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Abstract

Happiness (saʿīdah) materializes as the ultimate goal of man in Abū Naṣr Mūḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al- Fārābī’s Mabādiʾ Ārāʾ Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila (Principles of the Views of the Citizens of the Best State). But happiness, i.e., happiness in this life and happiness in the afterlife, is only attainable by the virtuous citizen. The prevailing academic vision of Fārābī’s Virtuous City essentially can be placed into two categories: either it is an ideal as found in Plato’s Republic or it is an actual city that has been founded or will be established at some time in the future. The difficulty with both of these interpretations is that they limit who can attain happiness. I will argue that we must examine Fārābī’s Virtuous City in a different light. I will show that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is comparable to the Plotinian World Soul in which it is the genus of all souls and it is the place to which all souls strive to return, and there attain happiness. As a result, it can be argued that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is a city that exists in the intelligible world; it contains both citizens that reside within the city and citizens that reside in the material world. Through a comparison of Fārābī’s Virtuous City with the Plotinian World Soul, we shall see that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is not unlike Aurelius Augustine’s City of God, which is also a city that exists in the intelligible world, and has citizens within both this city and here on earth. By comparing the relevant texts of Plotinus, Augustine, and Fārābī, it becomes possible to illustrate how Fārābī, like Augustine, utilized the Plotinian Triple Hypostases (The One, Nous, and the World Soul) in order to answer the ultimate questions: Why does man desire
happiness? How does man attain this happiness? And most importantly, where

can man attain this happiness?

Fārābī tells us that only virtuous citizens will achieve happiness. This
leaves us with unanswered questions. If all souls derive from the Virtuous City,
then why do they not all return? What defines a virtuous citizen? How does one
become a virtuous citizen? These are questions that must be answered in the
material world, by us, Fārābī’s readers. Fārābī’s Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila, like
Augustine’s De Civitate Dei, clearly outlines a specific system of knowledge and
a specific way of life; in this way, both Fārābī and Augustine provide the criteria
by which human beings can become virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of
God. Plotinus’ concept of the undescended soul may also provide us with
another way of looking at these virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God,
in that these citizens become aware of the higher part of their soul and assimilate
themselves to the intelligible world. These citizens must live in the material
world, i.e., in the non-virtuous cities and the City of Man, but they too can be
citizens of those cities that exist in the intelligible world. Fārābī and Augustine
leave us with a choice to make: of which city will we become citizens?
Résumé

Le bonheur (sa‘ādah) apparaît comme l’objectif ultime de l’homme dans (Mabādi‘ Āra‘ Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila) Idées des habitants de la cité vertueuse de Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī. Mais le bonheur, c.-à-d., le bonheur dans cette vie et le bonheur dans la vie après la mort, est seulement possible pour le citoyen vertueux. La vision courante de la cité vertueuse de Fārābī propose essentiellement seulement deux catégories: ou c’est un idéal comme trouvé dans Le République de Platon ou c’est une cité réelle qui a été fondée ou qui sera établie a un moment donné dans l’avenir. La difficulté avec tous les deux interprétations est qu’ils limitent le nombre dé ceux qui peuvent atteindre le bonheur. Pour cette raison, je soutiendrai que nous devons examiner la cité vertueuse de Fārābī dans une lumière différente. Je montrerai que la cité vertueuse de Fārābī est comparable à l’âme du monde de Plotinus dans laquelle c’est le genre de toutes les âmes et c’est l’endroit auquel toutes les âmes tâchent de rentrer; l’atteindre fait le bonheur. Ainsi, on peut soutenir que la cité vertueuse de Fārābī est une cité qui existe dans le monde intelligible; elle contient à la fois les citoyens qui résident dans la cité et aussi les citoyens qui résident dans le monde matériel. Par une comparaison de la cité vertueuse de Fārābī avec l’âme du monde de Plotinus nous verrons que la cité vertueuse de Fārābī n’est pas différente de la cité de Dieu de Aurelius Augustine; ça aussi est une cité qui existe dans le monde intelligible, et qui a des citoyens et dans cette cité et ici sur terre. En comparant les texts justicatifs de Plotinus, Augustine, et Fārābī, il devient possible d’illustrer comment Fārābī, comme Augustine, a
utilisé les Hypostases Triples de Plotinus (L’un, Nous, et L’âme du monde) afin de répondre aux questions finales: Pourquoi l’homme désire-t-il le bonheur? Comment l’homme atteint-il ce bonheur? Et d’une manière plus importante, qu peut l’homme atteindre ce bonheur?

Fārābī nous indique que seulement les citoyens vertueux réaliseront le bonheur. Ceci nous laisse avec des questions sans réponse. Si toutes les âmes dérivent de la cité vertueuse, alors pourquoi ne font-elles pas toutes le retour? Que définit un citoyen vertueux? Comment fait un devenu un citoyen vertueux? Ce sont ces questions qui doivent être adressées dans le monde matériel, par nous, les lecteurs de Fārābī. *Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍīla* de Fārābī, comme *De Civitate Dei* de Augustine, décrit clairement un système spécifique de la connaissance et une mode de vie spécifique; dans cette façon, Fārābī et Augustine fournissent les critères par lesquels les êtres humains peuvent devenir les citoyens vertueux et les citoyens de la cité de Dieu. Le concept de l’âme non descendue de Plotinus peut-être nous fournit une autre façon d’être de regarder ces citoyens vertueux et ces citoyens de la cité de Dieu, par laquelle, ces citoyens se rendent compte de la partie plus élevée de leur âme et s’assimilent au monde intelligible. Ces citoyens doivent vivre dans le monde matériel, c.-à-d., dans les cités non-vertueuses et la cité de l’homme, mais ils peuvent eux aussi être les citoyens de cette cité qui existent dans le monde intelligible. Fārābī et Augustine nous donnent un choix à faire: de quelle cité devenons-môns des citoyens?
Table of Contents.

Acknowledgements ......................................................... ii.

