wholes examined in this chapter will be discussed in view of what I call a ‘substantive normative framework’ for well-ordered wholes, which will also be shown to be pertinent to the production of complex wholes in general.\(^{18}\)

The specific examples of a *logos* and soul warrant even further attention in this examination. This is because of the powerful impact that speeches are assumed to have on the soul. For the ideal speaker aims to improve souls by producing *logoi* of a certain kind, namely, those which aid the soul in acquiring the virtues of justice and temperance (504d5-e4). This causal connection, I will nevertheless demonstrate, opens up a host of questions which shall require further explanation.

One problem is that it is not straightforwardly clear exactly how *logoi* ought to be put together for the benefit of individual souls. Rather, the general point is that a *logos* should embody *taxis* and *kosmos* (however these are manifested in speech) so that the soul may come to take on these same properties. In addition to this concern, it is also ambiguous how *taxis* and *kosmos* operate on the level of the soul itself given the underdeveloped psychology of the

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\(^{18}\) Whether or not the *Gorgias* expounds a substantive normative framework is a matter of debate in the literature. On the one hand, Irwin (1979: esp. 210) fails to find a clearly specified ‘final good’ for every rational agent in the *Gorgias*. On the other, Woolf (2000: esp. 12) and Sheffield (forthcoming) find more positive evidence for such a normative framework in the dialogue. My own interpretation of key passages in the *Gorgias* presupposes such a normative framework.
While the dialogue makes a strong correlation between the good of the soul and its well-orderedness, exactly *how* that order is best construed remains open to speculation until Plato has provided a more explicit statement on the internal constitution of the soul in later works.

The final complex whole that will be examined in this chapter is the *kosmos*. Within the *Gorgias*, the ordered *kosmos* seems to function as the best exemplar of a well-ordered complex whole. This will be shown to serve an important *ethical* function within the dialogue, even if it is not clear in precisely what respects we are to assimilate ourselves to the heavens, and why. Moreover, crucial to the cosmic order is one key principle highlighted at the climax of Socrates’ dialectical exchange with Callicles: ‘geometrical equality’ (508a6). Although this principle is mentioned fleetingly and without further explanation in the dialogue, it still seems to be doing important causal work for the way that Socrates envisages the order of the world *qua* complex whole of parts. It is therefore suggested that, for Plato, an appreciation of geometrical equality is tantamount to the well-orderedness of complex structures in general. In this way, the *Gorgias* once more looks forward to ideas which find their full flowering in subsequent dialogues, even if such ideas are introduced without the conceptual clarity and sophistication which are characteristic of Plato’s more mature works.\(^19\)

Overall, the main argument of this chapter is that the *Gorgias* offers a significant contribution to Plato’s engagement with the theme of well-ordered wholes. In a somewhat programmatic way, the dialogue introduces key ideas which form part of Plato’s explanatory framework for the production of well-ordered wholes throughout the dialogues. In light of the broader narrative of this thesis, however, the place of this unique contribution must also be clearly understood. As it will be suggested, the *Gorgias* expounds a normative theory of well-ordered wholes at the same time as it also leaves open genuine questions as to *how that theory is best articulated*. This holds true for many of the issues the dialogue raises but, especially in the case of the soul. Without a robust psychology of the kind we find in later Platonic dialogues, it is generally unclear how values such as *taxis* and *kosmos* are best applied to the soul. In the next chapter, several of these tensions will be shown to be the work of later dialogues (principally the *Republic*) to resolve.

\(^{19}\) As it will be suggested in the final chapter, geometrical equality (or at least something closely akin to this principle) is explicitly highlighted in two late dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Laws*, as a means for striking the best possible order in a complex whole of parts. In the former dialogue, geometrical equality secures the friendly and harmonious order between the different elements constituting the body of the world (31c2-32a7), while in the latter dialogue, it secures the ‘truest’ form of justice in the city (757b1-c6).
1.1. Unpacking the Normative Framework of the *Gorgias*: Craftsmanship, Order, and Function

That the theme of well-ordered wholes is integral to the *Gorgias* is not immediately obvious at first. Indeed, commentators have long been divided over the main subject matter of the dialogue. On the one hand, Socrates is preoccupied with issues related to the theme of justice, which is supported by the famous Socratic thesis that committing injustice is worse than suffering it. On the other hand, this ethical question is intimately tied to an examination of the nature of rhetoric, where Socrates asks whether contemporary speakers are able to improve the souls of their listeners. In this way, the *Gorgias* examines rhetoric in the light of ethics.

This relationship between speech and the improvement of the soul deploys our central concept of a well-ordered whole insofar as both *logos* and soul are seen as a complex of aspects, or parts, which become increasingly well-ordered when those parts are brought into a harmonious relation with one another. To this end, one reason why *logos* and soul will be discussed in close connection with each other in this chapter is because the structure of a speech plays an important part in the ordering of the soul. The more well-ordered a speech is, the more likely that the soul too will become well-ordered. In the following sections to this chapter, these claims will be substantiated further as I explore consecutively how Plato conceives the well-orderedness of both a speech (*logos*) and the soul.

When re-evaluating the effect of traditional rhetoric on the soul, Socrates embeds rhetoric within a more general account of *craft*. On this account, an ideal speaker is identified with a certain kind of craftsman who is responsible for the creation of a well-ordered whole out of some unstructured, disparate material. In what follows, I will reconstruct the key steps in this process of craftsmanship, with careful attention to how the passage opens up a substantive normative framework for the production of well-ordered wholes in general. Despite the importance of this passage for the overall orientation of my argument, however, it must also be treated with critical examination. Much of the focus will be given to questions which are raised, but not sufficiently answered, by the text. With these preliminary remarks behind us, let us now proceed to an examination of the key passage in question:

Come now, the good man who speaks with a view to the best (ἐπὶ το βέλτιστον), surely he won’t speak at random (οὐκ εἰκῇ), but will look to something (ἀποβλέπων πρός τι)? He will be like all other craftsmen (οὶ ἄλλοι πάντες δημιουργοί); each of them selects and applies his efforts with a view to his own work, not at random (οὐκ εἰκῇ), but so that what he produces will acquire some
form (εἶδός τι). Look for instance if you like at painters, builders, shipwrights, all other craftsmen—whichever one you like; see how each of them arranges in an order (εἰς τάξιν) whatever he arranges, and compels one thing to be fitting and suitable to another (προσαναγκάζει τὸ ἕτερον τῷ ἑτέρῳ πρέπον τε καὶ ἄρμότετειν), until he composes the whole into an orderly and structured item (τὸ ἅπαν συστήσεται τεταγμένον τε καὶ κεκοσμημένον πρᾶγμα). All craftsmen, including those we were talking of just now, gymnastic-trainers, and doctors, form the body into order and structure (κοσμοῦσι καὶ συντάττουσιν), don’t they? (503d6-504a4).

In this text, Socrates distances the good speaker from someone who operates with randomness (note the two references to ‘ouk eikē’), comparing him, rather, with ‘all other craftsmen’ who operate with purposeful design and intention. The negative side of this contrast brings to mind the image of a bad speaker who utters words with instantaneous spontaneity rather than careful execution and planning. Good craftsmen, on the other hand, are such because they possess the skill of forethought, carefully contriving each step of their creation until they have finally engendered a certain form (eidos τι) on their material.

Now, the language of eidos here is one of two references in the passage which might be thought to anticipate Plato’s more developed metaphysics (the other reference will be discussed in connection with the external paradigms of orderly creation on p. 19 below). In later Platonic dialogues, the ideal nature of a certain object becomes associated with the transcendent and eternal Form (eidos). As commentators have often objected, however, the reference to eidos in our context is perfectly compatible with a non-metaphysical reading of the term. On this interpretation, eidos might simply denote the particular shape, or organisational structure, of a complex item.

The lines immediately following the reference to eidos in our passage speak towards precisely such a connection. Indeed, Socrates attempts to substantiate this eidos by suggesting that craftsmen arrange the disparate parts of their material into order (taxis) until the whole (to apan) has been composed into an ‘orderly and structured item’ (tetagmenon te kai kekosmēmenon pragma). As this language demonstrates, taxis and kosmos emerge as the key values which craftsmen endeavour to instantiate in their products. However, these terms are used interchangeably throughout the dialogue, making it a challenge to distinguish any

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20 Translations of the Gorgias are from Irwin (1979) with emendations.
21 For an interpretation of eidos along the lines of form (morphē) or shape (schēma), see Herrmann (2007: 148). On this non-metaphysical reading, one can still retain the normative force of eidos Plato’s readers are familiar with. For the eidos that a well-ordered product acquires is not just any eidos, engendered at random (ouk eikē), but the eidos of the way a complex item ought to be. This normative claim will be substantiated further below when I come to discuss the role of function in the creation of well-ordered wholes.
difference in meaning between them. Nonetheless, these seem to be the general values that complex items stand in need of, I suggest, if they are to acquire a certain form (eidos ti).

At first sight, what might seem to be lacking in this passage is any explicit connection between, on the one hand, values such as taxis and kosmos, and the wholeness of complex structures on the other. In other words, Socrates falls short of telling us exactly what sort of pragma is generated from a more metaphysical perspective—is to apan simply a collection of disparate of parts, or does it indicate one single item composed of disparate parts? The examples of complex wholes Socrates provides in the broader context of this passage (504a7-b3) may, nevertheless, provide further illumination here. Socrates cites the examples of an organic body (σώμα), a house (οἰκία), and a ship (πλοῖον), all of which are surely items composed of a plurality of parts which exist as some one whole (apán). Finally, what seems to make each entity the kind of thing it is its peculiar form (eidos ti). As I have been suggesting, this form is enabled by the imposition of ordering values such as taxis and kosmos.

The passage also contains some interesting suggestions as to how craftsmen engender taxis and kosmos in their creations from what we may call a more ‘technical’ or ‘practical’ perspective. In order for a complex item to become well-ordered, Socrates says, craftsmen must make the disparate parts of their material both ‘suitable’ (prepon) and ‘fitting’ (harmottein) to one another. It is worth exploring for a moment what might be implied by these terms. For the language of prepon and harmottein seems to suggest that the parts of the craftsman’s material are not of their own accord disposed to be fitted together. This perhaps explains why the craftsman is said to use compulsion (prosanagkazei) as he brings his product into taxis and kosmos.

On the one hand, the notion of compulsion makes good sense in the case of organic wholes, whose internal parts seem to have an autonomous tendency of their own to deviate from order. The example of the body, which Plato turns to in the final line of our passage, makes good sense of this. Ancient theories of medicine reduced health to the harmonious and proportionate blend (krasis) of the constituents of the body, mostly, but not in all cases, the four humours. Disease,

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22 It is perhaps for this reason that the Gorgias is hardly referenced in Harte (2002), on which see further fn. 11 above. The pertinent issue here is that the Gorgias does not directly touch on the question of what a whole is in Plato, although it certainly anticipates this mereological question by suggesting that taxis and kosmos are essential for the production of well-ordered complex items (the main thesis of Harte).

23 According to Alcmaeon, health obtains when the opposite substances composing the body have equal power, so that no one part imposes single rule (monarchia) over the others (DK B4). This is then taken up by the Hippocrates with their theory of the four bodily humours. In connection with the Gorgias, the general point to be derived from these medical theories is that it is imperative for the parts of a complex item (such as the body) to be made fitting (prepon) and harmonious (harmottein) to one another in order that there may be order (taxis and kosmos) in the whole.
then, would have consisted in a deviation from this order, where one part held disproportionate power over the others. The upshot is that turning a complex of parts such as the organic body into an ordered whole might require making one part, which previously held an imbalance of power over the others, both fitting (prepon) and harmonious (harmottein) to the other. The same might be said of the soul, which conceivably has all sorts of conflicting desires of its own and which need to be moderated in light of what is best for the whole (this claim will be explored further in Section 1.3 below). 24

How might we apply this account of compulsion, on the other hand, to the case of artefacts? For as we have seen, Plato also mentions a house and ship as examples of well-ordered wholes, which we do not ordinarily conceive as organic entities. In response, the thought might be that the parts of, say, a ship, do not as it were come ‘ready-made’. The shipbuilder may need to adjust the wood and carve the different parts so that they fit and harmonise together. Consonantly, a housebuilder will select only those tiles which fit with each other so as to form a house.

This upshot of this interpretation is that the craftsman will use a considerable degree of practical reasoning to work out how the parts of his material are best fitted together. For he may have a certain ‘blueprint’ or ‘plan’ in mind before beginning his work, but he must still take account of the conditions posed by his material. This is, after all, the unique activity of a craftsman: to fit together, arrange, and assemble those parts of his product of which he is an expert so that his product may become the kind of entity it ought to be.

This analysis of prepon and harmottein thus sheds positive light on the intelligent work of the craftsman in bringing about taxis and kosmos in complex wholes of parts. 25 However, it must also be said that nowhere in the Gorgias does Plato explicitly associate the good craftsman cum rhetor with intelligence. This has the consequence of obscuring the agent responsible for procreating well-ordered structures. Although Socrates attempts to build a comprehensive picture of the good craftsman through the key steps outlined in the passage necessary for the ordering of complex structures, this picture is ultimately left incomplete without a more robust

24 In later Platonic dialogues, the notion that complex wholes are not naturally disposed to be fitted together leads Plato to assume that the disparate parts of complex structures have an innate tendency towards conflict and hostility (see further p. 2 above and fn. 4). In the Symposium, for instance, Eryximachus speaks of Love (erōs) as an all-embracing force which reconciles hostile opposites into harmonious relations (186a7ff.). In the Statesman myth, moreover, Plato speaks of the ‘innate desire’ (sumphutos epithumia, 272e6) of the universe to deviate from its direction and to turn in the opposite towards decay and destruction (phthoran).

25 That the notion of intelligence is built into Plato’s account of craftsmanship in the Gorgias is bolstered by Socrates’ insistence that a craftsman should be able to give a logos of what he does and why his actions are related to a certain outcome (in the case of a doctor, why the instruction he provides is aimed toward the end of health, on which cf. Gorg. 465a, 501a-b).
explanation of the identity of the good craftsman. As we shall see, Plato will look to bolster his account of craftsmanship in the Gorgias in later dialogues by explicitly associating the good craftsman with nous or intelligence. In this way, the Gorgias paves the way for developments to Plato’s account of craftsmanship in later dialogues, while also leaving open genuine questions of its own.

With this examination of the role of form, structure, and intelligence in our passage behind us, we may now proceed to explore one further step in Plato’s account of craftsmanship. In the creation of a well-ordered whole, Socrates says, the good craftsman will be aided by ‘looking towards’ (apoblepōn) some external object as a guide for artistic creation. As commentators have often observed, the language here strongly anticipates the more developed metaphysics of Plato’s ‘middle-period’ dialogues. The idea of contemplating an object outside the observer is a commonplace in discussions of how craftsmen use the transcendent external Form as a model for production (Crat. 389a-c; Rep. 500c2-d8, 501b1-7, 596b-597b; Tim. 28a7, 29a3). Nonetheless, it must be said that our passage leaves it unclear what objects the good craftsman looks towards and how such objects aid him in his creation of a well-ordered item. Since we have no compelling reason to assume that the external paradigms of the Gorgias have an ontological status analogous to what will be explicitly identified as Forms in later dialogues, we should ask what causal work these objects are doing in our passage and why they are apposite objects for artistic creation.

One promising suggestion which boasts a rich history in the literature is that the objects of the good craftsman are ideal functions or uses. If we are right to assume that the aim of the craftsman is to create a product which is able to perform its function to the greatest degree possible, he will, on this reading, look at the way his object is ‘by nature best constituted’. Support for this ‘functional view’ may be found in the lines immediately following our passage. When Socrates turns to the examples of a house and ship (504a7-b1), he asks whether these become ‘useful’ (chrēstē) when they possess order and structure (taxeōs kai kosmou), or bad (mochthēra) when they are devoid of order (ataxias). It is not implausible to suggest, for instance, that the shipwright would take as his model the ship as it is in its nature best constructed in order that it may sail long distances, withstand the danger of the elements, and

26 See Dorothea Frede (2012: esp. 374-375), who suggests Plato is still thinking along the lines of ideal functions or uses even when the external model begins to possess transcendent and other-worldly properties: ‘[W]hat may at first have been a proleptic thought that preceded the introduction of the theory of Forms subsequently found its place within that theory’ (376 fn. 22). The Gorgias, then, shows Plato’s early preoccupation with the notion of use or function for a thing’s ideal nature. See also Sedley (2007b: 108), who adopts a similar view.
resist the attack of the enemy. Similarly with a house, which achieves its own unique function (arguably, to provide a safe space for dwelling) when it is put together well. This interpretation provides a viable solution to the vexed issue of what the external models of good craftsmen could be. Further, it secures an indispensable link between the order (taxis) and functionality (chreia) of complex structures. This is significant, not least because it provides normative justification for the well-orderedness of complex structures. The salient point is that in any item composed of a plurality of parts, that item performs its distinct function, or achieves its optimal use, when those parts are arrange into an appropriate taxis and kosmos. In this way, when a craftsman has the ideal function of his product in mind, he ought to impose taxis and kosmos on his material so that the whole may function well.

In addition to providing a substantive normative framework for complex wholes of parts, I would like to end this section by suggesting that the passage also seems to anticipate a certain teleological account for the production of well-ordered wholes. This we may appreciate by turning towards the very first line of the text. Recall how Socrates says that everything the good craftsman does is with ‘a view to the best (epi to beltiston)’. In one recent paper, Rachel Barney has argued for what she calls a ‘deontological’ dimension of the craft model in Plato. On this account, crafts are what they are (normatively understood) because they aim to bring about some good for an external agent or thing. What our 503d6-504a4 passage invites us to reconsider, I suggest, is the connection between acts of craftsmanship in general and the good, or end, towards which they aim. Since the distinctive activity of a craftsman comes down to instantiating taxis and kosmos on a complex whole of parts, I will argue, there must be some relationship between the end to which they aim (to beltiston) and the notion of well-orderedness itself.

I will now proceed to draw evidence from various different contexts in the Gorgias which jointly build a case in support of this claim. To begin with, in Socrates’ discussion with Callicles about the distinction between different types of pleasures, good and bad, Socrates finds it beneficial to remind his interlocutor of an important point that was established earlier in the dialogue:

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28 Following these examples, Socrates extends this functionality requirement to both ‘body’ and ‘soul’. It could be argued, for instance, that the biological human body can only perform organic vital activities essential for living when its internal parts stand in good relations to each another. As Socrates says, when the body is in bad condition, the man must live (zēn) wretchedly (mochthērōs) too (505a2-4). The ideal function of the soul is, however, less straightforward. On p. 36 and fn. 62 below, it will be tentatively suggested that the ideal function of the soul consists in its ability to ‘act’ or ‘do’ well (eu te kai kalōs prattein, 507c3). Whether we find this interpretation satisfying or not, the salient point for my purposes is that the good function of the soul is achieved when it possesses taxis and kosmos, further underscoring the normativity of order for complex structures.

29 Barney (2021a: 63).
Yes; for I take it we agreed that we must do everything for the sake of goods, if you remember—Polus and I. Do you agree with us too, that the good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν) is the end (τέλος εἶναι) of all actions, and that for the sake of it (ἐκείνου ἐνεκα) we should do all the other things, not do it for the sake of the other things? Do you cast a third vote with ours? (499e6-500a2)

Socrates’ reference to to agathon here harks back to 468b7-8, where it was agreed with his interlocutor that ‘men do what they do for the sake of to agathon’. At this stage of the dialogue, this connection between ‘the good’ and ‘the end’ of human striving was made as a dialectical move to make Polus concede to the famous Socratic maxim that ‘no one does wrong willingly’. For we all do things believing that it will result in some good, although we often possess a mistaken notion of the good itself. While the Gorgias makes two explicit references to our pursuit of to agathon, however, it must be conceded that the content of to agathon is nowhere explicitly theorised in the dialogue. And yet, if good craftsmen are also guided by to agathon as the telos of their productive activity—for the good is the end of ‘all’ our actions (ἀπασῶν τῶν πράξεων)—we are left questioning what the ‘supreme good’ (to beltiston) might consist of for them.

In order to get closer to a possible response, it might be helpful to first consider mistaken notions of to agathon entertained in the Gorgias. Immediately after the passage quoted above, Callicles offers a rare nod of approval to Socrates by agreeing that we all pursue to agathon as the telos of our actions. The difference, however, will of course depend on how he conceives the good of human striving. On Callicles’ view, the telos for man arguably consists in the unhindered attainment of whatever one should desire. While Callicles assimilates to agathon with all pleasurable things, regardless of their individual content, Socrates suggests that one ought to first distinguish which pleasant things are good (agatha) and which pleasant things are evil (kaka). This is then said to require a skilled technician (technikos, 500a6), which echoes the notion of a good craftsman familiar from our main text in this section.

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30 As Dodds notes (1959: 317), in Socrates’ exchange with Polus to agathon just is what we all pursue, whereas in the later reference to to agathon Socrates suggests that we ought (dein) to do things for the sake of it. Dodds explains this difference by suggesting that the language of obligation can be understood in light of the earlier passage as meaning that ‘we shall further our own true interest if we discover and pursue what we ‘really’ want’.

31 Compare Republic 505d11-506a: ‘This [to agathon] is what every soul follows. All its actions are directed at this. It has a sort of divine intuition that the good is something, but it is in doubt, unable to get a firm grasp on what it is, or find any firm belief of the kind it has about other things’.
How does the skilled technikos distinguish good from evil pleasures? For this distinction still leaves open the problem of what the criteria for being agathon is in the first place. In other words, what makes each individual thing agathon rather than kakon, and what are the distinct features of agathon when it is represented in individual things? Socrates attempts a response to this puzzle by first proposing that all things become good (agathon) when ‘some virtue’ (aretēs tinos) comes to be present in them (506d2-4). The way that this virtue is then hashed out is highly suggestive of the sort of good he has in mind:

But now, the virtue of each thing (ἡ γε ἄρετή), a tool, a body, and, further, a soul and a whole animal, doesn’t come to be present in the best way just at random (οὐ τῷ εἰκῇ), but by some structure (τάξει) and correctness (ὀρθότητι) and craft (τέχνη), the one assigned to each of them (506d5-8).

Notice how this text makes a close association between the virtue (aretē) of each thing and its unique order (taxis). Now, one way that we might understand this virtue is by pointing towards the functionality of well-ordered complex items. The reference to the body, the soul, and the whole animal brings to mind specifically complex wholes of parts, which can function well when they acquire order (taxis) through the agency of a craft (technē). Further, the suggestion that the acquisition of taxis does not come about at random chimes well with our main craftsman passage, where it was suggested that good craftsmen order their material with purposeful design and not just at random (ouk eikē).

In response to the Calliclean problem of what makes individual pleasures agatha rather than kaka, then, Socrates might want to say that pleasures are good when they are characterised by their distinct virtue or purpose (aretē), which we have seen comes down to their well-ordered arrangement (taxis). The next step in the methodology of Socrates’ argument is to make a connection between the ‘virtue’ of each thing—its unique structure and ordering—and to agathon. Consider to this end the following:

32 Referring back to to agathon specifically, Dodds (1959: 333) writes ‘the Good is an organizing principle which makes a living creature or an artefact capable of fulfilling its function’.

33 We do not ordinarily conceive of a ‘tool’ (σκεύος) in the modern domestic sense as a complex whole of parts, but the scope of σκεύος may well be wide enough as to include any item which is constructed with a view to a specific function or purpose. In this way, a σκεύος ought to be well-ordered so that it may perform its individual function well.

34 The issues opened up by the relation between taxis and kosmos and the case of pleasure will be discussed further in Section 1.3 below, when we come to discuss the presentation of a well-ordered soul in the Gorgias.
Then it is some order (κόσμος τις)—the proper order for each (ὁ ἑκάστου οἰκεῖος) of the things that are—which makes (παρέχει) things good (ἀγαθὸν) by coming to be present in it (506e2-4).

A possible reconstruction of all the passages taken together could be as follows. First, the virtue (aretē) of each distinct thing is achieved when that thing acquires the taxis and kosmos appropriate (oikeios) to the kind of thing it is. By doing so, consonantly, that thing is also able to perform its distinct function optimally (which, we have seen, provides normative justification for why complex items ought to be well-ordered). Socrates, however, also wants to suggest that the imposition of taxis and kosmos brings (parechei) goodness (to agathon) to each thing. What we seem to have, therefore, is an unassailable link between the notion of goodness and well-orderedness (encapsulated by the term kosmos in our final passage). If the Gorgias is, therefore, espousing a teleology of craft, it seems to be one where the end to which craftsmen aim (to beltiston) is inextricably linked with the notion of well-orderedness. When craftsmen do things ‘with a view to the best’, then, this ‘superlative good’ will be achieved by contemplating and instantiating the ideal order in each of their creations.

Whether this reconstruction is sufficient to generate a teleologically separate and abstract notion of to agathon such as Plato’s more metaphysically developed ‘Form of the Good’ is, however, highly contentious. While the Gorgias is undetermined on this issue, to agathon is still presented as a causally efficacious principle which determines human action—whether souls possess an adequate understand of the content of to agathon and regardless of its precise metaphysical determination. Nevertheless, Plato still provides interesting suggestions as to the characterisation of to agathon by making a close association between goodness and order (kosmos, 506e2). This has the consequence of bolstering the normative dimension of well-ordered wholes which has in fact been the main purpose of this section to substantiate. With these considerations behind us, it is time now to explore the first of our three complex wholes subject to conceptual analysis within the dialogue: logos.

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35 Since the Gorgias is less metaphysically rigorous than other Platonic dialogues, it could be that to agathon is a single teleological good for each thing much like the way Aristotle describes the good in the opening book of the Nicomachean Ethics. As White (1990: 123) observes, ‘what constitutes the goodness of a thing is its own proper order’. Even if that is the case, this is still a noteworthy achievement for Plato. For the good of each thing will reside in well-ordered structure, which is an apt precursor to the more explicit connection Plato will make between the Good itself and kosmos elsewhere. See further footnote below.

36 Commenting on a contrast between the Gorgias and other dialogues where the Form of the Good is shown to have causal efficacy, Kahn (1983: 121) suggests: ‘in the Gorgias things are simpler, since our rational desire for the good is directed not towards some transcendent Form but towards the very adornment of the soul by virtue’. Whether to agathon in the Gorgias is metaphysically innocent or more metaphysically charged, the salient point on either interpretation for my purposes is that it is expressed through values such as taxis and kosmos.
1.2. Well-Ordered *logoi* in the *Gorgias*

The previous section unpacked Plato’s craftsman model for the construction of well-ordered wholes. In this section, I turn to an examination of how that model is expressed in the case of crafting a well-ordered *logos*. Reflecting on *logos*, I will demonstrate, offers us one important way to see Plato’s ideal craftsman at work. Since a study of *logos* is intimately tied with a study of soul, for reasons which will become clear in what follows, this will also suitably prepare us for an examination of the well-ordered soul in the next section.

Let me begin with a brief reconstruction of how the *Gorgias* conceives the mechanics of a well-constructed *logos*, with a keen eye on the steps outlined in the previous section associated with good craftsmanship. Now, just like any good craftsman, the ideal speaker will also look to engender a certain form (*eidos ti*) on his material—*logos*. This form, moreover, will be the result of purposeful design and intention rather than randomness (*ouk eikēt*). What this could mean is that rather than conjuring up a topic of discussion on the spot (as someone like Callicles might do whenever the desires of his audience changes, on which see *Gorg.* 481d7, 482a6-7), the good speaker will carefully prepare an appropriate mode of discussion for a certain audience. The *eidos* he imparts on his speech will, therefore, have to reflect these aims.

As we saw in the previous section, however, Plato also makes a close connection between the *eidos* of a complex item and its peculiar *taxis* and *kosmos*. What this induces us to reconsider in the case of *logos* is what sort of *eidos* a speech should embody, or in other words, how a speech receives *taxis* and *kosmos*. Once more, returning to Plato’s model of craftsmanship can help us shed light on this question. For, in the same way that all craftsmen (*pantes dēmiourgoi*) look towards an external model as they bring structure and order to their material, the good rhetor will also look towards certain external models—what Socrates calls the ‘ideal structures’ (*κοσμήσεσιν*) and ‘orderings’ (*τάξεσι*) of the soul (*πρὸς ταῦτα βλέπων*, (504d1-e4)). These ideal structures of the soul are then explicitly associated with the virtues of justice (*dikaiosunē*) and temperance (*sōphrosunē*) respectively. The upshot of this is that a *logos* qua complex whole of parts should in some way or another be put together so as to exemplify the virtues of the soul in its internal *taxis* and *kosmos*.

Following Plato’s model of craftsmanship further, these observations also hold implications for the proper *function*, or *use*, of a well-ordered *logos* (*tis chreia*, 481b4). If the external paradigms of a well-made speech are the virtues of the soul, then the function of *logos* must necessarily be to instantiate these virtues in the soul. As Socrates explicitly spells out, the
good craftsman aims to instil temperance (sōphrosunē) in the souls of his listeners and remove its opposite, intemperance (akolasia, 504d5-e4). In this way, the craft of logos will be like all other crafts which aim to confer some benefit on their recipient.37 This is bolstered by the argument from ends in Book 1 of the Republic, where Socrates suggests that each craft benefits the object it is ‘set over’ rather than itself (esp. 346d5). In the case of logos, the object that speech is ‘set over’ and aims to benefit is the soul. This is what makes Socratic rhetoric in the Gorgias especially unique—for it is something that no one has ever seen before (503b1). As Socrates is at pains to stress, contemporary rhetoricians have no track record of improving the soul (beltiōn gignesthai, 501e8-502a1).38

What we therefore end up with is something anticipatory of an Aristotelian causal framework. On the one hand, we can identify the ‘formal cause’ as the proper form of a speech (the eidos ti). As we have seen, this form is achieved when a complex item receives its unique taxis and kosmos. On the other hand, the ‘final cause’ or ‘that for the sake of which’ a speech is produced is the soul (what we may call the pros ti). This consists in the potential for a logos to improve (beltiōn gignesthai) the soul by making it increasingly well-ordered. This causal framework, significantly, opens up at least two substantive questions which shall jointly constitute the driving force of discussion in this section. First, how should a speech be constructed in its taxis and kosmos so as to model the virtues of the soul? This naturally lends itself to the second of our questions, which questions how the form (eidos) of a well-ordered logos benefits the soul. Since the goodness of the soul qua complex of aspects or parts will consists in its well-orderedness, we need to ask how well-ordered logos is primed to generate well-orderedness in the soul.39

Keeping these questions in mind throughout, let us begin with some preliminary evidence on how Plato conceives of the proper form (eidos) of a logos. This will then also put us in a

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37 As Barney (2021a: 63) puts it, each craft will have a ‘norm-imposing function or work (ergon)’ proper to it. This leads her to claim that craft is essentially ‘teleological and disinterested’ (p. 73).
38 Similarly, despite the harsh criticism of music in the Gorgias, I find it difficult to accept Irwin’s view (1979: 211) that ‘no educational use is found for music’ because Plato has not yet developed a complex theory of the soul (since, as Irwin suggests, music requires rational and non-rational parts). First, as I shall demonstrate in Section 1.3, the Gorgias offers intimations of a complex psychology. Second, Plato’s criticisms seem to be levelled at contemporary practices of music and rhetoric. In the same way that rhetoric can be transformed, music of an ethically beneficial type is certainly possible. Woolf (2000: 33 fn. 46) seems to be aiming in this direction when he says that the education of the kind we find in the Republic ‘has every relevance in the Gorgias’, and that ‘[T]he Gorgias combines an enhanced interest in politics with the notion that a principal way of achieving political good is bringing about psychic harmony’.
39 On p. 6 above, it was suggested that this connection was indicative of a general ‘causal mechanism’ according to which, for Plato, one well-ordered complex item has the potential to engender well-orderedness in some further complex item (which was also shown to be a variant of the famous ‘like-to-like’ principle in Plato). Both this and the following section will try to shed light on this mechanism.
position to be able to appreciate how the correct *eidos* of a speech has implications for the proper *function* of a speech (the improvement of the soul). Now, Socrates’ main interlocutor in the dialogue notoriously threatens to abandon the discussion at several points. If it were not for wanting to ‘gratify’ Gorgias (505c5-6), Plato writes, Callicles would much rather be done with the conversation altogether. For Socrates, this would have the undesirable consequence of ending the discussion prematurely. Not only does he have to try harder to persuade Callicles to live the orderly life; it seems that there is something inherently wrong in leaving a speech incomplete. Consider the following:

Well, they say it’s not right (*θέμις*) to break stories (*μύθους*) off in the middle either; we should put a head on it, so that it won’t go around headless. So, answer the rest of the questions too, so that our discussion (*ὁ λόγος*) will get its head on (505c10-d3).

Socrates refers to what is conventionally said about traditional stories (*muthoi*) in support of why *his* discussion with Callicles should not be left incomplete. Since Plato has Socrates refer to convention here, it is worth pausing for a moment to explore what might be inferred by saying that it is not *themis* to leave *muthoi* incomplete. One suggestion is that we are being offered a window into pre-existing ideas on the completeness of traditional stories. One could conjecture that Plato has in mind stories about the gods (think of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, for example); if such stories are to function as proper invocations to the gods in rituals or ceremonies, then the *muthos* necessarily needs a conclusion. Not only should a speech have a beginning, middle, and end for purely *stylistic* reasons. On this more religiously motivated reading, there is a link between putting a conclusion to the story and doing justice to the deity you are worshpping. This may explain why Socrates says it is not *themis* (a more fitting translation here might be ‘just’) to leave a story unfinished.

In addition to these observations from religion, Plato might have further reasons for wanting to emphasise the completeness of *logoi*. That this is of paramount concern to him is reinforced by the statement he puts in the mouth of Socrates a few lines following our above passage: ‘surely we mustn’t leave the discussion incomplete’ (*atelē*, 505d6-7). Now, Socrates’ remarks

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40 I thank Nicholas Denyer for raising this suggestion to me in discussion.

41 While Dodds (1959: 332) notes the religious background to this phrase, he downplays the notion that it is blasphemous to leave stories incomplete; rather, it is simply ‘unlucky to leave a story unfinished’ (my emphasis). A more sustained defence of the alternative interpretation would require a much larger study of Plato’s views on religion. While I need not commit myself to either interpretation, it is not altogether implausible that Plato takes seriously here the connection between stories and religion to bolster why *logoi* in general should not be left incomplete.
on putting a ‘head’ to his *logos* with Callicles suggests that a speech is comprised of distinct *parts*, which parts may be conceived temporally as the beginning, middle, and end (*kephalēn*) of a *logos*. What is interesting to note here is that, in the *Parmenides*, these are the same parts which are said to be constitutive of a whole (*holon*). From this assertion, Parmenides also claims that the property of unity (*to hen*, which is not conceived any differently from *holon*) will be possessed of the same parts that constitute a whole: beginning, middle, and end (145a5-b1).\footnote{See p. 3 above. Compare Aristotle’s *Poetics* (1450b25), where a whole is said to comprise a beginning, middle, and end.}

Socrates’ concern in the completeness of speech may, therefore, contain *metaphysical* overtones in the *Gorgias*. On the one hand, for a speech to become a proper instantiation of its own kind it ought to be *one whole entity* rather than a mere jumble of disconnected words. To put the point differently, to become *holon* a speech would have to be comprised of the same parts that comprise a unity (*to hen*). On the other hand, these remarks on the metaphysics of *logos* have bearings on the proper *function* of a speech. If a *logos* is going to have a positive ethical impact for the soul by making it well-ordered, it would at the very least have to possess the property of unity.\footnote{Compare *Republic* 530e, where philosophers are said to guard against studies which lack completeness (*atelēs*). I am indebted to Sheffield (forthcoming) for the reference.} Tentatively, we might argue that completeness of speech is necessary for a *logos* to obtain its proper *taxis* and *kosmos*. Only then can a *logos* be in a position to impart *taxis* and *kosmos* onto the soul.

In the *Phaedrus*, a dialogue which complements the *Gorgias’* account of rhetoric in many ways, the importance of a complete speech is also given explicit reflection. Our first insight into what Socrates deems necessary for the construction of a well-ordered speech comes via his critique of Lysias’ speech on Love. Socrates bemoans that the parts of Lysias’ speech (*ta tou logou*) have been thrown together at random (*chudēn*, 264b3-4), which should already serve to remind us of the *Gorgias’* account of good craftsmanship. There, it was said that the parts of a whole must not be put together at random (*ouk eikē*). This implies that that a well-made speech requires a certain level of forethought (*promētheian*, cf. *Gorg.* 501b4) concerning why the parts should be placed where they are and how they are connected to the whole speech. While Socrates claims to have no knowledge on matters of speech-composition (*logographikēn*, *Phdr.* 264b7), despite the several positive claims he makes throughout the dialogue, he is nevertheless prepared to tell us this:
But surely you will admit at least this much: Every speech must be put together (συνεστάναι) like a living creature (ζῷον), with a body of its own; it must be neither without head nor without legs; and it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work (πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ, 264c2-5).  

The similarities between our previous Gorgias passage and this text are clear. Here, a logos is likened to a living creature, and the parts of a logos to those of an organic body. Socrates speaks of three parts in particular: the legs, the middle (presumably the torso), and the head, which parts surely correspond to the beginning, middle, and end of a speech. Significantly, by comparing a speech to an animal body, Socrates suggests that a logos is a complex system of interrelated parts which jointly constitute a whole (holon). On the other hand, Socrates’ emphasis on ‘fittingness’ or ‘appropriateness’ (preponta) suggests that the whole is bound together by the structured relations of its parts.

In the particular case of a logos, a speech whose parts are not appropriately fitted to one another would manifestly constitute a bad speech, or in the more extreme metaphysical sense, might not even generate a proper speech at all. For a speech to be put together (sunestanai) well, these parts must be both fitting to one another and to the whole (preponta allēlois kai τῷ ἰνατῷ ἰνατοῖ). This thought is bolstered by Aristotle in the Poetics (esp. 1450b32-1451a3), who speaks of well-constructed speeches (τοὺς συνεστῶτας εὖ μύθους) as having parts which are well-ordered with one another, which is then specified as having neither a beginning nor end which end arbitrarily. Interestingly, he then goes on to compare speeches with beautiful objects, animal bodies, and ‘anything else with a structure of parts’ (καὶ ἄπαν πρόγμα ὁ συνέστηθην ἐκ τινῶν). Such items must have parts which are both ordered well and possess an appropriate magnitude (μέγεθος, for without magnitude, whatever Aristotle means by this, such wholes ‘lose a sense of unity and wholeness, τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὅλον’). These remarks, therefore, build on the text above from the Phaedrus on the construction of a well-made logos.

The further claim I would like to make here is that the relation of parts within a speech can also have important ethical implications for the soul. If the aim of a speech is to inculcate a

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44 Translations of the Phaedrus come from Nehamas and Woodruff (1995).
45 This language can be compared with Gorgias 503e8, where the good craftsman was said to compel one thing to be both “fitting and suitable to another” (prepon kai harmottein) until the whole (to apan there) is fashioned into an ‘orderly and structured item’.
46 Compare Johansen (2004: 92): ‘proportionality of speech is expressed both in the relative size of the parts of the speech and in the order in which they come’.
47 Under the heading of ‘poetic unity’ in the Oxford Classical Dictionary, Richard Hunter notes the background in Sophistic discussions (Gorgias, Helen 18), pre-Socratic, and medical ideas on the importance of each part fulfilling its function for the unity of the whole. The analogy above from the Phaedrus, he suggests, shows that
certain *virtue* in the soul, one could argue that the speech has to be fashioned in a way that *imitates* that particular virtue. Here, a comparison with the role of music in Plato might prove to be helpful. Commenting on the power of musical *mimēsis*, Malcolm Schofield has spoken of the ‘audible structure of music’, arguing how the structure of a musical composition imitates the ‘structure of virtue itself’. Building on a thesis proposed by Andrew Barker, Schofield suggests that it is the *concordant* structure in music that can imitate courage or moderation in a person’s soul, which gets expressed in the way that a singer ‘sings and plays a particular melody’. Similarly with *logos*, one could say that the ‘structure of virtue’ is represented in the structuring or ordering of parts within a speech. If a certain audience is more in need of courage or moderation, then the speech which is presented to them ought to be fitted together with a view towards such virtues.

One further way of determining well-ordered relations within *logos* is by looking at Socrates’ dialectical practice with his interlocutors throughout the *Gorgias* and, especially with Callicles. By employing the method of the *elenchus*, Socrates hopes to harmonise Callicles’ conflicted propositions through question and answer. For while Callicles ‘says now this, now that’, philosophy ‘always says the same things’ (482a6-b1). By philosophising with Callicles through *logos*, then, Socrates can bring his interlocutor’s beliefs into appropriate relationships. Callicles’ own *logoi* will, in turn, reflect the internal harmony of his propositions. The image of Socrates’ own unified soul contrasted with an out of tune lyre (482b7-c3) serves as a striking illustration of the effect that such *logos* can have (in the next section, this text will be discussed in much greater detail when I come to a closer inspection of the well-ordered soul in the *Gorgias*). Socrates would rather maintain a consistent set of propositions than be *ἀσύμφωνος* with himself, which demonstrates why needs to order his own *logoi* well.

Callicles’ disordered soul, therefore, serves as the object (or the *pros ti*) to which Socrates’ *logoi* with him are set over. Moreover, Socrates hopes to positively influence Callicles with such *logoi*, thus improving his soul. One further way of understanding this causal relationship

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Plato is the ‘first surviving theorist of literary unity’ and that the analogy gives ‘the pursuit of unity an ethical function, as well as a simply artistic one’ (my emphasis).

50 Tentatively, one could take the example of a speech which aims to inculcate courage or bravery. It would not be right, in this case of these virtues, for a speech to have a fast-paced beginning and middle, but a lengthy and slow end. For that would create a sort of anti-climax in which the listeners might not be left with feelings of courage. In the converse to this, a speech whose parts are put together at random (recall once more the reference to the randomness of Lysias’ speech at 264b3-4) might also be ethically inopportune for the soul. This is because such a speech reflects randomness rather than *intentional design*, which could pass over onto the souls of listeners.
is by suggesting that virtue is exemplified within the very activity of speech itself. On this interpretation, active discussion between speakers holds causal efficacy for the ethical transformation of souls. One text which strongly bolsters this proposal may be found, ironically, at a point in the dialogue when Callicles considers abandoning the discussion:

This man won’t abide being helped (ὠφελούμενος) and himself undergoing (πάσχων) the very thing (αὐτὸς τοῦτο) our discussion (ὁ λόγος) is about—being tempered (κολαζόμενος, 505c3-4).