Abstract ................................................................. iii-iv.

Résumé ................................................................. v-vi.

List of Abbreviations.................................................. x-xi.

Introduction......................................................... 1-15.

Part One

Chapter One: Historiography........................................ 16-58.

I. Historiography of Arabic Philosophy......................... 16-27.


II. The Neoplatonic Problem........................................ 27-42.


II.b. The Role of Plotinus........................................... 37-42.

III. Historiography of Fārābī’s Virtuous City................. 42-48.

IV. Neoplatonic Sources.............................................. 48-55.

V. Biographical Information........................................ 55-58.

Part Two


Introduction............................................................. 62-63.

I. Fārābī’s Plato.......................................................... 63-65.
II. Fārābī’s Aristotle. ........................................... 65-70.

III. Fārābī On Happiness. ..................................... 70-91.

IV. Comparison of Fārābī’s Active Intellect and the Plotinian Nous. 91-101.

V. Philosophy and Religion as Paths to Happiness. .............. 101-105.

Conclusion. .................................................. 105-107.


I. Augustine’s Quest for Happiness. .............................. 110-114.

II. Adam as the Plotinian World Soul. ........................... 114-119.

III. Augustine and Plotinus’ Use of Logos. ...................... 120-123.

IV. Augustine and Plotinus on Contemplation and Action. .... 123-124.

V. Augustine on the Return of the Soul. ......................... 124-126.

Conclusion .................................................. 127-128.

Part Two Conclusion ........................................ 129-130.

Part Three


Chapter Four: Cities in the Intelligible World. .................... 137-173.

Introduction. .............................................. 137-138.

I. The Cosmos of Plotinus. ................................... 138-140.

II. The Cosmos of Augustine. .................................. 140-147.

III. The Cosmos of Fārābī. .................................... 147-152.

IV. The Ruler of Fārābī’s Virtuous City. ......................... 152-154.
List of Abbreviations


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Introduction

In this dissertation I will argue that the varying interpretations of Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī’s [870-950 CE] Mabādi’ Ārā’ Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fādīla (Principles of the Views of the Citizens of the Best State)¹ have tended to ignore the most fundamental aspect of his thought. This is the central importance he accords to the notion of happiness (saʿādah).² By examining his Madīnah with this notion firmly in mind, however, it becomes possible to provide a coherent account of his thought. The interpretations offered to date by modern scholars differ widely and are often mutually exclusive; and yet, it is just these conflicting interpretations which continue to determine the very questions we ask of Fārābī’s text. Such forced questions have at times created a seeming gulf of divergent views. Here it will be argued that a new approach is needed. To accomplish that, however, we must begin by examining the established arguments.

A case in point is Joshua Parens, who begins his latest work with the claim that “now more than at any time for centuries, Alfarabi, a tenth-century

¹ Al-Fārābī, Mabādi’ Ārā’ Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fādīla Principles of the Views of the Citizens of the Best State, translated by Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). The text as a whole will be referred to as Madīnah while the discussion of the city itself will be referred to as the Virtuous City throughout this paper.

² According to Lane, the word saʿādah denotes “prosperity, good fortune, happiness, or felicity of a man; with respect to religion and with respect to worldly things: it is of two kinds relating to the world to come and relating to the present world.” Edward William Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon 8 vols. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), 1362. It should be noted, saʿādah is the Arabic word used in the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics for the Greek term eudaimonia. See Al-Akhlaq (Ethica Nicomachea. Arabic) translated by Ishaq ibn Hunayn, edited by ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawi, (Wakalat al-Matbuʿat: Kuwayt, 1979), 57. The Arabic Version of the “Nicomachean Ethics” edited by Anna A. Akasoy and Alexander Fidora with an introduction and annotated translation by Douglas M. Dunlop (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1095a 18f./1129b 18/1152b 6/1153b 11/1169b 29/1176a 31f.
Muslim political philosopher, is especially timely.”³ Parens primarily focuses on Fārābī’s *Tahṣīl al-Saʿādah* (*Attainment of Happiness*) wherein Fārābī “envisions the fulfillment of Islam’s ambition to spread Islam, as the virtuous religion, to the inhabited world.”⁴ Parens claims:

In his *Attainment of Happiness*, Alfarabi extrapolates from insights that Plato developed in the *Republic*. In the *Republic*, Socrates envisions a perfectly just city (*polis*) as one in which all citizens are devoted solely to the common good. The harm done to the private good of most citizens in that city is familiar to most undergraduates. Alfarabi uses that insight and applies it to his own setting. He wonders what it would take for Islam to achieve its ambition to rule the world justly. He argues that it would require that not only every nation but also every city within every nation should be virtuous. Furthermore, to be truly just, the rulers of each nation would need to be philosopher-kings, and each city would need to have its own peculiar adaptations or imitations of philosophy suited to its particular climate and locale. In other words, a virtuous world regime would require a multiplicity of virtuous religions to match the multiplicity of virtuous nations.⁵

Parens is actually arguing that the *Tahṣīl* is essentially a cautionary tale. Indeed he claims that “Alfarabi does not intend this world regime to be a realistic or even an ideal plan. Rather, he seeks to persuade his reader that the effort to establish a just world regime is an impossibly high, even if a noble, goal.”⁶ Unquestionably, Parens is correct in his assertion that Fārābī is extremely significant in light of the political atmosphere of the present day. The fulfillment of Islam’s ambition to spread Islam, as “the virtuous religion,” to the inhabited world is indeed an important point to examine. These statements lead us to think of another work of Fārābī’s which seems to be as essential, if not

⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., 2.
⁶ Ibid., 2.
more so; this is Fārābī’s Madīnah. Following Parens, we, too, ask: is Fārābī’s Virtuous City necessarily an Islamic city? And does Fārābī envision the Virtuous City as a city that is supposed to be spread across the inhabited world? The answer to these questions must be no. Nonetheless, by even asking these questions we are limiting the way that we perceive Fārābī’s Virtuous City. Is our vision of the Virtuous City predetermined? I intend to show that Fārābī’s Virtuous City has been predominantly recognized by scholars to be either an ideal city, a city that is only discussed in theory, as found in Plato’s Republic or an actual city that has been founded or will be established at some time in the future. Nevertheless, both of these interpretations conflict with what Fārābī conveys about the attainment of happiness. It will be argued here that we must change the way we examine Fārābī’s Virtuous City.

While there are numerous interpretations of Madīnah, none is wholly satisfactory because each ignores Fārābī’s concept of happiness (saʿādah), that is, happiness on earth and ultimate happiness, in which happiness is attained in the afterlife. Paul Walker notes that a single focal point in Fārābī’s thought has not been found; thus, all suppositions about Fārābī and his work are provisional.7 However, happiness appears to be the paramount consideration in his Madīnah and in a number of other works. But which happiness is the most important? Muhsin Mahdi notes that in Tahṣīl, worldly happiness is only mentioned once, thereby implying that it may not be as crucial as ultimate happiness. However,

Mahdi argues too that Fārābī could not have simply overlooked what most Muslims believed to be a prerequisite of ultimate happiness, i.e., happiness on earth. Patricia Crone claims that “true happiness, according to al-Fārābī, was intellectual and moral perfection in this world and immortality of the rational soul in the next.” This claim suggests that happiness on earth is the attainment of the necessary perfections, while ultimate happiness is attained in the next life. If Crone’s claim is correct, then earthly happiness appears to be vital in the achievement of ultimate happiness, but ultimate happiness is of the utmost importance. Fārābī seems to be more concerned about the soul and its final destination in the intelligible world than the soul’s place in the ever changing sublunary or material world. The intelligible world is the world that can be perceived by man’s intellect alone and not by sense perception. The intelligible world is the metaphysical, ethereal, incorporeal, or immaterial

10 In Fārābī’s cosmos, the First and the ten subsequent intelligibles (the last intelligible is the Active Intellect ‘aql fa‘a) are “utterly incorporeal” and are not in matter. While the celestial bodies “belong to the same genus as the material existents (of the sublunary world), because they have substrata, which resembles the matters which serve as the underlying carriers of forms, and things which are their forms as it were, by which they become substantified…Hence the form of each of these celestial bodies is ‘actual’ intellect, and the body thinks by means of this form the essence of the ‘separate’ (inmaterial) intellect from which it derives its existence, and it thinks the First. But because it also thinks its substratum which is not intellect, that part of its essence which it thinks is not entirely intellect, since it does not think with its substratum but only with its form. There is then in the celestial body an intelligible which is not intellect—whereas that part of its form which it intelligizes is intellect—it thus thinks with an intellect which is not identical with its entire substance. In this respect the celestial body differs from the First and from the ten ‘separate’ intellects which are free from matter and any substratum, and has something in common with man.” Thus, for Fārābī, the intelligible world would only include those incorporeal or immaterial beings and therefore would not include the celestial bodies, which can be apprehended by the senses. Fārābī discusses our mental apprehension of the First and so suggests that this world is perceived by our intellect alone. Fārābī, Madīnah, 3.1-10, 7.3-4; 1.11; tr. by Walzer 3.1-10, 7.3-4, 1.11. For the schematic of Fārābī’s cosmos, see footnote 264.
realm. Charles Butterworth and Thomas Pangle make a thought-provoking assertion when they claim, “To be sure, one learns to read Alfarabi with the awareness that one is playing a game of philosophic poker with a benevolent master teacher, who keeps hinting that you could win possession of your own soul for the first time.” So, with this awareness in mind, it will be argued here that happiness, i.e., ultimate happiness, is indeed the fundamental theme in Fārābī’s philosophy in general and, in particular, in his Madīnah.

Happiness, both in this life and in the afterlife, is intimately connected to Fārābī’s Virtuous City as only virtuous citizens can attain this happiness. This requires that we examine Fārābī’s Virtuous City and in particular, its most fundamental and yet elusive detail: does it exist or has it ever existed? Of course, there are arguments set forth by Richard Walzer and Majid Fakhry that suggest that it has been established since Muḥammad was indeed the founder of the Virtuous City. Scholars such as Leo Strauss and his followers insist that the Virtuous City is an ideal, a city in speech, while others, such as Muhsin

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11 Walzer wittily notes the difficulty with the parts of Fārābī’s cosmos that can be perceived only with the intellect and that which can be perceived with our senses. He writes, “Even in an intellectual climate like that of late pagan Greek philosophy—which is saturated to such a large extent with difficult abstract reasoning—it needs some effort of mind to convince oneself of the existence of an immaterial First Cause and of ten invisible, spiritual, intellects on which the nine celestial bodies with their special intellects and the changeable sublunar beings ultimately depend. Hence we may turn with some relief to the account of the nine celestial spheres which follows. The celestial bodies are not only visible and can thus be apprehended by our senses, they differ from the First Cause and the ten subordinate immaterial intellects also in that they move in space. Their circular movements are regular and can be described.” Walzer, Virtuous City, 375.


13 In chapter sixteen of Fārābī’s Madīnah it is clearly demonstrated that only virtuous citizens achieve happiness in the afterlife.

Mahdi suggest that it is a blueprint for founding such a city.15 Some scholars claim that Madīnah reflects the great schism found within Islam and that Fārābī is in fact supporting Shīʿism.16 As we shall see, these assorted hypotheses ignore what Fārābī is conveying about happiness. Whatever the theories are concerning Fārābī’s Virtuous City, it has been noted that happiness, in this life and in the next, is for the virtuous citizen alone. If the Virtuous City is only an ideal, a theoretical city, then how does one become a citizen? This claim has prompted some to suggest that only philosophers can achieve happiness since the world is in essence comprised of non-virtuous cities. And yet, if Fārābī’s Virtuous City is to be realized, what does one do to become a citizen? If such a city exists and if it can be destroyed, how does one maintain his or her citizenship in the Virtuous City? Finally, if Fārābī’s Madīnah is merely representative of the problems of his day, then what is the point of his claim that the virtuous citizen can and will attain happiness? These theories and others leave the attainment of happiness in a most tenuous position; therefore, we need to find a theory that allows the existence of Fārābī’s Virtuous City and guarantees the attainment of happiness for all of its citizens.