Socrates seems to assume that the *logos* being presented to Callicles will have the effect of converting his soul. This is encapsulated by the three passive verbal participles in the present tense, suggesting some sort of immediate process of ethical conversion during the activity of *logos*. By making ‘*ho logos*’ the grammatical subject of the sentence, moreover, Socrates implies that a *logos* can function as an active agent with autonomous force of its own. Indeed, Socrates had compared his earlier *logos* with Polus to a doctor (475d5-e1), presumably, because he thinks that his *logos* can have the same effect as a doctor by removing one evil from the soul (vice) and replacing it with a good thing (virtue). Finally, there is also something to be said about the particular topic of a *logos* itself. The present text comes in the context of a discussion about the virtue of temperance (*sōphrosunē*), which becomes enabled by tempering oneself (*kolazomenos*). To this end, Socrates seems to think that Callicles will be affected by the very same thing the discussion is about (*autos touto*). This suggests that discussion about a certain *x* has the power to manifest that same *x* in the soul, as if the process of ethical conversion occurs simultaneously with the nature of the discussion itself—in this case, Callicles becoming increasingly temperate by discussing temperance.

This constructive reading of *logos* may itself be tempered by certain legitimate objections. Commentators have often pointed to the fact that, despite Socrates’ efforts to the contrary, his efforts seem to fail systematically with Callicles. If this holds true, then to what extent can the soul really be affected (*paschei*) by *logos* and thereby come to engender a harmonious order?

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51 This thesis is argued for at length in Sheffield (forthcoming).
52 One might exempt Socrates from this criticism by pointing towards the fact that, both in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere, Socrates never declares himself to have the requisite knowledge to be a good rhetor. However, the *Gorgias* is unique in suggesting that Socrates is the only living example of a politician (521d8), where the art of politics is strongly associated with benefiting people’s souls by instilling *taxis* and *kosmos* in them. Since Socrates seems to present himself in this light, we would expect him to be responsible for improving Callicles’ soul. Further, Plato suggests that the man who intends to be a rhetor in the right way ought to be a just man and know about just things himself (460b-d, 508c1-3). Although Socrates repeatedly disavows having knowledge of such matters, it would be difficult not to concede that Socrates is presented as an exemplar of justice across the dialogues.
One immediate difficulty in answering this question is that the dialogue ends on an ambiguous note. Socrates exhorts Callicles to follow him in taking as their ‘leader’ (ἡγεμόνι) the logos presented before them, the one which will lead them to happiness by practicing ‘justice and the rest of virtue both in life and death’ (527e1-7). However, the reader is left wondering whether Callicles will follow Socrates in taking up this challenge. It is theoretically possible that Callicles does take up this challenge, and that he is guided by his logos with Socrates for the rest of his life. This suggests that becoming well-ordered through logos can be a process which takes place over the course of one’s whole life (bios), which is suggestive of diachronic well-orderedness and unity, in contrast to the immediate effects Socrates hopes his logoi will have with Callicles within the parameters of the Gorgias itself. Certainly, reflecting on a logos over time or continuing a certain logos will be of great benefit to a disordered soul (see fn. 53 below).

An alternative possibility is that Callicles is simply an extreme case in point, and that Socrates might be more successful with a different speaker. But then what is it about Callicles that makes him a poor candidate for Socratic logos? One issue is that Socratic logos usually involves two persons who are both willing to have their views disputed and challenged. Commenting on the fact that providing definitions in discussion is an arduous task, Socrates recalls how most of his interlocutors become increasingly irritated when things get difficult (457c4-e1). This almost reads as a foreshadowing of what is to later come in the dialogue, when Socrates tells Callicles that he is unwilling (ouk etheleis, 506b7) to participate in the discussion.55

In addition to willingness, the Gorgias is also suggestive of other ‘rules’ which are necessary for well-ordered logos to obtain, and which will be ethically beneficial for Callicles’ soul. For instance, Callicles’ admiration for pleonexia (508a7) also manifests in the way that he engages in discussion. To put the point differently, Callicles wants more than his fair share in discussion

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53 This is reminiscent of Socrates’ plea to his companions at the end of the Phaedo to live their lives ‘along the tracks’ set before them by their discussions with Socrates both at the time of his death and in the past (115b-c).
54 One reason why this may be the case is because Callicles is past the point of ethical conversion. Scott (1999: 15-36) suggests that this is why Plato turns his attention to the habituation of souls from youth in the Republic. Compare also Carone (2004: 91), who says ‘he [Callicles] might just be too old for these methods to succeed on him’. However, it is also important to note that in many of the early Socratic dialogues (such as the Euthyphro), Socrates converses with several different interlocutors many of whom do not go very far with the elenchus. This makes the case of Callicles even less unique (though the particular reasons why he fails may be different from why other interlocutors fail).
55 Despite Callicles’ genuine threat to leave the discussion (505c5-6), however, it must be conceded that he does remain in the discussion with Socrates as the main interlocutor until the end of the dialogue. Not only that but, were Callicles willing to stay in the discussion for a longer period of time, Plato makes ethical conversion a real possibility. This is bolstered by Socrates’ address at 513c7-d1, where he tells Callicles that ‘if we examine the same matters better, and often, you will be persuaded (peisthēsē)’. The emphasis on the future tense here creates a genuine sense of optimism for Callicles’ chances (or indeed any other interlocutor who continues philosophising with Socrates) of becoming virtuous.
too (see esp. 482c–486c for evidence of this). In the same way that pleonexia is the converse of values such as koinònia and philia in the case of cosmic order, then, we might say that pleonexia also neglects these values in speech. This suggests that productive discussion is parasitic on such binding values, which arguably become embodied in speech when two (or more speakers) have patience for each other’s views, care for each other’s souls, and all share in the discussion in a manner appropriate to the intellectual standing of each speaker.

Socrates’ varied experience in examining himself through questioning others gives him a legitimate right to assume the role of questioner, while interlocutors such as Gorgias who think they have knowledge should try to prove this under the test of the Socratic elenchus. On this reconstruction, a hierarchy of speakers may manifest in discussion, but this hierarchy would have to be respected in order for all parties to be benefited. In these ways, we can better appreciate how healthy relations between speakers during discussion can generate well-ordered logos, which by extension is also hoped to have an effect on the souls of individual speakers. This bolsters further why logos ought to be well-ordered.

In summary, Socrates’ comparison of the good rhetor with the good craftsman strongly implies that a logos is a complex whole of parts which requires a certain form (eidos ti) in order to fulfil its distinct function (the improvement of souls). This section has tried to suggest various ways in which the taxis and kosmos of logos may be conceived within the Gorgias, with particular attention to how the well-orderedness of logos can have a positive ethical impact on the soul. As I have tried to demonstrate, a logos can imitate the virtues of the soul (the external paradigms of the rhetor, being justice and moderation) either in its internal structure or within the very activity of discussion itself. The salient point to be taken from this section, then, is that logos has the power to reshape, restructure, and reorder the internal order of the psyche. Whether or not we see this happening in the case of Callicles, it is at least clear that this is the aim of the ideal speaker.

What might be thought still to be absent here is an account of the internal structure of the soul itself. Without this, it is difficult to fully ascertain the precise relationship between the function of a well-ordered logos and the consequence this can have on the soul. At the very least, Plato would seem to owe us an explanation of how the virtues of the soul become manifest in the soul’s own internal structure and ordering. As we shall be able to appreciate in the next

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56 One skill which Callicles does however possess in logos, which neither Gorgias nor Polus do because of fear of shame (487b1), is the ability to speak one’s mind ‘freely’ (παρρησία is listed as one of three rules necessary for an examination of the soul at 487a3. For direct evidence of Callicles speaking freely, see 491e7-8). In order for successful logos to obtain between speakers, and thereby to create a well-ordered logos, free speech between speakers seems to be a necessary pre-requisite.
section, this is complicated by the fact that the *Gorgias* falls short of offering the reader a thoroughly worked-out psychology. These are the concerns that will occupy us in the next section to this chapter.

1.3. The Well-Ordered Soul in the *Gorgias*

Underlying our analysis of well-ordered *logos* in the previous section is the thought that the soul must itself possess some internal complexity. Otherwise, Plato’s suggestion that the paradigms of the good rhetor are the ideal ‘orderings and structures’ of the soul at 504d1-e4 become obscured, since a *kosmos* manifestly denotes some complex order. The main objective of this section, therefore, is to try and work out exactly how the complexity and well-orderedness of the soul is conceived in the *Gorgias*. As it will be suggested, different models can equally accommodate for the ideal orderings and virtues of the soul (these models will be fleshed out in greater detail in what follows). On the one hand, this makes it increasingly problematic to determine just how the values of *taxis* and *kosmos* operate on the level of the soul. And yet, by suggesting that the soul becomes virtuous (and thus good) when it is well-ordered, Plato is nevertheless consistent in the *Gorgias* in espousing a normative framework for the well-orderedness of complex items.

In the latter half of the *Gorgias*, a crucial juxtaposition between the two main speakers of the dialogue—Socrates and Callicles—serves as an apt illustration of an ordered versus disordered soul. One way that this contrast is illustrated, I suggest, is through the notion of psychic concordance. Our first intimation of this psychic state comes when Socrates exposes Callicles for changing ‘this way and that’ and then saying ‘now this, now that’ (481d7-e1, 482a6-7).57 Callicles’ ever-changingness can be explained in the dialogue by his desire to pander to the whims of two different beloveds: the demos of Athens, and Demos the son of Pyrilampes. This leads Socrates to threaten Callicles with the claim that if he fails to refute the Socratic thesis that doing injustice is worse than suffering it, he will, remarkably, be ‘discordant’ (*diaphōnēsei*) with himself for the whole of his life (482b6). This arresting claim may be explained by the fact that Callicles holds a certain belief (namely, that committing injustice is better than suffering it) that he is not able to sufficiently maintain in argument,

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57 This may point towards a connection between one’s speech (*logos*) and one’s action (*praxis*). Consider to this end *Laches* 188d3-6, where Socrates says that the finest (*kallistē*) harmony is not the one on the lyre or any other instrument, but that which holds between one’s words and actions (*tois logos pros ta erga*); rendering one’s whole life harmonious. Consistency between one’s words and actions, then, may provide a further way of construing the well-orderedness of the soul in addition to the other models I shall explore in this section.
which for Socrates reveals internal inconsistency. This, in turn, functions as a microcosm of the way that Callicles’ beliefs constantly change with the demands of his two separate beloveds.

Socrates attempts to build some common ground with Callicles by suggesting that he too is affected by two distinct beloveds: Alcibiades the son of Cleinias and *philosophia* herself (481d3-4). The crucial difference in the case of Socrates is that he is able to maintain his psychic concordance despite the presence of these two beloveds. As he famously claims, philosophy ‘always says the same things’ (482a7-b1). Perhaps what Socrates has in mind here is that Alcibiades provides an opportunity for him to continue philosophising, or in the language of the *Symposium*, to receive and ‘beget wisdom’ in a soul of great philosophical potential. All the while, Socrates draws this inspiration from his primary beloved *philosophia*.58 This contrast between Socrates and Callicles becomes heightened, I now demonstrate, in one central text where the theme of psychic concordance is given explicit reflection:

> And yet I think, my excellent friend, that it is superior to have my lyre out of tune and discordant (ἀνάρμοστόν τε καὶ διαφωνεῖν), and any chorus I might equip, and for most men to disagree and contradict me, than for me—being just one man (ἐνα ὄντα)—to be discordant (ἀσύμφωνον) with myself and contradict myself (482b7-c3).

This text argues for Socrates’ psychic concordance (*sumphōnia*) on the basis of his self-discipline in maintaining a coherent position *despite* widespread opposition from the majority of his fellow Athenians (for further evidence of Socrates’ unique individuality when compared with others, see Gorg. 472b3-4; 474a5-8; 475e9). Though outnumbered by the Athenians, Socrates would rather be in agreement with himself than in disagreement with them, most of whom are likely discordant with *themselves* by ‘saying this, then that’ and changing ‘this way, then that’. Any contradiction that comes from Socrates is therefore more significant than any contradiction that might arise from others, even though he is only *one person* while they are many. Within the wider context of the *Gorgias*, we may also add, Socrates says that the sign of a good man is to consider whether he should 1) live in accordance with the political regime

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58 See Carone (2004: 82) for further comment here. Callicles, one might conjecture, could also be driven by the *same desire* by his two beloveds, namely, power or sexual gratification. It is theoretically possible for both the crowd and Demos of Pyrilampes to require exactly the same attitude from him. But we are faced with the stark reality that these two are separate influences which compel Callicles to behave in different ways. The whims of the crowd are always changing this way and that, forcing Callicles to perpetually change his narrative. Similarly, what Callicles’ beloved Demos wants in one moment might be different from the next. The inevitable consequence is that Callicles is led to adopt conflicting positions, thereby rendering his soul disordered.
of his *polis*, 2) be no different from his fellow citizens, or 3) follow a different path altogether (512e). By following the path carved for him by philosophy, Socrates has clearly gone for 3), which demands that he must be concordant with himself even though he is only *one person* compared with the many discordant souls around him.59

One way to explain Socrates’ psychic concordance, then, is by pointing towards the *internal consistency of his beliefs*. This generates our first model in this section, according to which a harmonious doxastic set is *indicative* of a well-ordered soul. Socrates would rather maintain a coherent set of beliefs than be contradicted by others, which is also manifested in the way that he converses with his fellow Athenians. This, in turn, has the upshot of shedding light on the proper function of *logos*, which was in fact the main focus of the previous section. On the assumption that *logoi* give voice to one’s *doxa*, and if the aim for Socrates is to have a soul with an internally consistent doxastic set, then we can see more clearly exactly why *logoi* themselves must be coherent (see esp. p. 29 above).

The notion of an internal harmony, I suggest, is further bolstered in our passage by the imagery of the *lyre*. In the same way that a lyre is constituted well when its various internal parts are attuned appropriately to one another, Socrates can attune his own soul by harmonising his *various beliefs* (what we might call the internal ‘aspects’ of his soul) and bringing them into one well-ordered whole. This passage, therefore, generates a significant normative claim. By comparing himself to a lyre or chorus, Socrates implies that he is composed of a plurality of aspects or parts which, being one single entity (a lyre, chorus, or a soul), *ought* to be brought into consonance. But could these observations also pave the way for certain *metaphysical* implications for the status of Socrates’ soul? I would like to suggest, tentatively, that the passage at least leaves this open as a possibility.

When does a lyre become *a* lyre? To answer this question, we may recall the connection between well-orderedness and functionality established in Section 1.1. A lyre, by definition, is an instrument which is put together in a certain way so as to utter harmonious melodies. This means that in order to become a certain *x*, that *x* must be such because of the *structured relation* of its parts. To this end, we may question whether a lyre that is out of tune or broken is a lyre at all, or whether it is just a conglomeration of disparate parts—the wood and string.

59 Note that this is not inconsistent with the view that the overall aim for Socrates is to have an internal harmony of *soul* and to live harmoniously with others. This latter, though, can only come about by creating a harmonious order *within* the city, which rhetoric may achieve by bringing both individual and collective souls into harmony. Woolf (2000: 13 fn. 19) puts the point beautifully when he writes: ‘[F]or Socrates one does not fully flourish as a human being unless one participates in a society in which one is valued and appreciated’.
On this interpretation, what makes a lyre (or indeed any other complex of parts) one whole entity is its unique structure, which enables the lyre to perform its unique function.60

If this is what Plato has in mind by invoking the image of a lyre, though the text is by no means committed to this interpretation, then the implication could be that Socrates’ own soul has become a unity on account of his harmonious doxastic set. In other words, the harmonious attunement of Socrates’ internal beliefs renders his soul hen. This, consequently, may invite a reassessment of the Greek in the final line of our passage, commonly translated ‘being just one man’ (ἐνα ὄντα). When Socrates puts the emphasis on his oneness, perhaps what he is referring to is the oneness or unity of his own soul.61 Not only is he one single individual apart from the crowd, and not only is any contradiction that comes from himself more important than any contradiction that comes from the majority; Socrates could also be heis in the metaphysical sense of the term having gathered together a consistent set of beliefs into a well-ordered whole.62

The example of Socrates here can be fruitfully contrasted with Callicles, whom Socrates says will be ‘discordant (diaphōnēsei) with himself for the whole of his life’ as a result of his inconsistent beliefs (482b6). While the text does not provide sufficient mileage to question the very identity of Callicles, it does at least flirt with the idea that an inconsistent set of beliefs can render one’s personality fragmented.63 On this construal, what constitutes a unified person is a well-ordered soul, which on the model entertained here boils down to a harmonious arrangement of one’s beliefs. Mutatis mutandis, when a soul is well-ordered, it is also one unified whole.

60 This is the mereological thesis of Harte (2002: esp. p. 132), who argues that structure is indispensable to the characterisation of a whole in Plato (see further fn. 5).

61 The only scholar to my knowledge to have recognised the underlying metaphysical import of these lines is Woolf (2000: 28 fn. 40), who translates hena onta as ‘being one’ and compares this to the ‘hena genomenon ek pollón’ claim at Republic 443d-e which strongly implies creating a unity from a pre-existing multiplicity (explored in Section 2.2 of the next chapter). More recently, Sheffield (forthcoming) also endorses the ‘being one’ translation of hena onta and suggests that ‘it is central to Socrates’ self-conception that he is one, and yet also a plural subject composed of distinct elements, like a lyre or a chorus, which may ‘harmonise’ or not’.

62 If a unified soul is one which is also able to perform its distinct function well, then what is the function of the soul, and why is its well-orderedness necessary for this? Plato does not provide an explicit statement of this in the Gorgias. However, in the good moral life, physic unity seems to be the precondition for ‘doing well’ (ἐν τε καὶ καλὸν πραττεῖν 507c3). In the Republic, this is specified as a specific dunamis of the soul. Perhaps the thought is that the soul cannot perform this dunamis unless it is well-ordered, since living well requires healthy relations in the soul.

63 Whether we take the idea that someone can become two persons seriously or not is a matter of contention. For we would still refer to the disunified person as that one single person, in the same way that we would refer to a corrupt city as that particular city. And yet, there is surely a normative claim at work here, namely, that the soul, properly speaking, ought to be one unified entity. When I come to discuss the unity of the city-soul in the next chapter, I return to these issues and suggest that individual unity needs to be earned (following McCabe 1994: 264), but that even corrupt souls may possess an unearned unity which grants them their unique individuality.
In addition to consistency of beliefs as being indicative of a well-ordered soul, the Gorgias is also suggestive of other models thereof. One further model is implicitly suggested through the notion of ruling (τὸ ἄρχειν). For Callicles, true justice for him consists in the ability of the superior man to exercise his rule by ‘having more’ (pleon echein) than the ruled (491c6-d3). After repeatedly questioning Callicles on what legitimates the ruler to have more, and on the content of what rulers should have more of, Socrates then turns to the question of self-ruling (ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχοντα). Pressed by Callicles on what he could mean, he responds in the following way:

Nothing complicated, but just as the many say—temperate, master of himself, ruling the pleasures and desires within him.

οὐδὲν ποικίλον ἀλλ᾽ ὡσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ, σώφρονα δὲντα καὶ ἐγκρατῆ αὐτὸν ἑαυτοῦ, τὸν ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν ἄρχοντα τὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ (491d10-e1).

In this passage, self-ruling equates to the ruling of pleasures and desires within the soul. That ‘the many’ are said to hold this view is somewhat curious, especially in light of the general critique of popular opinion across the dialogues. However, Plato urges us elsewhere to take the view of the many with caution, as when he tells us in the Phaedo that the many are said to be ‘temperate through a kind of intemperance’ (68e3). This means that most people suppress certain pleasures and desires just to be overtaken by others, which is counterproductive of true temperance. Nevertheless, the adequate suppression of desires and pleasures may not have been as foreign to Greek morality as we might think. The virtue of temperance (sōphrosunē) in the aforementioned sense may well have signalled a good and noble man in the mind of an ordinary Greek.64 What we are left questioning, however, is how Plato envisages genuine self-rule.

Socrates appears to shed light on this question by suggesting that true temperance rests in a certain ordering of pleasures and desires. This should not be surprising considering the way that goodness is generally conceived in the dialogue (Section 1.1), namely, with close reference to values such as taxis and kosmos. To this end, while Callicles thinks that a man should ‘let his appetites grow as large as possible and not restrain them … and to fill them with whatever he has an appetite for at any time’ (491e8-9), which reads as a further specification of his

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64 North (1966: 158) refers to sōphrosunē in the sense of ‘control of the appetites and passions’ as being common in the late fifth century BC, around the time of Plato’s own activity.
commitment to the notion of ‘to pleon echein’, Socrates submits that real virtue consists in the ability to know when to satisfy those desires that make a man better and when to avoid those that make us worse (503c6-d1). This prescription, I suggest, may well translate to creating an ordered relationship out of the appetites.

How is an ordered arrangement of pleasures or appetites meant to be conceived? For other than our 503c6-d1 text from the previous paragraph, the Gorgias does not appear to shed much light on this issue. Further clarification is needed, for instance, on the distinct function of individual pleasures. Socrates might reply that the function of pleasure is to fulfil certain needs human souls require qua embodied souls without contributing to the intellectual degradation of the soul. However, this is nowhere explicitly argued for in the text. One further puzzle that is generated by the relation between values such as taxis and kosmos and pleasure is the following. Does an individual pleasure itself need to be ordered, or is what is at stake the ordering of collective pleasures conceived as part of a well-ordered life? While Socrates advocates the ruling of pleasures and desires in the soul, he does not spell out exactly how that is to be secured.

Notwithstanding these more local issues, the notion that the well-ordered soul is when where pleasures and desires form a harmonious arrangement provides us with one further model for construing the well-orderedness of the soul in the Gorgias. And yet, the two models so far discussed may not be as incompatible as their separate treatment might suggest. For, it could be argued that a proper ordering of pleasures and desires comes about by first ordering one’s beliefs. By cultivating the right beliefs about what is worthy of pursuit, on this interpretation, the individual will also come to organise his own pleasures and desires so as to conform with those beliefs. If the ordering of one’s pleasures and desires simply amounts to ordering one’s beliefs, then, the second of these models may well collapse into the first. On either view, the upshot is that these models bolster an intellectualist account of the soul in the Gorgias, where there is just one rational principle and where desires do not have independent motivational force of their own.65

In contrast to the models discussed so far, however, could the notion of self-rule also open up an alternative model for the well-ordered soul? This sort of interpretation is motivated by revisiting the question of who, or what brings about the ordering of pleasures and desires within

65 On which, see Carone (2004: 88-90), who understands the order of the soul as the hierarchical structuring of one’s erōs towards different objects. For the converse (and highly contentious) interpretation that pleasures and desires themselves shape beliefs, see Brickhouse and Smith (2000: 22).
the soul. To this end, commentators have often objected that the concept of self-rule is better explained within a complex psychology which includes parts of the soul.

Louis-André Dorion, a proponent of this view, offers a re-evaluation of the phrase ‘master of himself’. As he argues, in the Charmides (esp. 168b-c) the notion of enkrateia was used in the reflexive sense to denote being stronger than oneself, which was subsequently criticised in the Republic for being somewhat ‘absurd’ (geloion, 430e6-431b7). For in the later dialogue, the notion of enkrateia is harnessed within a theory of parts of the soul, indicating that in every person there are better and worse elements with the former ruling over the latter. Conceivably, this might provide a better way of interpreting the reference to enkrateia in the Gorgias without having to admit the unwanted absurdities of the Charmides’ notion of self-ruling. Perhaps Dorion is right, then, to understand enkrateia in the light of a more complex psychology.66

Other than our passage on enkrateia above, however, is there enough evidence in the dialogue to support a complex psychology of this kind? One place commentators have often turned towards for such evidence is the famous myth of the ‘leaky jars’. Now, it is not my intention to offer a thorough examination of the myth, which Socrates admits is ‘somewhat strange’ (hupo ti atopa, 493c4).67 What is important for me to note here is that the myth may offer some important clues as to what conception of the soul Plato is working with in the Gorgias. For in the first half of the myth, it has been argued that Socrates does seem to adhere to a certain bi-partitioning of the soul through the much-vexed phrase ‘toute tês psuchês’ (literally, this ‘of’ the soul, 493a3-4, 493b1). Ostensibly, there is in the soul a ‘part’ in which the desires are located which is particularly susceptible to persuasion.68 In foolish men (anoētous), this part is compared to a leaky jar because of its insatiable desire for limitless pleasure. According to this view, the pleasures and desires familiar from our enkrateia passage become associated with a specific part of the soul.

66 Dorion (2012: 33-53). Compare Robinson (1967: 14), who suggests that the ‘[S]oul, it seems, is not a homogenous entity, but a complex of elements, the balance or imbalance of which will characterise it as morally good or bad’. We may add that the idea of a ruling and ruled element is taken by Aristotle always to be indicative of a composite unity, which we can readily apply to the soul: ‘because in every composite thing, where a plurality of parts, whether continuous or discrete, is combined to make a single common whole, there is always found a ruling and a subject factor, and this characteristic of living things is present in them as an outcome of the whole of nature’ (Pol. 1254a29-32).

67 There is already a vast literature on the myth, on which see especially Linforth (1944: 295-314) and Blank (1991: 22-36). I suspect that the principal elements of the myth complement the overall orientation of the dialogue. For instance, Socrates’ interest in the good and happy soul as constituting a well-ordered whole finds further support in the myth, as I shall demonstrate.

68 As Irwin (1995: 114) claims when he writes ‘[I]n the Gorgias […] Socrates recognizes two parts of the soul and says that one part consists of appetites that make it unruly and insatiable’. Compare Sedley (2014: 78), who admits that in the Gorgias ‘the soul is a complex entity which includes a distinct part containing potentially unruly desires’.
Just as this part of the soul is at risk of overflowing, it may also be well-regulated when the ruling part of the soul takes charge over it and allows only those pleasures which are good to flow in. One important function of the myth, therefore, is to highlight the undesirability of the uninitiated ‘leaky’ life, and to contrast it with the Socratic ethical ideal, which is now explicitly demarcated as the ‘well-ordered life’ (τον κοσμίον βιον, 494a4, 493c6). On this analysis of the myth, we may appreciate this psychic kosmos as being the rule of reason over the whole soul, so that the pleasures and desires are subjugated to this ruling principle.69 No doubt the pleasures and desires themselves form an ordered structure (as I have also argued); but their ordering might be secondary to the ordering of distinct parts within the soul—a rational part and a part where the desires and pleasures are located—if indeed Plato is espousing a bi-partite conception of the soul in the Gorgias.

While the myth is therefore suggestive of a complex psychology of parts, it must be conceded that the Gorgias ultimately remains ambivalent on this. Indeed, this notion of psychic complexity rests delicately on a certain interpretation of the phrase ‘touto tês psuchês’ which, ultimately, remains spurious. For this could simply refer to anything in the soul connected to pleasure and desire, without having to denote a specific location or part of the soul.70 For many things might belong to an individual without having to constitute a part of him or her. As I have also tried to demonstrate in this section, intellectualist models which do not require a strict partitioning of the soul can equally account for the well-orderedness of the soul. What we are left questioning, however, is what sort of model of psychic complexity makes the best sense of the taxis and kosmos of the soul, expressed in terms of the virtues of dikaiosunē and sōphrosunē.

On one interpretation, Plato would have a much richer account of the well-ordered soul if the soul itself had parts and was ordered when its potentially hostile parts are joined together into a well-ordered whole. This would have the advantage of both providing consistency with the notion of virtue in terms of taxis and kosmos (esp. 506d5-8, 506e2-4) and bolstering the account of craftsmanship (503d6-504a4) further, especially if the rational part of the soul is identified with the craftsman who creates out of his diverse elements a well-ordered whole.71

69 Commenting on the psychology of the Gorgias and the twin notions of kosmos and taxis from our central craftsman passage, Guthrie (1975: 300) writes ‘it does seem that we have here an earlier adumbration of the doctrine developed at length in the Republic that the soul is complex and righteousness consists in a harmonious order and working together of its parts’.
70 As Irwin’s (1995: 195) more deflationary formulation suggests, Socrates ‘at least seems to refer to a subset of desires in anyone’s soul’ (my emphasis).
71 While Plato’s craftsman model strongly suggests a rational principle, however, it is striking that Plato mentions neither phronēsis or sophia in the characterisation of the craftsman or in his discussion about the suppression of desires (see also pp. 18-19 above). This forms part of Sedley’s unique thesis that the Gorgias
Alternatively, one reason we might prefer a more intellectualist model for the soul is that it better clarifies how *logoi* function to engender *kosmos* and *taxis* in the soul. As we saw in the previous section, one way that Socrates sees his *logoi* working on Callicles’ soul is by creating a harmonious order out of his conflicting beliefs. Consonantly, Socrates’ *logoi* could help Callicles create a proper arrangement out of his pleasures and desires, so that he admits only those pleasures into his life which contribute towards virtue. Both of these intellectualist models (whether or not the second collapses into the first) provide a cogent model for the well-orderedness of the soul *wherever the beliefs or pleasures and desires of the soul derive from*.

In the end, the presence of these opposing models leaves the reader in the dark as to the exact specification of *taxis* and *kosmos* in the soul. This makes it unclear how the craftsman model espoused in the *Gorgias* is supposed to work on the level of the soul. As we shall see in the next chapter, it is only in subsequent works (especially the *Republic*) which promulgate a more detailed psychology where we can fairly determine exactly how the virtues of the soul are expressed in its ordering. That is to say, the ideal structures of the soul are *suggested*, but not explicitly *theorised*, in the *Gorgias*. Nevertheless, the notion that the soul is a complex of aspects or parts which exist as some one entity, and which *ought* to be well-ordered so that the soul can become genuinely good (normatively understood), remains an unblemished concern for Plato in the *Gorgias*.

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espouses a *structuralist* rather than *intellectualist* model of virtue (2014: 72-77). For Sedley, however, this model of *virtue* does not make a difference to the sort of *psychology* Plato offers in the dialogue.

72 I thank Frisbee Sheffield for raising this point to me in discussion.

73 While a thorough examination of the psychology of the *Phaedo* remains outside the scope of this chapter, it is worth remembering that the dialogue also espouses an *intellectualist* account of the soul. While Plato is not necessarily concerned in the *taxis* and *kosmos* of the soul conceived as a harmonious relation of distinct parts—for in the Affinity Argument, he seems to want the soul to be a *monoideitic* unity much like the Forms—the soul can still become good by ordering both its *beliefs* and its *pleasures and desires* (although the highest good of the soul unquestionably consists in theoretical contemplation of Forms). For instance, while the soul is not a *harmonia* in its essential nature (*contra* Simmias’ attunement theory), Socrates *does* refer to the virtue of the soul *ex hypothesi* as a state of attunement (*harmonian*, 93b8-c8). One way of understanding this *harmonia* without having to divide the soul into distinct parts is as a concordant arrangement of the soul’s *beliefs* (for an analysis of the role of *sumphōnia* in the *Phaedo*, see Bailey 2005: 95-115). Similarly, in one famous passage where Socrates compares virtue to the exchanging of pleasures and desires with a certain ‘coin’ (*69a6-c3*), Socrates suggests that the only coin worthy for exchanging such things is wisdom (*phronēsis*). The reference to wisdom here suggests some sort of *trafficking* of pleasures and desires rather than their complete elimination, which may involve bringing them into an appropriate *order* (on which, see Hackorth 1955: 193). This provides further support for how Plato can account for the well-orderedness of the soul in the absence of a complex psychology.

74 See North (1966: 163-4), who I think rightly suggests that ‘the precise meaning of *taxis* or *kosmos* in the soul is never explained in the *Gorgias*, nor are we told how the orderly arrangement is to be secured’. Schluderer (2016: 16) also puts it well by saying ‘it seems that the decision about exactly what sort of complexity this is should be suspended, since nowhere in the dialogue is a detailed psychological theory expounded, and different models can equally account for it’.
1.4. Ordered Kosmos and the Principle of ‘Geometrical Equality’

The previous two sections have explored how Plato conceives the well-orderedness of two complex structures in the Gorgias: logos and soul. Like other complex structures, these are subject to the same explanatory framework established through Plato’s craftsman model for the construction of well-ordered wholes (Section 1.1). I now close this chapter by demonstrating how the taxis and kosmos of the world is conceived in the dialogue, with particular attention to whether a connection between the kosmos and other complex structures can be made.

While the universe is just like other complex structures by being composed of a plurality of parts which exist as some one whole, the universe is fundamentally unlike other structures by possessing the value of kosmos to the highest degree that is possible for such items (hence why the universe is named kosmos, on which see fn. 3). A contemplation of the kosmos, therefore, serves at least two purposes within the dialogue. On the one hand, observing the order of the kosmos offers a large-scale model of the sort of work good craftsmen find themselves engaged in. By studying the universe, craftsmen will look to instantiate the same principles and rules in their own creations which bind the world into kosmos.

On the other hand, appreciating the well-orderedness of the heavens can also encourage observers to order themselves well. This adds an ethical dimension to our contemplation of the universe. As we shall now see, this is precisely what Socrates hopes to achieve with Callicles by urging him to reflect on the order of the universe after several failed attempts to persuade him that the ordered life of virtue is far more preferable to the life of akosmia. However, the way that Callicles’ contemplation of the heavens is supposed to aid his ethical conversion remains underdetermined, and will require some teasing out. Let me now quote the climax of Socrates’ dialectical exchange with Callicles:

Now the wise men say, Callicles, that heaven and earth, gods and men are bound by community and friendship and order and temperance and justice; and that is why they call this whole universe the ‘world-order’, not ‘disorder’ or ‘intemperance’, my friend. But I think you don’t heed them, though you’re wise yourself. You haven’t noticed that geometrical equality (ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ) has great power among gods and men; you think you should practice taking more (πλεονεξία), because you are heedless of geometry (507c6-508a8).
This text suggests several reasons why an observation of the ordered *kosmos* might benefit Callicles’ soul. In the first half of the text, Socrates mentions five values which hold together (*sunechein*) the *kosmos* into order. A detailed analysis of each value lies outside the scope of this chapter. However, the salient point here is that these are values which Callicles should look to instantiate both in his relations with others *and* within his own soul. Earlier in the dialogue, for instance, temperance and justice were said to be the virtues of the soul (504d1-e4). By seeing how these virtues operate on the level of the *kosmos*, therefore, Callicles can look to embody these virtues in his own soul. *Koinōnia* and *philia*, by contrast, seem to be values which manifest in relations *among* people. Immediately preceding the passage above, Socrates tells Callicles that the man who follows his appetites unchecked is incapable of both friendship and community with others (507e5-6). If the universe is held together by these values, however, that is even more reason for Callicles to eschew intemperance so that he can positively engage in *philia* and *koinōnia* with others (however these relations are expressed).

In the second half of the text, Socrates alludes to one key principle which seems to bind the *kosmos* into order *par excellence*: that is, geometrical equality’ or ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρική. Indeed, this principle is said to hold ‘great power (mega dunatai) among gods and men’. Since ‘gods and men’ were mentioned in close proximity to ‘heaven and earth’ at the beginning of the sequence, I take it that geometrical equality also holds great power over the entire cosmos, heaven and earth included. In order to appreciate fully both why geometrical equality is tantamount to the *kosmos* of the world, and why an appreciation of it has great potential for the conversion of Callicles’ soul, we must first get a clearer understanding of what is encompassed by the term. For this is the only mention of the sequence ‘ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρική’ not only in the *Gorgias* but, also in the whole Platonic corpus, and Socrates simply introduces geometrical equality without offering a definition as to what it is and what might be included in its scope.

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75 For a penetrating analysis of how these values inform the role of communication in the *Gorgias*, however, see Sheffield (forthcoming).
76 Annas (1999: 106) suggests that Socrates introduces geometry and proportion ‘in a not very serious tone’. However, I cannot see what might lead Annas to make this assertion. First, geometrical equality seems to be a key principle for the order of the heavens. Second, the theme of geometry and proportion seems to have significant ethical implications in the dialogue, for it functions as the converse of *pleonexia* which seemingly keeps Callicles’ soul in a state of disorder and corruption. An appreciation of geometry and proportion will, then, have great power in transforming Callicles’ own soul.
77 On such vagueness, see the comment in Irwin (1979: 226): ‘[T]he mere reference to geometrical equality leaves many unanswered questions’. The only other mention of geometry in the dialogue comes at 465b6-c3, where Socrates says that to avoid proceeding at length he will speak ‘as the geometers would’ (hōsper hoi geōmetrai), claiming ‘as cosmetics is to gymnastics, so sophistry is to legislation, and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice’ (465b6-c3). This, however, represents a simple mathematical formula without telling us what is entailed specifically by ‘geometrical equality’ (if indeed this is alluding to a precise specification of geometry).
On one interpretation, which we may call a deflationary reading, geometrical equality refers to something mathematically neutral such as the general study of geometry and proportions.\(^{78}\) This is supported by the last line of our passage, where Callicles is said to be heedless of ‘geometry’ (geōmetrias). Since Callicles is ignorant of geometry in general, he must first begin by studying the branch of geometry as a whole, which will include all of its various different specifications. On this reading, there is no need for Callicles to benefit from one particular branch of geometry. Rather, Socrates’ task is to convert Callicles to the path of philosophy, central to which is an appreciation of number and mathematics broadly construed.

In contrast to this deflationary reading, geometrical equality might plausibly denote a precise specification of geometrical studies. This is not to say, however, that Callicles should neglect other aspects which are fundamental to an understanding of geometry as a whole; only that there is a specific kind of geometry that will be most beneficial to his ethical conversion. One text that might help us figure out what is entailed by ‘geometrical equality’ in this more technical sense is Archytas’ Fragment 2, which outlines three distinct types of means in music. Consider now the following:

There are three means in music: one is the arithmetic, the second geometric and the third sub-contrary [, which they call “harmonic”]. The mean is arithmetic, whenever three terms are in proportion by exceeding one another in the following way: by that which the first exceeds the second, by this the second exceeds the third. And in this proportion (analogia) it turns out that the interval of the greater terms is smaller and that of the smaller greater. The mean is geometric, whenever they [the terms] are such that as the first is to the second so the second is to the third. Of these [terms] the greater and the lesser make an equal interval. The mean is subcontrary, which we call harmonic, whenever they [the terms] are such that, by which part of itself the first term exceeds the second, by this part of the third the middle exceeds the third. It turns out that, in this proportion, the interval of the greater terms is greater and that of the lesser is less (Fragment 2, transl. Huffman).

While a personal acquaintance between Archytas and Plato can only be a matter of conjecture, I do take it that Plato would have at the very least been aware of Archytas’ works.\(^{79}\) If that is the case, then perhaps what we have in Plato’s reference to ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ is an

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\(^{78}\) This interpretation has its origins in Burkert (1972: 78 fn. 56). Huffman (2005: 209) provides some evidence to the effect that ‘geometry thus comes close to being equivalent to mathematics as a whole’.

\(^{79}\) Burnyeat (2000: 15) quotes Republic 530d8 as evidence for such a connection, where he takes Plato to be referring not just to the Pythagoreans but, especially to Archytas.
intimation of the geometric mean, which is said to obtain ‘whenever they [the terms] are such that as the first is to the second so the second is to the third. Of these [terms] the greater and the lesser make an equal interval’. The simplest mathematical expression of such a mean is the ratio 2:4:8:16. Commenting on the fairness of such a progression among numbers which are clearly not equal, Morrison writes: ‘[I]n the geometric proportion the difference between one power and the next is similar, four is twice two, eight is twice four, and so on. Such an equitable system of differentials is regarded as a bond, because it does hold together the different powers in a numerical system or framework’.

Assuming for the moment that Plato is operating with geometrical equality in this sense, we must ask, why should this be most helpful to Callicles’ ethical conversion? An answer to this question can be attempted by first remembering that Callicles is an ardent devotee of pleonexia, which we can fairly demarcate as an excessive desire to ‘have more’ (pleon echein) than one is due. This manifests in Callicles’ overall views on the nature of human existence—from the way that he conceives the good life (ethics) through to his views on ruling and government (politics). Finally, although cosmology is not explored in any great degree of detail as a distinct theme in the Gorgias (apart the brief allusion to the ordered kosmos in our main passage), Callicles’ admiration for pleonexia may well also inform his views on the nature of the world. Geometrical equality, then, must be able to combat pleonexia in these various ways, which may also hold implications for the way that Plato conceives the well-orderedness of the city, the soul, and the ordered kosmos in the Gorgias.

Taking ethics first, one might think of the way that Socrates encourages the regulation of pleasures and desires within the soul rather than their unlimited flowing (see on p. 37 above). By selecting only those desires which will make us better (503c4-d3), it might be possible to arrange our pleasures into a sort of geometrical progression according to which we give more to some and less to others on the basis of their contribution to our psychological well-being. Geometrical equality, then, might provide one credible model for construing the ordering of pleasures and desires within the soul, which is not otherwise made clear in the dialogue (p. 38 above).

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81 In Book 10 of the Laws, the Athenian speaks of the corruption of the youth by experts who persuade them in their ‘poetry and prose’ that ‘anything one can get away with by force is absolutely justified’ (890a-b). For the Athenian, this leads the youth into atheism and having incorrect views on the nature of the universe. It is difficult not to see here a connection between the Athenian’s criticism of contemporary views among the youth and the sort of life Callicles advocates, which may well lead him into having corrupted views on the divine too (although that is not explicitly spelled out in the Gorgias).

82 Towards the end of the dialogue, the unjust soul is described as being ‘full of disproportion (ἀσυμμετρίας) and shamefulness’ (525a5). While Socrates mentions summetria fleetingly and without a proper definition, it is
Geometrical equality might also open up a viable model of political justice in the *Gorgias*.\(^8^3\) On the one hand, Callicles champions the unrestrained accruement of more than others (*to pleon echein*), without having a proper understanding of what a ruler ought to have more of and what legitimates political authority (see p. 37 above). On the other, Socrates opposes Callicles’ position with the view of ‘the many’ (*hoi polloi*), who openly espouse having an equal share (*to ison echein*, 483b4-c8).\(^8^4\) While Socrates endorses this sentiment of the many to force his interlocutor into conceding that *to ison echein* is not only just by rule but also by nature (488e7-498b1), contrary to Callicles’ original position, this should not be taken as an indication that the *Gorgias* adopts an Athenian conception of democratic justice.\(^8^5\) Rather, I take it that these two distinct positions (*to pleon echein* and *to ison echein*) pave the way for a third and preferable alternative of political justice, of which the *Gorgias* provides an implicit adumbration: ‘shouldn’t he rather have more than some and less than others?’ (490c4-5).\(^8^6\) As I will demonstrate in the final chapter of this thesis, this notion of distributive justice is explicitly associated with the *geometrical equality* in the *Laws* (757a1-c6). By referring to ἡ ἴσοτης ἡ γεωμετρική in our main passage above, perhaps Plato is carefully anticipating a certain theory of political justice which comes into full effect in subsequent dialogues.

\(^8^3\) The first two means mentioned in Archytas’ Fr. 2 received an explicit political application in 5\(^\text{th}\) and 4\(^\text{th}\) century writings, on which see the discussion of two types of equality in Harvey (1965: 101-146). The harmonic proportion seems to have only received a political counterpart in later pseudo-Archytan writings, which are themselves spurious. In the next chapter, however, I make the tentative suggestion that Plato could be engaging with the harmonic proportion in the *Republic* for his theory of the well-ordered city and soul.