If the highest state of being that man can ultimately obtain lies in a realm of pure conceptual abstraction, as divorced from matter as it is possible to be, if

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15 Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 6-7.
human perfection involves ascending towards the highest and purest level of thought, then can this imply that a Virtuous City, in which the sole aim of its citizens is felicity, will also lie on that rarefied conceptual plane? Fārābī writes, “Since we are mixed up with matter and since matter is the cause of our substances being remote from the First Substance, the nearer our substances draw to it, the more exact and the truer will necessarily be our apprehension of it. Because the nearer we draw to separating ourselves from matter, the more complete will be our apprehension of the First Substance. We come nearer to it only by becoming actual [or ‘actually’] intellect. When we are completely separated from matter, our mental apprehension of the First will be at its most perfect.”17 With this in mind, we shall argue that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is not a city of words nor merely a utopian fantasy; it is not that heavenly city that only philosophers discuss and can attain nor is it that perfect earthly city. It is not a city that is to be established at all, for it already exists. Fārābī’s Virtuous City can be interpreted as a city that exists in the intelligible world or in the incorporeal realm; indeed, it is an actual city; but not one that exists in the material or corporeal world. We will demonstrate that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is comparable with Plotinus’ [205-270 CE] third hypostasis,19 i.e., the World Soul.

17 Fārābī, Madīnah, 1.11; tr. Walzer, 1.11.
18 Utopia from the Greek οὐ = not and τόπος = place. So utopia is literally no place, but it is typically defined as a real or imaginary society that is considered to be ideal. Traditionally utopia is understood as a “mode of thought which deals solely with the temporal condition and the nature of utopia is that it promises through the establishment of an ‘ideal’ state, the ‘good life’ in this world.” Dorothy F. Donnelly, “Reconsidering the Ideal: The City of God and Utopian Speculation” in The City of God: a Collection of Critical Essays edited with introduction by Dorothy F. Donnelly (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995), 206.
19 Hypostasis “(from Latin ‘substance’)” is “the process of regarding a concept or abstraction as an independent or real entity.” It is typically defined as substance, essence, or underlying reality. In Plotinus, the third hypostasis is part of his chain of being, via emanationism. Emanationism is
Focusing on the Plotinian influence in the thought of Fārābī does not entail rejecting or negating the obvious and well-established Platonic and Aristotelian influences. Nor am I refuting any other influences that have been established by Farabian scholarship. I simply want to examine a Plotinian line of thought that can be traced in Fārābī’s work. The Virtuous City, like the Plotinian World Soul, is where all perfected souls will go when they have no need of a body, but it is also where all souls reside before descending into the material world. The Virtuous City contains citizens that reside within the city and citizens that reside in the material world. Through a comparison of Fārābī’s Virtuous City with the Plotinian World Soul, we shall see that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is not unlike Aurelius Augustine’s [354-430 CE] City of God.

"a doctrine about the origin and ontological structure of the world... [wherein] everything else that exists is an emanation from a primordial unity, called by Plotinus ‘the One.’ The first product of emanation from the One is Intelligence (νοῦς), a realm resembling Plato’s world of Forms. From Intelligence emanates Soul (ψυχή), conceived as an active principle that imposes, insofar as that is possible, the rational structure of Intelligence on the matter that emanates from Soul. The process of emanation is typically conceived to be necessary and timeless: although Soul, for instance, proceeds from Intelligence, the notion of procession is one of logical dependence rather than temporal sequence. The One remains unaffected and undiminished by emanation.” In the thought of Plotinus, the World Soul is the place where individual souls reside before their descent into the material world and it is the place where souls strive to return. The World Soul is the proper place for all souls and it is here that souls are happy because they have union with the One; thus, ultimate happiness, for Plotinus, would be the return of the individual souls to the World Soul. Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4-7; IV.3.12; V.1.4-6 Robert Audi, ed. The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), s.v. “Hypostasis” by C.F. Delaney; The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy s.v. Emanationism” by William E. Mann.


21 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4-7.

22 There is an ongoing debate about Augustine's use of Plotinus. Many scholars argue that the influence of Plotinus is clear, while other scholars, who typically use Augustine’s Retractions as a basis, deny all Plotinian influence. This paper will not examine these labyrinthine discussions; it will simply examine a few concepts that can and have been perceived as Plotinian and compare these concepts with another philosopher’s, i.e., Fārābī’s, possible and similar use of Plotinus. For the heated debate concerning Augustine, see Gerard O’Daly, Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and Augustine (Burlington: Ashgate Variorum, 2001). See also Augustine, The Retractions trans. Sister Mary Inez Bogan (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1968).
God is a city that exists in the intelligible world; it has citizens both within the city and here on earth.\textsuperscript{23} We will also compare Ğarābī’s use of Plotinus with that of Augustine, who provides an example of another figure, within the confines of a universal, monotheistic, and eschatological religion, who, like Ğarābī, utilized Greek philosophy to address the questions and problems of his day.\textsuperscript{24} In this dissertation Augustine will be utilized solely as a case study. I will be relying unreservedly on the scholarship that has thoroughly established the Plotinian influence in Augustine’s thought.\textsuperscript{25}

By comparing the works of Ğarābī with the works of his predecessor Plotinus, it may be possible to demonstrate by means of textual analysis that Ğarābī is discussing a city that exists in the intelligible world and that this city is analogous to the Plotinian World Soul. A comparison of the writings of Ğarābī and Plotinus, at least those found in the *Theology of Aristotle* (or the *Arabic Plotinus*), will demonstrate that though Ğarābī’s terminology differs from Plotinus, the meaning is the same.\textsuperscript{26} Scholars have long argued that Augustine relied heavily on Plotinus in his quest to answer the questions of how man has knowledge of God and how he is to return to God. Thus, by comparing the texts of all three, it may be possible to illustrate how Ğarābī, like Augustine, utilized

\textsuperscript{23} The academic discussion of whether Augustine’s City of God is an earthly city or a city that exists in the intelligible world will be addressed in chapter six, section I. Though this is an ongoing debate, there is ample evidence to conclude that Augustine’s City of God should not be considered an earthly city. Obviously I am considering Augustine’s City of God to be a city that exists in the intelligible world.

\textsuperscript{24} This, of course, is not the first time that the thought of Ğarābī and Augustine have been compared. See Ibrahim Madkour, “La Place d’al Farabi dans l’Ecole Philosophsique Musulmane” (Paris, 1934).

\textsuperscript{25} I do not claim to be an Augustinian scholar; therefore, all arguments, concerning Augustine, put forth in this dissertation are founded in secondary scholarship.

\textsuperscript{26} The *Theology of Aristotle* and Ğarābī’s use of this source will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter.
the thought of Plotinus in order to answer the ultimate questions: Why do men desire happiness? How do they go about attaining it? And most importantly, where can they attain this ultimate happiness? This dissertation sets out to prove that happiness is the ultimate goal of Fārābī’s Madīnah and furthermore, that Fārābī is in fact telling his readers the paths to happiness and where this happiness is to be attained. Fārābī’s Virtuous City is where happiness in this life, as well as ultimate happiness, is to be found; since only a citizen of the Virtuous City can be happy in this life and attain that ultimate happiness which occurs when he returns to his proper place in the intelligible world, i.e., the Virtuous City. How then shall we proceed to prove that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is indeed comparable to the Plotinian World Soul as the place where ultimate happiness is attained? First, we shall look at the concept of happiness. Fārābī, like Plotinus and Augustine, was primarily concerned with the human desire for happiness and he questioned how humans might have knowledge of this happiness and how they were to attain it. Fārābī, like Augustine, utilized the Plotinian triple hypostasis [the One, Nous, and the World Soul] to reveal the soul’s journey to the attainment of happiness. Obviously, Fārābī’s and Augustine’s use of Plotinus differs just as their circumstances differed, but their goals, i.e., the means of attaining happiness, are shared, and it is on this point that their ideas may sustain a parallel. The notion of happiness, as we shall see, is not something that man learns or discovers; it is something that is already in man from the outset. For Fārābī, the knowledge of happiness is bestowed upon
man by an intelligible being, i.e., the Active Intellect\textsuperscript{27} (\textit{aql fā’āl}), and the attainment of true or supreme happiness is ultimately achieved in the intelligible world wherein the perfected soul will exist just beneath or within the Active Intellect.\textsuperscript{28}

Augustine, in his search to understand how humans have knowledge of happiness, considers Adam, the first human. Augustine will essentially equate Adam to the Plotinian World Soul because all men hence all souls come from Adam, and for that reason, all men share in Adam’s knowledge of happiness. Unlike Plotinus and Fārābī, for Augustine, the perfected souls will not return to their source of origin, instead they will ascend to a higher realm, i.e., the City of God. According to John Rist, Adam is most likely the lower part of the Christianized Plotinian World Soul and the City of God represents either the upper level of this World Soul or the Plotinian \textit{Nous}.\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, we will argue that both Fārābī and Augustine conceive the soul’s journey as a descent from the intelligible world into the material world and that they both posit the possibility of a return to the intelligible world. Fārābī, like Plotinus and Augustine, postulates a means to attain ultimate happiness. For Fārābī both philosophy and

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\item It is generally known that the concept of the Active Intellect comes to us from Aristotle’s \textit{De Anima} III.5, but the term does not occur in the original Greek, however it is mentioned three times in the Arabic translation \textit{Aristūbūlis fi ‘l-Nufs [etc.]} … ḥaqqaqa-hū wa-qaddama la-hū ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawi (Dirāsāt Islāmiyya, 16), al-Qāhira, 1954, 75; See Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 403.
\item Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 13.5-6; tr. Walzer, 13.5-6. In \textit{Siyāsah}, there is a noted variant, wherein perfected man achieves the rank of the Active Intellect, not the rank beneath the Active Intellect. Fārābī, \textit{Kitāb Al-Siyāsah Al-Madaniyyah al-Mulaqqab bi-Mabādi’ al-Mawjūdāt} (Principles of Beings or the Six Principles, or the Political Regime) edited with an introduction and notes by Fauzi Najjār (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1964), 32.10; Fārābī, \textit{Political Regime} translated by Thérèse-Anne Druart available through the Translation Clearing House (Oklahoma State University) Catalog reference number: A-30-50d., 32.10.
\item John Rist, \textit{Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 126, 128-129.
\end{enumerate}
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religion offer a means to happiness. Augustine, by contrast, claims Christian faith alone as a means. Both Fārābī and Augustine contend that the perfected soul, or the soul that has achieved ultimate happiness, will exist in the intelligible world in a sort of quasi-relationship with an intelligible being that in many respects resembles the Plotinian Nous, thus connecting the individual soul to the One or God.

Now, since ultimate happiness is an eternal happiness, it cannot be realized in the sublunary world, which is in a constant state of flux. That this ultimate happiness is fused with a city suggests that the Virtuous City and the City of God exist in the intelligible world. Surely, if the highest felicity is to be found in the realm of pure abstract intellection, freed of matter, then it makes sense that the city devoted to such felicity will also be located there. First, we will examine the cosmos of each of the three writers. We will show how both Fārābī’s and Augustine’s cosmoi are similar and yet have marked differences from Plotinus’ emanation schematic; nevertheless, when we examine the City of God of Augustine and the Virtuous City of Fārābī, we find that they are analogous to the Plotinian World Soul. When we analyze Plotinus’ World Soul, we have, essentially, a description of a perfect city. This city is based on a rational hierarchy of souls. If these individual souls remain in the World Soul, they “can share in its government, like those who live with a universal monarch and share in the government of his empire.”