\(^8^4\) This seems to correlate with a strict conception of Athenian democratic justice, according to which all people have an equal share in thing regardless of individual merit (this, incidentally, corresponds with Archytas’ ‘arithmetic’ mean). While we might question whether Plato is offering an exaggerated position of Athenian democracy here (for there were surely opportunities for social mobility in Athens, on which see Vlastos 1953: 355), the notion of *to ison echein* surely originates in the natural right of each citizen to be treated equally under the law and have equal rights to political participation in a democratic regime.

\(^8^5\) Pace Popper (2020: 111), who takes Socrates’ dialectical proof as evidence for his sympathies toward democracy. In this way, he tries to drive a wedge between the political views of Socrates and Plato, so that the more modest form of Socratic philosophy is compatible with democracy, while the Platonic ideal of a philosopher is not (p. 125). And yet, he does concede that the *Gorgias* ‘also exhibits some leanings which are strongly anti-democratic’ (p. 111), quoting ἡ ἴσοτης ἡ γεωμετρική from 508a6 as evidence (p. 88 fn. 9; cf. p. 92 fn. 20). While he sometimes takes ἡ ἴσοτης ἡ γεωμετρική to refer to ‘geometrical’ or ‘proportional’ equality in the technical sense, and links such evidence with the more fully worked out theory of *Laws* 757a-e, he does not take geometrical equality to be necessarily anti-equalitarian. I suggest a more nuanced interpretation: Plato is not equitarian in the democratic sense, but nevertheless remains faithful to the notion that justice consists in equality (on which, see Vlastos 1977: 18-19). However, such equality is given a unique specification—an equality for *unequals*, or ἡ ἴσοτης ἡ γεωμετρική.

\(^8^6\) As Vlastos (1973: 195 fn. 119) writes, ‘the point of referring to “geometrical equality” is to uphold ἴσοτης against Callicles’ open espousal of πλονεξία without thereby conceding Callicles’ assumption that if justice is ἴσοτης, it would justify equality between the masses and their betters. Thus “geometrical” would be used to break the democratic stranglehold on ἴσοτης.’
By reflecting on the nature of the universe, Socrates urges Callicles to consider his own ethical, psychological, and political views in light of a cosmology where geometrical equality prevails as a binding principle *par excellence* for the *kosmos* of the world. Again, Socrates does not explicitly spell out how a more specified version of geometrical equality would manifest in the ordering of the world, but in light of our analysis of ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ thus far, we can estimate some ways in which it may be expressed cosmologically.

Perhaps one way to express geometrical equality in the universe would be to put gods and men into a proper relation of ruling and subservience.87 In such a relation humans would recognise the superiority of the divine and would live their lives in faithfulness to this hierarchical relation, so that they respect the gods and attempt to please them by living rationally and piously. This sort of explanation can be compared with Eryximachus’ speech in the *Symposium*, where erōs is said to be concerned with the correct relation (*koinōnia*) between men and gods (188c2). In order to consort and be friends with the gods, humans must be able to appreciate that they are *stronger* than us (τοῖς κρέιττοσιν ἡμῶν θεοῖς, 188d9). Expressed geometrically, this means that we ‘give more’ to the gods by way of power, while we ‘take less’ in recognition of our inferiority to the divine.

Understood as a precise *specification* of proportionality, geometrical equality in the technical sense might therefore make better sense of some of the themes raised by the dialogue. As we have seen, an appreciation of geometrical equality might ethically help Callicles’ own corrupt soul, but we have also seen how geometrical equality can inform relations among souls too. While I have tried to connect different complex structures together through geometrical equality in the technical sense, it must nevertheless be said that this depends on a certain reading of the phrase ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ which is by no means conclusive. In line with the previous interpretation, it is perfectly plausible that ‘geometrical equality’ refers to something mathematically neutral (such as the general study of proportions), without having to assume that Plato understood this in a more technical way.88 On either interpretation, it seems fair to say that the notion of proportionality (however understood) seems to be doing much causal work for Plato in the *Gorgias* as a binding principle *par excellence* for the order of the whole world.

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87 Heaven and earth are also mentioned in this context, but for a more natural exemplification of geometrical equality for cosmology one would do better to look to the *Timaeus*, where Plato suggests that the four elementary bodies of the cosmos are held together by a geometrical progression which generates its *philia* (32b-c). I explore this passage in much greater detail in Chapter 3.

88 As Huffman (2005: 209) argues, ‘[i]t is doubtful … that Plato is using the expression “geometric equality” as a technical term equivalent to “geometric mean.”’
One final observation may bolster the importance of proportionality within the dialogue. In Section 1.1, it was suggested that *to agathon* functions in the dialogue as an end (*telos*) which is intimately connected with the notions of *taxis* and *kosmos*. What we may now appreciate is that (geometrical) proportionality is one significant way of approximating this good. In fact, David Sedley has argued for an interpretation of the Good as an ‘ideal of proportionality’, drawing on discussions from the Academy where a mathematical notion of the Good was apparently widely discussed.\(^89\) What is more, Sedley understands in the reference to ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ an intimation of the notion of the Good *qua* ideal of proportionality (however construed). Indeed, this connection between the Good and proportionality becomes explicit in the *Philebus* where proportionality (captured in the term of *summetria*) forms part of a threefold definition of *to agathon* (64e5-7).\(^90\) In this way, Plato once more seems to be gesturing in the *Gorgias* towards connections which become increasingly pronounced in later Platonic dialogues.\(^91\)

The way that our main cosmological passage in this section does this is indicative of a procedure which is characteristic of the *Gorgias* in general. Overall, this chapter has suggested various ways in which the *Gorgias* offers a productive theory of well-ordered wholes which paves the way for important developments to that theory in subsequent dialogues. This has all been underpinned by a substantive normative framework for well-ordered wholes where the goodness and well-functioning of a complex whole consists in its ordering, and where the notion of order is expressed through values such as *taxis* and *kosmos*.

However, we have also seen how several aspects of the dialogue complicate the precise application of this normative framework. As it was suggested in the previous section, the lack of a fully developed psychology makes it difficult to understand exactly how to conceptualise the *taxis* and *kosmos* of the soul. In the next chapter, Plato will look to remedy this by offering a precise conceptual model for the complexity and well-orderedness of the soul. Finally, while the *Gorgias* suggests a similarity between the *kosmos* and lower complex structures, and while this similarity can be understood better through the notion of geometrical proportionality taken in the technical sense, this sort of resemblance requires us to look deeper into the text than perhaps initially intended. As we shall see in Chapter 3, this is something that Plato will return

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\(^{89}\) Sedley (2007a: 269-270).

\(^{90}\) Sedley (2007a: 271). Compare Maguire (1947: 170), who sees in the reference to geometrical equality an intimation of *Phaedo* 99c5-6, where the Good is said to have causal power as that which truly binds and holds all things together.

\(^{91}\) For instance, Dodds (1959: 339-340) and Vlastos (1973: 195 and fn. 119) have argued that ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ provides an early adumbration of the more fully-worked out theory of geometrical equality that Plato explicitly applies to his cosmology and politics in his final works (especially the *Timaeus* and *Laws*).
to in his later dialogues by establishing a more explicit connection between the well-orderedness of complex structures such as the individual, the city, and the *kosmos* through the innovation of key metaphysical concepts.
Chapter II: A Precise Conceptual Model for Well-Ordered Wholes in The Republic

In the previous chapter, I showed how the theme of well-ordered wholes was articulated within the Gorgias. In that dialogue, Plato promulgates a craftsman model for well-ordered wholes according to which items that are composed of a plurality of aspects or parts, and which exist in some one whole, function better when they are well-ordered (in the Gorgias, the key terms for the well-orderedness of such items were taxis and kosmos). In this way, I argued, the dialogue also establishes a substantive normative framework for the construction of well-ordered wholes.

In this chapter, I now turn to an examination of two specific complex wholes which occupy Plato in the dialogue Republic: the well-ordered city, and the well-ordered soul. In the Gorgias, Plato’s craftsman model functioned as a response to the ethical effect of rhetoric on the soul, which also opened up a re-evaluation of the proper use (chreia) and form (eidos) of a logos. Our analysis of this model strongly implied that the soul was an internally complex item which, like other complex structures, becomes good when it acquires its unique taxis and kosmos (these being synonymous with psychic virtue, spelled out in terms of dikaiosunē and sōphrosunē). However, we also saw that the Gorgias left it unclear how to conceptualise both the internal complexity and well-orderedness of the soul. As it was demonstrated, different models could account for the taxis and kosmos of the soul, making it a challenge to understand exactly how the well-orderedness of the soul is supposed to be secured.

In the Republic, Plato looks to clarify such tensions by explicitly dividing the soul into distinct parts, thus helping us better understand how to conceptualise the well-orderedness of the soul. What is more, the introduction of a specific conceptual model which supplements this psychology offers us one intriguing way of envisaging both psychic and civic virtue. Put in simple terms, the conceptual model of a tripartite harmonia for the complex city and soul is designed to elucidate more clearly how a complex of parts (in this case, a city and a soul) can be joined together into a well-ordered whole.

In what follows, I will flesh out the main characteristics of this model, with particular attention to both the ethical and political implications that are raised by it. In this way, the conceptual model of a tripartite harmonia will be treated with critical examination. For, while the Republic provides a considerable advance on the Gorgias by offering a precise conceptual
model for the well-orderedness of complex structures, we must also ask how far we find this model satisfying as an explanation for the coherence of such items thereof.

On the one hand, it is clear that the model of a tripartite *harmonia* is designed with a view to mitigating any conflicts that might arise among the disparate parts of the city and soul. By joining distinct and potentially hostile parts into a relationship characterised by a *harmonia*, Plato hopes that the city and soul will resist *stasis* and become well-ordered wholes. Crucial to this is the notion that each part of the city-soul performs the kind of role that is appropriate to it, without meddling in the work of another part. On the other hand, the *harmonia* model implies a strict separation between the different parts of the city and soul, with a top-heavy emphasis on the *rational* element. In the *Gorgias*, Plato suggested that a rational principle is responsible for ruling over (*archein*) the pleasures and desires (491d10-e1), but in the *Republic*, this notion of ruling leads to an inflexible and dominant hierarchy. When the *harmonia* model is applied to the city and the soul and their political-ethical ramifications have come to light, we may question whether this model is genuinely conducive to creating the friendship and unity that Plato is aiming for in the dialogue.

The disproportionate emphasis given to the rational part of the city-soul in earlier books of the *Republic* becomes significantly intensified in Book 10 of the dialogue, resulting in a fundamentally pessimistic model of composition which I will demonstrate has its roots in the Affinity Argument of the *Phaedo*. The extreme case of Book 10 will, therefore, be shown to be indicative of a tension between different approaches which underline the *Republic* in general. Plato’s strong preoccupation with rationality at the expense of the other parts of the city and soul which constitute the whole, I will claim, casts a negative light on the coherence and well-orderedness of the city and soul.

Overall, this chapter argues that the main books of the *Republic* attempt to offer a cogent model for the well-orderedness of complex wholes such as the city and soul. However, this model becomes obscured by the austere context of Book 10 of the dialogue, which seems to take us away from the positive model of composition espoused in earlier sections of the *Republic*. Even if the *harmonia* model is Plato’s primary explanation for the well-orderedness of complex wholes in the *Republic*, however, I also hope to reveal certain shortcomings of that model which leave Plato with considerable room for improvement in subsequent works. As I will argue in the next chapter, the later dialogues offer scope for such improvement through the establishment of a new conceptual model for well-ordered wholes enabled by key metaphysical terms such as *summetria* and *to metrion*. 
2.1. A Normative Principle in the Republic

Before exploring in greater detail the model of a tripartite harmonia, I will begin this chapter by first showing that the Republic is consistent with the Gorgias in espousing what I have called a ‘substantive normative framework’ for well-ordered wholes. Central to this framework, we found, was the notion that complex structures ought to be well-ordered wholes, so that they can become the kind of entity they are and perform their distinct function well. The aim of this section is to clarify how this normative framework is expressed within the dialogue Republic.

Significantly, the Republic conceives of the city as a single entity composed of distinct parts whose relationship to one another is envisaged in terms of their relationship to other parts, and to the larger whole they jointly comprise. Unification is achieved when the different elements in the city are brought into koinōnia, which requires the correct relationship between parts and the whole and things being shared out in an appropriate manner (the following section will answer the question how these relations are conceived in the dialogue). In the same way that a single individual is composed of different elements—body and soul—and ordered into a single system (eis mian suntaxin), so too the complex city needs to be fashioned into a single system (suntaxis) where ruler and ruled stand in their proper relationships (462c9). Notice that this analysis is strongly reminiscent of our central ‘craftsman’ passage from the previous section (503d5-504a5), where Plato referred to a body, a soul, and other inorganic objects as examples of complex structures which ought to have their parts well-ordered so that they can achieve their distinct good and function well.

This general reconstruction leads Plato to make a striking assertion on the role of unity. In specifically political terms, Plato assumes that a city, properly speaking, can only really be a city if it is one unified entity. Widespread evidence for this sort of claim can be found in several places in the Republic. In Book 4 of the dialogue, for instance, Socrates says that it would be foolish to call (proseipein) anything other than the ideal city a city (422e3-5). A city, by definition, is one single whole comprised of a plurality of parts. This is precisely how the ideal city is conceived, since the distinct classes comprising Kallipolis all combine to form one

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92 In this section, I shall be building on a central theme in Miller’s (2007: 333) discussion of the Republic, who writes: ‘[I]n the context of the Republic as a whole, the theme of the normative status of complex unity has deep and manifold resonance’ (my emphasis). Compare Burnyeat (2000: 56) on the role of guardianship in the Republic: ‘[F]or Plato, the important task of ruling is not day-to-day decision making, but establishing and maintaining good structures, both institutional and psychological’.

93 The Statesman makes a similar point at 293e3, where it is claimed that anything other than the law-abiding city cannot be said to be a ‘genuine’ city or real constitution at all (ou gnēsias oud’ ontōs ouzas lekteon).
constitution. In cities where there is hostile opposition between different classes, by contrast, two or more cities seem to be generated rather than one single city.\footnote{The specific example of hostile opposition between classes Plato provides here, and usually provides elsewhere in the Republic, is that between the rich and poor. In the discussion of different types of constitutions and the individuals resembling each constitution in Book 8 of the dialogue, Plato has Socrates say of the oligarchic city that ‘a city of this kind is bound to be two cities, not one: a city of the poor and a city of the rich’ (551d5-7).} While this claim is made in certain contexts, however, in others Plato undeniably has Socrates call (proseipein) less than ideal cities a polis all the same. For example, while Books 8 and 9 outline the features of different forms of ‘degraded’ cities, Socrates still refers to these as poleis in his treatment of them. This should already serve as a significant clue of the way that unity is being conceived in the dialogue, not as something necessarily absolute, but as something which we ought to aspire towards (normatively understood).

Not only does this general principle of unity have implications for the city, however. Depending on the constitution of the city, the citizens themselves may either become one or many. It is only through specification of functions (explored in greater detail in the next section) that ‘each may become a single person rather than many people, and in this way the entire city may grow to be a single city rather than many cities’ (423d4-6). There seems to be a certain isomorphism, then, between 1) the unity of the city and 2) the unity of each individual comprising the city. In other words, both city and soul are subject to the same structural analysis (see esp. 435b-c). This isomorphic claim, however, must be separated from the more controversial question of the explanatory direction of city and soul. While the text above puts the emphasis on the unity of individuals first and then the unity of the city, in other contexts the city seems to take illustrative priority, as for instance when Socrates suggests that in order to see justice in the individual one would do well to first look at it in the city (esp. 368d-e).\footnote{Thus Ferrari (2003: 59) says that if we see the city-soul analogy as a simile, then ‘it would be one in which the comparison could swing in either direction’. Instead, he suggests that we construe it as a ‘proportional metaphor’. For instance: ‘reason stands to the soul as rulers stand to the city, so that if reason is the ruler of the soul, then rulers are the reason of the city’. This, Ferrari suggests, is what Aristotle would call a ‘proportional metaphor’, that is, one which ‘implies or states a ratio’ (p. 61).}

For Plato, this emphasis on the need of the city to become one unified entity has bearings on the question of what makes a city good.\footnote{Schofield (2006: 215) devotes considerable space to fleshing this out, which he calls Plato’s ‘Unity Principle’ (UP), namely, that ‘[T]he greatest good for a city is what unifies it’. My general analysis, however, will differ from his both in scope and interpretation.} In order to further appreciate the reasons why this may be the case, let me first quote one important text where the connection between the goodness and unity of the city is made explicit:
Well, then, can we think of any greater evil for a city than what tears it apart and turns it into many cities instead of one (πολλάς ἀντὶ μιᾶς)? Or any greater good than what unites it (συνδῇ) and makes it one (ποιῇ μίαν)? (462a9-b2).97

The first thing to note here is that the unity of the city is put in terms of whether it is many (polla) or one (mia). By using the language of numerical number to denote the unity of the state, Socrates seems to put the emphasis on whether there is one single city or several cities (conceived numerically) co-existing within the same geopolitical landscape. This may point to a general contrast with the way that the unity of persons is conceived within the dialogue. In a text alluded to above which speaks of the unity of the city in close conjunction with the unity of individuals (423d4-6), the unified city is referred to as one (μία) in the numerical sense while the individual is referred to as one in what we might call a more metaphysical sense (εἷς). Recall, on one interpretation of the Gorgias, Socrates’ claim that he is one (hena onta, 482c2) in the same way that a lyre is one when its various internal parts have been harmoniously attuned (the point is not whether there are two or more lyres, but whether the instrument which purports to be a lyre is in fact a lyre or not). By referring to the unity of the individual in this metaphysical way rather than in a numerical way, Plato seems to imply that a disunified person is still one single individual rather than a plurality of individuals, even though his various internal parts may still be at war with each other. As it will be argued further below (esp. p. 58 and fn. 103), this seems to suggest that human souls already possess some sort of quasi-unity on account of being a soul rather than being something humanly constructed such as a city.

These remarks on the unity of a city and the unity of a soul form the basis of one major criticism of the Republic for Aristotle. Commenting on the passage quoted above, Aristotle objects that ‘the more of a unity (μία) a city-state becomes, the less of a city-state it will be’ (Politics 2.2 1261a15-16). For Aristotle, this is because a city-state is naturally composed of a multitude (πλῆθος) of persons, so for a city to flourish its plurality must be respected. By trying to make the city-state as unified as possible, however, Plato will in fact turn the city into a human being, eventually leading to the destruction of the whole city. Thus, Aristotle understands Plato to be imposing the kind of unity required of a person (or a soul) onto a city.

As we have seen, Plato may have a way of assuaging this criticism by pointing to the conceptual distinction between terms used to indicate the unity of a person and the unity of a city, which seems to have gone unnoticed by Aristotle. Whether or not this would make any

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97 Translations of the Republic come from Griffith (2000) unless otherwise stated, with minor emendations.
difference to Aristotle’s critique, however, Plato still speaks of the unity of the city and the unity of the soul in close conjunction with one another, and his exhortation for the city to become as unified as possible might well be taken to signify a kind of extreme unity which is uncharacteristic of what a city really is in its essential nature.98

Notwithstanding Aristotle’s criticism, it is clear that Plato still assumes that the good of the city rests in its unity (however strict that unity may be). In fact, goodness is actually conferred on what brings about (συνόη) unity itself, which will turn out to consist in a combination of specification of functions and the general acceptance of this. Even though the emphasis is put on what unifies the city in this text, however, by implication the end of this action is unity itself, which stands as the ultimate good for the city. Since this is a principal assumption of the Republic, we would do well to try and work out the reasons why Plato is committed to unity as the good for the city. The general thought seems to be that the presence of several cities co-existing within the same locus would be detrimental to citizens inhabiting that space. For fragmentation and pluralism occur whenever factions between the different individuals or classes arise within the city. Rather, the aim of the city should be to make all the citizens get along well rather than be at war with one another, for that will bind the whole (each and every class alike) into one (mian).

Plato provides further justification for why unity is the good for the city from as early as the opening book of the dialogue. In the initial discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus on the subject of justice, Socrates tries to show his interlocutor the tangible consequences of injustice in the city:

If it’s the function of injustice to produce hatred (μίσος) wherever it goes, then when it makes its appearance among free men and slaves, won’t it make them hate (μισεῖν) one another, and quarrel (στασιάζειν) with one another, and be incapable of any joint enterprise? (καὶ ἀδυνάτους εἶναι κοινῇ μετ’ ἀλλήλῳ πράττειν, my emphasis, 351d9-e1).

According to this passage, the fragmentation that arises in a disunified city is a result of injustice, whose consequence is to produce hatred among citizens bringing them into war with each other. Note the tangible consequence of this injustice in the last sentence: by causing hatred, injustice renders the citizens incapable of any joint enterprise. Significantly, what this suggests is that the city cannot function as it ought to—through co-operation and harmonious

98 This objection has its roots in Metaphysics Δ 1011b8-9, where Aristotle claims that the unity (ἐν) of an object is relative to the kind of thing that object is. I thank James Warren for bringing my attention to this material.
interaction among citizens—if injustice prevails. While Socrates does not use the language of ‘many cities’ or ‘one city’ here, we should have no doubt that the hatred caused by injustice also makes the city disunified. The salient point is that a city, which is composed of potentially hostile opposites, will also function and operate well when those various parts are brought into unity through justice. This emphasis on functionality, then, provides a strong independent reason for why unity is good for the city, and why the city is good when it is unified. 99

Socrates goes on to suggest at 351e9-352a3 that injustice also has the sort of power to make ‘whatever it appears in … incapable of concerted action’ (ἀδύνατον αὐτῷ ποιεῖν πράττειν μεθ᾽ αὑτοῦ), whether that thing be ‘a city, nation, army, or anything else’ (ἔτε πόλει τινί ἔτε γένει ἔτε εἴτε στρατοπέδῳ ἔτε ἄλλῳ ὀπῶν). Observe again the claim that injustice, which creates factions (stasis) amongst a plurality of individuals, inhibits action. Clearly, what is at stake is the functionality of different elements within the whole. When the different parts of a city, nation, or army become conflicted by injustice, rendering that thing many but not one, joint co-operation is impossible. Further, none of the individual constituent parts of such wholes can properly perform its own activity.

Now, one might object to this claim by pointing to the obvious fact that unjust persons are still capable of cooperating towards some goal. For instance, everyday experience tells us that a pirate crew or a team of jewel thieves, while certainly having unjust motivations, can still work together in unison to pull off a robbery. 100 While this remains a genuine challenge to Plato, he still seems to assume that the injustice of such individuals would eventually lead to their demise. In order to work out why, it may be helpful to consider not just the actions which lead to a certain goal but, also, the ultimate aim or goal of an unjust crew of thieves. When specified in this way, we can appreciate better why Plato may think injustice leads to stasis. For the end goal of robbery is the accumulation of riches, but we could question to what extent a gang of thieves will be able to adequately accrue and share out such riches given their perverse telic desire of taking more than is rightfully theirs. In this way, a gang of robbers may well possess some instrumental justice on the path towards their goal, but since that goal is itself unjust, Plato might be right to think that they will eventually run into problems. 101

99 It is thus no surprise that in what follows some of the passages I quote above, Plato goes on to give us the so-called ‘function’ (ergon) argument (352dff.). Both in Book 1 of the Republic and in the Hippias Major’s account of the beneficial, Plato seems to strongly adopt a functional account of goodness, on which see Hatzistavrou (2011: 370). What my analysis adds is that the good of a complex item—which can be understood as the ability to perform its function well—can only be secured when it becomes unified.

100 I thank James Warren for raising this objection to me in the viva voce examination to this PhD thesis. Korsgaard (2008: 108) suggests that unjust persons are incapable of acting as a unit because they fail to follow ‘normative procedures’ which are necessary for ‘collective deliberative action’. Such procedures are determined rationally and empirically produce good quality results, which justifies why they should be followed.
In a further striking passage, Socrates goes on to suggest that injustice has a similar effect not only among a community of souls but, also, within individual souls themselves. Consider to this end the following:

And when it [injustice] is present in an individual, too, I suspect, it will produce all these effects which it is its nature to bring about. In the first place, it will make him incapable of action, because he is at odds with himself, and in disagreement with himself (πρῶτον μὲν ἀδύνατον ἀυτὸν πράττειν ποιήσει στασιώζοντα καὶ οὐχ ὀμονοοῦντα αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ). And in the second place it will make him an enemy both of himself and of those who are just, won’t it (352a5-8)?

As this passage intimates, the explanation for why an unjust individual is incapable of action is because he is ‘at odds with himself, and in disagreement with himself’. This raises several questions which shall occupy us for the rest of this section. First, what sort of implications does this have for the unity of an unjust individual (a question already glossed above)? This, in turn, opens up the interesting but highly vexed issue of what it means to be an individual person in Plato, and what conditions must be present for agency. Second, what is the connection between the unity of an unjust individual and that individual being ‘incapable of action’? Is Plato suggesting that unless an individual or any other collection of individuals (such as a city, army, or ‘anything else’) is perfectly unified, then that individual is no longer an individual and cannot perform actions? A closer look at the evidence will reveal that Plato was in fact acutely aware of these problems, and arguably held a more moderate position on the unity of individuals than his remarks in the passage quoted above might be taken to suggest.

Intuitively, it seems plausible to assume that while a conflicted individual performs an action less than optimally, that same individual is still capable of action nonetheless. In order to appreciate this, let me first sketch the preceding context to where this claim is made. Having put the point to Thrasymachus that the unjust individual will also be an enemy to the gods—

and are sufficient for joint action. Without this, Korsgaard suggests, injustice will eventually lead to civil war and make people completely incapable of action. Unjust persons can still perform some actions, but they will ultimately fail to do as a unit since they have no normative standard to follow for collaborative action.

102 This is the main topic of discussion in McCabe (1994: 264), who suggests that for Plato ‘being a unified person is not something I can take for granted […] but rather something to which I aspire. Being a unified person is for Plato an honorific title’ (my italics). As I suggest below, this interpretation fits better with the normative claim that we ought to become one, where ‘becoming one’ is best seen as an achievement and an approximation towards the best life. However, this does not preclude souls which have not sufficiently ‘become one’ from having some ‘basic’ unity (see the next footnote). All souls have three parts which interact with each other whether or not they are put in their proper hierarchical relation, which just is the normative aspiration to ‘become one’.
since they are among the just—Socrates then summarises the main points from the whole argument:

I can see that the just are clearly wiser and better and more capable of action (σοφώτεροι καὶ ἀμείνους καὶ δυνατότεροι πράττειν), whereas the unjust are incapable of co-operating in anything (οὐδὲ πράττειν μετ᾽ ἄλληλων); though when we speak of them as being unjust, and yet at times carrying out some vigorous joint action, we’re not getting it exactly right. If they were completely unjust they couldn’t have resisted attacking one another. So there was obviously some justice among them (τις αὐτοῖς δικαιοσύνη), which stopped them acting unjustly against each other and their advertises at the same time, and which enabled them to achieve what they did achieve. They set about their unjust actions in a state of semi-injustice (ἡμιμόχθηροι ὄντες), since those who are wholly wicked (τελέως παμπόνηροι), and completely (τελέως) unjust, are completely incapable of doing anything (πράττειν ἄδυνατοι, 352b6-352c8).

The first unique feature of this passage is the introduction of comparative language in the opening sentence. Socrates says that the just are ‘wiser and better and more capable of action’, which seems to allow for the possibility that individuals who are not just can still perform actions. While he still wants to maintain that the unjust are ‘incapable of co-operating in anything’, Socrates now importantly adds that when we speak of the unjust as performing some joint action, we are not getting things exactly right. For there must have been some justice among them which enabled the unjust to achieve whatever they achieved. It seems, then, that even those we would ordinarily deem unjust are still endowed with some justice, or to put it in terms of Plato’s unity principle, some unity, which allows them to perform actions. There may still be those who are ‘wholly wicked, and completely unjust’, and thus ‘completely incapable of doing anything’, but this may just be hyperbole on the part of Plato.

By speaking in terms of degrees of justice (and thus unity), then, it seems to me that Plato is not espousing such an intransigent thesis on the unity of individuals (or collection of individuals). This need not undermine Plato’s exhortation for us to acquire unity. We should

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103 This chimes well with what Brown (2012: 53-75) suggests is an ‘unearned unity’ for all tripartite souls in the Republic, even those who have led unjust lives. I entertain that thesis here.
104 At least in the Republic. As readers of the Philebus will be aware of the tension whether anything other than a good mixture or the ‘right combination’ (ορθῆ κοινωνία, 25e7) of opposites can really be a mixture. Reading back from the Republic, however, it could be that the remarks on unity in the Philebus are also normative, though the point is made with even stronger emphasis there.
aspire to live as justly as possible, rendering our lives increasingly unified and good. This would make us better and more capable of action, but even if we fall short of that ideal, action is still possible nonetheless even with the derivative unity we may possess. As Socrates later puts the point, the discussion concerns ‘how we ought (chrē) to live our lives’ (352d5-6). Time and again, he speaks of the high standards that are required for living up to this ethical ideal. So, when he comes to discuss happiness or the good for individuals in Book 5 of the dialogue, it is most suggestive that he fleshes out the argument in the following way:

So, when we asked what sort of thing justice was by itself, and looked for the perfectly just man (ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον), if he existed, and asked what he would be like if he did exist, what we were looking for was a model (παραδείγματος). The same with injustice and the unjust man. We wanted to look at the perfectly just and unjust man, to see how we thought they were placed in respect of happiness (εὐδαιμονίας) and its opposite, and to be compelled to agree, for ourselves as well, that whoever came closest (ὁμοιότατος) to these examples would have a share of happiness which came closest to theirs (τὴν ἐκείνης μοῖραν ὁμοιοτάτην). It wasn’t our aim to demonstrate that these things were possible (472c4-d2).

It may be that Plato still thought that only the perfectly just man or city is one, and that the imperfectly just man or city can only be many. But that should not leave the latter without any unity, however imperfect, making them incapable of action. This is made more lucid with the example of happiness. As we can see from the text above, Socrates held the perfectly just (ton teleōs dikaion) and unified man up as a model for assimilation, in comparison with which we can be shown to be more or less happy. The implication, therefore, is not that the defectively just man has no share of justice, unity, or happiness. For when Socrates also discusses the individual counterpart to different constitutions in Book 9 of the dialogue, he explicitly asks which of the five kingly, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic and tyrannical men ought to be placed first, second, and so on with respect to happiness (eudaimonia, 580a9-b4). Notice that this once more creates some sort of grading of psychic unity and happiness. The thought seems to be that the more something (whether that be an individual or a city) is unified, the better it is able to function and thus flourish.

By stressing that only the perfectly just man is unified and happy in the truest sense, Plato’s remarks on the unity of an individual or city are best understood as being normative. And the

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105 As Brown (2012: 71 fn. 40) notes with respect to the city, Plato ‘might be worried that attributing goodness to every community undercuts the goodness that he wants to predicate of only the best communities.’ This again lends credence to the interpretation of the normative dimension of unity I am advocating here.
precise way in which this normativity is being construed is what I have been trying to investigate in this section. We ought to come as close as possible (homoiotatēn) to the perfectly just man, or there is always the real danger of becoming irreversibly fragmented and miserable.\textsuperscript{106} If this is deemed plausible and we are being urged to approximate to the model of the perfectly unified and just man (or city in the case of politics) as far as that is possible, then there seems to be some scope for a less perfect unity which still allows us to perform some functions and live relatively happy lives. While Plato may still want us to aspire towards this perfect unity in the \textit{Republic}, even if we fall short of that ideal, making our souls as unified as possible is still a worthwhile endeavour.

2.2. Justice, The \textit{Harmonia} Model, and Hierarchy in the \textit{Republic}

Now that we have a better grasp of Plato’s application of the unity principle, it is time to examine how Plato thinks the unity of complex structures is secured in the first place. For this, we must take a closer look at a principle already intimated in the previous section which sets out the \textit{conditions} for unity in the city and soul. We have seen that that injustice creates factions within a plurality of persons and within the individual human being. Justice, when applied to the city or human being, must therefore be that which \textit{enables} these different elements to become one well-ordered whole. In the \textit{Republic}, this is expressed through the conceptual model of a \textit{harmonia} of better and worse elements.

In their discussion of the hypothetical city in Book 2 of the dialogue, Socrates and Thrasymachus agree that one key defining feature of a city is that no one of its individual citizens can be entirely self-sufficient. In order that the several different needs of individuals among the city are met, things must be shared out according to a certain plan. At this point, Socrates only makes the very general claim that ‘one individual is by nature quite unlike another individual, that they differ in their natural aptitudes, and that different people are equipped to perform different tasks’ (370a7-b2). What he is of course advocating for is specification of functions. That is, the carpenter is by nature best equipped to do carpentry.

\textsuperscript{106} Brown (2012: 71 fn. 40) suggests an implied contrast here between the unity of souls and the unity of cities (on which, see my distinction of terms denoting their respective unity on p. 54 above). According to this view, even an unjust soul to a degree still possesses unity by virtue of being a soul, whereas Plato might think that ‘the causal relations among human beings, unlike those among the parts of the soul, do not underwrite unearned unity’. Notice that this would come with the consequence of making the city-soul analogy less exact. Brown (2012: 71-2) provides some further reasons why a divided city is not a genuine city at all, while still maintaining that a divided soul is a unity.
work, the house-builder is by nature best equipped for house-building, and so forth with the other crafts (cf. 374b-d). Returning to this principle later in Book 4, Socrates says:

The principle we laid down right at the start [presumably in Book 2], when we first founded our city, as something we must stick to throughout—this, I think, or some form of it, is justice. What we laid down—and often repeated, if you remember—was that each individual should follow, out of the occupations available in the city, the one for which his natural character best fitted him (433a1-6).

As the intervening books of the dialogue make clear, the founders of the ideal city ought to stick to this ‘principle of justice’ (hereafter PJ) for a few reasons. First, it is this principle which facilitates the unity of the city. At 423d, specification of functions was said to make each ‘a single person rather than many people’, making the entire city ‘a single city rather than many cities’. With each sticking to the function they are by nature best suited to, the city becomes one unified whole. This is because meddling with another person’s distinctive function would disrupt the order of the city, making it increasingly pluralised rather than unified. Consonantly, specification of functions will also increase the koinōnia of the city, which is one of the principal aims of philosopher-rulers. Specification of functions is therefore important to the extent that products are both well-made and able to be shared out with one another for the benefit of all (see esp. 371b).

PJ also opens up important implications for psychic unity. Now, Plato’s method for proving that the soul is internally complex with the so-called ‘argument from opposites’ (436a8-b1), which he needs if his remarks on psychic harmony are going to be made intelligible, has been a matter of much scholarly debate.107 A thorough examination of that argument lies outside the scope of this chapter. Here, we may note that Plato infers from the fact that there are three elements in the city that there are also three elements in the soul (the isomorphic claim), from which he then asks whether we do different things (such as feeling anger or feeling pleasure) with the same part of ourselves, or with different parts. In Book 4 of the dialogue, Plato has Socrates flesh out how PJ operates within this complex schema of a tripartite soul. Justice in the city, it turns out, was only a useful ‘image’ for illustrating justice in the individual soul:

107 That Plato thinks there is a better way of explaining psychic complexity is clear by his suggestion at 435d3 that there is a ‘longer and harder’ way. For one interpretation of what this ‘longer way’ could be, see Miller (2007: 310-344).
But the truth is that although justice apparently was something of this kind [specification of functions in the city at large and each doing their own, which was said to be a useful ‘image’ of justice at 443c4-5], it was not concerned with the external performance of a man’s own function, but with the internal performance of it, with his true self and his own true function, forbidding each of the elements within him (ἐν αὑτῷ) to perform tasks other than its own, and not allowing the classes of thing within his soul to interfere with one another. He has, quite literally, to put his own (αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ) house in order, being himself his own (ἐαυτῷ) ruler, mentor and friend, and tuning (συναρμόσαντα) the three elements just like three points in a musical scale—top, bottom, and intermediate. And if there turn out to be any intervening elements, he must combine (συνδήσαντα) them all, and emerge as a perfect unity of diverse elements (ἐνα γενόμενον ἐκ πολλῶν), self-disciplined and in harmony (σώφρονα καὶ ἡρμοσμένον) with himself (443c9-ε2).

In this central passage the psychology of a tripartite soul, PJ, and the conceptual model of harmonia coalesce. PJ necessitates that each part of the soul does its own proper work, isolating certain functions to the reasoning, spirited, and appetitive parts of the soul respectively. Any deviation from this norm would, again, make the soul a disjointed plurality rather than a unity. That is because when PJ prevails in the tripartite soul each part remains in its proper place without encroaching on any other: ‘and not allowing the classes of thing within his soul to interfere with one another’. The musical model of harmonia, correspondingly, helpfully makes clear this ordering process. Manifestly, a musical harmonia denotes a relation of parts where each point in a musical scale—top, bottom, intermediate in the example here—is tuned properly and put in its proper place. Similarly in the human soul, the individual must tune the plurality of her soul-parts into a well-ordered system with each part in its rightful place, thereby ‘becoming one from many’ (hena genomenon ek pollōn). Notice, finally, that this model suggests a unity which arises out of harmonious relations of various distinct parts within the soul, which takes us away from Aristotle’s criticism of the Republic (Politics 2.2 1261a15-16 and p. 54 above) as imposing a unity of strict identity (even though this criticism was levelled against the unity of the city there).

In our craftsman passage from the Gorgias, Plato spoke of craftsmen making the parts of their material ‘harmonise’ (harmottein) with one another (503e8). In the case of the soul, 

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108 As Burnyeat (2000: 74) notes: ‘[T]he reason why concord, attunement, and proportion are valued in Plato’s Republic is that they create and sustain unity’. As for the correct hierarchy of these values, Burnyeat also writes ‘unity is the highest value, which explains the more specific values of concord and attunement’.

109 As we shall see in Section 2.4, however, this clashes with the conception of unity offered in Book 10 of the dialogue, where Plato rather emphasises the exclusionary unity of the rational soul alone and not the unity of the whole composite soul. In Section 2.3, I will show how this exclusionary unity has its roots in the way that the Republic conceives of the unity of the city.
however, the dialogue left it unclear exactly what aspects or parts of the soul are being harmonised. This passage from the Republic makes better sense of the notion of harmonia, since it is now the three parts of the soul which stand in need of tuning. The way to do this, in accordance with PJ, is by putting each part in its proper place, separating and isolating the distinct functions within the soul from one another. By offering a precise conceptual model for the soul, then, Plato clarifies exactly how the soul becomes well-ordered in the Republic.

Before fleshing out some of the more ethical and political ramifications of PJ and the conceptual model of harmonia that follows from it, let me first take some time to note one further point of comparison and contrast with the Gorgias. Similarly to that dialogue, the Republic also characterises those persons responsible for creating well-ordered structures as craftsmen. At 500d6-8, for instance, Socrates describes the philosopher as a craftsman of self-discipline (sōphrosunē) and justice (dikaiosunē) as well as the whole of popular virtue, which we will remember were also said to be the ideal virtues of the soul in the Gorgias.110

In the Republic, the model of craftsmanship Plato frequently adopts is that of a painter. Socrates says that a city can never be happy unless it is designed by artists (ζωγράφοι) who use a ‘divine pattern’ (τῷ θείῳ παραδείγματι).111 After being asked by Adeimantus exactly how this process works, Socrates says that philosophers will take the city as a clean slate, starting fresh with the character of human beings. Having done that, they would then draw the outline of the constitution in the following way:

And then I imagine they would work away, with frequent glances (ἀποβλέποιεν) back and forth. First towards what is in its nature just, noble, self-disciplined, and everything of that sort, and then again towards what they are putting into making, mingling and blending institutions (συμμειγνύντες τε καὶ κεραννύντες ἐκ τῶν ἑπτηδευμάτων) to produce the true human likeness

110 In the wider context of this text (500c2-d8), these virtues become associated with the Forms, which are said to be properly arranged (τεταγμένα), are always the same (ταὐτὰ ἀεὶ ἔχοντα), and neither wrong one another nor are wronged by one another (οὔτ᾽ ἀδικοῦντα οὔτ᾽ ἀδικούμενα ὑπ᾽ ἀλλήλων). This characterisation of the Forms is strikingly reminiscent of Plato’s account of PJ. In fact, this is the first time that PJ in terms of ‘each doing its own’ is being applied to relations other than those that inhere in the composite city or soul. However, it is difficult to think of transcendent unities committing an ‘injustice’ against one another, for which reason I take Plato’s characterisation of the Forms in this passage as an ad hoc appropriation for his political-ethical purposes in the Republic.

111 See 500d10-e4. We might find this characterisation surprising since Plato is especially critical of painting in his critique of mimēsis in Book 10 of the Republic (597b-599d). According to the ontology he espouses there, there is 1) the original model (created by god?), 2) a copy of that model, and 3) a copy of a copy of the model. Plato locates the painter with imitation 3rd removes from the original, which he associates with truth. He also suggests that the imitator on this third level sets out to intentionally deceive. All this does not bode well for the painter, despite Plato’s own youthful interest in painting as (perhaps spuriously) reported by Diogenes Laertius (3.5).
based on that model which Homer called, when it appeared among mankind, a “godlike form and likeness” (501b1-7).

The notion of a craftsman ‘looking towards’ an external object as he gives shape to his creation is once more reminiscent of the Gorgias, where Plato compared the good rhetor to a craftsman who looks towards a certain model (apoblepōn pros tι) as he composes his product (503d6-504a1). However, it was open to question there exactly what the craftsman looks towards (though it was suggested that this could be the ideal function of his product), and what the identity of the craftsman was. Here, the craftsman is explicitly associated with intelligence or rationality, since only philosopher-rulers are privileged with the knowledge of how to use their model to create a well-ordered whole. Moreover, the model of the ideal craftsman in the Republic falls out of Plato’s more developed metaphysics: the craftsman will take the appropriate Form as his model. He will look towards these objects ‘with frequent glances back and forth’, just as a painter looks towards his model and again towards his work.

In the same way that a painting could not be possible without an original model, the Forms seem to provide necessary conditions for the existence of physical particulars by giving the craftsman of Forms (the philosopher) vital information for production. In fact, in an earlier passage intended to justify philosophical rule, Plato compares the philosopher to a painter who makes constant comparisons with what is ‘most real’ (the ‘pattern’ or ‘model’ in his soul), establishing rules about beauty, justice and goodness in everyday life, or defending and preserving existing rules (484c6-d3). In both passages, what the philosopher brings into existence are institutions (epitēdeumata) or rules (nomima) which are crucial to the harmony of the city.112 These items, in all probability, are what Plato thinks will have a positive effect in ordering and restructuring individual souls. The picture we therefore end up with is threefold: 1) Forms provide certain rules for the ordering of 2) laws and institutions, which in turn engender orderly structures in 3) the souls of the citizens of Kallipolis.