30 But, as we shall see below Augustine considers anyone who is searching for truth to be a citizen of the City of God. Thus he is allowing a path other than religion.
31 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4.
and it is only here that the individual soul can find eternal rest.\textsuperscript{32} Augustine’s City of God, or the “heaven of the heaven,” is described as that place where “the pure heart enjoys absolute concord and unity in the unshakeable peace of holy spirits, the citizens of your city in the heavens above the visible heavens.”\textsuperscript{33} Augustine’s City of God clearly exists in the intelligible world; it exhibits a complete harmony and permanence not found in the material world. The individuals who reside in Augustine’s City of God resemble the individual souls within the Plotinian World Soul. There is a rational hierarchy found within the City of God and, as we shall see, it is in this city that Augustine’s criteria for true happiness are met. Fārābī’s Virtuous City is constructed in a way comparable to the human soul and the healthy human body, but the salient point is that it looks and it functions like the intelligible world. We find too that there is the same rational hierarchy found within the Virtuous City as found in the intelligible world and, of course, as found within the Plotinian World Soul. In Fārābī’s Kitāb al-Millah wa Nuṣūṣ Ukhra (Book of Religion), he compares the Virtuous City and the natural or material world and there the Virtuous City appears to be distinct from the material world. Fārābī presents both the material world and the Virtuous City as eternal entities. Furthermore, in his Madīnah, Fārābī reveals that all men, whether they be virtuous, wicked, or ignorant, were at one point a part of the Virtuous City. So it is reasonable to assert that Fārābī is claiming that all souls originate in the Virtuous City just as the World Soul is

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., V.1.4.
the point of origin for all souls in the thought of Plotinus. This implies that the
Virtuous City is an eternal city that exists in the intelligible world and that it is
comparable to Plotinus’ World Soul. Fārābī tells us that only virtuous citizens
will achieve eternal happiness, thus suggesting that not all souls will return to
the Virtuous City. This leaves us with unanswered questions: If all souls derive
from the Virtuous City, why do they not all return? What defines a virtuous
citizen? How does one become a virtuous citizen? These are obviously questions
that must be answered in the material world, by us, Fārābī’s readers. Clearly,
Fārābī and Augustine are discussing two levels of existence: the metaphysical
and the physical. We will maintain that the Virtuous City and the City of God
are cities that exist in the intelligible world and that they are analogous to the
Plotinian World Soul, but in addition, we will show that the non-virtuous cities
and the City of Man are essentially the cities that exist in the material world.
Fārābī and Augustine classify a city, and implicitly its citizens, by their aims or
their loves. Augustine only examines two cities, the City of God, whose love is
God, and the City of Man, whose love is self. Fārābī examines various cities, but
in essence, considers only two cities: the Virtuous City, whose citizens aim for
happiness and thus live as the One intends, and the non-virtuous city, whose
citizens live for things other than true happiness and so, do not live as the One
intends. How then do we, who live in non-virtuous cities or in the City of Man,
become citizens of those cities of the intelligible world and come to happiness?
For Plotinus, the World Soul is the “homeland” or “fatherland” for all souls, but
when these individual souls exist in the material world, many no longer live in
accordance with the *Nous* and the One; hence, these souls become weak and isolated and forget their true home.\(^{34}\) Even so, Plotinus maintains that by contemplating what is above, i.e., the intelligible world, these individual souls can find their way back; and ultimately achieve happiness.\(^{35}\) Fa\textsuperscript{ā}b\textsuperscript{i}’s *Madinah*, like Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei*, clearly outlines a specific system of knowledge and a specific way of life; in this way, both Fārābī and Augustine provide the criteria to become virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God. Plotinus’ concept of the undescended soul, perhaps, provides another way of looking at these virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God, in that these citizens become aware of the higher part of their soul and assimilate themselves to the intelligible world. These citizens must live in the material world, but they too can be citizens of those cities that exist in the intelligible world. Fārābī and Augustine leave us with a choice to make: of which city will we become citizens?

\(^{34}\) Plotinus, *Enn.*, IV.8.4.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
Part One
Chapter One
Historiography\textsuperscript{36}

I. Historiography of Arabic Philosophy.

Dimitri Gutas has recently provided a thorough account of the problems with the historiography of Arabic philosophy.\textsuperscript{37} Gutas visits some of the approaches and interpretations that are prevalent in the study of Arabic philosophy and reveals the negative consequences of each. He begins with what he calls the “Orientalist” approach and the antiquated Western view of the natives of the Orient, which essentially describes Arabic philosophy as being “mystical, sensual, otherworldly, non-rational and intensely interested in religion….”\textsuperscript{38} Gutas insists that the perceptions stemming from the Orientalist view manifest itself in various ways, e.g., that Arabic philosophy is nothing more than “mystical, only an intermediary between Greek and medieval Latin philosophy, as being concerned only about the relationship between religion and philosophy, and as coming to an end with Averroes, when the torch was passed on to the West.”\textsuperscript{39} Next, he discusses the “Illuminationist” approach, in which he focuses primarily on Henry Corbin. Gutas asserts that Corbin’s methodology, which he claims is an offshoot of the Orientalist approach, makes Arabic

\textsuperscript{36} This historiography will focus mainly on al-Farābī since he is the subject of this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 8. Gutas notes that the term “Orientalist” is a “loaded” term, but claims that it is necessary to refer to it because it provides a framework of the nineteenth century view of the natives of the Orient and he claims this picture, although it is a caricature, determined the types of questions that were asked by scholars. Gutas also notes Mahdi’s work that emphasizes the pervasiveness of these notions. See Muhsin Mahdi, “Orientalism and the Study of Islamic Philosophy,” in Journal of Islamic Studies, 1 (1990), 79-93. Gutas, “Historiography,”8.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
philosophy nothing more than a fusion of mysticism and theology. Finally, Gutas examines the “Political” approach, which will be discussed in depth, since it invariably focuses on Farabi.