What still seems to be missing here is an explanation of how Forms manifest in the creation of physical particulars. Consider to this end the language of philosophers ‘mixing’ and ‘blending’ (summeignuntes te kai kerannuntes) institutions so as to produce a ‘true likeness’ of their model. In ancient theories of medicine, this language was used to indicate different bodily

112 As for the Form of Justice, which is arguably one of the most important objects of contemplation for a philosopher and for the order of the city-soul, recall the central definiens of PJ as ‘doing one’s own’. In light of this, one could suggest that the Form of Justice manifests in the tripartite composite soul as the harmonious relation of distinct parts where each is put in their proper place and does not encroach on the function of another part.
states. Health (life) was generally understood as a balance of the internal parts of the body when they are mixed and blended appropriately, while disease (death) was thought to be a disruption of this state. Returning to our passage with this in mind, perhaps the thought is that Forms provide the general information for the ordering of institutions and laws, and that philosophers mix and blend such data according to certain ratios so as to instantiate a particular Form. This interpretation is not, however, made an explicit feature of the text, and the relationship between a Form and its expression in production still requires further explanation.

This digression from our 443c9-e2 passage suggests that philosopher-craftsmen are responsible for engendering well-orderedness in the city and soul. However, we will also remember from our earlier passage on harmonia above that Plato spoke of the individual tuning himself, which suggests that the ordering of the soul ought to be self-determined rather than externally imposed. This is reflected in the self-reflexive pronouns permeating the passage, which are initially governed by mē easanta at 443d1: the individual must not allow the parts within his soul to interfere with one another but, must put his own house (auton hautou) in order, being his own (heautōi) ‘mentor, ruler, and friend’. In other words, the intended active agent in this passage is the individual his or herself.

While it is well and good for Plato to want each and every individual to be a ruler of oneself, Plato’s assimilation of the philosopher with a craftsman of other souls suggests that most people will lack the ability to adequately rule over and thus order themselves well. This tension raises the further question of what sort of control philosophers are assumed to exert over other

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113 This point is borne out well in Simmias’ harmonia theory in the Phaedo, where Plato writes of the krasis of hot, cold, wet and dry in the body that gives rise to the existence of the soul. Not just any blending, however, but only whenever they are blended with each other in due proportion (kalōs kai metriōs krathē pros allēla, 86c1-2).
114 Miller (2007: 341) suggests that ‘ratios can be understood as the expression of Forms’, an interpretation which I shall argue for when I come to discuss the relationship between Forms and well-ordered wholes in the later dialogues. This ‘mathematical’ explanation would also seem to make further sense of the guardians’ education and ascent to the Form of the Good. According to the ontology of the dialogue, mathematical objects or ‘intermediates’—the objects of ‘thought’ (dianoia)—function as good instantiations of Forms. If so, then the philosopher’s study of subjects such as geometry and harmonic theory may aid him in giving complex objects a proper mathematical structure, thereby rendering them well-ordered wholes, instantiating in them the right ratio which is in turn a manifestation of a Form. For an analysis of intermediates as ‘perfect figures and normative proportions’ that ‘perfectly instantiate Forms’, with which I am sympathetic, see further Miller (2007: 340).
115 The onus here and elsewhere in the Republic, then, is on which part should rule over the whole soul, and which parts should be ruled. Compare 444d3-6, where Plato has Socrates say that health is a matter of arranging the elements in the body so that they control one another, and are controlled by one another, in accordance with nature. He then explicitly connects health or a lack thereof with justice and injustice and the notion of ruling and being ruled. While Socrates uses the example of the body as an analogue for the soul, in the case of the soul I take the idea that parts ought to ‘control one another’ not to mean that the rational soul is somehow ruled by some other part of the soul. Recall that in the discussion of self-control (430e-431a) Socrates raises the absurdity that one thing cannot both control and be controlled. This leads him to the conclusion that there are better and worse elements in the soul, and that the better governs the worse. The analogue of health in the body thus better reads as reinforcing the general point that in a complex of elements there should be a proper relation of ruling and being ruled.
souls (or the rational soul over the irrational parts), which also has implications for the kind of hierarchy that is suggested by the *harmonia* model.

One of the key passages where these tensions become underlined comes towards the end of Book 9, where Socrates asks how most people’s souls can be ruled in the best possible way:

So, if we want someone like this [someone whose reasoning element is weak in their soul] to be under the same kind of rule as the best person, we say he must be the slave (δοῦλον) of the best person, don’t we, since the best person has the divine ruler within him? And when we say he needs to be ruled, it’s not that we mean any harm to the slave (δοῦλον), which was Thrasymachus’ view of being ruled. It’s just that it’s better for everyone to be ruled by what is divine and wise. Ideally, he will have his own divine and wise element within himself (οἰκεῖον ἐχόντος ἐν αὑτῷ), but failing that it will be imposed on him from outside (ἐξωθεν ἐφεστῶτος), so that as far as possible we may all be alike, and all friends (ὁμοίοι ὁμοῦ καὶ φίλοι), since we are all under the guidance of the same commander (590c8-d6).

What we will find immediately arresting here is the suggestion that the ignorant person should be a ‘slave’ (doulon) to the best. This is a striking sentiment for Socrates to express, for in Book 5 of the dialogue the unity of the city was strongly predicated on the fact that the majority of citizens are not referred to as slaves (463a-d). For instance, Socrates observes that in other cities the ruled refer to their rulers as ‘masters’ (despota), while the rulers refer to their subjects as ‘slaves’ (doulous). In the ideal city, by contrast, the ruled refer to their rulers as ‘saviours and defenders’ (sōtēras te kai epikourous), while rulers shall refer to their subjects as ‘paymasters and providers’ (misthodotas te kai tropeas). By suggesting that ignorant souls should *enslave* themselves to the wise and knowledgeable in our Book 9 text, then, Socrates seems to be turning his back on a key condition set out earlier in the dialogue which is key to the unity of the whole city.

Interestingly, friendship (philia) is also said to be the product of our slavery passage above. The inferior element in the city assumes a position of slavery towards the best ‘so that we may all become alike and friends’ (homoioi kai philoi). This ensures that all the parts of the city-soul can be joined into a relation characterised by *harmonia*, according to which each is put in their proper hierarchical relation, so that each only performs its distinct function. But to what extent is the *harmonia* model, and the implications posed by it, conducive to creating genuine

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116 For a closer analysis of terms of address between rulers and ruled in the community, see Sheffield (2021: 92-3). Kamtekar (2004: 158, 161) links these terms with the unforceful *persuasion* of the producers to the ruled, a point which I emphasise below.
friendship (and thus a well-ordered whole)? For it is hard to see how a model which implies such a strict hierarchy and divide between parts can create *philia*\(^\text{117}\). In this way, the slavery passage above once more raises tensions with the way that a well-ordered whole is being conceived in the *Republic*.

One reason for adopting a more charitable position towards this passage, however, is that Socrates immediately distances his conception of the master-slave analogy from Thrasyphron’s earlier corrupted notion of slavery. In Book 1 of the dialogue, Thrasyphron had compared the ‘true rulers’ of the city to shepherds or herdsmen, not interested in the good of their cattle, but solely in the benefit they might receive from ruling over them (343b-c). This has led some commentators to take a more deflationary reading of the passage altogether. On this interpretation, Socrates is not actually suggesting that the general run of people will be slaves to the best but, rather, he is using the language of slavery as a *dialectical move* against Thrasyphron so that he may understand better the proper relationship which should obtain between ruler and ruled.\(^\text{118}\) While this interpretation holds gravitas, Socrates is still quite happy to refer to the majority as *slaves*—though not in the Thrasyphronian sense—and the *harmonia* model seems to at least imply some form of quasi-slavery.

Even if we take the reference to slavery here to be sincere, it is still important to get clear on the precise model of slavery Socrates is advocating for. For unlike Thrasyphron, Socrates’ account of slavery in Book 9 implies that that the best rules over the weaker not with a view to their benefit but, with a *paternalistic* eye on the general improvement of society as a whole.\(^\text{119}\) As he had earlier said in Book 4, the aim of the ideal city is ‘not to make any class outstandingly happy (εὐδαιμονέστατοί εἰσιν), but to make the *whole* city (ὅλη ἡ πόλις) as happy as possible’ (420b4-8), which already involves denying philosopher-rulers the privileges that rulers conventionally enjoy in other cities. The language of *holon* is worth pausing on here, for it strongly suggests that Socrates’ interest is with the happiness of all citizens conceived as a totality of distinct *parts* comprising one integrated *whole*. Looking towards Book 9 in light of this passage, then, Socrates’ account of natural slavery cannot be one where the interests of the subjugated are *entirely* neglected. By making the lower parts of the city ‘slaves’ to the best,

\(^{117}\) As El-Murr (2014: 26) writes, ‘it is difficult to see how guards and producers will enjoy mutual friendship’. This is important, since as we shall see in the next chapter, the later dialogues present a radically different notion of friendship which is contingent on a more moderate hierarchy between parts. For now, see *Laws* 757a1, where Plato cites the famous maxim that ‘slaves and masters can never be friends’.

\(^{118}\) Thus Schofield (2006: 274) suggests that in the slavery passage Socrates is producing ‘considerations drawn from ordinary experience that might appeal to the ordinary person’ to show that we should not be ruled by greed but rather by the true human within. In this way, the majority ‘certainly do not have the status of slaves’.

\(^{119}\) For the distinction between totalitarianism and paternalism in the *Republic*, see Taylor (1986: 4-29).
Plato assumes that each part will be able to fulfil its own unique desire in a healthy, rational way (esp. 586e-587a), so that the city as a whole can flourish and be happy. This is because the rational element, qua rational, knows what is best for each part and for the whole. The question we must nevertheless return to is whether this justifies the dominant and inflexible hierarchy that is generated by the slavery model, and whether this is truly compatible with the well-orderedness of a multiplicity of citizens.

One further point in Socrates’ defence is that this ‘enslavement’ to a rational principle will be forced on those individuals incapable of adequately ruling themselves.\(^{120}\) In fact, it is crucial to the Republic’s account of natural slavery that the intervention of a rational agent ‘from outside’, as it were, occurs for the most part with consent. The fact that the ruled are able to willingly submit to the authority of a higher principle suggests that they possess some awareness that their subjugation is in their best interests. As we shall now see, this agreement (homonoia) on who should rule and who should be ruled is spelled out in terms of the virtue of sōphrosunē. In Book 4 of the dialogue, this virtue is said to be available to everyone in the city when each and every class has a correct intuition of proper ruling relations:

It extends literally throughout the entire city, over the whole scale, causing those who are weakest—in intelligence, if you like, or in strength, or again in numbers, wealth or anything like that—together with those who are strongest and those in between, to sing in unison. So we would be quite justified in saying that self-discipline (σωφροσύνην) is this agreement (ὁμόνοια) about which of them should rule—a natural harmony (συμφωνίαν) of worse and better, both in the city and in each individual (432a2-9).

\(^{120}\) Pace Samaras (2002: 33), who suggests that ‘Plato is explicit on the question of force’, citing the widespread marshal imagery in the Republic which demonstrates the control over the desiderative part of the soul. In the event that the producer class does not recognise that their subjugation to philosophers is in their best interests, force is ‘unreservedly sanctioned by Plato’ (p. 34). But Plato’s ideal city is one where the producers are persuaded of rule by philosophers and so force, for the most part, should not be necessary. Samaras also picks up on the language of ‘but failing that [having an internal reason] it will be imposed on him from without’, which he thinks refers to a friendship ‘created by force’ (p. 34). But again, I find this unconvincing. The Greek for ‘imposed’ here is ἐφίστημι, which need not imply force or violence. It can, and most often does, simply mean ‘set over’ or ‘set above’. This reading also fits the context of the passage better. Plato is not saying that an external principle will be imposed upon the producers (or lower parts of the soul) with force, only that if the individual is not able to sufficiently rule his or herself then their ruling element will come from outside. However, as Annas (1981: 117) notes, Plato often ‘goes out of his way to stress the unruly and unorganised nature of the productive class’s aims, and the need for them to be controlled by the aims of the Guardians’, which ‘leaves us unsure how much force and coercion will be required even in the state run on ideal lines’. Perhaps, then, the safest option is for the guardians to use, occasionally and where appropriate, a moderate amount of force to keep the desires of the producers at bay. 519e3-4 thus reads: ‘using persuasion and compulsion to bring the citizens into harmony’.
In this passage, agreement (*homonoia*) on who should rule and who should be ruled is the key to instantiating the virtue of self-discipline in the city. Whilst the common people may not be equipped with the knowledge of the *principles* which justify the rule of philosophers over the entire city, the very fact that they willingly submit and accept that the rule of philosophers is for the best of them reveals some dim cognition of the good.\(^{121}\) Since self-discipline is cashed out in this way, the many may be able to have a share of such virtue as long as they retain at least a *true belief* of who should rule and be ruled.\(^{122}\)

Notice, moreover, that this relation of ruled to rulers is spelled out in terms of a ‘musical harmony’ (*sumphōnia* here rather than *harmonia*). On this musical metaphor, disparate parts which naturally vary are conjoined together through agreement (*homonoia*) on proper ruling relations to form one harmonious melody. This agreement on who should rule, which we have also seen is inextricably linked with the virtue of self-discipline, is said to result in the ‘friendship and harmony’ between the one ruling element and the two ruled elements in the city, without any rebellion (442c10–d1). In this way, *philia* is also assumed to obtain between the different parts comprising the whole.

These remarks have gone some way in trying to help us understand the mechanics of the *harmonia* model, and how Plato thinks this model holds the key to the well-orderedness of complex structures such as the city and soul in the *Republic*. As we have seen, the way that Plato articulates this model is through a strict hierarchical relation of better and worse elements. According to my reconstruction, the *Republic* concedes that even the lower parts are important parts of the whole which must be given their proper attention. Since spirit and desire cannot be entirely eliminated, the solution Plato provides to mitigating conflict between the different city-soul parts is to suggest that these non-rational aspects be *informed* by rationality itself, so that our true selves—reason—can give proper meaning and expression to each. One salient

\(^{121}\) How will the producers be able to do this when their *logistikon* is not dominant in their souls (we have seen their reason must come from ‘outside’), and we are told so little of their education? Schofield (2006: 272 and fn. 50) interestingly suggests some ‘secondary ways’ in which the ideal education of the city might extend down to the producers (compare Burnyeat 1999: 261). For instance, censorship of the arts in Book 2 seems to apply to the whole city: ‘purging the city means more simplicity in the economic class as well as in the lifestyle of the guards’ (my emphasis).

\(^{122}\) Samaras (2002: 29) thinks that this would create a ‘deep-seated ambiguity’ for the theory of the *Republic*. On the one hand, if the producers are entirely irrational then there can be no possibility of harmony in the state, since ‘harmony depends on concord between the citizens and consent on the issue of who is to rule’ (p. 31). If, on the other hand, the producers *do* have some share of reason and rationality, then ‘Plato’s political argument is seriously undermined. Since rationality and virtue […] constitute the fundamental attributes which legitimise political authority in the *Republic*, the greater the extent to which the Producers ‘possess’ those attributes, the greater the potentiality of their laying a claim to power becomes’ (p. 31). But I have tried to suggest a third possibility where the producers possess a *limited* rationality according to which they dimly recognise that the rule of philosophers is good for them.
consequence of this is that the lower aspects of the city-soul subjugate themselves to the rule of a superior authority. But Plato thinks he can avail himself of any criticisms here by suggesting that the majority, or the lower parts of the soul, will recognise that this hierarchical relation is ultimately in their best interests (the paternalist claim). Unity in the whole, then, crucially hinges on this awareness.123

Inevitably, underlying Plato’s *harmonia* model is a strong emphasis on reason and rationality as the agent in the city-soul responsible for the good ordering of the whole. Since, according to the *harmonia* model, reason is the only part of the composite whose natural function is to rule (441e4-6), Plato stresses the essential separation and difference of each soul part from the other. In this Plato is bound by the demands of PJ, which necessitates that each sticks to its own unique and distinct function. It is not distinctive of spirit or desire in and of themselves to be natural rulers of the whole city-soul. And yet, Plato also suggests that disenfranchising the lower parts of the city-soul from having any real autonomy (and their acceptance of this) is the key to engendering friendship and alikeness (*homoioi kai philoi*) in the city and among the different parts of the soul. Given the dominant hierarchy that obtains from this, I argue, it is not entirely clear how the relations which arise out of that hierarchy will bind the whole city-soul into a genuine unity (*eis mian*).

### 2.3. Some Critiques of the Unity of the City

In the previous section, the conceptual model of a tripartite *harmonia*, which explains how justice becomes embodied in the city and soul, was shown to hold the key for the well-orderedness and unity of complex structures in the *Republic*. Having revealed some of the tensions latent in that model, this section will now proceed to examine whether Plato’s hopes for civic unity in particular are in fact met in the dialogue by drawing our attention to two different criticisms.

In the first criticism, I revisit the specific *provisions* and *constitutional rules* of *Kallipolis*. To what extent does the constitutional framework of the city uphold the unity of the *whole* city,

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123 One further way in which the producers might be able to maintain this awareness, as suggested by Schofield (2006: 275 and fn. 58), is through *acquiescence to the law*. Even though the function of laws is not as clearly fleshed out as it is in the *Laws*, law is still ‘treated as a form of wisdom—even (as in the *Laws*) as divine wisdom—controlling the behaviour of citizens through its prescriptions’. Schofield cites 590e-591a as evidence in support of this claim. It seems to me that both the function of law and the general cultural reshaping of society (cf. fn. 121 above) provide cogent reasons for how the producer class, despite Plato’s silence on their education, can still partake (to a limited extent) of the sort of rational conversion that Plato envisages for the first two classes.
each and every class included? In the second, I offer a re-evaluation of the harmonia model by considering its connection with a well-established ancient connection between justice and equality, which was thought to be paramount to political unity. I will question whether Plato has abandoned this important connection in the Republic, and whether this has an impact on our verdict of the way that the well-orderedness of the city is being envisaged in the dialogue.

One way that the unity of the city conceived as a plurality of distinct parts is supposed to be upheld is through its constitutional arrangement, which is encapsulated in the notion of koinōnia (communion, association, partnership). What I would like to ask here is whether the koinōnia of the city as envisaged in the dialogue is in fact conducive to this purpose. For the emphasis given to the rational element on the harmonia model, which already throws into question how the city can become a unified whole, also finds its way into the way that Plato sketches the koinōnia of the city itself in the Republic.

In Book 5 of the dialogue, Socrates notoriously compares a whole community to the biological human body (462c10-d5). In the same way that the whole body feels pain when only one of its parts is injured (Socrates uses the example of the finger), in the ideal city each citizen comprising the community will feel the pleasure and pain of another as if it were their own. Immediately following this analogy, however, Socrates goes on to speak specifically of the guardian class as being the main recipients of this sort of koinōnia. This is reflected in the terms of address used within the guardian class. While the majority shall refer to their rulers as ‘saviours and defenders’ (on which, see p. 66 above), the rulers will refer to each other not just as ‘fellow-rulers’ but, also as ‘relatives’ (oikeious). Since the guardians are bound together by this sort of unconventional kinship with one another, each and every guardian will both think and speak alike; hold each thing as common; and regard the same pleasures and pains as their own (463e-464c). This, above the general organisation of the city, is explicitly demarcated as the greatest good (megiston agathon) for the city on two separate occasions (464b1, 5-6). Finally, this megiston agathon is said to result from even deeper familial relations within the guardian class, which Socrates had earlier defined as the ‘taking of wives, marriage, and having children’ (423e7). Within the guardian class, importantly, all women and children will be held in common.

In this way, the koinōnia originally intended for the whole community-body becomes in fact restricted to one specific class: the rational element in the city. While earlier sections of the

124 Recall how koinōnia was said to be one of five values which binds (sunechein) the whole universe into order (kosmos) in our famous ‘cosmological’ passage from the Gorgias (507e6-508a4). In Stephanides (2022: 149-177), I examine the connection between koinōnia and the notion of proportional equality across the dialogues.
Republic had predicated the good of the city on the unity of all its parts conceived as one inseparable whole (Section 2.1), Book 5’s account of koinōnia suggests a rather different picture, leaving us ‘with the difficulty of understanding how [...] the unity of the entire city would follow from it [the unity of the guardians]’. Whatever unity inheres in the whole (all three classes combined), then, seems subordinated to the unity within the philosophical class itself. In the next section, I will demonstrate how this emphasis on the unity of the guardian class (or rationality) is paralleled in the case of the soul in Book 10 of the dialogue.

One place commentators have often turned towards in Plato’s defence is the famous myth of the Noble Lie (414b-415d). I cannot give a full examination of the myth here, but what is important to note is that whilst the myth reinforces tripartition, it is also intended to show that all citizens derive from ‘one common autochthonous origin’. Despite the fact that the myth is addressed to the guards in the first instance, its effects seem to extend to each member of the community, not just the guards. As Malcolm Schofield has suggested, the bonds which hold between the different classes can be explained by recognising ‘grades’ or ‘modes’ of brotherhood. According to this interpretation, guards may enjoy one grade of brotherhood with their fellow guards, and a lower grade of brotherhood with another class. In this way, all the citizens may see themselves as part of one whole family, where each can regard the other as their own brother or sister.

The bonds that might hold between the different classes of Kallipolis, it must nevertheless be conceded, are still a far-cry from the much stronger familial relations which unify the guardian class itself. On the one hand, this obscures just how far the koinōnia of the ideal city extends to the unification of the whole city. This could be taken to suggest that Plato’s interest is with the unity of one specific part of the whole over the unity of the whole. On the other, the way that the koinōnia of the city is conceived seems to be a symptom of the conceptual model of harmonia more generally, which was shown in the previous section to create a strong emphasis on the rational principle and a stringent separation between the distinct parts comprising the city-soul.

Another way that this gulf in separation between the guardian class and the lower parts of the city can be expressed is through the notion of equality. Gregory Vlastos has helpfully brought our attention to an important connection in ancient political thought between equality (τὸ ἴσον, ἴσότης) and justice (τὸ δίκαιον, δικαιοσύνη), where justice was thought to be

126 This expression comes from Loraux (2002: 198).
fundamental to the cohesion of the city-state. This connection is echoed by Aristotle in his political dialogues, who submits that ‘the just is equal, as all men suppose it to be, even apart from argument’ (Pol. 1131a13-4, my emphasis). In Euripides’ Phoenissae, moreover, Jocasta urges her son Eteocles to honour equality (ἰσότητα), which is said to bind friends, cities, and allies together (531ff.). Finally, we may recall Plato’s striking reference in the Gorgias to the great power that ‘geometrical equality’ (ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ) holds par excellence for keeping the world together in kosmos (508a4-7).

In spite of the importance that equality clearly held in antiquity as a binding principle for complex structures, however, in the Republic Plato is conspicuously silent on the role of equality as a cause for the well-orderedness of the city and soul. As Malcolm Schofield has observed with reference to the dialogue, ‘Plato does not have anything to say about equality of any sort’. This has led some commentators to claim, provocatively, that Plato has severed the ancient connection between justice and equality in the dialogue, with justice being harnessed to a completely new framework.

In order to see whether equality can be assimilated into the conceptual framework of the Republic, and if so, how, let us first remind ourselves of the way that justice is being conceived in the dialogue. According to the Plato of the Republic, justice is secured in the city (and soul) when each distinct part sticks to its own unique function, without meddling in the work of another (what I have called PJ). This is corroborated by the conceptual model of a tripartite harmonia, explored in the previous section, according to which each part is placed in a proper hierarchical relation to one another analogous to the relations that hold between the notes of a musical scale.

This notion of justice, I now suggest, may give the citizens of Kallipolis some equality. For instance, different classes seem to be treated equally to the extent that each receives only what is needed for each to carry out its unique function (433e-434b). Let us call this Plato’s

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128 See Vlastos (1977: 18-19). Further evidence for this connection can be found in Plato’s own Republic, where Glaucon links popular justice with equality and juxtaposes this with injustice and pleonexia (359c3-6). For the connection between equality and democracy in particular, see Samaras (2002: 63).

129 Whether or not geometrical equality denoted a precise specification of equality in the Gorgias was open to question (Section 1.1). However, I took Plato to at least have been aware of the different models of proportional equality made available to him by Archytas’ Fragment 2. It is not altogether implausible, then, that Plato could put these models to work for his own theory of well-ordered complex structures both in the Gorgias and, as I will suggest in this chapter, in the Republic.

130 Schofield (2013: 287 fn. 8).

131 As Julia Annas (1981: 119-120) has claimed, ‘justice has been brought in without any mention of other notions which are usually connected with it—equality, giving or receiving what is due, refraining from pleonexia (grabbing what is another’s). Plato has cut justice out of its familiar context and introduced it in a new context of his own’.
‘Principle of Distribution’ (henceforth PD). This can be contrasted with the distribution of rights in an Athenian democratic regime, on which Book 8 of the dialogue provides an implicit critique: at 558c1-6, Socrates complains that democrats grant ‘a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike’ (ἰσότητά τινα ὁμοίως ἱσοῖς τε καὶ ἀνίσοις διανέμουσα). By contrast, PD is intended to bolster fairness in the city by ensuring that each receives only what is due for each to carry out its own unique function, in order that products may be shared out with the common need of the city. Something akin to this principle has been given the label ‘formal equality’ by Vlastos, who uses such evidence to suggest that Plato has not completely disavowed the age-old connection between justice and equality in the Republic.132

More recently, some commentators have also seen in the notions of PD and formal equality an intimation of one of the specific proportional means alluded to in Archytas’ Fragment 2 (see p. 44). Thanassis Samaras has suggested that ‘Plato there [in the Republic] employs geometrical equality in the sense that everyone receives from the state what is appropriate for him or her in correlation with his or her social role and contribution’ (my emphasis).133 On this model, the citizens of Kallipolis are given a share which is proportionate to their own unique function. Whilst commentators are in one sense correct to rehabilitate geometrical equality into the Republic in this way, in another sense the more natural way of expressing geometrical equality politically is as a communal sharing of the same content in either greater or lesser quantities. This is the way that Plato will describe the function of geometrical equality in the Laws, which is said to distribute out more to what is greater and less to what is lesser where the Athenian has in mind the same content of distribution (757b1-c6).

This system of just distribution, however, is simply not possible on the inflexible hierarchical model of the Republic. For each class receives a share of only what is distinctive of their own social contribution, and not of anything any of the other classes receive. Now, when the content of just distribution is spelled out in terms of rights to participate in the functions of government—which is in fact the principal factor at stake in any theory of political

132 Vlastos (1977: 19). As Sheffield (2021: 103) also observes, ‘[E]quality of some kind is needed to accommodate reciprocity, which requires friends to be equal enough to return something of value to each other’ (Sheffield’s emphasis).

133 Samaras (2002: 64). Samaras is followed by Sedley (2007a: 271 fn. 24), who contrasts the disproportionately equal distributions handed out by democracy at 558c1-4 with the distribution of rights at 433e-434b (discussed above) and suggests this is reminiscent of the geometrical equality which was alluded to in our famous cosmological passage from the Gorgias (507e6-508a8). In the Politics, this becomes synonymous with what Aristotle calls ‘proportional’ equality (τὸ κατ᾽ ἀναλόγησιν ἴσον), which is also said to constitute justice (5.1 1301b25-30) and is a cause of civil strife (stasis) whenever it is neglected (1301b25-30).
equality—the *Republic* leaves us with a pressing concern.\(^{134}\) For in denying the majority a share of governing themselves, the dialogue enables a severe inequality which devalues the individual autonomy of citizens who are otherwise supposed to be free. Recall to this end how Socrates suggests that by subjugating ourselves to an external authority, we may all become ‘alike and friends’ (ὁμοιοὶ ὁμοιοὶ καὶ φίλοι, 590c8-d6). It is surely striking that the emphasis here is on becoming *alike*, and not on becoming *equal*.\(^{135}\) This arguably serves as a conscious recognition on the part of Plato that the hierarchical model he has promulgated in the dialogue is incompatible with any real notion of equality, let alone the *geometrical* equality which dishes out a share of political equality to *all* citizens even if those shares are markedly *unequal*.\(^{136}\) This explains why Vlastos, whose interpretation seems promising, submits that the *Republic*’s ‘political inequalities, which are catastrophic, and its socio-economic equalities, which are substantial, become intelligible without any need to refer to “proportional” [what I call geometrical] equality at all’.\(^{137}\)

Importantly, the political inequalities to which Vlastos refers would become a further source of critique for Aristotle’s reading of the *Republic*, who I quote:

> ‘The way Socrates selects his rulers is also risky. He makes the same people rule all the time, which becomes a cause of conflict (στάσεως) even among people with no merit, and all the more so among spirited and warlike men’ (*Pol.* 2.5 1264b5-10).

Aristotle’s warning derives from his awareness that in any stable and flourishing political regime, citizens should have the right to both rule and be ruled in turn, which was thought to be paramount to political equality itself (see fn. 134).\(^{138}\) Admittedly, however, it is not entirely

\(^{134}\) As Schofield (2006: 109) writes that ‘the point of political equality is that it supplies the conditions for freedom and its exercise. By freedom two things were meant above all: the political freedom for the citizens collectively to manage their city’s affairs themselves; and social freedom for each citizen to live his life as he pleased’. Here, I am principally concerned with the equality which enables the former freedom.

\(^{135}\) As El-Murr (2014: 20) correctly observes, ‘[R]esemblance and equality, obviously enough, are different in kind’ (see however *Laws* 836e5-837d8, where equality at least implies similarity and belongs to the same semantic field: ‘isos te Kai homoiois’).

\(^{136}\) Thus Harvey (1965: 109 fn. 34) suggests that that the *Republic* operates with a model of geometrical equality while conceding that ‘Plato says nothing about it’. Rather than trying to somehow explain away this silence, however, can we not take the fact that Plato ‘says nothing about’ geometrical equality to indicate that he is not, after all, employing this equality in the *Republic*?

\(^{137}\) Vlastos (1977: 24). For Vlastos, this has the effect of leaving the lower classes without any substantive rights, which he contrasts with the formal rights alluded to on p. 74 above.

\(^{138}\) Pointing to a contrast between civic friendship in the *Laws* and the *Republic*, which we shall be able to appreciate further in Section 3.2 of the next chapter, El-Murr (2014: 24) writes ‘the majority of citizens [in *Kallipolis*] do not participate in the political life of the city […] where guards and producers do not seem to share in the joint activities of the kind described in the *Laws*. For El-Murr, this is why the *Republic*’s approach to civic friendship ‘remains unconvincing’.
clear whether Plato does in fact obstruct the spirited class from participating in the functions of government as Aristotle seems to suggest. Unfortunately, this is not a topic that Plato appears to shed much light on in the Republic. However, since Plato makes ruling contingent on a proper grasp of the Form of the Good (see esp. 540a4-b1), we may assume that even the smallest responsibilities of government will be reserved for only those with adequate knowledge of the Good: the philosophical class.

While Aristotle’s criticism remains a genuine threat to the unity of the city, it must be said that Plato is not perturbed by the possibility of the lower classes rebelling against the ruling class for not having the intrinsic freedom to be able to rule over themselves each in turn. In fact, he assumes that as long as factions does not arise within the guardian class, there can be no danger of the whole city being divided (465b8-10). When factions do inevitably occur—and Plato seems to think that even the ideal city will eventually disintegrate (546a2-3)—it is because the guardians are no longer able to discriminate between the different types of metals representative of different classes: for then ‘you will get unlikeness and uneven discordance (ἀνομοιότης ἐγγενήσεται καὶ ἀνομαλία ἀνάρμοστος). And when you get those, wherever they occur, they always breed war and hostility (πόλεμον καὶ ἔχθραν, 547a2-4)’. Although Plato seems to think that he has thus covered his tracks against the possibility of political stasis arising within the city, his method for preventing stasis rests on a fundamental inequality among persons where the lower classes are given absolutely no share of the greatest privilege the city has to offer—political participation. On the basis of this, I have suggested so far that the theory of geometrical equality when expressed in its most natural political form sits awkwardly with the hierarchical model of the Republic. However, it might still be helpful to consider whether other, alternative models of proportional equality (broadly construed) fit the conceptual framework of the Republic better. As I now suggest with some caution, the ‘subcontrary’ mean, which is also called the ‘harmonic’ mean in Archytas’ Fragment 2, may well fulfil this purpose.139 According to this Fragment, the harmonic mean obtains

‘… whenever they [the terms] are such that, by which part of itself the first term exceeds the second, by this part of the third the middle exceeds the third. It turns out that, in this proportion, the interval of the greater terms is greater and that of the lesser is less’.

139 This is the line taken by Morrison (1958: 214), contra Harvey (1965: 109 fn. 34). While it is by no means definitive that Plato applied the harmonic proportion to politics in the Republic, we can at least be confident that he was aware of this model of proportion since he applies it without question to cosmology in the Timaeus (on which, see Iamblichus in Nic. 118.23).
One reason for preferring this model of proportional equality is that, just as a harmonic progression creates a substantial divide between the greater term(s) and the lesser even more than a geometrical progression, Plato’s harmonia model is designed to separate the philosophical class from the inferior elements in the city by virtue of political power. By locating all the functions of government in one specific class, Plato has in fact created a severe divide between this class and the others just as terms are distinguished from one another in a harmonic progression. While a connection between the harmonic proportion and Plato’s harmonia model sketched along these lines ultimately remains speculative, the similarities between this model of proportional equality when politically construed and the hierarchical structure of the city-state in the Republic remain striking.\(^{140}\)

In summary, it is important to remember that for Archytas the study of calculation (logismos), which arguably encompasses all proportional models of which the harmonic proportion is one specific kind, has the function of mitigating political discord (stasis) and increasing civic concord (homonoia).\(^{141}\) However, we might question whether the application of the harmonic proportion to politics, as it may well have been applied by Plato in the Republic, is most conducive to keeping the whole city efficiently bound together into unity given the dominant hierarchy it generates. The salient upshot is that, if the Republic is aiming for unity, it seems to be of an exclusionary kind which creates severe differences and inequalities between the different members comprising the city (and soul), resulting in an unsatisfying picture for the city. In this section and in these various ways, I hope to have demonstrated that Plato’s hopes for the unity of the city in the Republic remain open to considerable objections.

### 2.4. The Supremacy of Reason in the Soul: A Reassessment of Book 10

The previous section highlighted certain criticisms of the way that the unity of the city is being conceived in the Republic. These criticisms were shown to result primarily from Plato’s strong

\(^{140}\) Morrison (1958: 214) notes that for the Pythagoreans ‘this bond of unity was even more desirable than the geometric proportion, since it recognises merit to an even greater degree’. It could therefore be that Plato was strongly influenced by the Pythagoreans in the Republic in this way, which makes sense of the many musical metaphors littered throughout the dialogue. For Morrison, however, ‘[T]he superiority of the geometrical progression as a basis for social order lies in its greater fairness’. In the next chapter, I will suggest that Plato is guided by this principle in his later dialogues as he makes explicit use of geometrical proportion to politics in the Laws.

\(^{141}\) This is argued for in Archytas’ Fragment 3. For a detailed commentary of this fragment, see Huffman (2005: 193-224).
preoccupation with the rational element in the city, creating an exclusionary unity comprised solely of philosopher-rulers. In this section, I will show how this emphasis on rationality is mirrored in the case of the soul. While the earlier books of the dialogue profess to offer a model of composition for the well-orderedness of the whole soul, with reason being an integral part of this whole, Book 10 of the Republic offers a less sympathetic picture of psychic composition where an emphasis with reason seems to eclipse the good order of the whole. In doing so, I will also argue, Plato seems to have returned to an austere conception of the soul as a rational incomposite unity made prominent in the Phaedo.

In order to work out what sort of presentation of the soul we are being offered in Book 10, some context is first in order. To begin with, Book 10 of the Republic offers one notoriously question-begging argument for the immortality of the soul. Central to this argument is the notion that each distinct thing possesses its own natural evil, and that it is this evil which spells the destruction of an object. In organic objects like the body, sickness and disease (the body’s evils) lead to the internal decay of the body, which amounts to the internal dissolution of its parts (610b1-5). In the case of the soul, however, not even its natural evils—injustice, intemperance, baseness and ignorance (609b11-c1)—can destroy it. Since the argument makes an assimilation between the internal structure of an item and its dissolution (ἀπόλλυται, 608d4), by suggesting that the soul is not liable to such dissolution Socrates implies that the soul does not have the sort of internal makeup which would make it susceptible to the dissolution of its parts.

These remarks on the internal simplicity of the soul are connected to what immediately follows the argument, where Socrates proceeds to draw some significant ethical implications for the way that we think about the soul. At 611a10-b3, Socrates suggests that in its ‘truest nature’ (τῇ ἀληθεστάτῃ φύσει) we should not think of the soul as being ‘full of much volatility and internal inconsistency and conflict’ (πολλῆς ποικιλίας καὶ ἀνομοιότητος τε καὶ διαφορᾶς). This implies that the soul is an essentially simple rather than variegated entity. However, Socrates’ admission that this is what the soul is like in its ‘truest’ nature raises the question of whether the soul that has been up for discussion so far in the dialogue—the tripartite composite soul—is the true soul or not. This, in turn, also opens up the issue of what sort of internal simplicity is being envisaged for the soul.

142 For a fuller examination of that argument, which lies outside the confines of this thesis, see Brown (1997: 211-238).
On the one hand, one of the main objectives of elucidating the conceptual model of a tripartite *harmonia* for Plato was to show how, despite being comprised of a plurality of potentially hostile parts, the soul can be free from conflict and become one well-ordered whole. The composite soul could therefore be compatible with the ‘truest’ soul, if this is a soul which has become so harmoniously attuned as to be free from any internal conflict or volatility whatsoever. Importantly, this opens up a conception of simplicity which is still compatible with the possession of distinct parts. On the other hand, Socrates could be suggesting that the composite soul *even when optimally harmonised* is still subject to some degree of internal differentiation qua composite of parts. On this interpretation, the true soul is rather simple in essence by being *partless*. This chimes well with the previously argued immortality thesis, which assumed that the soul is not the sort of entity to be broken up into its constituent parts and be dissolved. The true soul, then, would be synonymous with the soul that survives the destruction of the soul-body compound, remaining a partless entity throughout.

The choice between these two candidates is made even more complicated by the following lines, which make an even more explicit connection between the eternity of an item and its internal constitution. Consider now the following:

> It isn’t easy for something composite of many elements and lacking the finest structure—as the soul seemed to us recently—to be eternal (transl. Halliwell).

Οὐ ῥᾴδιον, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ἀίδιον εἶναι σύνθετον τε ἐκ πολλῶν καὶ μὴ τῇ καλλίστῃ κεχρημένον συνθέσει, ὡς νῦν ἡμῖν ἡ μὴ ἐράνη ἡ ψυχή (611b5-8).

This text raises two distinct possibilities as to what the eternal and true nature of the soul might be. On one reading, Socrates is not ruling out the possibility that a composite (*suntheton*) item—that is, one which is comprised of several parts (*ek pollōn*)—can be everlasting. While it may be a *challenge* for such an item to be eternal, Socrates says only that it is ‘not easy’ for a composite to survive destruction. This leaves open the theoretical possibility that an item composed of many parts can survive the dissolution of its parts for an infinite span of time. Crucial to this interpretation, moreover, is the condition of whether a composite soul possesses the ‘finest structure’ or not.\(^\text{143}\) This means that a *suntheton* without the finest structure is more

\[\text{143} \] This condition forms the basis of Lorenz’ view (2006: 161) that the eternal soul is one which has been finely put together despite having internal parts. There is, however, a passage from Book 2 of the dialogue which is more pessimistic on the eternity of composites. Socrates says that *all* composites (*ta suntheta panta*) such as furniture, houses, and clothes which are *made well and in fine condition* (*ta eu eirgasmena kai eu echonta*) are...
at risk of destruction, whilst a suntheton with a fine structure has a much greater chance of remaining everlasting. This proviso, however, raises certain questions as to how the beautiful construction of a composite is meant to be understood.

First, is Plato here referring to the beautiful construction of a composite item by some divine agency as he does in the Timaeus? For in that dialogue, one reason why both the world-body and soul are everlasting is because they were put together by a divine and benevolent Demiurge, despite being in principle dissoluble (41a-c). In the Republic, however, Plato is silent on the beautiful creation of the soul either from some divine agency or another. Alternatively, it could be that the agent him or herself is responsible for beautifully fine tuning their soul. If the survival of the soul depended on its being finely put together, however, this might leave us with the unwanted consequence that souls lacking the finest structure would not be immortal.

This would be a strange outcome for Socrates, since he is clearly after an account of immortality that will fit all souls, even vicious and unjust ones (recall that the central premiss of the immortality argument is that not even injustice can destroy the soul).

In contrast to this reading of the passage, Socrates could instead be putting the stress on the eternity of incomposite entities. In the Phaedo, one argument for the immortality of the soul assumes that the soul is indestructible on the basis of its being incomposite (asuntheton). Let us now briefly turn to this argument, with particular attention to how Socrates might be looking back to it in Book 10 of the Republic with the purpose of supporting an austere conception of the soul he had first promulgated in the Phaedo. This will form the basis of my interpretation of the ‘true’ soul in what remains in this section, which has implications for how we construe the well-orderedness of the soul.

After delineating two different ontological ‘kinds’ (duo eidē, 79a6) in the Phaedo, one which is liable to destruction and one which is not, Socrates proceeds to offer the Affinity Argument (hereafter AA) in an effort to prove that the soul belongs to the latter of these kinds. Let me now quote one main branch of that argument:

least altered by time and other such affections (381a6). Thus, anything which is in fine condition, either by its nature or design or both is ‘most resistant (the actual word is ‘hēkista’ meaning ‘least likely’) to being changed by an external agency’. Notice that Plato writes ‘most resistant’ and not resistant simpliciter, for the contrast being drawn here is between composite wholes and god, whose perfection precludes any alteration in form that would come about as a result of some external cause (381c-d). On this account, beautiful composition may at least increase the longevity of a compound, but it cannot guarantee indissolubility.

144 Unlike the Timaeus, moreover, Plato may not yet in the Republic be open to the idea that something created can be immortal. Speaking of the ideal city, Socrates says at 546a2-3 that ‘since destruction (phthora) awaits everything that has come to be (genomenōi), even a construction (sustasis) of this kind will not survive for the whole of time’. There is no suggestion in the Republic, as there is in the Timaeus, that a created composite may be immortal due to the agency of a benevolent, divine cause.
Then is it true that what comes together with parts and is composite by nature is liable to undergo this, to break up at the point at which it was put together; whereas if there be anything incomposite, it alone is liable, if anything, to escape this?\footnote{Translations of the \textit{Phaedo} are from Gallop (1975) with some emendations.}

\[ \text{Ἀρ᾽ οὖν τῷ μὲν συντεθέντι τε καὶ συνθέτῳ ὄντι φύσει προσήκει τοῦτο πάσχειν διαιρεθῆναι ταύτῃ ἕπερ συνετέθη: εἰ δὲ τι τυγχάνει ἄν ἁσύνθετον, τούτῳ μόνῳ προσήκει μὴ πάσχειν ταύτα, εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ; (78c1-4).} \]

A fuller examination of these lines and what follows the argument of the AA requires a much larger treatment.\footnote{I endeavour to provide such a treatment in Stephanides (forthcoming with \textit{Rhizomata}) \textit{Plato on the Indestructibility and Essential Nature of the Soul in the Affinity Argument of the Phaedo}.} What I would like to do here is offer a general reconstruction of the logic of these lines, before fleshing out some of the metaphysical and ethical implications both this text and the larger context of the AA offer for the soul. First, notice that Socrates only speaks of what \textit{prosēkei} to break up into its component parts as the composite, and what \textit{prosēkei} to escape destruction as incomposite. Liability for the occurrence of a specific action, however, does not entail that that specific action \textit{will} occur.

Conversely, the language of \textit{prosēkei} may well be taken to denote something much stronger than mere probability or likelihood.\footnote{On which, see Bryan’s (2012) illuminating discussion of the term in the Presocratics and Plato. See esp. ch. 3 for her positive discussion of the role of \textit{ἰκός} in \textit{Timaeus}’s cosmology. Similarly, Socrates may not be committing himself to the absolute truth; but he is nevertheless presenting what he would probably suggest is the best candidate for the truth.} On this construal, the thought could well be ‘what kind of entity is such that it is \textit{appropriate} for it to be dissoluble or indissoluble’. Notice that putting the emphasis on aptness does not make the implications of the distinction here just a matter of probability. Since there are entities out there that are dissoluble, the question then becomes for what sort of thing it is \textit{apt} to either be dissolved or not. And the answer could be that composite items fulfil that criterion well, just insofar as they are composite. In other words, that it is \textit{proper} (LSJ s.v. \textit{προσήκει}) for composite items to be dissoluble, and for incomposite items to be indissoluble (notice that Socrates says that only the incomposite (\textit{τούτῳ μόνῳ}) is liable to escape destruction).\footnote{As Gallop (1975: 137) notes in his commentary, ‘[T]he supposition that incomposite things are indestructible has a \textit{strong intuitive appeal}. For the destruction of a material thing seems to require the separation of its component parts’ (my italics). The idea that composite items are dissoluble—what El-Murr (2021a: 70) has recently labelled Plato’s ‘principle of dissolubility’—seems to be a preoccupying thought not only in the \textit{Phaedo} but, also in the \textit{Timaeus} (41a-b) where we are told that anything bound together (including the gods and the}
Assuming, therefore, that Socrates is committed to the idea that only the incomposite can escape destruction, what *gravitas* does this proof hold for the soul? Ostensibly, by suggesting that only the incomposite can escape destruction, the strong supposition could be that the soul too is incomposite and therefore indestructible.\(^{149}\) However, it is a matter of contention whether the wider context of the AA is successful in proving that the soul is in fact indestructible. Indeed, one main feature of the argument holds that the soul has an affinity with the Forms; since *these* items are immortal and indestructible, then the soul too must be. And yet, to say that the soul is ‘most similar’ (ὅμοιότατον) to the Forms is not to say that the soul is of the same essential nature as them (80b1-3). This perhaps explains the seemingly non-committal ending of the argument, where Socrates concludes that the soul must either be ‘completely indissoluble (παράπαν ἀδιαλύτῳ), or something close (ἐγγύς) to it’ (80a8-10). Undeniably, the proviso at the end of the sentence here leaves the reader in considerable doubt as to whether the soul is in fact indissoluble or not.\(^{150}\)

Outside of being an argument for immortality, commentators have also noted that the AA serves an important *protreptic* function within the *Phaedo*.\(^{151}\) For in demonstrating the soul’s affinity with the divine, Socrates exhorts us to become as much like them as possible, highlighting the rewards of doing so and the punishments of not doing so. For instance, Socrates speaks of corrupted souls that have become ‘impure’ and ‘polluted’ by the body (81b1), ‘interspersed with the corporeal’ (81c4-5), and literally ‘grown’ in the body ‘as if sown there (83e1)’. These examples highlight the dangers of living an unphilosophical life, since increasing attachment to the body hinders our chances of escaping the wheel of reincarnation. By contrast, Socrates suggests that souls which have ‘gathered themselves together’ will enter the presence of ‘the good and wise god’ (80d5-81a1), which guarantees a blessed post-mortem existence. In these ways, the AA encourages us to separate ourselves from bodily temptation and assimilate ourselves to the divine as far as that is possible.

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\(^{149}\) As Sedley (2009: 155) writes, ‘[A]ccording to the *Phaedo*, everything composite can eventually come apart, and the reason why souls, like Forms, are privileged with indissolubility is that they are incomposite’. Compare more recently Long (2019: 52), who similarly suggests ‘[O]ne argument in the *Phaedo* for the soul’s immortality takes the soul to be incomposite’.

\(^{150}\) It is perhaps for this reason that commentators have often found the AA generally unsatisfying. One classic example includes Elton (1997: 313-316), who suggests that Plato included the AA to show the reader how not to argue for the immortality of the soul.

\(^{151}\) So Woolf (2004: 115) and Betegh (2018: 3).
Notwithstanding this protreptic dimension, the paradox of the AA is that souls may still be guaranteed some ‘basic’ immortality.\footnote{This point is noted well by Woolf (2004: 116), who writes ‘the soul is not guaranteed immortality, \textit{at least of the rich sort that involves communion with the divine}'. Compare Rowe (1993: 191), who says ‘[A]ll souls will be immortal, if all share the same essential nature; but not all, of course, will in fact go off to join the forms (or gods)’.} As I have tried to demonstrate, one reason why this may be the case is because the soul is \textit{incomposite} in its essential nature—for only the incomposite is such as to be indestructible, since in composite items are not liable to be broken up into their constituent parts.\footnote{I took the main characteristic of incompositeness to be ‘without internal parts’, which is also how I understand the nature of the Forms. In doing this I follow Harte (2002: 22 fn. 38), who speaks of Forms as ‘mereological atoms’, that is, as utterly self-contained unities with no internal parts. For this interpretation of a mereological atom, see further Simons (1987: 16).} Returning to our \textit{Republic} text above, it is true that Socrates adopts a milder position on this thesis, suggesting rather that while it is not \textit{easy} for composite items to survive destruction, it is not in theory \textit{impossible} for them to do so. However, it is also possible that Socrates was hoping to remind us of the distinction between composite and in composite entities he had made earlier in the \textit{Phaedo}, along with both the metaphysical and ethical implications this distinction held for the soul there.

First, recall that Socrates had just offered us one argument for the immortality of the soul where it was strongly suggested that the soul, unlike the organic body, does not have the sort of internal structure which would make it susceptible to dissolution. By invoking the language of \textit{sunthesis}, Socrates puts us right back into the context of the AA, where the soul was arguably shown to be in composite (and indestructible) just like the Forms it is akin to. It could therefore be that Socrates is urging us to see the soul along these same lines in its immortal and ‘truest’ nature in Book 10 of the \textit{Republic}.

That Socrates is harnessing the soul to a new metaphysical and ethical framework is supported by the fact that he speaks of being a composite of several parts and ‘how the soul seemed to us recently’ (ὅς νῦν ἡμῖν ἐφάνη ἡ ψυχή). According to one strand of interpretation, the \textit{nun} here refers to the tripartite composite soul familiar from the earlier books of the dialogue.\footnote{So Woolf (2012: 154 fn. 5). Hall (1963: 74), by contrast, would have this refer to the decline of constitutions and their psychic counterparts from the previous Book 9. For this is also a soul which ‘lacks the finest structure’.} In what follows this text, conversely, Socrates strongly inspires us to distance ourselves from this conception of the soul. To see the soul in its truest nature, we should not look at it ‘as we are now (\textit{nun}) contemplating it’ (611c2). Thus, what was said earlier is ‘true of the soul as it appears as present (\textit{nun}, 611c5)’, but not what it is like in its essential nature.
The soul that Socrates is referring to ‘earlier’ is, however, an embodied soul, which is also to say a tripartite composite one.

In the Phaedo, the incomposite soul is one which has neglected its association with the body and instead focussed all of its efforts on turning its attention to the Forms. This is what Socrates urged us to strive towards (the protreptic dimension of the AA) there. Similarly, in Book 10 of the Republic, Socrates urges us to see the true soul as one without partnership (koinōnia, 611c1) with the body. Rather, we should contemplate it in its ‘pure’ (katharon, 611c3) state, where purity is also a condition of the soul when it has separated itself from the body in the Phaedo. But to see the soul in this state is, Socrates says,

‘… something which can only be seen adequately by means of reason (λογισμῷ). We’ll find it far more beautiful, and get a much clearer view of justice and injustices, and all the things we have so far described’ (611c3-7).

In the main books of the dialogue, psychic justice seemed to equate to the harmonious arrangement of distinct parts within the soul. By suggesting that we can get a much ‘clearer view’ of justice by contemplating the soul in its pure state, Socrates implies that real justice is of a different kind from what it previously looked like in the embodied composite soul. This lends further credence to the view that the soul Socrates is sketching in Book 10 is of a different nature to the composite one. If it is better to explain psychic justice not in terms of a harmonia of parts within the soul, however, then how else is it to be explained?

An answer, I think, lies again in the fact that Socrates repeatedly contrasts his earlier account of the soul with how we should see it in its pure state. The same can be said with respect to psychic justice. In its embodied state, the Form of Justice manifests in the composite soul as a harmonious relationship between parts (compare fn. 112). This was the best image of Justice that Socrates could provide of the human soul while he was still sketching it in its embodied, tripartite form. But since the definiens of PJ is ‘doing one’s own’, Plato is given the licence to say that the rational soul ‘does its own’ better when separated from the lower parts.155 Accordingly, the pure soul is a much finer instantiation of Justice because it performs its function (theoretical contemplation) to a greater degree without the hindrance of the parts of the soul traditionally associated with the body. This reassessment of the virtue of justice is bolstered by Book 7 of the dialogue, where Socrates makes a clear-cut distinction between the

155 This is the interpretation of Smith (2001: 129).
virtues of the soul and the virtues of the body, claiming that the virtue of ‘rational thought’ (τοῦ φρονήσαται) is something completely different and composed of some more ‘divine material’ (μᾶλλον θειότερον) which ‘never loses its power’ (δύναμιν οὐδέποτε ἀπόλλυσιν, 518d9-519a1).

In order to see the soul without its partnership with the body and in its pure state, Socrates likens how we have been contemplating the soul thus far to how most people perceive the seaweed Glaucus. It is difficult to appreciate the original nature (τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν) of Glaucus because, after years of living at sea, Glaucus’ body has been mutilated by waves, whilst the accretions of the ocean (barnacles, seaweed, rocks) have attached themselves to his body. However, Socrates does not explicitly spell out what the analogues of these evils are in the case of the embodied soul. For instance, Socrates could be referring to the organic body itself and the evils posed specifically by embodiment. What we see on the outside is the body, but not the true soul within. Alternatively, our ‘accretions’ could be the two lower parts of the soul as a result of embodiment. The soul in its truest nature is pure rational reason, although when we perceive it, the soul appears as though it is joined with a spirited and appetitive part.

At this point, it is important to remember that the Glaucus image is, after all, only an image.156 When Socrates says that in order to see the true justice and beauty of the soul we must apprehend it with ‘reason’ (λογισμῷ), clearly the Glaucus image will not suffice as an explanation thereof. What Socrates may have in mind is intimated by his exhortation for us to ‘turn our gaze in another direction’ (ἐκεῖσε βλέπειν, 611d7-8). Now, the language of ‘looking towards’ something is reminiscent of the procedure that philosopher-craftsman were shown to undertake when looking towards the transcendent Form as a model for artistic creation. To this end, Socrates says that in order to work out what the soul is in its essential nature, we should fix our gaze towards the soul’s ‘desire for wisdom’ (τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς, 611e1). This perhaps explains how apprehending the soul with reason will be achieved.

What could the objects of the soul’s love of wisdom be? Socrates offers a significant clue by suggesting that we should reflect on the entities the soul grasps (ἅπτεται), yearns to be in company with (ἐφίεται ὁμιλιῶν), and most importantly to its kinship with what is ‘divine and deathless and immortal’ (ὡς συγγενὴς οὖσα τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ τῷ ἀεὶ ὄντι, 611e1-3). It is striking that commentators have not always picked up on both the thematic and linguistic similarities with this material from Book 10 and the austere context of the Phaedo.157 By

156 For further discussion on the difficulties of the image, see Woolf (2012: 150-174).
157 The only exceptions I have found are Adam (1902: notes to 611b8, b14, c17, c30) in his commentary on the Republic; Guthrie (1957: 7), who notes some intertextual allusions between Republic 10 and the Phaedo; and
suggesting that we should look towards what the soul is akin (suggenēs) to, we are bound to be reminded of the AA, where the soul was shown to have a kinship with immortal and divine Forms. Elsewhere in the Republic, Socrates speaks of the nature of the philosopher as being someone who never gives up ‘until he has grasped (ἀψασθαι) the nature of what each thing itself is with that part of his soul—the part akin (συγγενεῖ) to it—which is equipped to grasp (ἐφάπτεσθαι) this kind of thing’ (490b2-4). By putting the onus on the soul’s affinity with the Forms, then, Socrates takes us one step closer to understanding the true essence of the soul.158

When Socrates concludes that having reflected on what the soul is suggenēs with one will then see whether in its truest nature the soul is multiform or uniform (εἴτε πολυειδής εἴτε μονοειδής, 612a4), I do not think he is being as non-committal as commentators often make him out to be.159 For in the Phaedo, uniformity turns out to be one pertinent feature of the Forms (80b2), which human souls presumably too possess by virtue of their affinity with them. Whilst in Book 10 Socrates had originally put the emphasis on whether the soul was a composite of many parts (σύνθετόν ἐκ πολλῶν), but now reverts to the language of uniformity (μονοειδής), it is possible that he could just be asking the same question: is the soul in its essential nature such as to contain parts, or not?160

Having posed the question, Socrates then says that as things stand, the different πάθη and εἴδη of the soul during its human life (ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπινῷ βίῳ) have been reasonably discussed (612a5-6). Pointedly, the language of εἴδη is used at various points in the Republic to denote specific parts of the soul (440e8, 580d3; cf. Phdr. 253c8-9; Tim. 89e4). The point could therefore be that the different parts of the soul have been discussed in association with the tripartite composite soul during the main books of the dialogue, even though Book 10 is now speaking of a different conception of the soul altogether. On balance, I therefore submit, the

Gill (2006: 6), who suggests that in both contexts ‘very similar claims about human nature are made’. Gill therefore suggests that the true soul of Book 10 is uniform (monoeidēs), an interpretation I defend below. 158 I therefore concur with Woolf (2012: 159) on the one hand that Socrates offers us mostly a prescription for how to discover the true soul rather than an actual description, and that the soul’s true nature ultimately remains hidden because of methodological constraints (Woolf’s mainly negative thesis). But I think Socrates does offer us enough clues to infer what the true soul really is by invoking the context of the Phaedo and urging us to think of the soul’s suggeneia with the Forms. 159 Thus Shiner (1972: 28) suggests that monoeidēs is ‘an obvious word for Plato to use of the true state of the soul, given the metaphysical significance of the word’, but then quite paradoxically maintains an agnostic position on whether it is monoeidēs or not. This stems from his pessimistic interpretation that Book 10 offers no clear answer on the true soul. 160 There is evidence for a close association between monoeidēs and asuntheton in the sense of ‘without parts’. Thus, Hackforth (1955: 81 fn. 2) suggests that the word monoeidēs signifies ‘the denial of internal difference or distinction of unlike parts’. Theaetetus 205d1-2 points strongly in favour of this linkage, where both monoeidēs and ameristos (205d1-2) are used in the same stretch of text to refer to the same entity, as if these terms were near synonyms. I take it that ameristos is again an alternative for asunthetos in the sense of ‘without parts’, though its more natural translation is ‘indivisible’. See further footnote below.
evidence suggests that the true soul is essentially partless just like the Forms it is akin to.\textsuperscript{161} Just as in the \emph{Phaedo}, the soul is more likely to be immortal if it is without parts. Finally, since the function of the true soul is to both contemplate and be in contact with transcendent and divine Forms, it is unlikely that the true soul will also contain a spirited and appetitive part since their distinct functions are separated from the functions of the rational part.

\textit{Prima facie}, this analysis of the soul as an incomposite entity sits at odds with the main presentation of the soul in the \textit{Republic} as a composite of disparate parts.\textsuperscript{162} Thrasymachus’ challenge to Socrates in Book 1 of the dialogue to prove that justice is intrinsically worth pursuing leads Socrates to divide the soul into distinct parts, and to show how justice operates \textit{within} the schema of the tripartite soul. In order to substantiate this, the \textit{Republic} offered a precise conceptual model to illustrate the well-orderedness of the soul according to a \textit{harmonia} of betters and worse elements, with each soul-part performing its characteristic distinct role. Book 10, in stark contrast, presents an austere account of the ‘true’ soul as a monistic rational unity much like the \emph{Phaedo}, where Plato’s interest in the well-orderedness of the whole composite soul fades into the background.

The rather different conception of the soul promulgated in Book 10 of the dialogue may, I nevertheless suggest, have been anticipated by the \textit{harmonia} model for the soul. On the one hand, I have tried to show how this model is designed to mitigate conflict and secure well-orderedness in the \textit{whole} composite soul. Crucial to this order, however, was a strict hierarchy between rational and non-rational elements where unequal weight is given to the rational part at the expense of the others.\textsuperscript{163} On one interpretation, this can be seen as the logical result of

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\textsuperscript{161} I therefore reject those interpretations which suggest that the uniformity of the soul is compatible with the possession of parts (like the gods of the \textit{Phaedrus}, which have achieved a perfect synthesis of their parts). For variants of this interpretation, see Hall (1963: 73), Robinson (1967: 50), and more recently, Lorenz (2006: 162). Rowe (2007: 170) and Whiting (2012: esp. 208) speak of psychic division as a ‘contingent’ matter, so that there are no ‘lower’ parts of the soul but rather the soul in its essential nature just is one unified entity which also contains non-rational capacities. The soul only \textit{appears} as if it has distinct parts due to some form of psychic conflict during its embodiment. While attractive, I find this interpretation difficult to square with Plato’s remarks in Book 10 as I have reconstructed them.

\textsuperscript{162} It will be in even more tension with the presentation of the soul in the \textit{Phaedrus}, where Plato likens the soul to a winged team of horses and their charioteer which are all ‘grown together’ (συμφύτῳ, 246a6–7). The message there is that the whole soul is one integrated unity, so that the rational soul cannot be conceived apart from its relation to the two lower parts as it is in Book 10 of the \textit{Republic}. In the \textit{Phaedrus}, a conception of the soul as a well-ordered whole of parts is therefore part of the conception of the soul’s good, which cannot be conceived in terms of isolation from, or externalisation of, these parts. This gets us closer to a more \textit{holistic} conception of the soul which is explored in greater detail in the \textit{Timaeus}, where the goodness of the soul is a matter of the well-ordered relations that are formed between all three parts. In Section 3.4 of the next chapter, I will show how this presents a more successful picture of the well-ordered soul.

\textsuperscript{163} Annas (1999: 134, 136) thus contrasts what she calls an ‘agreement’ model with ‘one in which the person isolates his “true self” in his reason and then externalises the parts other than reason as something subhuman, rejected and kept under harsh control’. Compare Russell (2005: 218-19), who also detects a conflict between two different models (an agreement and control model) in the moral psychology of the \textit{Republic}. This forms part
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the harmonic proportion, if indeed Plato is espousing this proportion for the order of the city-soul (on which, see pp. 76-77 above). According to my reconstruction, the tensions generated by Plato’s emphasis on the rational part from the earlier sections of the dialogue (our 590c8-d6 ‘slave’ passage was one pertinent example) culminate in Book 10 with an exclusive preoccupation with reason at the expense of the whole composite soul. Within the context of Book 10, I suggest, the exclusivity of the rational soul can be reduced to two main reasons, one ethical and one metaphysical.

Concerning the first, the rational soul qua incomposite unity seems to be the only immortal soul. In this Plato is guided by the AA, which made a connection between the indestructibility of the soul and its incompositeness. Importantly, the part that survives death is certainly of more value to a Platonic philosopher than the parts which are perishable, since this is the soul Plato time and again encourages us to identify ourselves with.\footnote{This idea is taken to its logical extreme in the \textit{Alcibiades} (128e10-11), where Plato strongly suggests that the true self is neither the body, nor the composite (\textit{sunamphoteron}) of body and soul, but rather the soul alone. There, the prescription is quite clearly that we (our souls) divert attention to ruling the body as if it were a separate thing, not forming a composite with it at all. In the \textit{Alcibiades}, like the \textit{Phaedo}, the soul that Plato seems to be speaking of is simply a rational principle.} In addition to this, Plato stresses the kinship of the true and immortal soul with the divine Forms just as he did in the \textit{Phaedo}. Since the Forms are of supreme value, Plato invites us to think of the rational soul away from its relationship with the whole composite soul and more towards its affinity with Forms. This has the effect of placing a significant premium on the rational soul and not on the place of the rational as a part within the composite soul.

These metaphysical observations, moreover, are also intimately tied with certain ethical implications for the true soul. Since the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul are essentially extraneous attachments to the rational soul, getting away from these lower parts will be the main objective for us rather than forming a (well-ordered) composite whole with them. On this view, the rational part should strive to separate itself as far as possible from the two lower parts, just as the soul is urged to eschew the body in the more austere context of the \textit{Phaedo}. In doing so, the rational soul can reveal its true goodness within and perform its peculiar function of theoretical contemplation unencumbered by the demands of the essentially ‘human’ parts of the soul traditionally associated with the body (recall once more \textit{Rep.} 518d9-519a1 and p. 85 above).
Overall, our analysis of Book 10 has revealed a strong emphasis on the unity of the rational soul rather than the unity of the whole psychological compound. In this way, what we found to be true of the city in the previous section has also turned out to be true of the soul in this section. In both cases, Plato begins with a conception of complex structures as well-ordered wholes of disparate but connected parts, where the conceptual model of a tripartite harmonia is intended to show how the city and soul, despite being composed of distinct parts, can be fashioned into one well-ordered whole. What Plato seems to end up with, I have argued, is in fact counterproductive to this aim. For the relations that arise out of the harmonia model raise puzzles as to how order and unity can really be achieved in the complex city and soul. By stressing the essential separation between the parts of these structures, which generates a severe hierarchy with reason given disproportionate emphasis in the whole (which culminates in Book 10), I have suggested in this chapter that the Republic leaves the reader with a generally unsatisfying picture of well-ordered complex wholes.

In Plato’s later dialogues, I will suggest in the next and final chapter, Plato’s interest in the well-orderedness of complex structures begins to take on a unique nuance. In these works, Plato shows an increasing interest in a more balanced conception of unity and cohesion where the plurality of complex structures is given greater respect. I will argue that these nuances are achieved with a conceptual model enabled by new metaphysical terms (summetria, to metrion) which put the emphasis on the well-ordered relations between distinct parts conceived as part of one integrated well-ordered whole rather than the good of some one part within the whole (harmonia). In this way, the later dialogues strive to offer a more holistic rather than dominant hierarchical conceptual model for well-ordered wholes, central to which is the notion of ‘due measure’ or ‘due proportion’. In Plato’s more mature dialogues, this model becomes the primary explanandum for how Plato elucidates the well-orderedness of complex structures, of which three structures in particular will receive special focus: the individual human being, the city, and the cosmos.
Chapter III: Key Metaphysical Concepts for Well-Ordered Wholes in The Late Dialogues

In this chapter, I argue that Plato’s account of well-ordered wholes improves significantly in the later dialogues. This improvement is achieved through the emergence of new metaphysical concepts where further attention is given to the well-orderedness and unity of whole structures, including the correct relation between their parts, rather than any undue emphasis on any one of their individual parts. In doing so, the later dialogues generate what I shall be calling a more holistic model for well-ordered complex structures which, importantly, takes us away from the dominant hierarchical model of earlier dialogues (such as the Republic) which was found in the previous section to be open to noteworthy objections.

In the later dialogues, the new terms which Plato takes up to conceptualise the well-orderedness of complex wholes are summetria and to metrion. While these terms were used scarcely in earlier dialogues, a simple search in Ast’s Lexicon Platonicum will reveal that most entries for summetria come from the late triplet of dialogues Timaeus, Philebus and Laws. In the Republic, for instance, there were only two references to summetria, both of which come in the discussion of traditional astronomy (530a). However, the term is used in a negative context where Socrates describes the mathematical ratios of the heavenly bodies, which he urges philosopher-rulers to look beyond. A more mathematical usage of the term is also deployed in the Parmenides and Theaetetus, dialogues which are outside of the scope of this thesis. Finally, the Republic also frequently refers to the character of philosopher-rulers as being metrios (measured), but this is not developed into a normative standard which philosopher-craftsmen must aim towards (to metrion) as it is in both the Statesman and Laws.

Further clarification will be needed to distinguish each term from one another and to ascertain the relevant meaning of each term for my purposes in this chapter. It is helpful in this regard to remember that, in the Philebus, Plato places to metrion higher than summetria in the final ranking of ‘goods’ (66a-d). On one plausible interpretation, this is because to metrion represents a basic property or constituent of well-ordered wholes, while its cognate summetria may be understood as the consequence or result of to metrion once this has been instantiated in a particular complex whole of parts. The superior ranking of to metrion perhaps explains why, in the dialogue Statesman, Plato establishes to metrion as a normative standard or ideal

165 This chimes well with the interpretation of Lang (2010: 153), who explains the final ranking as follows: ‘the higher ranked goods are necessary conditions for the goods of the level immediately below’ (my emphasis).
for good craftsmen to aim towards in their production of well-ordered wholes, which signifies the notion of ‘due measure’ or ‘due proportion’ between potentially opposing extremes. In what follows, I will elucidate the main features of the metaphysical framework connected to *to metrion*, showing how the concept is applied to the well-orderedness of the city both within the *Statesman* and then the *Laws*.

Owing to the semantic diversity of the term *summetria*, let me first briefly survey how it can be deployed by Plato in various different contexts for different purposes. In some contexts, Plato adopts the term to signify a certain ‘fit’ or ‘commensurability’ between two distinct items, as when he speaks of the *summetria* between the objects of sense and the sense organs in his theory of sense-perception (*Men. 76d4-5* and *Tim. 67c4-7*). When Plato comes to discuss the phenomenon of imitation (*mimēsis*) elsewhere, the language of *summetria* can represent the original *proportions* of a 3-dimensionally extended object, which an artist will look to recreate in his likeness (*Soph. 235d6-236a8*). Yet in other discussions of imitation, *summetria* may be used to express an *isomorphic* relation between a representation and its model (*Laws 667e10-668b8*), so that the two are in harmony with one another.

What is consistent in all these different examples, I argue, is that *summetria* is a normatively *value-laden* concept which expresses a positive relation among distinct things. In the later dialogues, *summetria* also becomes a central feature or characteristic of the internal structure of complex wholes which enables them to become well-ordered, genuine unities. This is the main sense of the term that will interest me in this chapter. Unlike other concepts denoting the well-orderedness of complex wholes (such as *harmonia*), I argue, the specific nuance that *summetria* brings to Plato’s later thought is the idea of a more measured relation between the parts of a complex structure so as to mitigate the possibility of any imbalance or disproportion of powers within the whole, which might otherwise lead to the excess and corruption of the whole. In this way, *summetria* seems to function as the converse of any form of *pleonexia* in complex wholes, thus securing their well-orderedness and hence unity.

In the late dialogues, this normative dimension of *summetria* is applied to the well-orderedness of three specific complex structures: the city, the cosmos, and the individual (including the soul-body compound). Taking the city first, I will suggest that Plato’s application of *summetria* (and also *to metrion* here) to the city in the *Laws* originates in his recognition that the city needs to have a more balanced relation between the extremes of authority and freedom.

166 For further comment on this usage of *summetria* both in Plato and in Theophrastus’ *De Sensibus*, see Tor (2017: 169-174).

167 See Hatzistavrou (2011: 371) for an in-depth analysis of this sense of *summetria* in the *Laws* passage.
On this model, the supreme authority or power of one individual part of the city must be curtailed so as to create a more equal relation among the different members of the community. This will lead us to a principle we have encountered time and again in this thesis—geometrical equality—which is now given the privileged function of securing civic unity and friendship. In the *Timaeus*, this model of equality is applied explicitly to the relations that hold the cosmos together in unity. I will show how this equality functions to secure the right measure (*summetria*) within the cosmos *par excellence* by mitigating the differences between the constituents of the cosmic body which might lead to the *stasis* and destruction of the world. Plato also suggests that the individual human being can become good by imitating the cosmos in respect of its *summetria*. In the *Timaeus*, I will convey how *summetria* is made a prominent feature not just of the three internal parts of the soul—which is suggestive of a less hierarchical relation among soul-parts—but also of the entire psychosomatic being. This represents Plato’s growing interest in the goodness of a whole human being as well-ordered, which will involve attention to the body as much as the soul, in much the same way that the cosmos is a well-ordered whole of body and soul as a result of its psychosomatic *summetria*.168

By suggesting that each of these complex wholes is bound by the same structural principles, our investigation of the concept *summetria* will have the upshot of providing a critical insight into the connection between these wholes, as well as allowing us to appreciate the unique intertextuality of Plato’s later dialogues.169 More importantly, our assessment of Plato’s application of *summetria* to these complex wholes will also be shown to have important implications for the way that we read Plato’s later ethics, psychology, politics, and cosmology. I will argue that the new picture to each of these areas of Plato’s thought we up with in the late dialogues is connected to his foremost concern in the question of how complex wholes of parts become well-ordered wholes.

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168 For further examination of the increasing importance of the body for a well-ordered human life in the later dialogues, see the recent monograph by Jorgenson (2018). Gill speaks of ‘psychosomatic holism’ (2006, cf. also Gill 2000) in Plato’s later dialogues, suggesting some ways in which Plato may have positively anticipated the attention to psychological and psychophysical integration in Stoic and Epicurean thought. As Gill convincingly suggests, ‘[G]oodness is […] instantiated in all forms of ordered wholeness’ (2006: 20). What I would like to demonstrate in this chapter is how this link between the ‘goodness’ and ‘ordered wholeness’ of complex items is secured by *summetria*.

169 As Lloyd (2003: 142) writes: ‘[O]ne recurrent theme that serves to link Plato’s ideas in the physical, to the psychological, social, moral, and even cosmological domains, relates to his notion of what the good order of composite wholes consists in’ (my emphasis). My task in this chapter is to flesh out precisely what such good order consists in.
3.1. The Metaphysical Framework for Well-Ordered Wholes of The Statesman: The Concept of To Metrion

In this section I take my cue from the dialogue Statesman, where Plato establishes to metrion as a normative standard for complex wholes of parts to become well-ordered wholes, central to which is the notion of the right measure between potentially hostile opposites.\(^{170}\) Within the dialogue, this standard is part of a new metaphysical framework for Plato to illustrate how well-ordered wholes are produced. One pertinent question I will be attending to throughout this section is the relationship between to metrion (due measure, due proportion) and transcendent Forms. Since it is assumed that Forms have causal efficacy in the creation of well-ordered wholes, it will be helpful to ask how the Forms fit into the metaphysical framework promulgated in the Statesman, and later in the chapter, the Philebus. Having examined the metaphysical framework connected to the concept of to metrion in detail, I will then proceed to illustrate how the well-orderedness of the city is tied to this concept in the Statesman, with particular attention to the sort of order that is being envisaged among the different members of the community. This will then put us in good stead for the next section, where I will show how the concept of to metrion is harnessed within the political theory of the Laws.

Let me begin with some introductory remarks on the place of the Statesman within Plato’s thought. The Statesman, along with the later Laws, stands out as being perhaps the most ‘practical’ of Plato’s political dialogues. Rather than conjuring up a hypothetical abstraction of an ideal city, as Plato does in the Republic, the Statesman is concerned with the real world, taking imperfect characters or souls as they are and suggesting ways to positively reform them in society. While it is true that the statesman’s knowledge is established as a species of theoretical knowledge (τῆς γνωστικῆς ἐπιστήμης, 260a1-2), and while the statesman himself directs with the wisdom of his soul rather than with his hands (259c6-8), the statesman is pictured from the outset as a ruler who acquires knowledge with a view to applying it practically, and as one who concerns himself with the messy perceptible world of flux. This poses an important difference between the statesman and the philosopher-ruler of the Republic.

\(^{170}\) Levin (2014: 13) argues that to metrion originated in Hippocratic discourses and that Plato was influenced by this usage in the Statesman. However, I think the emphasis Levin gives to a possible Hippocratic influence is far too strong. What we must take into consideration is the unique metaphysical status Plato accords to the concept and the way he appropriates it for his own philosophical purposes in his works. As Schofield (1997: 229) rather suggests, the concept as we see it in Plato is probably the result of extensive discussions between Plato and his pupils in the academy. In Section 3.4, I suggest some further ways in which Plato distances himself from the Hippocratics, this time with particular reference to their understanding of summetria in conceptualising health.
While it might be true that the content of their knowledge remains the same (I will argue for this interpretation below), the statesman is no mere ‘spectator’ of truths (τινὰ θεατήν, 260c2) as the philosopher-ruler seems to be by nature. That is to say, the philosopher would much rather not rule, while the statesman is geared to ruling from the outset.171 Within this nuanced political landscape, I will demonstrate, the concept of to metrion offers Plato a new way of conceiving of the well-orderedness of the city which is more sensitive to the realities of political life.

With these preliminary remarks behind us, it is time to explore how the concept is first established within the wider context of the dialogue. Prima facie, the Stranger’s introduction of the concept seems to derive from a self-reflexive concern on the status of his logos with his interlocutor. For he exclaims to Young Socrates (hereafter YS) that the lengthy distinctions given so far in the dialogue to get closer to a definition of weaving may well have been made in vain (μάτην, 283b2), since they could have taken the much easier option of defining weaving as the ‘intertwining of woof and warp’ (283a9-b2). In this way, the Stranger appears to warn us against the length of the myth that had just been given in the dialogue, as well as the length of speeches in general. The salient point be taken from the Stranger’s conscious reflections here is that the appropriate length of a speech will depend on the particular subject it is related to. Violating this principle would mean that a speech is being made in excess, which is counterproductive to the proper function of a logos.172

Once this worry has been laid out by the Stranger, YS responds that none of the previous divisions have in fact been made in vain. But even though he holds this view now, he may be inclined to think otherwise about lengthy divisions in the future, which is interestingly coined a ‘sickness’ (τὸ νόσημα, 283b6) by the Stranger. Thankfully, there exists an art of measurement (μετρητικῆ, 283d1) which serves to prevent YS of such sickness, and to remind him not only of the appropriate length of logos but, also of what is appropriate in the case of all sorts of production. As the Stranger goes on to later suggest, getting things right on the art of measurement will hold the key to distinguishing ‘bad men from good’ (283e5-6), which

171 For further comment on the differences between the statesman and philosopher-rulers in the Republic, see Schofield (2006: 179) and Lane (2005: 336-37).
172 Compare Johansen (2004: 190-192) on the proportionality of Timaeus’ logos and its particular subject matter: ‘[A] proportionate account of the cosmos itself instantiates the order and relative importance of the parts of the cosmos’. As I have been suggesting, a speech must be made proportionate to the value of its subject matter. Compare also Socrates in the Gorgias (Section 2.1), who tries to avoid βραχυλογία when speaking about Gorgias’ style of rhetoric (449c5). The point there is that Gorgianic rhetoric, which has no connection to the genuine improvement of people’s souls (which is the proper function of a speech), is unworthy of a lengthy explanation.
demonstrates why an understanding of the art of measurement will be so beneficial to YS’ intellectual and ethical development.

The Stranger begins to substantiate his account of measurement by saying that it pertains to the sphere of excess (ὑπεροχῆς) and deficiency (ἐλλείψεως) in general (283c11-d2). This brings to mind the notion of two opposing extremes, which jointly constitute the underlying substrate or material of artistic creation. Once the art of measurement has been sketched along these lines, the Stranger then bifurcates measurement into two distinct kinds. An examination of these kinds and the differences between them will then lead us to to metrion, which shall preoccupy us for the rest of this section. For now, consider the following:

One part will correspond to the sharing (κοινωνίαν) by things in greatness and smallness (μεγέθους καὶ σημικρότητος) in relation to each other (πρὸς ἄλληλα), the other to the necessary being of coming-into-being (κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν, 283d7-9).

The first kind of measurement outlined in this text concerns itself with the sharing of things which partake in ‘greatness’ and ‘smallness’ relative to one another (pros allēla). Put simply, this means that a particular instance of greatness and smallness is measured by these opposite extremes in their relation to one another, and not to some separate standard for judging the greatness or smallness of a particular thing. As I will now demonstrate, this mode of measurement is not only problematic for the political theory of the Statesman. Elsewhere in the dialogues, Plato also provides good textual grounds for being cautious about the first type of measurement above.

In the Protagoras, where the ‘art’ (technē) of measurement is said to be concerned with ‘excess and defect’ (ὑπερβολῆς τε καὶ ἐνδείας, 357a1-2) in similar language to the Statesman, Socrates champions measurement as holding the key to the salvation of human life. This salvation depends on making the ‘right choice’ about pleasures and pains, which Socrates says comes down to measuring the excess and defect of pleasures in their relation to one other (πρὸς...

173 In the Philebus, the notion of two distinct extremes moving in opposite directions becomes associated with one specific ‘kind’ within the fourfold ontology of the dialogue: the Unlimited (or peras). When I come to discuss the importance of the Philebus in Section 3.3, the similarities between the metaphysical frameworks of both dialogues will become clearer. For a discussion of the metaphysics of the Statesman and Philebus taken together now, see Sayre (2006).
174 This translation of the Statesman has its roots in Rowe (1995) but is otherwise my own. The biggest difference is with how we translate the latter part of the Greek ‘κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν’, on which I provide further analysis below.
175 While ‘greatness and smallness’ seem to be the paradigm case of ‘excess’ and ‘deficiency’ (283c11-d2), the Stranger also mentions several other such cases which fit into this broad category: the ‘exceeding and exceeded’ (283e3-4), the ‘greater and lesser’ (283d11-12, 284a1-2), and the ‘more and less’ (284a8-9).
This formulation clearly corresponds to the first type of measurement outlined in our text from the *Statesman* above. However, one immediate reason for being suspicious about this kind of measurement is that, in a famous passage from the *Phaedo* (69a-c), the measurement of pleasures and pains *pros allēlas* is ‘expressly condemned’ by Socrates. One should rather exchange all pleasures for the much worthier currency of wisdom (*phronēsis*), for only then will we be able to judge which pleasures may rightly be admitted into the virtuous life and why. What is therefore required is something external to the pleasures themselves by which pleasures can be independently assessed. This explains why, for one commentator, the *Phaedo* passage ‘puts in its proper place the ‘art of measurement’ as understood in the *Protagoras*.’

Returning to the *Statesman* with the hindsight of these passages in mind, the obvious danger with the greater and lesser existing *solely in their relation to one another* is that we would be left with no separate standard or norm for judging particular instantiations of greatness or smallness in the real world (whether a certain $x$ is ‘too big’, ‘too small’). This would have the effect of destroying all sorts of expertise and, in particular, the art of statesmanship itself (284a5-8). For the Stranger, the standard required for true measurement is provided by due measure (*to metrion*), which the second type of measurement in our text above corresponds to (283e3, 11). In contrast to the sharing of the greater and the lesser in relation to one another, the second type of measurement measures these opposites ‘κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν’. At this stage, however, it is far from clear how best to interpret this highly vexed phrase, as well as how *to metrion* is supposed to relate to this mode of measurement. These are some of the issues I now hope to shed further light on in what follows.

Christopher Rowe proposes a well-received translation of the Greek as ‘what producing things necessarily is’ (my emphasis). On this construal, the salient point being made is that the second type of measurement is necessary for artistic production, without which the various

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176 Similarly in the *Charmides* (168b5-9), Socrates says that the greater is only measured by the lesser (and *vice versa*), which supports once more the first measurement from the *Statesman*. It is interesting that Plato has *Socrates* in these dialogues voice comparative measurement, but when he comes to articulate the converse of such measurement (normative measurement) in the later dialogues, it is put in the mouth of *other* interlocutors. Perhaps this is one way in which Plato is showing us that he is offering us his own authentic ideas in the late dialogues?

177 The expression comes from Guthrie (1978: 170). Thus, while the *Protagoras* suggests that the art of measurement reveals the truth (δηλώσασ τὸ ἀληθὲς, 356d8-e1), it is also agnostic on precisely *how* this truth is revealed: ‘what kind of knowledge this would be, or what kind of know-how, is something we can look into some other time’ (357b5-6). Perhaps that is the task taken up by Plato in the *Statesman*.

178 Guthrie (1975: 234).

179 As Guthrie (1978: 169) notes, this measurement is ‘sufficient for purely theoretical studies’ only, while there is ‘no question of a *right* mean because he [the theoretician] has no ulterior purpose in view’ (Guthrie’s italics). This is an important part of the distinction between the two types of measurement.
crafts would be destroyed (see 284a5-8 once more). Indeed, the Stranger goes on to say at 284a8-b1 that the crafts ultimately depend on to metrion for their production of all fine and good things (πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ), which justifies why the second measurement is necessary for production. The only issue this leaves open, nevertheless, is why to metrion ought to assume this causal priority in production.

A significant clue is provided by the fact that, later in the dialogue, to metrion is also associated with what is ‘fitting’ (to prepon), the ‘right moment’ (ton kairon), and what ‘ought to be’ (to deon, 284e6-7). This means that rather than measuring the greater and the lesser haphazardly and in their relation to one another, when craftsmen produce their creations with reference to to metrion they also consider what is right or appropriate in any given instance of production. What is in due measure, then, can therefore be understood as the best and most stable condition of an item comprised of a plurality of opposing extremes.

While this interpretation of the second measurement certainly reveals something of the function of to metrion, the preferred translation of κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν adopted in this thesis as a measurement concerned with ‘the necessary being of coming-into-being’ is more metaphysically charged than Rowe’s translation would admit. My own construal both takes the Greek literally and sees in the reference to ousia a profound metaphysical point. On this reading, the second measurement also takes into consideration the ‘essence’ or ‘being’ behind particular acts of production which, controversially, is provided by nothing other than the intelligible Forms. To clarify the point, opposite extremes existing in some one whole

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180 In fact, to metrion must needs to be ‘compelled’ into existence in much the same way as Non-Being had to be compelled into existence in the Sophist (254a-259b). For without the existence of to metrion, the art of Statesmanship would in fact disappear, in the same way that reality would break down without Non-Being itself.

181 Actually, it is by preserving measure (to metron) that all craftsmen produce what is fine and good. I suspect that to metron refers to ‘measure’ as such, which is prior to to metrion, but which will nevertheless produce the right measure (to metrion) within a complex whole of parts.

182 While Samaras (2002: 143) suggests that to prepon, ton kairon and to deon represent a ‘shift in emphasis from the universal to particulars’, I argue that these items of knowledge do not conflict with the statesman’s knowledge of Forms. As Samaras (2002: 144) also writes: ‘Forms remain ontologically prior, and their knowledge remains the sine qua non for the Scientific Ruler’. For a more thorough analysis of ton kairon, see Lane (1998).