First, it is necessary to examine Gutas’ classifications as they concern Farabi. So we shall begin with the standard claim that Arabic philosophers were attempting the harmonization of philosophy and religion, a claim that is commonly made about Farabi’s writings. Gutas asserts that Oliver Leaman is “most obviously guilty” of this misconception, but in truth this assertion is so ensconced within the reading material that it is generally accepted as common knowledge. Gutas claims that Leaman’s work would have us believe that “medieval Arabic philosophy was in fact nothing else but a continuous squabble through and across the centuries about the relative truth values of religion and philosophy.” Obviously Gutas disagrees with the claim that the Arabic philosophers’ salient focus was the harmonization of philosophy and religion.

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40 Ibid., 18.
41 As noted above, Gutas insists that this claim stems from the Orientalist approach.
43 Gutas, “Historiography,” 12-13. In his examination of Leaman’s An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy, Gutas argues that the purpose of this book as Leaman states in his Preface, is “to discuss some of the leading themes of Islamic philosophy by analyzing the arguments of some of the most important philosophers concerned, and by relating those arguments to Greek philosophy on the one hand and to the principles of religion on the other’ (p. xii, emphasis added). If this is the purpose of the book, then it cannot be an introduction to medieval Islamic philosophy, unless one holds that its leading theme and major achievement were the discussion of the respective merits of religion and philosophy.” Gutas, review of “An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy,” by Oliver Leaman, in Islam 65 (1988): 340.
Gutas argues that the philosophers were interested in philosophy, and only philosophy.

A. Gutas’ Critique of Strauss.

The notion of the harmonization of philosophy and religion is, according to Gutas, an important aspect of Leo Strauss’s and his followers’ interpretation of Arabic philosophy. Gutas places their interpretation under the “Political” approach. Gutas writes:

Strauss’s interpretation of Arabic philosophy is based on two assumptions: first, it is assumed that philosophers writing in Arabic worked in a hostile environment and were obliged to represent their views as being in conformity with Islamic religion; and second, that they had to present their real philosophical views in disguise. What is required [therefore, in order to understand their text.] is a key to understanding the peculiar way in which the text has been composed, and that key is to be found by paying attention to the conflict between ‘religion and philosophy’.\(^{44}\)

Gutas disagrees that there was a hostile environment for those philosophers writing in Arabic and he questions why the Straussians do not bother to cite evidence if such an environment existed.\(^{45}\) He examines Charles Butterworth’s claim that “Islamic political philosophy has always been pursued in a setting

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45 Gutas cites examples of the so-called persecutions. He claims:

Suhravardi (d. 1192), who is usually cited as an example in this connection (most recently by Griffel, Apostasie, p.358) was executed because he had usurped, though an outsider to Aleppo, the position of the local ‘ulama’ as confidant and manipulator of the prince, al-Malik al-Ẓāhir, Saladin’s son. The execution of Abū ‘l-Ma‘ālī al-Mayānji (d. 1131; also cited by Griffel) took place not because of his philosophical beliefs but, as even al-Bayhaqi reports, ‘on account of an enmity between him and the vizier Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Anasabādhi’, see M. Meyerof, ‘‘Alī al-Bayaqi’s Tatimmat Šīwān al-Hikma’, Osiris 8 (1948), p. 175.

Gutas claims that the so-called persecutions are incorrect even in the case of Maimonides. Gutas states that “he [Maimonides] and his family were persecuted by the Almohads and had to leave Spain in 1149 not because Moses was a philosopher—in any case, he was barely in his teens at the time—but because they were Jews.” Gutas, “Historiography,” 20.
where great care had to be taken to avoid violating the revelations and traditions accepted by the Islamic community….”

Gutas claims that these types of statements are continually given as hard facts and yet there is no evidence given to support them. Even Miriam Galston, a fellow Straussian, questions the degree of the threatening religious climate as understood by Strauss. She insists that “there is no prima facie reason to assume a completely hostile relationship between Alfarabi (and those similarly situated) and the religious establishment at that time.”

Indeed, Gutas insists that “were one, however, truly to investigate Arabic philosophy dispassionately and objectively, it would be immediately clear to him that religion versus philosophy is but a minor subject of concern, and only at certain times and in certain places. Islamic Spain at the time of Averroes may have been such a place, but this is very far from characterizing the entire Islamic world during the 10 centuries of Arabic philosophy that I talked about at the outset.”

The second assumption of Strauss’ interpretation, which is the philosopher’s deliberate disguise of his true philosophy, essentially rests on the first assumption, which is tenuous at best. Nevertheless, Gutas argues: “If one assumes a philosopher not to have meant what he said and always to have concealed his true meaning, how is one to understand his text? In other words,
how is one to find the ‘key’ with which to unlock his allegedly secret meaning?
Straussians, of course, always claim to have the right key and to be able to read correctly between the lines, but their claim by itself cannot hide the arbitrariness of their enterprise nor the fact that if there are no rules to the game then anybody’s interpretation of a philosophical text would be equally valid.”