183 This perhaps explains one reason why the Stranger criticises those ‘clever’ men (κομψοί) who suppose themselves to be saying something ‘wise’ (σοφὸν) when they say that there is ‘an art of measurement relating to everything that comes into being’ (284e11-285a3). Arguably, Plato could be referring to thinkers such as the Pythagoreans who valued the numbers in the world but did not go one step further to investigate where those numbers came from, on which Republic 531c provides support. But this may not be the only reason why the clever men are criticised; for they are also said to carry out their investigations without dividing into kinds, throwing all kinds of things together. So, perhaps the Stranger is also criticising the clever men for lumping together the two kinds of measurement together without discrimination. For a more thorough (and different) analysis of the so-called ‘clever’ men, see Barney (2021b: 129-134).
must be reconciled through the imposition of an appropriate Form, and this is what I take the necessary being (ousia) of production to provide.\textsuperscript{184}

Take particular acts of courage, for instance, and let us place at either end of the spectrum the two opposite extremes of foolishness and cowardice (which may well fit into the Stranger’s general framework of ‘excess’ and ‘deficiency’ at 283c11-d2). One extreme will correspond with overexuberant and inappropriate acts of courage, while the other will correspond with actions which substantially lack courage. It could be argued that it takes the ‘being’ of Courage to instantiate the appropriate act of courage, which stands somewhere between these opposite extremes as a certain numerical ratio which captures the notion of due measure. On this analysis of the second measurement, the Stranger’s language of ‘necessary being’ thus serves to highlight the objective reality of the normative standards behind production, which have their origins in the Forms.\textsuperscript{185}

This interpretation does not, however, require to metrion to be as abstract or transcendent as a Form. For notice that the Stranger twice refers to the ‘coming-into-being of due measure’ (τὴν τοῦ μετρίου γένεσιν, 284c1, d6). As we have also seen, to metrion is a standard which is intimately linked with terms which bring to mind the ‘existential limitations of context’ (recall to prepon, ton kairon, to deon).\textsuperscript{186} If the essence (ousia) of production leads the statesman away to the Forms, the appropriate, the timely, and the necessary bring him right back down to the physical world. While the Forms are unchanged and eternal, particulars ‘down here’ are messy and in perpetual flux. The statesman must find a way to marry the two, and he does this by

\textsuperscript{184} This interpretation has its origins in Miller (2004: 66), whose more metaphysical reading of the Statesman I am sympathetic with. For evidence of intelligible items in the Statesman, see especially 285d-286b. This text both 1) draws a distinction between perceptible likenesses and ‘those things that are greatest and most valuable’ of which there are no sensible images, and 2) refers to the value of being able to ‘give and receive an account of each thing’, where the Stranger has in mind things which are ‘without body, which are finest and greatest’. Such language is strongly reminiscent of Plato’s metaphysics in the middle-period dialogues. See also 269d-e, which refers to entities that remain ‘permanently in the same state’, which ‘belongs only to the most divine things of all, and the category of body is not of this order’. For a defense of Forms in the Statesman with reference to the texts cited, see Samaras (2002: 138-146). Rowe (2000: 328-329) also suggests that the objects of the statesman’s knowledge, consonant with the philosopher-rulers, are transcendent Forms. However, Rowe also concedes that the Statesman, unlike the Republic, has no ‘explicit metaphysical commitments’ (my italics). While these may not be explicit, that should not perturb us from the fact that the statesman is concerned with metaphysics, for as I shall suggest his instantiation of to metrion is compatible with his knowledge of Forms.

\textsuperscript{185} Mohr (1977: 232-234) strikes a comparison here with the Statesman and Aristotle’s On Ideas, where it is said that the ‘objects of the arts exist and are something other than the particulars’. In both contexts, Mohr understands the ‘objects’ of the arts as separate Forms. Compare Guthrie (1978: 171), who writes: ‘[F]or Plato the standard [to metrion] is obviously provided by the changeless and definable Forms, culminating in the Form of the Good’. See also more recently Harvey (2009: 21): ‘the normative standards governing the production of mixtures possess their status by virtue of their relation to the Forms’.

\textsuperscript{186} I borrow this phrase from Miller (2004: 66). One might also find it helpful to compare Philebus 62a-c, where Socrates speaks of the individual who has knowledge of what ‘Justice itself is’ but does not have the human tools to ‘find his way home’. What is therefore desirable is some combination of theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge so as to flourish within the world.
considering how the Form might best be instantiated according to what is appropriate, timely, and needed. The ‘coming-into-being’ of to metrion may, therefore, be understood as the ‘fullest possible realisation of the Form’ as one scholar has put it.\(^{187}\) To metrion is then neither a Form, nor a sensible (since it functions as an absolute paradigm), but rather something intermediate between the two—‘a standard for judging the realization of an idea’.\(^{188}\)

This analysis of to metrion has several upshots for Plato’s theory of well-ordered wholes. First, it is better able to explain how the Forms are involved in the creation of a well-ordered whole. In the Republic, Plato employed the model of a painter as an attempt to explain how philosophers use the Form in their creation of the well-ordered city and soul. There, it was said that philosopher-rulers look back and forth between an eternal model and their creation like painters (501b1-7). However, other than the suggestion that philosophers ‘mix’ and ‘blend’ their material (on which, see pp. 64-65) so as to reproduce the paradigmatic Forms—which may well anticipate the Statesman in the sense that to metrion can be seen as a ‘definite ratio’ among different extremes—Plato did not have much else to say about how intelligible items become manifest in production. In the Statesman, by contrast, to metrion adds a more ‘practical’ dimension to the artistic creation of well-ordered wholes, which straddles the notion of an intelligible paradigm interacting with the contingencies of the physical world (to prepon, ton kairon, to deon). In this way, to metrion can be seen as the best expression of that interaction.

In addition to this, the concept of to metrion also equips Plato with a consistently workable framework for conceptualising the well-orderedness of complex items. As we have seen, due measure functions as a normative standard for judging the goodness of all artistic production, providing us with a reliable reference point for whether or not an item is well-ordered.\(^{189}\) This standard, I have tried to demonstrate, is one where the emphasis is put on the notion of the right measure, balance, and compromise between distinct and potentially opposing extremes existing within some one whole. In this way, the standard of to metrion is well suited to mitigating the possibility of any one part within a complex structure from swaying towards excess—a feature of Plato’s theory of well-ordered wholes which becomes increasingly pronounced in the later dialogues.

\(^{187}\) I refer once more to Miller (2004: 67).

\(^{188}\) The expression comes from Ferber (1998: 55).

\(^{189}\) Barney’s (2021) analysis of to metrion in the Statesman points to a further epistemological upshot, which ‘represents the power of rational inquiry to reach objective and authoritative results’ (p. 134). This hope for ‘objectivity’ has its roots in earlier dialogues such as Euthyphro 7d1e-5, Barney (2021b: 125-127) suggests, but is fulfilled with normative measurement in the Statesman.
Having reconstructed the metaphysical framework opened up by the concept *to metrion* at length, it is time now to explore some of the implications of this concept for the well-orderedness of the city in the dialogue. This will then allow us to appreciate some of the political differences between the *Statesman* and previous dialogues, which I will go on to highlight at the end of this section. Within the political context of the *Statesman*, the two opposite extremes which stand in need of reconciliation by due measure, and which function as the statesman’s productive ‘material’, are the virtues of ‘courage’ and ‘moderation’ respectively. These virtues, I suggest, can be understood as both tendencies of individual souls and of the city at large—for if the souls of individual citizens have a predominance of either virtue, then this predominance will also extend into the collective citizen body.

Now, while it is often said (λέγεται) that the different parts (μόρια) of virtue, *qua* virtues, are all ‘amicably disposed’ towards one another (ἀλλήλους φίλους, 306b13-c1), the Stranger also makes the ‘astonishing’ (θαυμαστόν) assertion that the specific virtues of courage and moderation are in ‘some sort of way’ (τινα τρόπον) hostile towards each other and opposed in various ways (πρὸς ἄλληλας ἐχθρὰ καὶ στάσιν ἐναντίον, 306b6-11). There follows a stretch of text in which the Stranger appeals to our everyday experience to show that these virtues *are* in fact diametrically opposed. The task of the statesman is, therefore, to discover and instantiate the *right measure* (*to metrion*) among these different ‘extremes’, ending the conflict between them and thus bringing the ‘organisation of life as a whole’ (περὶ ὅλην [...]) τὴν τοῦ ζῆν παρασκευήν, 307e1) into unity.

On the model of the *Statesman*, this task is not achieved with a ‘one size fits all’ approach, according to which each and every citizen will have the *same* measure of courage and moderation in their soul. For some individuals may well still have a predominance of either virtue, which is only to be expected among persons with naturally distinct tendencies. Nevertheless, the statesman will aim to instil the *right measure* among these virtues by weaving a society which neither unduly neglects nor overvalues either virtue, but rather acknowledges the need for a healthy balance between both (esp. 309a8-b7). The individual who has a propensity to embody either courage or moderation to the level of *excess* must therefore be moderated through an appreciation and mild dosage of the opposite virtue, thereby becoming altogether ‘fine and noble’ (ἐπὶ τὸ γενναῖον [...] καθίστασθαι, 309a8-b1).

The way that the statesman will carry out this task becomes the central focus of the final part of the dialogue to work out. Indeed, what still remains is an explanation of exactly *how*, in the words of the Stranger, the statesman will bring all the parts of the city ‘together into one’ (πάντα εἰς ἑν) and produce ‘some single kind of thing with a single capacity’ (μίαν τινὰ δύναμιν...
καὶ ἰδέαν, 308c6-7). For the unity of the city remains the primary desideratum for Plato in the Statesman, just as it did in the Republic, even though we questioned how far Plato was successful in this in the previous chapter. Thus, it is said that the statesman endeavours to unify the city through the imposition of certain ‘bonds’ (δεσμοί).  

It is to an examination of these bonds (309c-311a) that I would now like to turn to in what remains in this section.

On the one hand, the statesman is said to ‘fit together’ (συναρμοσαμένη) the ‘eternal’ (τὸ ἀειγενὲς) part of the citizens’ souls with a ‘divine bond’ (θείῳ δεμῷ) in accordance with its affinity to the divine (κατὰ τὸ συγγενὲς, 309c1-3). The way that the statesman will attempt to actualise this divine bond in the community is by instilling in the divine portion of souls a true opinion (ἄληθη δόξαν) about what is ‘fine, just and good’ (τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων πέρι καὶ ἀγαθῶν) and their opposites (309c5-8). According to the previous interpretation, the statesman is arguably able to do this through his higher knowledge of these same items, which he will bring about in the city through the ‘means of the music that belongs to the art of kinship’ (τῇ τῆς βασιλικῆς μούσῃ, 309d1-4). Analogously, the statesman will exercise his art by instantiating the ‘being’ (ousia) of these values in society through the ‘coming-into-being’ of to metrion (τὴν τοῦ μετρίου γένεσιν). As the Stranger had previously exclaimed, we must remember, the art of statesmanship would be destroyed without the existence of due measure (284a5-8).

When a soul is predominant in courage and has no share of the opposite virtue, the Stranger says, it will ‘slide away towards becoming like some kind of beast’ (τινὰ θηριώδη, 309e2-3). By contrast, a courageous soul which has been fitted together with the divine bond of the statesman will be more willing to have a share in justice (309d10-e2). Consonantly, if a soul is too predominant in the opposite virtue of moderation, it will acquire a ‘disgraceful reputation for simple-mindedness’ (εὐθείας, 309e7-8, a term which should be understood pejoratively in this context). When the excessively moderate soul has been remedied through the art of the statesman, conversely, it will become ‘genuinely moderate and wise’ (ὄντως σῶφρον καὶ φρόνιμον, 309e6). Once the divine bond has been effectively fitted together with the souls of citizens in this way—which enables each soul to become properly virtuous through a proper

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190 As El-Murr (2021b: 255) rightly observes, citizens with opposite tendencies ‘must still be reconciled, for it must be shown that they are two compatible parts of the same whole, each recognizing the other as a legitimate part of this whole’. As I suggest at the end of this section, the statesman’s intertwining art seems to produce a different well-ordered whole out of the city than, for instance, the Republic.

191 From a less metaphysical and more practical perspective, the statesman will instantiate to metrion in the city through two further means. First, by overseeing other crafts in the city (rhetoric, musical education, law), and deciding when (recall ton kairon) and how they should be used to promote due measure among the opposite virtues of courage and bravery (304c10-305e5). Secondly, by making decisions about the right time when the opposite virtues should receive praise or blame (see esp. 307a-c, 307e).
understanding of what is fine and just and good—the statesman will have realised his aim of ‘uniting parts of virtue that are by nature unlike each other, and tend in opposite directions’

(ἀρετῆς μερῶν φύσει ἀνομοίων καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἑναντία φερομέων, 310a4-5).

This divine bond, nonetheless, must also be complemented with certain ‘human bonds’ (ἀνθρωπίνοις) which are attached to the ‘mortal’ or ‘human’ part of citizens’ souls (τὸ ζωογενὲς ἀντίον, 309c3). These bonds are said to be secured through ‘intermarriages and the sharing of children’ (τῶν ἐπιγαμιῶν καὶ παιδών κοινωνήσεων, 310b2-5). For when the dispositions of courage and moderation in the citizens’ souls are not ‘mixed’ (ἀμεικτός) with their opposite virtue through such intrafamilial relations, then you end up with a society where these virtues become intolerable and too overpowering (310d6-e3). Not only this, but one further feature of the city that must also be held in common among various psychic dispositions is the ‘sharing of offices’ (311a1-2), a political opportunity flatly denied to anyone other than those with supreme philosophical wisdom in Kallipolis. In this way, important organisational activities in the city will be given to individuals with different temperaments, bolstering the harmonious mixture of these virtues in society at large.

In the final lines of the dialogue, the combination of both divine and human bonds is said to bring the dispositions of brave and moderate people together into ‘agreement and friendship’ (ὁμονοίᾳ καὶ φιλίᾳ, 311b9). Importantly, while these are the same values that philosopher-rulers aim to instantiate in the Republic, unlike that dialogue this is not a philia which results out of a strict separation or hierarchy among citizens—what we might call a ‘vertical’ notion of friendship. Rather, the philia of the Statesman is one in which difference and plurality are part of a more integrated account of well-orderedness, and where a merging or fusion of potentially hostile opposites creates a sort of unity-in-plurality—a more ‘horizontal’ notion of friendship achieved through the new notion of to metrion. This is in fact the version of friendship Plato will end up with in the Laws, as I will show in the next section, although the way that this friendship is achieved is slightly different within the political framework of that dialogue (see esp. pp 108-109).

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192 The notion of balancing out extremes in the city through inter-marriage relations is also made a central feature of Book 6 of the Laws (772e6-773e5), where we are told that a rich man ought to marry a poorer woman, and a man with a headstrong temperament ought to marry a woman with a quieter and more gentle nature. For ‘everyone is naturally drawn to the person most like himself, and that puts the whole state off balance (ἀνώμαλος, 773b6-c1)’. The Stranger goes on to liken the state to the ‘mixture of a mixing-bowl’ (κρατῆρος κεκραμένην). In the same way that wine, when mixed with water, produces a pleasing drink, the same principle applies to the production of children when parents are mixed together well (773c8-d5).

193 I thank Frisbee Sheffield for pressing me on the distinction between these different models of friendship.
These differences, I suggest, are emblematic of the way that Plato assumes that a complex whole of parts such as the city is best held together in unity (συνέχῃ, 311c4) in the later dialogues. Importantly, the rather nuanced account of political unity in the *Statesman* is grounded in the metaphysical concept of *to metrion*, which makes due measure among opposing extremes the salient feature of integrated well-orderedness. This bolsters a suggestion made recently in the literature by Malcolm Schofield, which we are now in a much better position to appreciate:

‘It is hard to doubt that Plato saw his identification of the notion of the proper mean between excess and deficiency as a lasting and fundamental contribution to the understanding of political judgement. It resonates with other pivotal statements on right measure in other late dialogues’. 194

In this section, I hope to have clarified the metaphysical framework connected to the notion of a ‘proper mean between excess and deficiency’, as well as provided some suggestions as to how this framework informs the way that Plato conceptualises political unity in the *Statesman*. In the next section, I will demonstrate how the concept of *to metrion*, in combination with its close relative *summetria*, is taken up by Plato in the *Laws* to produce further striking political contrasts with the *Republic* regarding the well-orderedness and unity of the city.

3.2. The Concepts of *To Metrion* and *Summetria* in the *Laws*

In order to understand how the concept of *to metrion* is behind Plato’s thinking on civic unity in the *Laws*, let me first make some general remarks on the political orientation of the dialogue. Much like the *Statesman*, but unlike the *Republic*, it has often been noted that the *Laws* takes a much more ‘pragmatic’ approach to politics.195 What this means is that the dialogue works with existing constitutions and attempts to reform them from within, much like the *Statesman* took characters from within the real world, rather than conjuring up a hypothetical city outside of our ordinary experience.

In the *Laws*, Plato is interested in the structure of two main political systems: monarchy and democracy. The main historical examples of such constitutions given in the dialogue are Sparta

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194 Schofield (2006: 182). All that I would add to this otherwise illuminating statement is that the notion of due measure does not just inform Plato’s politics, but also his ethics and cosmology, as we shall see in the final two sections to this chapter.

195 On the pragmatism of the *Laws*, see the monograph by Bartels (2017). Schofield (2006: 81) speaks rather of the *Laws*’ more ‘historical’ approach, which Book 3 provides good evidence of, as I will demonstrate below.
(and Persia in Book 3) and Athens, which represent the two distinct tendencies of slavery and freedom. This should already serve to remind us of the metaphysical framework of the Statesman, central to which is the notion of two opposing extremes which need to be reconciled by the normative standard of to metrion (in fact, the principal virtues of courage and moderation from that dialogue are specifically associated with the cities of Sparta and Athens in the Laws).

From as early as Book 3 of the dialogue, the Athenian establishes certain aims the lawgiver must legislate with a view towards if the city is to become well-ordered. In order to avoid the pitfalls of previous regimes, he says, a city ‘needs to be free, rational, and on friendly terms with itself’ (ἐλευθέραν τε εἶναι δεῖ καὶ ἔμφρονα καὶ ἕαυτῇ φίλην, 693b3-4). Importantly, while rationality and friendship were set out as clear desiderata for the ideal city in the Republic, the Laws adds a third novel component: freedom. As Malcolm Schofield writes, ‘[W]hat the Republic does not do, by contrast [with the Laws], is accord any explicit recognition to freedom as a fundamental value needing to be built into the basic design of the politeia of the good city’.196 Within the Laws, this positive attention to freedom functions as an attempt to balance sovereign authority with the basic rights citizens possess in a political regime for self-determination and individual autonomy. This nuance, I suggest, will turn out to have significant implications for how the well-orderedness of the city is now being conceived in the Laws.

If these aims are going to be instantiated in the city, the Athenian says, then it must necessarily partake of both systems of monarchy and democracy (693d8). In other words, the city becomes unified by possessing features of both freedom and authority. This means that the trinity of aims for the lawgiver are distinctive features of the mixed system, so that all other political systems fail to instantiate these values due to a predominance of either freedom or slavery. What is important to observe for my purposes here is that the desired relation between both systems of government is put in the normative language of to metrion.

In preparation for this use of the concept, one important place where to metrion is first alluded to is in the Athenian’s discussion of certain historical cases where leaders in the past had apparently disregarded due measure. The Athenian provides the specific example of the kings of Argos and Messene, who had transgressed the norms of good ruling thus ‘destroying both themselves and the power of the Greeks’ (690d5-e1). The good lawgiver must learn from such examples and study them diligently. He will benefit from asking himself the question: what exactly constituted the decline of such rulers?

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Wasn’t it because they were ignorant of Hesiod’s—absolutely correct—observation that the half is often greater than the whole? He thought that when it was damaging to take the whole, but the half constitutes due measure (τὸ μέτριον), then due measure (τὸ μέτριον) is more than the immoderate (τὸ ἀμέτρον)—better in preference to worse (690e1-5, Hesiod’s Works and Days 40).

While there were two earlier references to to metrion in the context of the education of the youth, which signalled ‘moderation’ in drinking and dancing (666a8, c5), to metrion is here normatively loaded in the way we found it to be in the Statesman. For neglecting Hesiod’s plea for due measure (not taking more than one ought to) turns out to be a great source of civil faction, while upholding it will hold the key to the flourishing of a city. This is precisely what happened to the kings of Argos and Messene, who met their fate as they demanded more than the law decreed (τὸ πλεονεκτεῖν τῶν τεθέντων νόμων, 691a4), leading to a personal discord (stasis, 690d4) which resulted in the destruction of the whole of Greece. Indeed, the Athenian says that disregarding to metrion is a ‘disease affecting kings for the most part’ (691a1-2) as a result of their desire and greed for more political power.

The Athenian then bolsters his account of the dangers associated with neglecting to metrion in the political sphere with an observation of what happens in the case of both organic and inorganic objects generally. Consider to this end the following:

If you forget about due measure or proportion (παρεὶς τὸ μέτριον), and give things with too much power (μείζονα) things which have less (τοῖς ἐλάτοσσι) — sails to ships, food to the body, or positions of power to the human soul — then everything is turned upside down (ἀνατρέπεταί που πάντα); excess takes over (ἐξυβρίζοντα), and things run either to physical disorder or to injustice, the child of excess. What exactly are we saying? Doesn’t it amount to this? There is no human soul, my friend, which is naturally able to handle absolute power (τὴν μεγίστην ἀρχὴν) over human beings when it is young and unaccountable; its mind fills with folly (ἀνοίας), that greatest of ailments, and it becomes an object of hatred to its closest friends; once that happens, the soul is rapidly destroyed (διέφθειρεν), and loses all its power. That is what the great lawgivers have to guard against — and they do it by observing due proportion (τὸ μέτριον, 691c1-d5).

Translations of the Laws come from Griffith (2016) with emendations. It should be noted that the language of to metrion is not actually found in the Works and Days but is a Platonic addition. However, Plato clearly took the general thrust of the passage to be implying the notion of due measure (normatively understood).
The main point promulgated in this passage is that giving ‘too much’ (meizonê) to something which is not able to handle a greater amount will create an unwanted excess and eventually ‘destroy’ (diephhteieren) that item. This general point is supported by the examples of a ship and a human body, which ‘turn upside down’ whenever they are given more than they are able to tolerate. For instance, a ship will not be able to adequately direct itself if its sails are too big for the rest of the ship, while the body cannot endure too much food without eventually becoming filled with diseases. This clearly has implications for the proper function of each item; a ship cannot sail unless its parts are in proportion with one another, while the organs will eventually fail if the body is given a disproportionate amount of food necessary for its survival.

These basic examples, however, are intended to be supplementary to the main subject the Athenian is interested with in this passage—political power and its effect on the human soul. In the same way that too much food brings disease to the body, too much political power for the soul, insofar as it corrupts it, creates the biggest disease of all: ignorance (anoia). One is reminded of the example of Callicles, whose soul is corrupted by a desire for more power than is rightly due (pleonexia) and who was said in our famous ‘cosmological’ passage from the Gorgias (507e6-508a8) to be ignorant of the great power that ‘geometrical equality’ holds among gods and men. The true lawgiver must therefore safeguard against this disease by ensuring that authority never reaches the point of excess but is always curtailed in faithful observance of to metrion. As the Athenian later says, god is in fact the ‘measure’ (metron) of all things, and so if we want to be a friend of god we ought to become like him in respect of becoming measured ourselves (716c1-d4).

Our passage from the Laws above has, moreover, often come as a surprise to readers of the Republic. For in that dialogue, Plato isolates unrestricted political authority to a certain class of individuals, which is incidentally comprised of the least number of people in the city. Now, I cannot speculate on whether this difference in political orientation of both dialogues was motivated by Plato’s own involvements abroad as documented in the Seventh Letter, whose authenticity is spurious. The observation I would like to make here is that the Laws’ warning of extreme political authority is consonant with the development of the concept of to metrion. On this account, any form of extreme power which is not moderated by due measure is incongruous with well-orderedness. Expressed politically, this clearly has implications for how

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198 Barney (2021b: 127) suggests that geometrical equality in the Gorgias anticipates to metrion in later dialogues in important ways: ‘measurement appears in its [the Gorgias’] invocation of ‘geometrical equality’, which looks like it might be a more specific precursor to the normative measure [i.e. to metrion].’
the well-orderedness of the city is being conceived, but will also be shown to have implications for how Plato thinks other complex wholes of parts become well-ordered too.

These are ideas to which the *Laws* explicitly return later in Book 3, where the Athenian begins to expound a more positive account of *to metrion* by reflecting on certain progressive cases of rulers in the past who were able to observe Hesiod’s famous rule in government (see again 690e1-5). I refer to the example of Persia under the time of Cyrus the Great before it became a pure monarchy, which the Athenian speaks of as a society which had a more proportionate relation between slavery and freedom. Let me quote the text here in full:

This [*to metrion* between slavery and freedom] gave them, first, their personal freedom, and secondly, the mastery over many peoples. The rulers gave a share of freedom (ἔλευθερίας) to those under their rule, *putting them on an equal footing* (ἐπὶ τὸ ἵσον ἄγοντες). This made the soldiers well disposed (μᾶλλον ὕπολοι) towards their generals, and they showed themselves eager to face danger. And further, if there was any among them wise enough (φρόνιμος) to offer good advice, the king was not one to resent this. He allowed freedom of speech (διδόντος δὲ παρρησίαν), and promoted those whose advice was of some value (τιμῶντος τοὺς εἴς τι δυναμένους συμβουλεύειν). So someone like this could regard the benefit of his wisdom as belonging to everybody, and put it forward openly. *So at that time all their affairs prospered as a result of their freedom, friendship, and community of mind* (δὲ ἔλευθερίαν τε καὶ φιλίαν καὶ νοῦ κοινωνίαν, 694a3-b6, my emphasis).199

In this passage, I will show *to metrion* functions to facilitate both friendship and freedom, two of the values which were suggested to be key to civic unity at the start of the dialogue. First, one important outcome of Cyrus’ reign as portrayed in this text was that the rulers gave a certain share of ‘freedom’ to the ruled, thus putting them all on an ‘equal footing’ with one another (I shall return to the function of equality in particular shortly). This freedom, importantly, was enabled by allowing those beneath the rulers to have ‘freedom of speech’ (*parrēsian*). If there was someone *phronimos* enough among the soldiers, then, rather than having their views unduly silenced, that person was actively encouraged to contribute to the king’s decision making. This freedom for others to contribute to the collective government of the city, it seems, functions as a significant check on the sort of excessive power we found to plague the kings of

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199 Schofield (2013: 292) doubts whether this picture of Persia under King Cyrus is in fact accurate, which is corroborated by Cleinias’ reply: ‘what you describe probably (Ἐωκίν) is what happened’ (694b7). Nevertheless, it is certainly helpful to reflect on the passage for how Plato thinks an appreciation of *to metrion* in a political regime creates a well-ordered city.
Argos and Messene above, and which the Athenian fears would corrupt a single ruler. Moreover, it works to secure the right measure (to metrion) between opposing claims to authority: extreme oligarchic rule on the one hand, and extreme collective to rule on the other.

In stark contrast to the Republic, freedom—which equates to allowing those in inferior positions to have a share in the functions of government—becomes a critical factor in the proliferation of communal friendship in the Laws. For this freedom is said to make the soldiers in King Cyrus’ reign ‘more friendly’ (mallon philoi) towards their superiors. In the final lines of the passage, moreover, notice that the structure of king Cyrus’ government made the whole of Persia flourish as a result of its ‘freedom, friendship and community of mind’. Admittedly, were there too much freedom among the citizens, then the city might lack the proper direction it needs to make good decisions. For excessive freedom poses genuine threats of its own, and could equally lead to the corruption of all citizens as much as excessive authority (this is perhaps the danger with democratic Athens). It is not, therefore, that there should be no ruling principle, for the Athenian would not have expressly said earlier in the dialogue that ‘in any gathering or association—for any activity whatever—it is right that in each and every case there should be a directive principle (ἄρχοντα, 640a3-6)’. No, the issue at stake is what sort of balance or hierarchy between ruler and ruled, authority and freedom, best fosters a friendly and unified community of distinct parts.

The response of the Laws, I suggest, is to base its conception of friendship on a more robust sense of equality among citizens varying in degrees of virtue and intelligence. And here is where we may recall the Athenian’s striking reference to the effect of freedom as putting all the Persians ‘on an equal footing’ (epi to ison agontes) with one another. This, incidentally, gets us closer to a conception of ‘horizontal’ friendship alluded to in the previous section (on p. 102), or what Malcolm Schofield has called ‘egalitarian friendship’ in contrast with a ‘friendship based on superiority, or as we might put it, hierarchy or deference’. In fact, this is the paradigmatic model of friendship in Aristotle, who famously suggests that ‘only those who are on an equality are friends’ (EE 1239a4-5). By incorporating freedom into the social fabric of the community in the Laws, I submit, Plato seems to be more conscious of the binding role of equality in keeping disparate members of the community in friendship and thus unity.

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200 This can be fruitfully compared with the subsequent reign of king Darius, whose government was also said to successfully instantiate to metrion by allowing ‘some degree of common equality (ἰσόρροπη κοινήν τινα)’, thereby ‘creating friendship (φιλίαν) and community (κοινωνίαν) among all Persians’ (695c10-d6).


202 As I will suggest below, the equality Plato operates with in the Laws is geometrical equality, which gives more opportunities to some and less to others. Interestingly, Schofield (1998: 43) renders this as a form of hierarchical friendship. But as he also observes, ‘[F]or Aristotle polity is not the only ‘correct’ form of
This connection between friendship and equality is substantiated further in Book 6 of the *Laws*, where Plato offers a more precise account of the exact sort of equality which best engenders friendship and political unity. This model of equality, moreover, is tied closely to the political ideal of *to metrion*, so that it must be able to foster a measured relation between the opposite extremes of monarchy (slavery) and democracy (freedom). The Athenian thus begins by reinforcing the message that a constitution should at all times maintain a ‘middle position’ (μέσον) between these two distinct constitutions (756e9-10). This is then followed by the striking claim that ‘slaves and masters can never be friends’ (757a1). Arguably, this may read as a direct reassessment of the *Republic*, where becoming ‘alike and friends’ (ὅμοιοι ὦμεν καὶ φίλοι) was predicated on a sort of quasi-slavery and dominant hierarchy where the ruled were obstructed from exercising any self-autonomy (590c8-d6).

In a further noticeable point of contrast with that dialogue, the Athenian also refers to the old and true saying that ‘equality creates friendship’ (ὡς ἰσότης φιλότητα ἀπεργάζεται, 757a6-7, cf. Aristotle *EE* 1239a4-5). In the previous chapter (pp. 73-77), I showed that the *Republic* was ambiguous on the function of equality in creating civic unity, though it was suggested that if the dialogue is operating with a model of equality at all, it is likely to be one which enables severe inequalities and differences among citizens (the so-called ‘harmonic’ proportion). This is again something that the *Laws* consciously seeks to correct, and it does so by elaborating a thoroughly detailed theory of equality. Nevertheless, the exact type of equality which has the effect of creating true friendship is, as it stands, still far from clear. Consider to this end the distinction between the following two kinds of equality:

Equality comes in two forms, which, though they both have the same name, are really, in many respects, almost diametrically opposed. The first (i) is the equality of measurement, weights, and number, and applying it to the distribution of public honours is within the capacity of any city—

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203 It is for this reason that El-Murr (2014: 24) submits that Socrates’ ‘approach to civic friendship in the *Republic* falls short of the precise account provided by the *Laws* and remains unconvincing’. Bolstering this contrast further, El-Murr rightly notes on the same page that ‘the majority of citizens do not participate in the political life of the city and […] do not seem to share in joint activities of the kind described in the *Laws*’. El-Murr draws on Bobonich (2002: 432), who stresses the shared activities citizens of Magnesia are involved in, including, crucially, political participation. As I will demonstrate below (and this is something that neither commentator ventures to suggest), this sharing is enabled by geometrical equality, an equality which I suggested in the previous chapter could be present in the *Republic* but is nevertheless difficult to square with the dialogue’s dominant hierarchy (pp. 73-77).
or any lawgiver; they can use the drawing of lots to ensure equality. But (ii) the truest and best equality (τὴν δὲ ἄλληθεστάτην καὶ ἄριστην ἰσότητα) is not immediately obvious to everybody. It leaves the decision to Zeus, and its effect on mankind is always the same: it helps them but rarely, though whenever it does help either cities or individuals, it is the cause of all things good (πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ ἀπεργάζεται), since it allocates more to what is greater and less to what is lesser, and by giving each of them a measure related to its nature—in the case of public honours, greater honours to those whose endowment of human goodness is greater, and lesser honours to those whose endowment of goodness and education is the opposite duly allocates to each class what is appropriate to it (τῷ μὲν γὰρ μείζον πλείον, τῷ δὲ ἐλάττων σμικρότερα νέμει, μέτρια διδοῦσα πρὸς τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν ἐκατέρω, καὶ δὴ καὶ τιμὰς μείζοσι μὲν πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀεὶ μείζους, τοῖς δὲ τούναντιν ἔχουσιν ἀρετῆς τε καὶ παιδείας τὸ πρέπον ἐκατέροις ἀπονέμει κατὰ λόγον, 757b1-c6, my emphasis).

On the first model (i), political positions are drawn at random through the use of the lot without any regard for personal differences, since each individual is deemed to have the same intrinsic worth and value. This corresponds to an Athenian conception of strict democratic equality, which has its roots in Archytas’ so-called ‘arithmetic’ mean which obtains ‘whenever three terms are in proportion by exceeding one another in the following way: the first exceeds the second, by this the second exceeds the third’ (Fr. 2, p. 44). This model is then contrasted with a second model of equality (ii), which is rarely used in cities but is ‘the cause of all things good’ whenever it is employed. This model, which is also said to be the ‘truest and best’ equality and ‘leaves the decision to Zeus’, clearly corresponds to the geometrical equality-proportion we saw Plato espousing at least in outline in our famous ‘cosmological’ passage from the Gorgias (508a4-8). For it gives out ‘more to the more deserving, and less to the less deserving’ according to those whose ‘endowment of human goodness is greater’ and those whose ‘endowment of goodness and education is the opposite’. Let me take some time now to flesh out some of the most important implications of this model of equality, with particular attention to how it bolsters the trinity of aims for a lawgiver set out at the beginning of the dialogue (freedom, friendship, and rationality) and upholds the normative ideal of to metrion between monarchy and democracy.

Now, unlike the arithmetic equality, one important detail to be aware of is that geometrical equality does not entail absolute equality. For on this model, there is an inequality of distributions depending on the virtue of each individual. This is supported by one earlier passage where the Athenian applies the principle of geometrical equality to the distribution of
property, tax, and office allocation (744b-d). In ideal circumstances, citizens will enter the state with an equal share of property and will be given completely equal shares in return. But since this is not the case, there are good reasons, the Athenian says, for allocating property rights which are not equal. This point is once again made in the normative language of ‘τῷ ἀνίσῳ συμμέτρῳ’ (744c3), which literally translates to ‘proportional inequality’. Consonant with the second type of equality above, what is being envisaged here is a system where people are given greater opportunities according to what they can offer to the state, ‘not just on the moral excellence of somebody’s ancestors, or of the person himself, or on his physical strength or good looks, but also on what they have made of their wealth or on their poverty’ (744b7-c2). Within this framework, citizens will be given rights in an appropriate proportion to their wealth, which ensures greater opportunities for enterprise to the more able but also leaves room for a considerable degree of social mobility. The result of this is the establishment of four different classes, each with an unequal size of property, but each being equal to the other in terms of what they duly receive. Finally, this equality is employed to ensure that citizens do not differ (μὴ διαφέρωνται, 744c3-4), which is good preparation for our main equality passage above insofar as this model is most conducive to creating philia.

Immediately following our equality passage, the Athenian submits that the art of statesmanship should always be concerned with this justice, so that there is neither ‘a handful of tyrants, or a single one, or some kind of popular control, but always justice’. As the Athenian had earlier stressed, ‘equality between people who are not equal—and the absence of any proportion—amounts to inequality’ (757a2-4). Notice that this equality is perfectly compatible with, indeed is necessitated by the Athenian’s earlier remarks on freedom as a new desideratum for the lawgiver. Too much power in the hands of a select few individuals would hinder less capable individuals with some potentially important contributions from having a share in government, while too much freedom fails to account for personal differences and treats all alike. It is in this way, I submit, that geometrical equality functions to uphold the right measure (to metrion) between slavery and freedom. It values authority by distributing a greater share to those who are on an unequal footing in terms of merit than the rest, but it also values freedom

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204 It is also applied to the selection of priests, which the Athenian says must occur ‘partly by election and partly by lot’ (τὰ μὲν αἱρετὰ χρή, τὰ δὲ κληροτά, 759b4-5). The first of these, presumably, will involve electing priests on the basis of their aptitude for that role and function, so that more positions are given to those with greater merit (which corresponds with geometrical equality). This functions as a way of ‘mingling democratic with non-democratic methods, to secure mutual friendliness’ (759b5-6).

205 In the next section, we shall find the four elements of the Timaeus which differ in quantity being made equal to each other through geometrical proportion. On the connection between the politics of the Laws and the cosmology of the Timaeus, see further Pradeau (2002: 159): ‘just as four elements combine to form the world, so too the city of the Laws is composed of four classes of citizens’, bound together by ‘proportional relations’.
by allowing those with a lesser share of virtue to still have some share (and if this was not enough freedom, the Athenian also says at 757d5-758a2 that the first model of equality must also be employed if the city is going to avoid ‘a certain degree of civil unrest’).

These results from the Laws will appear striking to us in light of our examination of the Republic in the previous chapter. As it was demonstrated there, the notion of equality is not made an explicit object of reflection in the Republic, nor is it built into the dialogue’s account of how civic friendship and unity is obtained (esp. p. 73 and fn. 130). Even if equality can be rehabilitated into the conceptual framework of the Republic, however, it seemed to be of a kind which generates tensions of its own. For the model of geometrical equality it operates with (each having its due but none having a share of what the philosophical class possesses) accommodates a strict hierarchy of various kinds which leads to politically objectional results and makes it difficult to see how philia is to be sustained. By contrast, the Laws ties the notion of equality inextricably to its account of philia, adopting a more precise version of geometrical equality which is less hierarchical in operation and where the twin values of freedom and friendship fall out of this improved equality. On this kind of geometrical equality, the wisdom of good political decision making is still esteemed without allowing an excess of powers from dominating the whole of which the various different citizens of the city make up. As I have been arguing, the improved account of civic well-orderedness and unity in the Laws is given expression through the normative ideal of to metrion, which puts the emphasis on the right balance or compromise between distinct extremes. Within Magnesia, to metrion achieves that balance between the two opposing claims to freedom and authority respectively.

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206 One could still protest that 1) due proportion (to metrion) or a balanced mixture between different constitutional extremes (monarchy and democracy) is an entirely different thing from 2) the geometrical equality (so Harvey 1965: 105 fn. 12). But if that were the case, why would Plato have introduced the two different equalities and shown a clear preference for geometrical equality in the same context as he stresses that a constitution ought to have a ‘middle position’ (meson) between monarchy and democracy? With Morrow (1960: 525), I am more confident that the ‘mathematical conception of the mean [i.e. geometrical proportion] is present in Plato’s thought of the political mean [to metrion between monarchy and democracy]’. Thus Schofield (2013: 297) rightly suggests that proportionate equality (what I am labelling geometrical proportion) is the key to achieving a ‘carefully considered blend’ of monarchy and democracy.

207 On which, see Schofield (2013: 287 fn. 8), who I quote in full: ‘[T]he Laws’ theory is palpably unlike the account of political justice in the Republic, which makes ‘doing one’s own job’ [PJ] by the different classes within the city the key idea, and has nothing to say about equality of any sort, or about the selection of persons for public office. Whether or not Plato in the Laws has changed his mind about political justice, he has certainly harnessed the concept to a different theoretical agenda’ (original emphasis). Crucial to this new ‘theoretical agenda’, I am arguing, is the notion of due measure (to metrion) between the extremes of freedom and slavery, which is enabled by the geometrical equality (see previous footnote).
3.3. *Summetria* in the Cosmology of the *Timaeus*: A Joint Reading with the Metaphysics of the *Philebus*

In the previous section, I demonstrated how the instantiation of *to metrion* and *summetria* holds the key to the friendship and unity of the city in the *Laws*. In this section, I will now proceed to demonstrate how the key metaphysical concepts of the late dialogues are applied to the well-ordered whole *par excellence* in the *Timaeus*: the cosmos. This will then pave the way for our investigation of the well-orderedness of the individual human being in the next section, remaining faithful to Timaeus’ own strategy of ‘beginning with the cosmos and ending with man’ (27a5-6; 90e1-2).

Before getting to the *Timaeus*, even in the *Laws* itself Plato suggests in Book 10 that Magnesia is a city guided by the same order which governs the heavens.²⁰⁸ Further, the god we are to assimilate to within the context of the *Laws* is not a disinterested contemplative intellect, as has sometimes been suggested in discussions of ‘godlikeness’ in Plato,²⁰⁹ but one which is a paragon of measure. This is supported by 716c1-d4, where the Athenian refers to god as the ‘measure’ (*metron*) of all things and suggests that, if we want to become like him, we ought to become *metrion* ourselves. This can also be compared with what we find in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, where it is said that god grants all power to moderation (*to meson*, 529). In the *Laws*, then, god seems to organise the world in a way which reflects his perfectly measured state. Using their own reason, I suggest, the lawgivers of Magnesia can create provisions which reflect the rational structure imposed on the heavens by the deity. Might we not say that the intelligent system of *geometrical equality* is one way of approximating to that intelligent structure?²¹⁰ For in the same way that the political system of ‘proportional inequality (*tō ἀνισοί summetριή*, 744c3) holds the key to the friendship and unity of the city, as we shall see divine *nous* creates *summetria* and engenders friendship in the heavens in the *Timaeus* through the

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²⁰⁸ On which, Annas (2017: 150) has recently written that the ‘objective status of the law in Magnesia […] is based on the idea of reason directing the cosmos, the city, and the individual life. The distinctive ways in which reason does this are not expounded as doctrine by Plato’ (my italics). As will be clearer by the end of the chapter, if my argument holds true, we have one way of understanding how reason operates at the cosmic, political, and individual level—by ensuring that complex structures instantiate proportion. I would, however, caveat the latter part of Annas’ statement. For the *Laws* provides a way in which reason directs the cosmos, the city, and the individual, namely, by instantiating geometrical equality. However, the *Timaeus* makes this linkage much clearer.


²¹⁰ Thus O’Meara (2017: 138) writes ‘both the order of the heavens and the order of the state reflect the same functional principles. A visible expression of these principles can be seen (and admired) in the heavens and a political expression of these same principles can also be planned’ (my emphasis). For the political expression of the principles operative in the cosmos, O’Meara refers to a passage we have already discussed on geometrical equality from the *Laws* (744b-d).
imposition of geometrical proportion. In this way, the citizens of Magnesia may enjoy a life akin to the same principles which govern the heavens (if indeed the Laws operates with a similar cosmic order to the Timaeus). The study of the cosmos will therefore be helpful in granting us access to the same principles which bind the city-state into a well-ordered whole.\textsuperscript{211}

In the Timaeus, it is well observed that the cosmos, qua superlatively ordered structure, is established as the highest paradigm of striving for lower structures.\textsuperscript{212} By observing the summetria that exists within the complex body of the cosmos, which is surely tantamount to its happiness and well-being (34a8-b9), we may gain an appreciation of how an intelligent deity like the Demiurge operates with certain principles to create the best and most complete well-ordered whole: the cosmos. In order to fully understand the operations of summetria in the Timaeus, however, let me first raise a few framing questions for consideration in this section from now.

First, why is summetria such an important value for cosmology and for the production of other complex wholes? This we may fairly call the ‘normative question’, insofar as it asks why the possession of summetria is desirable for the goodness of a complex whole. By looking at the way that summetria is applied to the cosmos, we will be in a better position to answer this question. The second question derives from appreciating that the Demiurge is said to instantiate certain precise numerical ratios, which engender summetria in the cosmos, by looking towards an intelligible model which is called ‘Intelligible Animal’ (39e7-9). What, therefore, is the relationship between summetria and the intelligible objects which precede its instantiation in a complex whole of parts? This we may call the ‘metaphysical question’ (a question I began an answer to answer in section 3.1 with reference to the concept of to metrion in the political context of the Statesman). In responding to this question, I will offer an examination of the metaphysics of the Philebus and suggest that a certain interpretation of the metaphysics of that

\textsuperscript{211} Thus Pradeau (2002:112) suggests that the late political dialogues ‘represent politics both as imitating cosmology, as an ordering submitted to the same conditions and the same explanation as the ordering of the world’. In this section, I will show how the ‘ordering of the world’ makes better sense of the way the Laws does politics.

\textsuperscript{212} As Broadie (2016: 173-174) has recently shown, it is the cosmos, not the Demiurge, that is introduced as an object of worship (see esp. Tim. 27c-d). The cosmos is in a sense closer to us, insofar as it too is a living being that we can strive to emulate (this is how some later Platonists, like Proclus, understood assimilation to god in the Timaeus). But this does not mean that we cannot also imitate the Demiurge in respect of his intelligent ordering activity. On this latter aspect as an important part of what it is to ‘become godlike’, which I think is much under-appreciated, see the accounts of Armstrong (2004:171-183) and Mahoney (2005: 77-91), who emphasise the function of nous as a creative principle of order to which human souls should assimilate; contra Sedley (1999: 309-328). See also Carone (2005: 58): ‘God, the Demiurge and later the cosmic God (an embodied being also presented as an exemplar of virtue and happiness) will in the Timaeus turn out to provide a model that is closer to us and available to all’.
dialogue can help shed light on the issue of how Forms are associated with the numerical ratios which are in turn indicative of summetria.

With these considerations behind us, let us now turn to the text of the Timaeus itself, beginning with some helpful preparation for the way that the cosmos will be shown to possess summetria. Our first important passage comes at a pivotal point in the context of the Timaeus, where Timaeus finds it helpful to look back to the beginning of his monologue. Having spent some time speaking of the ‘necessary nature’ of things and the way that the Demiurge uses auxiliary causes for good ends in the construction of the cosmos, Timaeus also looks forward to how he might ‘weave together’ the different types of causes (the necessary and the divine) in the remainder of the discussion.\(^{213}\) It is at this point that he pauses to give us a reminder of where the story took off, after which he will be able to put a ‘final head’ on his masterpiece:

213 The word used here (69a8) is ‘συνυφαίνω’, the same word which described the statesman’s political technē (305e4) of ‘weaving’ together the different virtues of ‘moderation’ and ‘courage’ in the Statesman. As we saw in Section 3.1, in weaving together these potentially hostile opposites the statesman appeals to the normative standard of to metrion. With the imagery of weaving here and the resonances this has with the Statesman, is Timaeus indicating that he too is conscious of the need to create ‘due measure’ in discourse? In the Phaedrus (Section 1.2), Socrates suggested that a logos should be put together (sunestanai) like an animal: ‘it must be neither without head nor without legs; and it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work’ (264c2-5). In his analysis of logos in the Timaeus, Brague (1985: 55-56) suggests that the Timaeus embodies the rules of logos formulated in the Phaedrus. Since Timaeus’ subject matter is an animal, as a literary work his speech too must be composed like an animal, ‘corresponding to the structure of its object’.

214 Translations of the Timaeus come from Zeyl (2000) with some emendations.

To repeat what was said at the outset, the things we see were in a condition of disorderliness (ἀτάκτως ἔχοντα) when the god introduced as much proportionality into them and in as many ways—making each thing proportional (συμμετρίας) both to itself and to other things—as was possible for making them be commensurable (ἀνάλογα) and proportionate (σύμμετρα, 69b2-5).\(^{214}\)

The description of the pre-cosmic chaos here and the specific language Timaeus invokes to describe it echoes his previous narrative in many ways. When he began his monologue at the outset of the dialogue, Timaeus said that before the Demiurge took over the universe everything was ‘not at rest but in discordant and disorderly (ἀτάκτως) motion’ (30a4-5). In the discussion of the receptacle that follows, the mere ‘traces’ (ἴχνη) of the elements were said to lack proportion and measure (ἀλόγως καὶ ἀμέτρως, 53a8). Indeed, in what follows our passage, it is clear that the things that were ‘disorderly’ and ‘without measure’ are the same things which later came to be named fire, water, and the other elements. So, what we have here is a general recapitulation of some of the main themes the dialogue has already introduced us to. Namely,
the disorderly condition of the pre-cosmic state, the potentiality for matter to become orderly, and the way for such matter to become well-ordered through the imposition of *analogia* and *summetria*.

What is still missing from this general summary is a more substantive explanation of exactly how terms such as *analogia* and *summetria* are connected to the *kosmos* of the universe. In an earlier passage, this is something that Timaeus hopes to clarify by speaking of the ‘bond’ that holds the cosmos together in unity. To provide some context to this passage, Timaeus had just stressed that whatever ‘comes-to-be’ must be of bodily form (σωματοειδής, 31b4). Two key features of the bodily form are visibility and tangibility, for which fire and earth serve as the key placeholders. This is why, Timaeus says, the cosmic body was put together out of these elements. However, these two could not be united without a third bond, at which point the speaker tells us:

Now the best (κάλλιστος) bond is one that really and truly (μάλιστα) makes a unity (ἓν) of itself (αὑτον) together with the things bonded by it (τὰ συνδούμενα), and this in the nature of things is best accomplished (κάλλιστα) by proportion (ἀναλογία). For whenever of three numbers (or bulks or powers) the middle term between any two of them is such that what the first term is to it, it is to the last, and, conversely, what the last term is to the middle, it is to the first, then, since the middle term turns out to be both first and last, and the last and the first likewise both turn out to be middle terms, they will all of necessity turn out to have the same relationship to each other (τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ γενόμενα ἄλληλοις), and, given this, will all be unified (ἓν, 31c2-32a7).

Let me begin by trying to briefly reconstruct the main explanatory direction of terms and ideas in this passage. Taking the notion of a bond (desmos) first, Timaeus suggests that the proper (malista) function or use of a bond is that which best (kallistos) creates a unity both out of itself (heauton) and the things it binds (ta sundoumena). On the one hand, this establishes unity (to hen) as the end or ‘that for the sake of which’ the bond is produced, which makes cogent sense of the Demiurge’s desire to keep the cosmos held together in order rather than disorder. On the other, Timaeus says that the instrumental means for best achieving (kallista) this aim is through the medium of proportion (analogia). What we therefore end up with is a sort of

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215 What could it mean for a bond to make a unity of itself? One suggestion is that that in being a bond which unifies other items (ta sundoumena), the bond also stands on its own as a distinct, self-contained unity (heauton). Another way of putting this is that the bond is a unified whole which is nevertheless comprised of things which are unified by it. El-Murr (2021a: 57) seems to say something similar when he asks this same question and writes ‘introducing proportionality between several elements amounts to adding something to them (a mathematical ratio), but without, I take it, adding anything purely external to them’.
threefold explanatory framework according to the notion of a function, a means, and an end. This analysis of the text, however, opens up several pressing issues which warrant further consideration.

First, Timaeus’ use of the superlative (kallistos) to describe the bond which most (malista) sustains unity suggests that there may have been other, more ‘deficient’ bonds available to the Demiurge to create some semblance of unity in the cosmos. Since we learn elsewhere that the Demiurge is good natured and wants only what is best for his creation (29e1-3; 41a7-b6), however, it is no surprise that he would want to choose the bond that is most suited to realising his aim. As Rachel Barney has argued with reference to the notion of to kalon, ‘beauty is the mark by which we perceive a thing’s excellence, appropriateness, or fittedness to function’ (my italics).216 By employing the language of kallistos to explain the Demiurge’s bond, then, Timaeus puts the emphasis on the optimal functionality of this bond in sustaining the Demiurge’s goal of bestowing the best possible unity onto the cosmos. In addition to this, it has also been suggested that beauty functions as the ‘realisation’ of the Good in the world.217

In the Phaedo, Socrates famously speaks of to agathon as that which ‘truly binds and holds all things together’ (ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δέον δυνδεῖν καὶ συνέχειν, 99c5-6). If the Good is a binding principle which is closely connected to beauty, and assuming that the Demiurge is motivated by this Good (to ariston, 46c8; to eu, 68e5) in his construction of the world, then it is no surprise that he chose a kallistos bond (proportion) to produce the Good (his aim of unity). Incidentally, this connection between beauty, proportion, and the Good will coalesce in the Philebus, where to agathon is ‘captured’ (θηρεῦσαι) under the trinity of terms proportion, beauty, and truth (65a2).

Of the available bonds that the Demiurge could have chosen, then, he clearly chose the proportional bond because that bond is ‘best accomplished’ (kallista) to bestowing unity onto the cosmos. But this raises the further question of exactly why the proportional bond should have this privileged function in being best suited to creating unity. In order to answer this question, I will first provide a more mathematical analysis of the sort of proportional bond Timaeus has in mind. Having equipped ourselves with the mathematics of this bond, I will then provide some suggestions as to the kind of unity this bond creates, and why Plato might think this is the best unity for a complex whole such as the cosmos to possess.

217 O’Meara (2017: 76).
Now, Timaeus refers to this bond in terms of proportion (analogia). While analogia and summetria appeared in close conjunction with each other in our first text above (69b2-5), analogia is usually used to refer specifically to ‘mathematical proportion’ (LSJ). I suggest that analogia therefore expresses the mathematical way of bringing about the right measure (summetria) in a complex whole of parts. Nevertheless, this mathematical proportion (analogia) could have one of two applications in antiquity: it could refer either to the arithmetical or the geometrical proportion. It has long been debated whether the reference to analogia in our passage indicates just one of these mathematical proportions, or whether it refers to mathematical proportion broadly construed. Cornford translates analogia here as ‘continued geometrical proportion’, citing an ancient tradition spearheaded by Proclus (II, 20.26) according to which geometrical proportion is kuriōs. However, Proclus still took analogia at 31c3 to refer to mathematical proportion in general.218 Since Timaeus goes on to outline a geometrical progression, however, with Cornford I take it that analogia in our passage categorically denotes ‘geometrical proportion’. So, what is the mathematics behind this proportion, and why does it hold such value for keeping complex wholes of parts in unity?

Following a classic reconstruction by Cornford, in a geometrical progression what the first is to the middle, so the middle is to the last (2:4 = 4:8); as the last is to the middle, so the middle is to the first (8:4 = 4:2); as the middle becomes first and last, so last and first become middle (4:8 = 2:4 or 4:2 = 8:4).219 Such a progression would satisfy Timaeus’ demands insofar as the middle term between the extremes has the effect of making each number reciprocal. However, as Timaeus goes on to say, since the body of the universe was to be a three-dimensional solid, there must have been two middle terms. This would create a new geometrical progression in itself, but one which is still bound by the principles of the previous demonstration.

The salient feature of a geometrical progression, then, is the emphasis given to the reciprocity of terms (or numbers). By ensuring that all the elements are alike through one common geometrical progression, proportion mitigates the possibility of any conflict arising among the elements on account of their natural propensity to war with one another. In this way, the geometrical bond in the cosmic body of the universe secures an equal and harmonious relationship between the elements such that they will ‘all of necessity turn out to have the same relationship to each other’ (ta auta de genomena) and will ‘all be unified (hen)’, despite their

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218 Cornford (1937: 44). Proclus is followed by Taylor (1928: 96), who takes analogia to refer to both arithmetical and geometrical proportion.
219 Taken from Cornford (1937: 45).
differences and relative inequalities. In the lines that follow, Timaeus then applies this continued geometrical bond more explicitly to the relationship between elements themselves:

Hence the god set water and air between fire and earth, and made them as proportionate to one another as was possible, so that what fire is to air, air is to water, and what air to water, water is to earth. He then bound them together and thus he constructed the visible and tangible universe. This is the reason why these four particular constituents were used to beget the body of the world, coming into agreement through proportion (δι᾽ἀναλογίας ὠμολογήσαν). They bestowed friendship upon it (φιλίαν τε ἐσχέν ἐκ τούτων), so that, having come together into a unity with itself, it could not be undone by anyone but the one who had bound it together (32b3-c4).

Commenting on the theory of the elements in antiquity, Cornford interestingly notes that fire and earth were commonly regarded as ‘extreme’ elements. We might therefore conjecture that Plato’s geometrical model of the elements implies that all four represented distinct quantities, where the volume of fire (the heavenly bodies were thought to be made mostly of fire) would have been the greatest and the volume of earth smallest, with air and water somewhere in between. Again, the geometrical bond ensures that despite the difference in powers among the elements, they may all be joined into unity (hen) through a sort of ‘unequal equality’. Notice that this reconstruction gets us strikingly close to the political theory of the Laws, where we found the lawgiver taking four unequal classes of society and bringing them together into a well-ordered whole through one common geometrical progression (‘τῶι anísoi summetrói’, 744c3 and pp. 110-111). In our subsequent ‘two equalities’ passage from the Laws, moreover, friendship (philía) was associated explicitly with the geometrical equality, since this has the effect of bringing all the citizens together despite each being given a different share of honours in society (some receive more while others receive less). Analogously, we will notice in our passage from the Timaeus that the four elements of the cosmic body are said to come together in agreement (homologia) through (dia) geometrical proportion (analogia), with friendship (philía) being one further result of this coming together.

Now, the homologia of the world-body, I suggest, can be explained by the fact that all four elements have the same relationship with one another through geometrical equality, on the basis of which there is universal ‘agreement’ among them. As for the philía of the world-body, this is in fact said to result from the four elements themselves (ek toutón). I take this to mean that philía is obtained by the fact that the four elements have already been brought into a unified

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220 Cornford (1937: 45).
relation through geometrical proportion. Nevertheless, the specific function of *philia* in this
passage is still open to question. Commentators have traditionally taken it as an allusion to
Empedocles’ Love, which acts as a causal unifying force in cosmogonical creation.\(^{221}\) Taking
a closer look at this comparison might therefore prove useful in helping us get clearer on the
way that *philia* is being envisaged in the *Timaeus*.

First, the aim of Empedocles’ Love is to unify the cosmos by thoroughly intermixing all the
four elements into a homogenous sphere. Exactly how this Love brings the world into order
(*kosmos*) is, however, not very straightforward. For the coming together of the elements is
nowhere explicitly theorised in terms of proportionate relations which unify the world-body,
as it is in the *Timaeus*. One possible exception is Stobaeus’ allegorising testimony (A33,
*Eclogae* 1.10.11b) of Empedocles’ double zoogony, where we are told that the elements
produce the universe by their ‘mutual proportion (*analogias*) and blend’. However, Stobaeus’
reference to proportion (*analogia*) here could be picking up on commonplace vocabulary in
contemporary cosmological discourses rather than a genuinely Empedoclean insertion. Indeed,
Stobaeus only quotes Empedocles verbatim for saying ‘at one time all coming together by Love
into one…’, where that ‘coming together’ is not itself explicated in terms of proportionate
relations. In Empedocles, then, there seems to be no *direct* relation between Love as a causal
unifying force and the unity of the elements being a result of proportionate ratios.\(^{222}\)

For Timaeus, *philia* is not an active agent like Empedocles’ Love which brings disparate
things into unity (this would be Eryximachus’ Love in the *Symposium*, on which see p. 18 and
fn. 24). For that is the task taken up by god or the Demiurge, who functions as a sort of efficient
cause. Rather, *philia* seems to be the *result* or *consequence* of the geometrical bond which
binds the four elements of the world-body into unity, which explains more clearly than
Empedocles *how* the world becomes *kosmos*.\(^{223}\) This is not to say, however, that once *philia*
has been produced it has no causal efficacy whatsoever. For when *philia* is created, Timaeus
says, the cosmos ‘could not be undone (\(\tilde{\alpha}\)λυριον) by anyone but the one who had bound it

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\(^{221}\) Cornford (1937: 44 n. 4); Taylor (1928: 99).

\(^{222}\) Such a connection, however, seems to be implied by Aristotle in the *De Anima*. Speaking of *logos* as a *ratio*
of mixtures in his discussion of Empedocles (I.4.408*10-30), Aristotle asks whether *philia* functions as the *ratio*
of elemental mixture in the cosmos or whether it is something distinct (*heteron it*) from *logos*. This would make
*philia* synonymous with *logos* (proportion), so that proportionality is built into the account of *philia* itself.
Aristotle’s analysis of Empedocles’ *philia* elsewhere also leaves some room for the possibility that *philia* may
be something distinct from *logos* as being the *cause* of proportionate mixtures. This would get Empedocles’
*philia* closer to a type of formal (that which makes certain things what they are) and efficient cause (that force
which brings things together) in a way that might have been acceptable to Aristotle, on which see *Metaphysics*
1001*13-16: ‘at any rate Love is the *cause* of Unity in all things’ (my emphasis). For further discussion of
Aristotle’s engagement with Empedocles in the *De Anima*, see Betegh (2021a: 1-44).

\(^{223}\) This is also the view of El-Murr (2021a: 62).
together’. That this is the outcome of *philia* is bolstered by the result clause after *philia* is initially mentioned beginning with ‘ὥστε’; *so that* the cosmos could not be undone (32c2).

Importantly, this opens up a conception of *philia* as a sort of ‘glue’ which has the effect of keeping disparate items together in a well-ordered whole,\(^\text{224}\) which leads us to one further point of departure from Empedocles. For in Empedocles, the rule of *philia* in the cosmos is only *temporary* until Strife has ripped the elements apart from one another. In the *Timaeus*, by contrast, the *philia* which exists in the cosmos—secured by proportionate relations—is intended to secure the indissolubility of the cosmos for eternity. *Qua* good, *philia* should never lose its causal power, unless of course the god should remove himself from his watch over the universe (see esp. 41b-c). How, then, could the cosmos possibly be dissolved, when proportionate ratios bind it together with a strong *philia* which not even forceful Strife could destroy?\(^\text{225}\)

This analysis of the unity and friendship of the cosmos as a result of proportionality sheds light on the importance of terms such as *analogia* and *summetria* for Plato’s views on how the world becomes a well-ordered whole in the *Timaeus*. The Demiurge’s geometrical bond secures the right measure (*summetria*, 69b2-5) among the disparate parts of the world-body by creating an equal relation among the elements despite the natural differences of each. This mitigates the possibility of the elements falling into conflict (*stasis*) with one another, thereby ensuring that the cosmos is held together in unity as long as the Demiurge keeps watch over his creation. This justifies why complex wholes of parts *ought* to possess *summetria*, bolstering the normativity of such metaphysical terms in Plato’s later thought. Indeed, the cosmos possesses *summetria* to the greatest degree that is possible for a created entity by being bound by the Demiurge’s intelligent bond, but by studying this bond, lower structures such as the city and the individual human being can also come to imitate the cosmos and create a well-ordered whole out of themselves *through* the possession of *summetria*. In the next section, I will highlight the importance of *summetria* for individual persons and show how this is achieved within the framework of the *Timaeus*.

With this analysis behind us, what still remains is a response to the second of our framing questions raised at the beginning of this section concerning the metaphysical *source* of the

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\(^\text{224}\) The tight-knit relation among the elements may well be a result of their *amicable* disposition towards each other having been joined together in equality through geometrical proportion, which gets us closer to a conventional sense of *philia* as a certain amicable feeling towards another. Thus, Cornford (1937: 44) translates *φιλία* at *Timaeus* 32c2 as ‘Amity’.

\(^\text{225}\) El-Murr (2021a: 63) notices this contrast with Empedocles’ *philia* well, who writes that ‘Timaeus draws consequences subverting the need for *philia* as understood by Empedocles’. I take El-Murr to mean that Empedocles’ *philia* is unnecessary since the cosmos is *already* bound by geometrical proportions.
geometrical ratios the Demiurge instantiates in the cosmos. Let us first remind ourselves of what was suggested there. Much like craftsmen in general take an external model in acts of production, the Demiurge looks toward a ‘perfect’ (teleion) and ‘intelligible’ (noēton) model (39e1-2) as he brings form and structure to his creation through the imposition of precise numerical ratios. Moreover, the Demiurge is said to impose ‘forms and numbers’ (eἴδεσί τε καὶ ἄριθμοῖς, 53b5) on the pre-cosmic chaos, which already makes a close association between intelligible items and number, but which will require further scrutiny. To summarise the issue, then, what is the relation between the numbers or ratios the Demiurge instantiates in the cosmos, and the Forms he looks towards? This is the vexed metaphysical question I will now try to attempt a response to in what follows.

One possibility is that the Demiurge reproduces Forms in respect of the proportionate relations that exist among them qua community of intelligible items. In one famous passage from the Republic, Plato spoke of the Forms as observing justice with one another so that each remains in its own place without encroaching on the other (500c2-d8 and see fn. 110), though this was not explicitly expressed in terms of any proportionate relations among Forms there. In the Timaeus, however, Plato does not have much to say about the internal structure of the intelligible world itself. All we are told are certain features which characterise the intelligible world, such as being eternal, complete, and intelligible. This possibility will not, then, suffice as an explanation for how Forms are related to the numerical ratios the Demiurge instantiates in the cosmos. Rather than thinking about relations among Forms, I suggest rather that we consider the relation between a single Form and how that Form becomes instantiated in the world as proportionate numbers and ratios (this includes the World-Soul, which is bound by precise harmonic ratios).

Bolstering a suggestion made in Section 3.1 in my analysis of production in the Statesman, a more promising line of thought is that, in their causal capacity, individual Forms ‘express’ or ‘show themselves’ as precise numerical ratios when they are instantiated in the world through the agency of intelligence. On this interpretation, it is important that Forms remain causally

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226 There is the problem here of determining what is included in the Form ‘Living Being’. On the one hand, Sedley (2007b: 108 fn. 36) suggests that this Form contains only the Form of Animal (including the various subspecies of animals), since the Demiurge creates a living animal. But this interpretation leaves question-begging how the more ‘moral’ virtues such as Justice or Beauty would become instantiated in the world. Following Kahn (2013: 184-185), I endorse the view that the Intelligible Animal includes the totality of all Forms.

227 This is the interpretation of Miller (2007: 341), with whom I am sympathetic, who suggests that ‘ratios can be understood as the expression of Forms’. Or, as Miller elsewhere suggests (2004: 149), ‘forms express themselves as numbers’ (Miller’s emphasis). This interpretation was also intimated in Section 2.2 to frame my discussion of the philosopher’s instantiation of Forms in the Republic (see on pp. 64-65 and fn. 114), where I
prior to their worldly instantiations, and not be *identified* with the proportionate ratios they manifest as in complex well-ordered wholes. Nevertheless, the numbers that inhere in well-ordered structures ultimately derive from an appreciation of Forms themselves. Another way of expressing this interpretation is to look at the unity of a single Form and the causal relationship between this unity and the unity of complex structures. On one recent assessment, Forms are utterly single unities in the sense that they contain no internal parts or differentiation. Thus, this raises the puzzle of understanding precisely how this unity will manifest as the unity of complex structures, where unity is more conventionally assumed to be a property of an entity *with* internal parts.

With due caution, it could be argued that Forms bestow their partless unity onto complex structures by becoming manifest as precise numerical ratios, which brings about a sort of complex unity or unity-in-plurality onto worldly structures. Undoubtedly, this complex unity will be of a different *kind* from the partless unity of a Form, for the former is predicated on unified relations *between* parts of a complex structure. However, this unity will originate *from* the unity of a Form. While this interpretation remains speculative, and here is where Plato’s later metaphysical vocabulary comes into play, my suggestion is that the concept of *summetria* can help to bridge the gap between the unity of a Form and the unity of complex structures. As I have shown, *summetria* may be normatively conceived as the right measure within a complex whole of parts. Of the many available numbers or ratios that could be instantiated within a complex structure, it is only the *right number* which creates due measure or proportion, which reconciles hostile opposites within a plurality. However, Forms are causally responsible for the well-orderedness of complex structures, and must somehow be related to the *proportionate ratios* which become instantiated in complex wholes as *summetria*.

I would now like to suggest that a certain reading of the *Philebus* can help build a case for this sort of interpretation, which will in turn assist us with the second of our framing questions set out above. For, as Dorothea Frede has suggested, the metaphysics of the *Philebus* can be read as a sort of ‘preface to the cosmology of the *Timaeus*’. Taking this as our guiding claim,

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suggested that the language of philosophers ‘mixing’ and ‘blending’ may suggest that their contemplation of Forms become manifest as numerical ratios.

228 See Harte (2002: 22 fn. 38), who speaks of Forms as ‘mereological atoms’, that is, self-contained unities with no internal parts. Miller (2004: 149) speculatively suggests that Forms derive their own unity and singularity from the ‘One’ itself, drawing heavily on a certain interpretation of both the *Parmenides* and the so-called ‘Unwritten Doctrines’ in the later academy.

229 Frede (1993: p. lxvii). There are various ways in which both dialogues can be compared with one another. Hackforth (1972: 3) brings to light three main observations: 1) the Cosmic Reason in the *Philebus* and the Demiurge in *Timaeus*, 2) the opposition of Unlimited and Limit in *Philebus* and the distinction between the pre-cosmic chaos and the ‘forms and numbers’ (εἰδεσί τε καὶ ἀριθμοῖς) by which it is ordered in the *Timaeus* (53b5),
let me first provide a brief summary of the fourfold ontology of the dialogue. In the *Philebus*, Plato delineates four ontological kinds which jointly constitute the whole of reality. On the one hand there is Limit (*peras*), which imposes a definite number onto complex items thereby engendering in them order and stability. The Unlimited (*to apeiron*) functions as the underlying substrate or material of complex structures and can be understood as a numerical spectrum or scale of opposite extremes, which is itself inherently disordered. A combination of these two kinds produces a third kind, mixture (*mixis*), which is analogous to what this thesis has been calling a well-ordered whole. Finally, a mixture would not be possible without the agency of an intelligence (*nous*), which applies Limit to the Unlimited so as to create a *mixis*.

Within this fourfold ontology, I am principally concerned with Limit since this kind is closely related to the production of *summetria* in complex items and must therefore have some sort of relation, I suggest, to intelligibility itself. Consider to this end one of the first occurrences of the kind Limit, where *peras* is described by Socrates as

The kind that contains equal and double (τὴν τοῦ ἴσου καὶ διηπλασίου), and whatever else puts an end to the conflicts there are among opposites, making them (ἀπεργάζεται) commensurate (σύμμετρα) and harmonious (σύμφωνα) by imposing a definite number (ἀριθμὸν) on them (25d11-e2 transl. Frede).

First, it is important to get clear on the precise causal relationship between Limit and the production of *summetria* here. Now, Limit is said to produce (*apergazetai*) proportion in hostile opposites (things which are characterised by the Unlimited) through the imposition of definite number (*arithmon*). This means that *summetria* comes about in a complex item after Limit has imposed number, where that same item did not possess a definite number before the causal work of Limit. Immediately following our text, Limit is said to be that which ‘takes away excesses and unlimitedness (*apeiron*) and establishes measure (*emmetron*) and proportion (*summetria*, 26a6-8)’. This measure and proportion, in light of our passage above, is clearly the result of the imposition of definite number, which according to the translation above is ‘contained’ within the class of Limit. In fact, Limit is said to be the kind ‘of’ the equal and double (notice the genitive *tou*), which creates an inextricable connection between Limit and number.

and 3) the similar replenishment-depletion formula for pleasure and pain in both dialogues. Of these three comparisons I shall be preoccupied with 2) in particular.
Despite this explicit connection between Limit and number, scholars have often detected in the class of Limit an intimation of Forms. To begin with, earlier in the dialogue Socrates had explicitly referred to the limits (the proportionate ratios) that inhere in the unlimited as ‘forms’ (ideai, 16d-17a). In further support of this view, one might also turn towards the epistemic hierarchy fleshed out towards the end of the dialogue, which according to one recent interpretation ranks each level with different types of measures (which we have seen are characterised by Limit). Importantly, the highest member of this epistemic scale—dialec
tic—is concerned with objects which strongly echo Plato’s theory of Forms: ‘what is and truly is and is by nature always the same’ (τὴν γὰρ περὶ τὸ ὅν καὶ τὸ ὅντος καὶ τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὸν ἀεὶ περικός, 58a2-3). A few Stephanus pages later, this knowledge is then associated with things ‘that neither come into being nor perish, but are always, unchanged and unaltered (τὰ μήτε γενόμενα μήτε ἀπολλόμενα, κατὰ ταὐτὰ δὲ καὶ ὄσσωτος ὄντα ἀεὶ, 61e1-3). Finally, there follows an allusion to what Justice itself is (62a2-3), the Divine Circle, and the Divine Sphere (62a7-8). The language used to describe the items of dialectic here at least suggestive of what are elsewhere called Forms in Plato.

If the objects of the highest member of the epistemic scale are associated with pure measurements, however, the Forms would become closely related with the study of Limit itself. Taken to its logical extreme, this may have the effect of tying the Forms too closely to number, a conflation which I strongly resist. Consider to this end one recent suggestion by Jessica Moss, which seems to hold some promise, but which will nevertheless require critical analysis. Commenting on the relation between ‘Justice itself’ (62a2-3) and Limit, Moss entertains in a footnote to one recent paper the view that

‘Justice as a form is the ratio imposed on worldly things to create the mixture that is one particular just city or soul or so on’.  

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230 Compare Aristotle Met. Δ.17, 1022a4-10, who appears to make a connection between limit and form: ‘Limit (peras) means … [among other things] the being of each thing, or the what-it-is-to-be of each thing, for this is said to be the limit of knowledge; and if of knowledge then of the thing also’ (my emphasis). For Aristotle, of course, this does not imply that the form of each thing, while being the highest item of knowledge, is transcendent and separate from the world.

231 See Moss (2019: 219-234) for a recent defence of this view. This interpretation presupposes that there is a unified scale with measures involved in every step, from less pure to purer and eventually the purest measures. See further footnote below.

232 Fahrnkopf (1977: 202-207) locates the Forms at the top of this hierarchy of different kinds of knowledge.

233 Moss (2019: 231 fn. 12).
In order to get the most out of this suggestion, Moss’ formulation needs to be carefully broken down. On the one hand, I argue that Moss seems to be aiming in the right direction to the extent that she makes a connection between one particular Form and the causal efficacy of that Form as the proportionate ratio of a worldly mixture (in her example, a particular just thing). However, in the same footnote, Moss seems to also assimilate Forms with Limit so that the ratios of mixtures are themselves indistinguishable from Forms.\(^{234}\) Admittedly, it is true that the class of Limit contains properties which at least resemble transcendent Forms—as Moss concedes, numbers are themselves ‘abstract, stable, unchanging, purely intelligible items’, by which I take the reference to intelligibility to mean that numbers are objects of thought much like number is associated with dianoia in the Republic. And yet, as we also learn from the divided line of the Republic (509d-511e), intelligible numbers are themselves somehow intermediate between Forms and sensibles, and should not be identified with the former.

What stands in need of further clarification, therefore, is the relation between a certain Form—say the Form of Justice to continue the example—and the causal efficacy that Form has in its expression as the proportionate ratios enabled by the class of Limit which manifest as the many instantiations of eidetic Justice in composite mixtures (these normative ratios will also depend on contextual factors, as the Statesman suggested with terms such as to preon, ton kairon, and to deon). Now, the version of this interpretation which I take to hold the most promise is one where the Form is expressed numerically as the proportionate ratio of a worldly mixture while maintaining its essentially separate and transcendent nature. Perhaps this is also what is meant by David Sedley when he refers to the Form of the Good as an ‘ideal of proportionality’ (on which, see also p. 48 above).\(^ {235}\) Certainly, an ideal is not identifiable with its instantiation, in the same way that the Form of the Good is a binding principle (cf. Phd. 99c5-6) which is expressed through proportion but may not itself be identifiable with those proportions.

Following this train of thought, and returning to the connection between the Timaeus and Philebus, I take Hackforth to be pointing us in a promising direction when he suggests Forms are ‘behind’ both the limits of the Philebus and the ‘forms and numbers’ (ἐἴδεσί τε καὶ ἄριθμοῖς, 53b5) which the Demiurge instantiates on the pre-cosmic chaos. In the Philebus, nous is said to be a cause of harmonious mixtures by implementing Limit on the Unlimited thereby creating the right measure (summetria) in mixtures (27c-31b). Examples of such mixtures includes

\(^{234}\) Moss (2019: 231 fn. 12) is therefore critical of Hackforth’s interpretation (1972: 40) that Forms cannot be identifiable with limits since Forms do not literally ‘go forth into things’ (Hackforth’s own words).

\(^{235}\) Sedley (2007a: 269-270).
health, the seasons, and the yearly *cum* monthly cycles. It is to the Forms, then, that Cosmic Reason looks to in its creation of well-ordered mixtures through Limit, in the same way that the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* looked toward an intelligible model (or Forms) when imposing number and ratio on the pre-cosmic chaos. And this is because the way that the Forms become embodied in the world is *through* proportionate number and ratio. Significantly, I have suggested that *summetria* functions as a straddling principle (recall my analysis of *to metrion* from the *Statesman*) between intelligible Forms and well-ordered wholes, of which the physical world in the *Timaeus* is our highest paradigm. While the *Republic* merely suggested a causal relationship between external Forms as paradigms and their instantiation as well-orderedness in complex structures (pp. 64-65 and fn. 114), *summetria* can be seen as the very *expression* of the interaction between Forms and composite physical particulars. The upshot is that *summetria*, insofar as it functions as a principle of unity in well-ordered wholes and allows them to function optimally, has the value for Plato of both manifesting the Forms and, more importantly, pointing us toward them.

### 3.4. *Summetria* in the Microcosm of the Human Being in the *Timaeus*

The previous section highlighted the normative dimension of *summetria* by investigating its application to the cosmology of the *Timaeus*. We found that *summetria* is the best way for a complex structure to be kept together in unity insofar as it mitigates differences and conflicts among the parts of complex structures and holds the key to their friendship and well-functioning. This led us to an examination of the metaphysics behind the concept of *summetria*, which came down to appreciating that the proportionate ratios of complex structures derive

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236 These latter examples are suggestive of what may be called ‘diachronic’ unity, that is, a unity which is obtained *over time*. This provides one further way of understanding the operations of *summetria* in addition to ‘synchronic’ unity, of which this thesis has provided several examples. For instance, one could suggest that achieving order in the soul is a process which occurs over the course of an embodied life. This makes good sense of Socrates’ exaltation to Callicles to keep practicing dialectic even when his discussion with him has ended in the conclusion of the dialogue, on which see further p. 31 above.

237 Epistemologically, this may take us further than the *Republic*, where knowledge is reserved exclusively for transcendent Forms. If *summetria* is our closest approximation of Forms in the world, then particulars possessing *summetria* must have higher epistemic value than the objects of mere belief or true opinion from the *Republic*. For *summetron* objects are determinate, and the determinate is closely associated with knowledge in Plato. As Moss (2019: 234) writes, ‘measure is the best approximation of the purely knowable, and measurement the best approximation of pure knowledge’. Further, since *summetria* is closely correlated with the Good, ‘the closest approximations of goodness and of knowability coincide, and the real good is really knowable because it exhibits the determinateness that measure best approximates’. These epistemological differences, however, should not lead us to make the further inference that Plato abandons the transcendent Forms of the *Republic*, which still function as the highest objects of knowledge for a Platonic philosopher, above even the purest measures (since I have argued measures are ultimately *instantiations* of Forms).
from a contemplation of Forms, just as the intelligent deity of the *Timaeus* looked towards an intelligible model when instantiating proportionality into the cosmic body of the universe.

It is time now to explore how this metaphysical vocabulary is applied to the well-orderedness of individual human beings in the *Timaeus*. As a preface to this section, let me note from now that *summetria* will be important not just to the three internal parts of the soul but, also, to the whole psychosomatic compound. This represents a slight nuance to Plato’s usual approach insofar as he is mainly preoccupied with relations pertaining to the different parts within the soul, and not to the relation that holds between body and soul as such. This newfound focus on the soul-body compound, I suggest, arises from two interconnected considerations.

First, Plato’s interest in the order of the whole psychosomatic being can be seen as part of his culminating interest in goodness as being exhibited on *all* levels of well-ordered structure (see fn. 168). While Plato usually speaks of the relation between reason and the body (or the rational and two lower parts of the soul) in *hierarchical* terms, this interest leads Plato to conceive of the relations both within the soul and the soul-body compound in more *holistic* terms in his later thought. On this account, psychosomatic order is still achieved through the agency of a rational ruling principle, but the place of this ruling principle within the order of the body-soul compound, or within the order of the three soul parts, needs to be itself moderated so as to accommodate for a more balanced relation within the whole psychosomatic compound. The language of *summetria*, I will show, is key to capturing this nuance for the well-orderedness of the human being.

Second, since the cosmos *in its entirety* now becomes our model of assimilation *par excellence*, one important way of approximating to the order of the world is by imitating the proportionate relation that holds between its body and soul (esp. *Tim.* 34a8-b9). The human soul and world-soul are already related to the extent that they possess the same three ingredients—Being, Sameness, and Difference—and are constructed by the Demiurge according to precise harmonic ratios. The internal parts of the world-body, we have also seen, are bound by a geometrical progression which ensures the friendliness and everlastingness of the cosmos. But if the cosmos is going to be a complete and blessed living thing, its body and soul must *themselves* have been brought into a proportionate relationship.

These three ways of instantiating proportionality on the levels of the soul, the body, and the whole soul-body compound, I will now show, coincide in one central text from the *Timaeus*.
which will constitute the main focus of this section. Quoted below, this text arises out of Timaeus’ discussion of various forms of disease and their causes. He has just elaborated at length on how the diseases of the body in particular come about. He then turns to the issue of how a diseased body can come to affect the soul in two different ways: by incurring either madness or ignorance (86b-87c). For instance, an overindulgence of pleasures will lead to madness (86c-e), while a defective body can also affect the mental capacities of the soul, leading to forgetfulness and ignorance (86e-87c). However, in either case the body should not be entirely to blame.²³⁹ Timaeus, echoing Socrates’ customary sentiment that ‘no one does wrong willingly’, also applies this claim to diseases of the soul arising from a bad body. No one wants to have a diseased soul—it is just that the person is ignorant of the condition of their body and is also deprived of a proper education. If one has not been educated or raised by the city in the right way, then blame cannot be completely aimed towards the body for the ills of the soul. In these ways, Timaeus offers a more subtle account of the diseases of the soul, and of the role of the body in the diseases of the soul.²⁴⁰

After dealing with the diseases of the body and how they can affect the mind, Timaeus then turns to the order and health of the whole psychophysical complex. This is where the language of summetria comes to focus:

Now all that is good is beautiful, and what is beautiful is not ill-proportioned (οὐκ ἄμετρον). Hence we must take it that if a living thing is to be in good condition, it will be well-proportioned (σύμμετρον). We can perceive the less important proportions (συμμετριῶν δὲ τὰ μὲν σμικρὰ) and do some figuring about them, but the more important proportions (τὰ δὲ κυριώτατα καὶ μέγιστα), which are of the greatest consequence, we are unable to figure out. In determining health and disease or virtue and vice no proportion or lack of it (συμμετρία καὶ ἀμετρία) is more important than that between soul and body—yet we do not think about any of them nor do we realise that when a vigorous and excellent soul is carried about by a too frail and puny frame, or when the two are combined in the opposite way, the living thing as a whole lacks beauty, because it is lacking in the most important of proportions (ἀσύμμετρον γὰρ ταῖς μεγίσταις συμμετρίαις). That living thing, however which finds itself in the opposite condition is, for those who are able to observe it, the most beautiful (κάλλιστον), the most desirable (ἐρασμιώτατον) of all things to behold (87c4-d8).

²³⁹ See the seminal paper by Gill (2000: 59-84) for a nuanced account of the role of the body in psychological disease. See also Steel (2001: esp. 126) for an account of the teleological construction of the human body, which is designed to facilitate rationality, for which reason we ought to not blame the body for our vices.

This passage raises many interesting questions, but I want to frame my analysis of it by taking some time to offer a closer look at what seems to be a grading of different types of proportions. For Timaeus says that we easily perceive ‘less important’ (smikra) proportions, but that we fail to recognise the ‘most important proportions’ (tais megistais summetriais). By taking the former proportions first, we will come closer to understanding what ‘the most important proportions’ are on Timaeus’ account, and why these are the most important for him. Since we have seen that summetria is a highly normative term in Plato, however, it is clear that even the lesser proportions must themselves be value laden. The basic point, nevertheless, is that there are better and worse proportions for the psychosomatic being. For the subject of the whole passage is the body-soul composite, and so the more important proportions must be the ones which are most conducive to the order and balance of the whole human being. While there may be other important proportions within the psychosomatic compound, these proportions, I will show, are subordinate to the proportions that ought to hold between the body and soul itself.

On my reconstruction, the ‘less important’ (ta smikra) proportions can only refer to those that obtain within the soul and within the body taken in isolation from each other. Taking the proportions of body and soul separately in this way, we might also see a grading of lesser and more important proportions of soul and body in contrast to one another. To put it crudely, it is common knowledge that the soul is of a more divine order than the body (think of the Affinity Argument of the Phaedo, for instance). One might therefore suggest that the proportions of the soul are of greater value than those of the body. I will shortly come to explore the proportions of the soul, but let us first begin with what are conceivably the least important proportions suggested in this passage—those of the body—before working our way up to the summetria of the whole body-soul compound.

There are, I suggest, two different ways of conceiving the summetria of the body. On the one hand, there are the proportions that hold between the external parts of the body. Since the body is a 3-dimensionally extended entity in space, its parts must bear a certain relation to each other.241 Brague (1985: 63) suggests that Plato may be referring to the ‘puny’ astronomical ratios we are easily able to perceive and compute (διαισθανόμενοι συλλογιζόμεθα, Tim. 87c7) in contrast to the harmonious ratios that govern the revolutions of the planets and which we do not easily notice. While Plato would certainly want to draw a contrast between these proportions for his astronomical theory, I do not think these proportions are intended in the context of the passage. For Timaeus’ subject is the human being, and so the proportions we easily perceive and compute must be of the human being. Returning to Timaeus’ language, perhaps we ‘perceive’ the proportions of the body, and ‘compute’ the proportions of the soul (since these are non-perceptual).
other which can be expressed mathematically.\footnote{In the \textit{Sophist}’s discussion of good and bad image making, Plato refers to the ratios of breadth, depth, and length as proportions (\textit{summetrias}, 235d6-236a8). This means that these parts could themselves be referred to as ‘proportions’. However, the more natural way of rendering \textit{summetria} is a relation that holds between different ratios, and not the ratios themselves. Thus, in the \textit{Critias}, the temple of Poseidon is said to have a height that appears ‘proportional’ (\textit{summetron}) to its length and width (116d1-2).} Ugliness was commonly conceived as the disproportionate relation of those parts—for instance, a torso that is too large and overpowers the other parts of the body. Beauty, by contrast, would have been conceived as the proportionate relation of the different parts of the body.\footnote{See Bosanquet (1904: 30), who suggests that the one true aesthetic principle recognised by Hellenic antiquity is ‘the principle that beauty consists in the imaginative or sensuous expression of unity in variety’.} In light of this, we might recall the famous ‘\textit{Canon}’ of the fifth-century Athenian sculptor Polykleitos, which purported to contain the ideal proportions (\textit{summetriai}) between the different parts of the body. It is more than likely that Plato’s contemporary audience would have been aware of these notions of art and aesthetic beauty, in which case the ‘lesser’ proportions of the body may well refer to those established by Greek artists.\footnote{Plato himself mentions Polykleitos twice in the \textit{Protagoras} (311c3, 328c6). Brague (1985: 62) suggests that it is no coincidence Polykleitos is alluded to here in a dialogue named after a sophist who claimed that ‘man is the measure of all things’.} While the proportions of the external parts of the body are clearly desirable insofar as they suggest a beautiful body, by calling these ‘less important’ the thought might be that we should not stop at these 3-dimensional proportions. For these proportions are ultimately \textit{visible} and, as we know from the \textit{Phaedo}, invisibility is a mark of the divine. This is already one reason why the proportions of the soul may be of more importance than those of the body.

The second way to conceive the \textit{summetria} of the body is to think of the relation of its \textit{internal} parts. Indeed, proportionality was central to Timaeus’ earlier account of biological health (82a-b). It sometimes happens, Timaeus says, that the elements unnaturally (\textit{para phusin}) encroach on one another as a result of either excess (\textit{pleonexia}) or deficiency (\textit{endeia}). The way to remedy this is when ‘that which arrives at or leaves a particular body part is the same as that part, consistent, uniform, and in \textit{proper} proportion (\textit{ana logon}) with it’ (82b2-5). While \textit{summetria} is not mentioned here, we have seen that \textit{analogia} is a close relative in the \textit{Timaeus} (see 69b5). The idea seems to be that perfect health and order requires a dynamic and balanced equilibrium between the internal parts of the organic human body.

Perhaps the more natural place to look for ancient conceptions of health, however, is the Hippocratic corpus, where proportionality plays a central role. With the hindsight of this in mind, my suggestion is that Plato may well have had the Hippocratics in mind when he laments that we are only able to perceive the ‘less important proportions’. In order to substantiate this claim, we must first understand how health was conceived by the Hippocratics. To this end,
the Hippocratic Corpus provides at least two different definitions of health which are relevant to my purposes here.

First, there is the author of *Nature of Man*, who is known for having famously criticised both philosophers and physicians for maintaining that man is formed of a unique principle.\(^{245}\) Having stated that the body of man is constituted rather of four elements—blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile—health is then said to obtain when

These elements are duly proportioned to one another (μετρίως πρὸς ἄλληλα) in respect of compounding, power and bulk, and when they are perfectly mingled (*Nature of Man* IV, Loeb IV, pp. 11-13).

Health is defined here in terms of the proportionate relation between the four bodily elements. Any defect or excess from the right proportion creates pain and distress, eventually resulting in bad health.\(^{246}\) What is important to flag is that the language of proportionality has normative status once more, suggesting the perfect health of man.

The second example from the Hippocratic literature which makes a link between proportionality and health comes from *On Regimen*. At the outset of the treatise, the author boastfully claims to have made an original discovery on the prognosis and diagnosis of health. While he accepts the correct statements of his predecessors, he will embark on a journey they have not yet dared to undertake (*On Regimen* I, Loeb IV, pp. 226-227). Later in the work, we find the same scorn of his predecessors when he says that the regimen he has discovered ‘approximates to the truth as closely as is possible’ and brings the ‘kalon’ (interestingly translated ‘glory’ in the Loeb) to ‘himself the discoverer’ (*On Regimen* LXIX, Loeb IV pp. 382-383). So, what is this famous discovery? The text says that ‘food and exercise, while possessing opposite qualities, yet work together to produce health’. A man must proportion exercise (tas summetrias) to the quantity of food, constitution of the patient, age, seasons, winds, and years (*On Regimen* II, Loeb IV pp. 228-229). In language reminiscent of *Nature of Man*, the author’s regimen here concerns whether exercise and diet are ‘duly proportioned’ to one another (metriōs echei pros allēla, *On Regimen* LXIX). The ‘overpowering’ of either

\(^{245}\) See Jouanna (1999: 326) for further analysis.

\(^{246}\) Surely, there is no one right proportion between the constituents that ‘fits’ everyone; depending on one’s age or condition, the right proportion may vary. As Freudenthal (1986: 203) writes, ‘it is a basic tenet of Hippocratic physiology that there are indefinitely many states of equilibrium: in different persons the constituents are equilibrated differently’. 

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exercise or diet over the other results in disease. When they are equal (isazein) to one another, the desirable condition of health arises (On Regimen LXIX).

As Jouanna notes, for the author of On Regimen the ‘elements’ involved in perfect health differ from those in the account of Nature of Man. For the former, the relevant elements are not the ‘constituents’ of man but the components of regimen diet and exercise. As we can see, however, what is nevertheless consistent in both accounts is the notion that two or more items need to be in proportion with another in order for health to obtain. These accounts suffice to show the importance of proportionality for health in ancient medicine.

Returning to our text from the Timaeus, it could be that Plato was consciously drawing on the Hippocratics when he comes to expound his own views on the link between proportionality and health in human beings. While we can certainly assume this awareness on Plato’s part, matters are always more complex when Plato engages with his predecessors. As Geoffrey Lloyd writes, Plato has ‘selected and modified those common Greek themes that suit his underlying moral’. As we have seen, Plato does not reject the idea that health is the proportionate arrangement of internal parts in the Timaeus (82a-b). What he does think, I suggest, is that the link between proportionality and health for the human being goes much deeper than anything suggested by the Hippocratics. One important detail to remember here is that both texts quoted above fail to mention the place of the soul in health. This may be because the Hippocratics did not admit the existence of a separate soul, apart from the body, and so health, for them, concerned solely the proportions of the body. For Plato, by contrast, the health of the individual concerns the entire living being, body and soul included. That is why Timaeus also speaks of how diseases of the soul can come to affect the body, and thus eventually the whole psychosomatic complex:

When within it [the soul-body composite] there is a soul more powerful than the body and this soul gets excited, it churns the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases, and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or inquiry, it wears the body out. And again, when

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248 Galen writes ‘all my predecessors defined health as good mixture (eucrasia) and proportion (summetria) of the elements’ (On Preserving Health 1.4). In the De Affectibus, Chrysippus simply changed the ‘elements’ for the hot, cold, dry, and moist, and made these the objects for proportionate (summetria) mixture. Jouanna (1999: 327-328 and fn. 24) even suggests that ‘Alcmaeon’s teaching contained the gist of what one finds later in the Hippocratic treatises’. Of course, the accounts of Alcmaeon and the Hippocratics are not identical, not least because in the Hippocratic works we find no explicit political overtones in definitions of health. Any resemblance is made by the fact that, much like Alcmaeon, the Hippocratics spoke of equilibrium or disequilibrium between different things to illustrate health and illness.
the soul engages in public or private teaching sessions or verbal battles, the disputes and contentions that then occur cause the soul to fire the body up and rock it back and forth, so inducing discharges that trick most so-called doctors (τῶν λεγομένων ἰατρῶν) into making misguided diagnoses (87e6-88a7, my emphasis).

Might the Hippocratics be implicated here as the ‘so-called doctors’ who are led to making misguided diagnoses when the body becomes diseased? For as we have seen, the Hippocratics took health to be a matter of proportionate relations within the body but, disregarded the role that the soul may play in health. If summetria really is conducive to creating health, and if man is best understood as a composite of body and soul, then clearly the summetria of the body alone will not suffice as being ‘the most important’ proportions for health. In this way, I submit, Plato’s suggestion that we perceive only ‘the less important’ proportions might well be directed at the Hippocratics, who focused solely on the proportions of the body and did not appreciate how disproportionality between soul and body can be a genuine cause of sickness.

According to my broader reading of our main passage in this section (87c4-d8), however, neither are the proportions of the soul itself the most important proportions for Timaeus, even if they trump the proportions of the body by not being 3-dimensionally extended in space. For the proportions of the soul must ultimately be prior to the proportion between body and soul, since Timaeus’ main concern is with the whole psychosomatic complex. Nevertheless, when Timaeus does come to speak of the proportions of the soul specifically, he reflects on the need for the ‘motions’ of the soul to be proportionate (summetrous) to each other. Let me now take a moment to discuss what implications this might hold for Plato’s conception of psychic well-orderedness in the Timaeus. Consider the following passage, which comes shortly after our main passage on psychosomatic summetria above:

There are, as we have said many times now, three distinct types of soul that reside within us, each with its own motions. So now too, we must say in the same vein, as briefly as we can, that any type which is idle and keeps its motions inactive cannot but become very weak (ἀσθενέστατον), while one that keeps exercising becomes very strong (ἐρρωμενέστατον). And so we must keep watch to make sure that their motions remain proportionate to each other (τὰς κινήσεις πρὸς ἅλληλα συμμέτρους, 89e3-90a2).

In this text, psychic health and flourishing equates to each part of the soul receiving its own proper motion (kinēsis). Crucially, when Timaeus says that the motion which keeps exercising
‘becomes very strong’, we are meant to see this being applied to all parts of the soul, the rational part as much as any other. As Thomas Johansen has well observed, ‘[T]he rational order of the soul, post embodiment, is not one in which only the motions of the intellect thrive but a complex order in which other psychic motions operate alongside those of the intellect in common pursuit of the human good’.250 On Timaeus’ account, no one soul part should become overly powerful at the expense of another, just as no one internal part of the body should be in excess or defect (82a-b). This is because any deviation from this norm would result in the imbalance of the whole soul, which will eventually lead to its corruption and disease.

Much like the Republic, nevertheless, it must be conceded that this ‘complex order’ in which the motions of each soul part operate in close tandem with one another is not entirely incompatible with a certain version of a hierarchy of powers within the soul. For instance, it might be best at times for one of the soul’s motions (the rational motions) to receive more exercise than the others qua rational being. This could well allow for an inequality of motions between the parts of the soul, and yet any severe inequality (which I have suggested is implicated in the Republic’s more dominant hierarchy) is counterbalanced by the need for each other part of the soul to receive its distinct motion in light of what is good for the whole soul. Much like the cosmic body of the universe, we could say that the motions of each part of the soul are brought into a sort of geometrical progression, so that each part is equal to the other while still allowing a moderate degree of an inequality of motions. This summetria of parts within the soul might, therefore, be thought to create a higher degree of integration within the composite soul than previous models of psychic well-orderedness, bringing the relations of the distinct parts of the soul closer together in unity.

At this point, a strong intellectualist might object that the motions of each part of the soul should only be made proportionate to each other to the extent that the rational soul may perform its distinct function of theoretical contemplation with the least possible hindrance. On this view, proportionality of psychic motions would only be desirable insofar as the rational soul, the most important part within the complex soul, may assimilate itself to the divine and become immortal by contemplating godlike thoughts (see 90a-e).251 Consequently, there would be nothing intrinsically valuable in the motions of the soul being made proportionate to one another, despite the fact that the emphasis in the Timaeus seems to be on goodness as being a product of all the parts of the soul conceived in terms of summetria.

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251 This is the immortality thesis of Sedley (1999: 309-328).
Nevertheless, there is strong evidence in the text to suggest that achieving a just order of soul which involves complex interrelations of all three parts as one well-ordered whole is already sufficient for a blessed afterlife. When, for example, Timaeus comes to discuss how the rational soul is implanted in the body, he speaks of several disturbances the soul will have to face as a result of its embodiment. These include sense perception, feelings of love intermingled with pleasure and pain, as well as the emotions of fear and spiritedness and their opposites (42a-b). These latter we can fairly associate with different parts of the soul. What is noteworthy is that Timaeus says that if souls are able to master (κρατήσουσι) these emotions, their lives would become just, whereas if they were mastered (κρατηθέντες) by them, they would be unjust. What is more, the just individual would ‘at the end return to his dwelling place in his companion star, to live a life of happiness (βίον εὐδαίμονα) that agreed with his character’ (42b2-c1). Here, justice in the soul, which amounts to its parts receiving their appropriate motion and becoming proportionate to each other, results in the soul returning to its home star and thus upgrading its mode of embodiment. This lends support to the view that psychic proportionality is not a means to some further end, distinct from the good of the soul, but is a desirable end in and of itself.

Undeniably, achieving this justice in the soul will involve the rational soul having to take charge over the whole soul. Furthermore, in order for the rational soul to receive its proper motion and adequately govern the soul, it must engage in a reasonable degree of theoretical contemplation. However, I do not see these two modes of the soul (its justice and the rational soul’s contemplation of divine thoughts) as being necessarily incompatible. On my view, both contribute to the immortality that the soul may achieve by leading a just life. For the rational soul to become good, on this account, is for it to both perform theoretical contemplation and order the soul into a well-ordered arrangement where each part contributes to the goodness of the whole. This means that one important function of the rational soul is to be a principle of order in the context of embodied human life. While it will still pursue its peculiar function (contemplation of divine thoughts), that goal is not separate or distinct from the more important goal (the divinisation of the whole soul) of which the rational soul is a crucial part. In the

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252 Pace Sedley (1999: 309-328), who restricts godlikeness in the Timaeus to pure noetic activity. See rather Jorgenson (2018: 139), who writes ‘[T]o become like god does not necessarily require us to transcend human nature. It can equally be taken to signify the divinization of the human qua human, that is qua composite of body and soul’. For other accounts of godlikeness, see fn. 212.

253 See again Jorgenson (2018: 92), who says that the rational soul has a ‘hegemonic or demiurgic function as a principle of order and measure within the soul, the city, and, at the largest scale, the cosmos’.
hindsight of the previous chapter, this may point to an important contrast with the presentation of the soul in Book 10 of the Republic.  

To this end, let us also note the language Timaeus adopts to explain the rational soul’s responsibility of ordering the whole psychosomatic complex. In what I take to be a sort of preface to the dialogue’s famous passage on ‘becoming godlike’, Timaeus labels the rational soul as ‘the part that is going to do the leading’ (τὸ παιδαγωγῆσον, 89d5). More precisely, the word better translates to the rational soul being a ‘caretaker’ over the whole body-soul complex. This is to say, the rational soul qua intelligent principle creates summetria between the body and soul. And here is the salient point. This summetria between body and soul is said to constitute an overall life ‘according to reason’ (μάλιστ᾽ ἀν κατὰ λόγον, 89d4). What this seems to suggest is that psychosomatic proportion is not incongruous with the highest mode of existence for the embodied soul but, rather, is a critical feature of it. In this way, body-soul proportionality seems to take priority over both the proportionality of different parts within the soul and over the distinct interests of the rational soul alone conceived apart from the body. As I have suggested, this is because Timaeus’ main interest in the passage lies with the whole psychosomatic being. The order of this whole is therefore of more value than the order of any of its individual parts (even though both body and soul must themselves be well-ordered), which culminates in a more holistic model of well-orderedness for Plato in his later thought.

These remarks have prepared us for an examination of the ‘most important proportions’ on Timaeus’ account, to which now I turn in what remains. To begin with, when Timaeus comes to speak specifically of body-soul proportion, he does so with the following reasoning as his guiding point. Since human beings have two sets of natural desires coming through (διὰ) the body and soul respectively—the desire of the body for nourishment (τροφῆς) and the desire of the most divine part in us (τὸ θειότατον) for wisdom (φρονήσεως)—both of

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254 For Johansen (2004: 145-155), this represents a ‘general difference in emphasis in comparison to the Timaeus and the Republic’, since ‘[C]aring for the self […] extends to caring for the entire tripartite soul, not just the intellect’. See further note below.

255 To quote Johansen (2004: 155) once more, ‘our rationality is not exhibited simply in rational contemplation in disregard of the influence of body, but in the pursuit of a composite life of soul and body’.

256 As Carone (2005: 30) notes, in the case of cosmology the goodness and completeness of the whole cosmos takes precedence over the good of any of its individual parts. In the Laws, Plato applies this holistic principle to an observation of the individual’s place within the order of the whole universe: ‘Existence does not come into being for your sake—rather you for its sake. After all, for any doctor, any skilled workman, everything he does is for the sake of the whole; he strives for what is best on an overall view, producing a part for the sake of the whole, not the whole for the sake of one part’ (903c4-d1). The individual should therefore situate himself in relation to the whole of which he is an important part. See further fn. 263 below.

257 Most versions of the Timaeus translate ‘food’ for τροφή, but this restricts the scope of the body’s desires. It wants not just food, but also nourishment, growth, and sustenance in general, even though the main way for it to receive this is from food itself.
these desires need to be met in order for psychosomatic summetria to obtain. For a soul which is too strong in wisdom will bring diseases to the body (hitherto undiagnosed by ‘so-called’ physicians), while an overpowering body will render the soul dull, stupid, and forgetful, leading to the worst disease of all: ignorance (88a8-b3). Timaeus then offers us the remedy for both of these states:

From both of these conditions there is in fact one way to preserve oneself, and that is not to exercise the soul without exercising the body, nor the body without the soul, so that each may be balanced by the other and so be sound (ἰνα ἀμθομένω γίγνησθον ἰσορρόπω καὶ ὑγιῆ, 88b5-c1).

Left to their own devices, the text seems to presuppose that both body and soul have a natural tendency to sway towards the extreme connected to their natural desire. Taking the body first, an overindulgence in pandering to the demands of the body (nourishment, exercise) will lead to a neglect of the demands of the soul. Someone who takes too much value in exercising the body, for instance, might forget to also fulfil the other aspects of human existence necessitated by the mind. When Timaeus speaks of ‘the soul’ in this context, conversely, I take him to refer to the rational soul alone. This means that the rational soul also has its own characteristic form of excess, which needs to be moderated in light of the good order of the whole psychosomatic complex.258 One is reminded of the Philebus in this context, which champions the mixed life of both pleasure and intelligence (since this life constitutes a mixture, we may also assume that its relative components stand in a relation of summetria to one another). The message there is that a life of pure intelligence would be uncharacteristic of our human nature (Phil. 21d9-e4; 33b2-9), and should be balanced with a moderate degree of pleasure. And yet, what could the excess of the rational soul amount to in the Timaeus? Recall that the desire of the most ‘divine part’ in us is for wisdom. While Timaeus does not spell out the epistemological content of wisdom, I take the reference to phronēsis here as a blanket term for all the operations of the rational soul, which may well include a contemplation of Forms. This suggests that even our study of Forms can become an object of excess, in contrast to the exclusively rational function

258 It is not simply that one ought to exercise the body for the sake of the harmony of the soul (for exercising the body is valuable in and of itself insofar as the needs of the body have an important place in the context of embodiment). This is rather the message of the Republic, where Plato speaks of exercising the body (411e) and attuning it (591d) for the sake of the soul. Or, as Johansen (2004: 156) has put it, as a way of working on the soul through the body. The Timaeus, by contrast, shows interest in the body in isolation from the soul, and is also concerned with the good condition of the whole body-soul complex. This difference can be explained by the more holistic flavour of the Timaeus, as I am suggesting.
of the World-Soul which is at liberty to continuously thinks divine thoughts without having to attend to its body.

To say that body and soul ought to be ‘balanced’ by the other and become ‘sound’, however, is not to say that each must be absolutely equal to one another.\textsuperscript{259} The underlying implication seems to be that there must be just enough exercise for both body and soul for psychosomatic \textit{summetria} to obtain. This leaves open the possibility that the motions of one part of the human being may be stronger than the other, without, of course, either becoming too overbearing for the other (similarly with the motions of the soul). In fact, this seems to be the inference of what follows in the text, where Timaeus speaks of two distinct kinds of individuals who stand in need of soul-body \textit{summetria} (88b5-c6).

On the one hand, the ‘mathematician’ (τὸν δὴ μαθηματικόν) or the one ‘deeply engaged in intellectual pursuits’ (σφόδρα μελέτην διανοίας κατεργαζόμενον) must balance his studies by providing his body with an appropriate amount of movement (κίνησιν) and exercise (γυμναστικῇ, 88c1-3). The word \textit{kinēsis} here is not unintentional, especially since Timaeus uses this term to describe the unwavering movement of the receptacle. Speaking specifically of the body further on, Timaeus says that the good man must imitate (μιμῆται) the nurse of the universe by continually giving his body \textit{kinēsis} and producing vibrations (σεισμοὺς) so as to keep the various \textit{internal} parts of the body in their correct order (88d-e). Here, we might detect an implied contrast between the human body and the cosmos to which we must assimilate ourselves. For in the case of human bodies, constant movement is necessary insofar as the internal parts of the body have a natural tendency to stay towards excess and deficiency (see 82a-b again). The cosmos, by contrast, is bound by precise mathematical ratios which help it to maintain its order and balance without further intervention; its movement still contributes to its health and longevity, but there is no possibility, as there is with the biological human body, that the internal parts of the cosmic body might deviate from their fixed order. Nevertheless, the individual will still benefit from observing and imitating the constant motion of the universe in maintaining health. By giving himself constant movement, the intellectual ‘will not allow one hostile (ἐχθρὸν) element to position itself next to another (παρ᾽ ἐχθρὸν) and so breed wars (πολέμους) and diseases in the body. Instead, he will have one friendly element (φίλον) placed

\textsuperscript{259} The ancient concept of \textit{summetria} did not entail ‘symmetry’ as does our modern term. \textit{Summetria} signifies due proportion, commensurability, a ‘fit’ between items, while symmetry implies an absolute mirroring of things. Although the concept of \textit{summetria} anticipated symmetry (on which, see Hon and Goldstein 2008), symmetry only came to have its modern scientific meaning as we know it from the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century onwards.
by another (παρὰ φίλον), and so bring about health’ (88e4-89a1). In other words, he will fashion his body into a well-ordered whole.

On the other hand, the individual who ‘takes care to develop his body’ (τον τε αὐτό σῶμα ἐπιμελῶς πλάττοντα, 88c3-4 should impart motion to his soul by engaging in ‘music’ (μουσικῆ, not just music but ‘musical culture’ in general) and ‘all philosophy’ (τράση φιλοσοφία). The terminology of ‘plattonta’ here might plausibly be taken as a back reference to the Phaedo (a point noted by Verdenius), where Socrates said that true philosophers do not live ‘fashioning’ (plattontes) their bodies (82d3). To this end, it has often been noted that the Timaeus offers an advanced and more positive account of embodied human life than the Phaedo. In the Timaeus, in stark contrast to the Phaedo, Plato seems to make room for a great deal of bodily excellence in the good life. From the holistic perspective of the Timaeus, as I have sketched it, bodily excellence even seems necessary for a rational and virtuous life. Nevertheless, Timaeus also warns us against exercising the body to an excessive level. For this reason, the athlete, much like the intellectual, may also benefit from observing and imitating the cosmos to suit his particular needs. For the regular motions of the heavenly bodies are, in the context of the Timaeus, visible manifestations of the thoughts of nous. By aligning the motions of our own thoughts with the motions of the heavenly bodies, we may assimilate our minds to divine thought itself and thus give the divine part in us the exercise it requires.

Having provided us with these instructions, Timaeus then says that both the mathematician and the athlete need to exercise the motions of the other and thus achieve psychosomatic summetria if anyone is to truly deserve the joint epithets ‘fine and good’ (εἰ μέλλει δικαίως τις ἅμα μὲν καλός, ἅμα δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὀρθῶς κεκλησθαί, 88c5-6). Earlier in the dialogue, Timaeus used this same formulation when saying that the Demiurge is a cause of everything ‘fine and good’ (καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν) 46e3-6), where I suspect that one important reason why the cosmos possesses these same features is because it, too, has a proportionate and friendly relation between its body and soul (Tim. 34a8-b9). As Gabriela Roxana has compellingly argued, ‘[W]hen we read about the friendliness and harmony that already exists between the cosmic soul and body of the universe, we are encouraged to think this god is presented as the model of virtue’. If that is the case, then in addition to imitating the body of the cosmos (the

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260 For a recent analysis, see Betegh (2020: 228-258).
261 This may be read as a reappropriation of the aristocratic model of the kaloskagathos which traditionally signalled nobility of birth and status. Within the more holistic framework of the Timaeus, these epithets are rather reserved for someone who instantiates proportionality in the best possible way, namely, between body and soul.
intellectual) and its soul (the athlete), observing the *summetria* that exists between its body and soul as a whole may impel the individual to create a good psychosomatic whole of himself. By likening ourselves to the divine craftsman’s fine and good creation, we too can become fine and good, well-ordered wholes of body and soul.263

Returning to the climax of our main text in this section, Timaeus says that by achieving this psychosomatic proportion we will also become the most beautiful (*kalliston*) and most desirable (*erasmiōtaton*) of all things to behold (*pantōn theamatōn*, 87d7-8).264 But what could it mean for the well-proportioned individual to become an object of desire and contemplation? Not because of any superficial beauty—for body-soul proportionality is not something immediately perceptible but, rather, something to be grasped through reflection on the way one lives their life.265 The *summetros* human being becomes an object of desirable contemplation, rather, because he has become a small-scale copy of the cosmos. As we learn elsewhere in the dialogue, the cosmos is a divinity which should be revered *par excellence* above all other divinities (see esp. 92c4-9 and fn. 212). By modelling ourselves on this divinity, the people with whom we share a community will come to admire the same goodness and beauty which exists in the heavens above them.

Our rational desire for the well-proportioned human being may, however, go one step further than the level of the cosmos itself. Recall the way in which the Good is captured under the three terms beauty, proportion, and truth in the *Philebus* (65a2). At the beginning of our main passage in this section, Timaeus said that ‘all that is good is beautiful, and what is beautiful is not ill-proportioned’, which also makes a close association between two of the values mentioned in the *Philebus* text (beauty, proportion) and goodness itself. Perhaps our desire for the well-proportioned individual, then, derives from our latent psychic desire of the Good itself, which seems to be expressed in the world through the value of proportionality (*summetria*).

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263 As Boys-Stones (2019: esp. 108-109) suggests in his discussion of part-whole relations in Plato and the Stoics, Plato is also interested in the role that the human being plays as being a part of the larger whole that is the universe (cf. fn. 256 above). In order to function properly as such a ‘part’ within a whole which has body-soul *summetria*, I suggest, is to fully realise one’s human nature by becoming a proportionate psychosomatic whole ourselves.

264 This language strongly echoes *Republic* 402d-e, where the musical man is said to be sensitive to all beautiful and harmonious things and will thus feel *erōs* whenever the physical form of a body matches and agrees with the beautiful character of a soul. However, the *Republic* speaks of agreement and concord (*homologia* and *sumphōnia*) between body and soul rather than *summetria*, terms which seem natural in the context of the musical education of the soul. As I have also shown, references to *summetria* in its normative-ethical application in the *Republic* are scarce.

265 On a similar response to perceiving beauty as I am suggesting here, see further Barney (2010: esp. 377).
Creating soul-body *summetria* may, finally, also serve an important *epistemological* function. In the previous section, it was argued that intelligent agents create *summetria* with the aid of an appropriate model. While the Demiurge took the Intelligible Animal as his model, however, human beings have a more readily available model in the heavens: the well-ordered cosmos. This model, in turn, seems to be the best instantiation of what we could call the Form ‘Life’ by being an animal *par excellence*. When we model ourselves on the cosmos, then, perhaps we too come to partake in the Form ‘Life’ (albeit in a more imperfect way), which demands of us to create a proportionate relation between our body and soul *qua* living beings. By establishing an equal balance of the two extreme desires humans possess as composites of body and soul (88a8-b3), it is as though we impose a Limit on our Unlimited desires. Through the instantiation of *summetria*, then, we come to embody the Form of Life itself. Whilst this is manifested best on the level of the heavens, by embodying the Form we may trigger rational inquiry into the same principles which went into ordering the heavens for those are adequately able to contemplate our *summetria.*

In closing this chapter, the application of Plato’s later metaphysical concepts (*to metrion*, *summetria*) to the cosmos, the city, and the individual human being has provided both a common thread for understanding the interconnection between all three structures (something which was suggested but not developed in the *Gorgias*) and revealed something unique to the way that the well-orderedness of each is being conceived in the late dialogues. These concepts, I have suggested, coincide with Plato’s increasing interest in the question of how complex structures become optimally ordered and suggest that such well-orderedness is a matter of striking ‘due measure’ or ‘proportion’ between opposing extremes within a complex structure, so that the whole may be bound together with a unity which is more accommodating towards plurality and difference.

When applied to cosmology, we can see that *summetria* enables the cosmos to thrive by bringing the distinct parts which constitute the world into an equal and balanced relation despite the natural differences of each. This, in turn, holds the key to both the unity and friendship of the cosmos. These relations, I have also shown, are secured through *geometrical* proportion, which this thesis has argued is Plato’s fairest and best model of proportional equality for complex wholes of parts. When applied to politics, the notions of *to metrion* and *summetria* are suggestive of a less hierarchical relation between the ruling element in a city and the other

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266 As Miller (2003: 43) suggests, ‘Life, to be well instantiated, requires of the animal in which it is instantiated that its soul and body not exceed one another in either direction but be evenly balanced’.

267 On the connection between the *Timaeus* and the metaphysics of the *Philebus* here, see Miller (2003: 44).
members of the community so that each individual may become equal and friendly with one another, bringing the city into one unified well-ordered whole. Finally, by explaining the well-orderedness of the individual human being in terms of *summetria*, this section has argued that a good human life is one where proportionality is instantiated on *all* levels of embodied existence, from the relations that unify the soul to the proportionate relations *between* body and soul which are more characteristic of our human nature. While rationality may still be of most value to Plato’s ethics and psychology, the reasoning element in us should never become too dominant as to eclipse what is good for the well-orderedness of the whole human being.

In these ways, I have argued, Plato ends up with a conceptual model in his later dialogues established through new metaphysical concepts which best responds to the question of how complex wholes of parts are best put together so as to quality as being well-ordered, coherent, and whole. In fact, when Plato suggests in the *Philebus* that ‘any mixture that does not in some way or other possess measure (μέτρου) or the nature of proportion (τῆς συμμέτρου φύσεως) will necessarily corrupt (ἀπόλλυσι) its ingredients and most of all itself’ (64d9-11), we are meant to see *summetria* as that which enables *all* complex structures to be both the kind of entity they *ought* to be and thus perform their distinct function well. In this way, I submit, *summetria* becomes an irreducible item for how late Plato conceives of the well-orderedness and unity of complex structures.
Conclusion: A Development in Plato’s Theory of Well-Ordered Wholes

This thesis began by showing that the *Gorgias* expounds a ‘substantive normative framework’ for theorising well-ordered wholes. Central to this framework was the notion that, since complex structures are comprised of a plurality of distinct and potentially opposing parts which exist as some one entity, these items are able to *function* better when they acquire their own unique *taxis* and *kosmos* and thus become whole. In this way, the *Gorgias* was shown to generate a significant *normative* claim. That is, complex wholes of parts *ought* to become well-ordered. This normative concern in the well-orderedness of complex structures would constitute a lasting contribution to the philosophy of Plato, as he attends to the theme of well-ordered wholes in various subsequent dialogues and contexts.

In addition to providing a substantive normative framework for well-ordered wholes, we also found intimations in the dialogue of an explanatory framework with attention given to the procedures required for complex structures to become well-ordered and perform their distinct function well. In one famous passage which framed my discussion of the dialogue (503d6-504a4), Plato compared the ideal speaker to a *craftsman* who harmonises the disparate parts of his material into a certain ‘form’ (*eidos ti*) by looking towards an external paradigm in order that his product may be of optimal use (*chreia*) for a certain object or purpose (*pros ti*). However, this framework was also shown to be underdetermined in important respects. For instance, the metaphysical status of the craftsman’s paradigms was ultimately left ambiguous, obfuscating the connection between the external paradigm and its causal role in the production of well-ordered wholes. Moreover, while the depiction of a ‘craftsman’ strongly *suggested* that intelligence is responsible for creating order, the lack of any explicit reference to rationality made this a further point the dialogue left question-begging.

Three complex structures were of special significance to Plato’s efforts in the dialogue: a *logos*, a soul, and the ordered *kosmos*. Plato’s craftsman model implied that a *logos* is a complex whole of parts which, if it is to fulfil its distinct function of *ordering the soul* well, must have parts which are fitting with one another and to the whole they jointly comprise. The dialogue also shed light on the question of what sort of form or structure a *logos* should embody by suggesting that ethically beneficial speeches are modelled on the ideal virtues of the soul, namely, justice and moderation. While the dialogue also suggested some important ways in which well-ordered *logoi* improve the soul by making it increasingly well-ordered—for instance, by harmonising its various *doxa* so that the soul can become virtuous—the absence
of a thoroughly worked-out psychology meant that several different (and sometimes radically contrasting) models could account for the well-orderedness of the soul. In this way, the question of how exactly to conceptualise the *taxis* and *kosmos* of the soul in light of the dialogue’s central craftsman analogy was one pertinent issue the *Gorgias* left hanging.

Plato’s remarks on the well-orderedness of a *logos* and a soul, it was then argued, culminated in an explicit reflection on the *kosmos* of the whole universe, of which the dialogue provided a tantalisingly vague but potentially innovative clue: ἡ ἰσότης ἡ γεωμετρικὴ. By intimating that the *kosmos* is held together *par excellence* by geometrical proportionality, Plato seems to look forward to a principle which finds its full flowering in later dialogues, and which will be explicitly applied to complex structures as the fairest and most cohesive model of well-orderedness. However, Plato did not explicitly spell out what is encompassed by the term ‘geometrical equality’, leaving the status of this principle ambiguous within the dialogue. Finally, while the reference to geometrical equality arises out of a series of arguments against Calliclean *pleonexia*, thus suggesting that a proper understanding of the ordered *kosmos* can also facilitate psychic and civic well-orderedness, the structural isomorphism between the *kosmos* and lower paradigms such as the city and soul was not made an obvious feature of reflection in the *Gorgias* as it is elsewhere in Plato.

In all these various ways, the *Gorgias* was shown to lay down the foundations for Plato’s interest in the theme of well-ordered wholes, while also leaving open several questions which remained the task for subsequent works to resolve. One place where Plato begins to build on issues which were left unclear in the *Gorgias*, it was then shown, is the *Republic*. Principally, the *Republic* provides a detailed psychology of distinct *parts* within the soul which enables Plato to construct a precise *conceptual model* for explaining the well-orderedness of the soul. On the *harmonia* model of the dialogue, both city and soul are made well-ordered through a hierarchy of better and worse elements with reason assuming authority over the whole. This conceptual model was supported by the dialogue’s stance on the principle of ‘justice’ (PJ), which made the unity and friendship of the city contingent on each part performing its own distinct function and being separated from the function of any other part.

This model, while clarifying an open question in the *Gorgias*, was also shown to create palpable tensions of its own. In particular, it was suggested that the model of a tripartite *harmonia* generated a dominant and inflexible *hierarchy* which placed supreme emphasis on the rational element at the marginalisation of the other parts comprising the city and soul, resulting in a picture of complex structures which was open to significant political and ethical objections.
With regard to the city, the dominant hierarchy enabled by the *harmonia* model led to a strong preoccupation with the exclusionary unity of the philosophical class, which was shown to cast shade on Plato’s hopes for the unity of the whole city. Furthermore, it was unclear how all of the parts of the city become *philoi* with another when that *philia* seemed to be predicated on a quasi-slavery, which created a severe political inequality among persons. This critique was brought into sharper focus in comparison with the political theory of the *Laws*, since that dialogue both makes equality an explicit object of reflection for the *philia* and unity of the city and makes the geometrical equality the key to these outcomes, an equality which was obscured by the dominant hierarchy of the *Republic*. As Aristotle warns us with the hindsight of the *Republic* (*Pol. 1301*²25-30, 1301³25-30), severe inequalities can become a genuine source of civil strife (*stasis*) and lead to the destruction of the whole city. This gave us reason to be at least cautious with the *harmonia* model as being conducive to civic unity.

With regard to psychology, the *harmonia* model also raised doubts as to how the soul can really be joined into a well-ordered whole of plural elements given the strong emphasis on reason. This tension within the *harmonia* model was shown to reach its climax in Book 10 of the dialogue, where Plato returns to an austere conception of the soul which I demonstrated had its roots in the Affinity Argument of the *Phaedo*. In Book 10, Plato seems to present a conception of the soul as an incomposite and exclusively rational unity, which complicates his main objective in the dialogue of showing that the soul achieves justice when it is made into a well-ordered composite whole of a plurality of parts. Nevertheless, the *harmonia* model was already shown to create a tension between a model of the soul as a well-ordered whole of plural elements, and a model of the soul where plurality and difference is side-lined in favour of a fixation with one part of the whole over the others.

Perhaps it was Plato’s reflection on the psychological, political, and ethical tensions generated by the *Republic*’s conceptual model of structure which prompted the introduction of new conceptual terms in the later dialogues, which yield what I have argued is a more holistic model for complex wholes. This model seems to have been motivated by Plato’s recognition to come up with improved ways of conceptualising a more balanced relation between the parts of complex structures, which is encapsulated in the notion of due or right measure and proportionality (*to metron, summetria*) within a complex whole. This comes with the corresponding concession that even the best or strongest principle within complex wholes such as the city and the soul, which will always be the rational principle for Plato, needs to be itself moderated to accommodate for a model of well-ordered structure which is more conducive to the friendship of unity of such wholes.
These conceptual ideas were underpinned by an advanced metaphysical framework first promulgated in the *Statesman* and then taken up in the *Philebus* where the concepts of *to metrion* and *summetria* signify the right numerical ratio among a plurality of opposing extremes. When a complex whole is characterised by *to metrion* or *summetria*, which enables that item to become unified and well-functioning, then it has also become a good instantiation of its intelligible counterpart. This is because, as I have tentatively argued, in their causal capacity in production Forms become *expressed* in composite worldly structures as the *right* ratio or number among an indefinite plurality. This was also shown to shed further light on the operations of intelligence (*nous*), which contemplates the appropriate Form for his creation and considers how that Form might best be instantiated by also considering contextual factors such as the right time (*ton kairon*), the appropriate (*to prepon*), and the necessary (*to deon*). In these ways, the key metaphysical concepts of the later dialogues have the upshot of allowing Plato to clarify more vividly the connection between intelligible items and their causal role in the production of well-ordered wholes through the agency of intelligence.

Viewed through the lens of politics, these metaphysical concepts were shown to generate an account of the city as a well-ordered whole where the notion of hierarchy is still present but nevertheless *qualified* so as to create a fairer and more balanced relation between the disparate parts of the city. It was argued that this was achieved through the application of geometrical equality or proportion to the city, which becomes politically expressed in the *Laws* by giving all citizens a share of participating in the functions of government but where some will receive a *greater or lesser* of such shares depending on their contribution to the city. In this way, the wisdom of the city may be upheld while also acknowledging the need for members of the community to be both free and equal with another, which, consonantly, achieves *the right measure* (*to metrion*) between the opposite extremes of freedom and slavery. In contrast to the *Republic*, this was shown to enable an account of *philia* based not on harsh separation but a greater sense of integration and togetherness, making it easier to see how the different parts of the city would resist *stasis* and enjoy civic unity.

The concept of *summetria* was also shown to have significant implications for the ethics and psychology of Plato’s late dialogues. Indeed, the rational part of the soul is still recognised to be the most godlike and the part that is to lead the whole soul, but psychic *summetria* necessitates that a critical part of the rational soul’s good is for it to form a well-ordered whole with the other parts of the soul where each receive their distinct motion and function as one integrated rational whole. This more holistic principle for the order of the individual human being was then reflected in the notion that the whole psychosomatic compound should itself
achieve *summetria*. In this way, it was argued, a good ethical life is one where the desires of neither the body nor the rational soul become too extreme (for the rational soul is now conceded to have its own characteristic form of excess), but rather one where both are balanced by the other in favour of a view of the entire human being as one inseparable well-ordered whole.

In the late dialogues, this account of civic and individual well-orderedness is bolstered by a robust cosmology where *summetria* becomes the key to the supreme well-orderedness of the world. By showing how the geometrical proportion (*analogia*) binds the disparate parts of the world into unity *par excellence* in the *Timaeus*, picking up on a suggestion which was intimated but left unclear in the *Gorgias* (507e6-508a8), Plato establishes the cosmos as a paradigm for lower structures to assimilate themselves on. In the *Laws*, Plato makes the structural isomorphism between cosmos and city clear by showing how the four classes of Magnesia are bound through a geometrical progression much like the body of the world so that the whole is joined into friendship and unity (744b-d; cf. 757a-e). In the *Timaeus*, this isomorphism also extends down to the individual human being; by appreciating the proportionality that exists between the cosmic body and its soul, the individual will learn to create a psychosomatic whole of himself, thus becoming a miniature cosmos and a fine instantiation of goodness itself (87c-d). In this way, well-orderedness becomes expressed on all levels of embodied existence.

By putting Plato’s works in close dialogue with one another, what has emerged in this thesis is a development in Plato’s theory of well-ordered wholes, where later works respond to, and resolve, tensions generated in earlier works. This development, it has been argued, arises out of the need for Plato to come up with better ways of conceptualising how complex wholes become well-ordered, as he struggles to negotiate better in his later works with a wider range of citizens in more practical political contexts, with the human aspects of the soul and the body in less strictly intellectual contexts, and with the physical world in a teleological context. I have argued that this more sophisticated account of well-orderedness in the late dialogues is achieved with new conceptual terms and a holistic model which enable more integrated, less hierarchical, and less objectionable ethical and political ideas to be ventured.268 Arguably, then, this stands as Plato’s best expression of how complex structures become well-ordered wholes.

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268 The ethics, psychology and politics of Plato’s later dialogues has become a popular topic in recent literature. For instance, Johansen (2004: 158) speaks of a ‘change in emphasis’ between the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* on the issues of moral psychology and ethics, which he explains by attending to the teleological structure of the soul in the *Timaeus*. More recently, Jorgenson (2018: 203) has claimed that the ‘central aim’ of his monograph (which straddles the ethical dimension of the body-soul relation in Plato) is ‘to indicate how Plato’s thinking in the later period dialogues differs, at least in emphasis, from that of works such as the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*’ (my italics). This thesis has therefore hoped to have provided a new window into understanding these nuances of the late dialogues by examining Plato’s interest in the substantive question of how complex wholes of parts are optimally ordered so as to become well-ordered wholes.


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