Gutas asserts that Strauss’s interpretation of Arabic Philosophy begins with his understanding, or really his misunderstanding, of Maimonides’ introduction to his Guide of the Perplexed wherein Maimonides:

Lists the various causes which ‘account for the contradictory or contrary statements to be found in any book or compilation’, and offers suggestions about how they are to be read in order to eliminate all seeming inconsistencies and contradictions. There is nothing novel in this approach of Maimonides; allegorical interpretation of religious texts is as old as at least the Stoics and had been in constant use throughout the centuries...as for philosophical texts, their obscurity, and especially the obscurity of Aristotle’s works, had become in late antiquity a doctrinal topos among the Aristotelians of Alexandria. Al-Fārābī adopted wholesale the Alexandrian teaching on this issue.... [According to Gutas] Strauss failed to see the historical context and philosophical pedigree of Maimonides’ introduction, and already influenced by his work on Socrates and his execution by the Athenians, misinterpreted the introduction to mean that philosophers never say explicitly what they mean out of fear of persecution and lest they suffer the same fate as Socrates. He then generalized this position allegedly held by Maimonides, to all Muslim philosophers, if one is to judge by his analysis of al-Fārābī’s works.51

Furthermore, Gutas insists that Fārābī is an inappropriate example based on his explicit criticisms of theology as a science and religion in general. Contrarily, Christopher Colmo suggests that Fārābī’s now lost Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics may have been destroyed precisely because of his

50 Ibid., 21.
51 Ibid., 19-20.
unorthodox statements concerning the afterlife. Thus Colmo sees that Fārābī did not escape the penalty of the conflict between philosophy and religion.\textsuperscript{52}

Galston provides an excellent account of the scholarly debate concerning the esoteric/exoteric writings of Fārābī. She notes that Strauss has influenced much of this debate due to his theory of Fārābī’s notion of happiness and exactly who is able to attain it. Strauss maintains that it is only the philosophers who will attain happiness and so the need for Fārābī to hide the truth from non-philosophers. Galston admits that this theory is partly responsible for the heated debate concerning the relationship between philosophy and religion. Of course the most obvious question is whether this so-called hostile relationship is in fact a justification for these scholars to interpret Fārābī’s text in an esoteric manner. But this question is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Galston examines the scholarly evidence that posits whether Aristotle, too, employed the technique of esoteric/exoteric writings. Galston notes:

The distinction between exoteric and esoteric works is not made by Aristotle. We can conjecture that the distinction came to be attributed to him because he does speak of exôterikoi logoi (literally: exoteric speeches, arguments, or works); because some of his teachings are difficult to reconcile with others of his teachings; and, in the case of particular versions of the exoteric-esoteric tradition, because of mystical theories prevalent in the centuries after Aristotle’s death.\textsuperscript{53}

Galston examines commentators of Aristotle between the first century B.C.E. and the sixth century C.E. While she notes the mystical theories prevalent in the centuries after Aristotle, there is no mention of any mystery cults, which existed


during the lifetime of Aristotle and his student, Alexander, or later with
Gnosticism and Christianity when all of these movements considered the notion
of a secret knowledge hidden within the texts. Thus the interpretations as
presented by Strauss and his followers are, according to Gutas, both circular and
weak. Indeed, a hostile environment should not be the underlying principle for
scholars to claim that the philosophers disguise their views. And the claim that
the very “key” to understand a particular philosophical writing may be found by
examining this so-called conflict between philosophy and religion, a conflict that
Gutas does not suppose to have existed, should also be reevaluated.

B. Politics and Neoplatonism.

According to Gutas, there are two negative consequences that stem from
the Straussian approach. The first, which arises from the claim that the
philosophers hide their true meaning, implies that everyone but a handful of
philosophers, and of course the Straussians, are “absolute idiots;” since it is only
they who know how to read between the lines.54 Gutas contends that the
Straussians’ “hermeneutical libertarianism” ignores the basic rules of
“philological and historical research.”55 He insists that the comparison of Arabic
philosophical texts with the texts of Plato and Aristotle gives the false
impression that the Arabic philosophers had the same access to the Greek
sources that we now have and the same understanding of “Greek society and
institutions” as we have today.56 This complaint is echoed by Georges Tamer

55 Ibid., 21.
56 Ibid.
who asserts that it cannot be established that Fārābī “knew Plato’s writings in their original form” and he claims that this is a major weakness at the very foundation of Strauss’s argument.57 Strauss does acknowledge that Fārābī did not have access to all of Plato’s works and he claims that we do not know the extent of the distortion of what he did have. However, he maintains that Fārābī understood Plato’s thought as a whole based on his knowledge of the Republic, the Timaeus, and the Laws.58 Nevertheless, the Straussian contention of the need to read between the lines in order to truly understand the text is rampant in their scholarship. For instance, according to S.B. Drury, Strauss views Plato as “a master of the esoteric art of writing. So much so that he succeeded not only in avoiding persecution, but in fooling the whole tradition of Neo-Platonism.”59 Joshua Parens appears to takes this line of thought to a new level of absurdity. Parens sets forth the possibility that “Fārābī rediscovered the original meaning of Plato’s political thought, after its having lain dormant for centuries….Could he not have understood things about Plato’s thought that was lost on many of Plato’s own disciples in the academy after his death?”60 Parens’ theory seems to argue that of all the scholars who lived and worked after Plato, only Fārābī, roughly thirteen hundred years later, truly understood his meaning. While these are certainly provocative claims, we must question why these scholars are

making them. Perhaps these particular scholars are reading their own understanding of Plato into Fārābī’s texts. So, it is understandable why Gutas is perplexed and is led to wonder how a handful of scholars have such a miraculous understanding of Fārābī’s thought, and with such clarity.

The second negative consequence, according to Gutas, lies in the fact that to truly understand the Arabic philosophers’ meaning one has to examine the texts within a political framework. Gutas argues that because Arabic philosophy is assumed to be about religion and philosophy—and since in Islam there is no separation between civil law and canon law—any question concerning law meant that the philosopher was questioning divine law. Therefore, according to Gutas, “the reason why Arabic philosophers allegedly had to disguise their real opinions was because they wrote about politics.” Hence, philosophy became political philosophy. However, according to Gutas, “There is no political philosophy as such in Arabic, as the term is normally understood, before Ibn Khaldūn; there is, in other words, no independent field of study within Arabic philosophy which investigates political agents, constituencies, and institutions as autonomous elements that operate according to their own dynamic within the structure of the society.”

62 Ibid. Parens insists that “because Alfarabi lived in a medieval community that made no claims to separate religion and politics, he was more attuned than we are to the role that beliefs or commitments play in politics. Parens, Metaphysics as Rhetoric, xiv.
By ‘government of the city’ [Al-Siyāsa Al-Madaniyya] the philosophers mean simply the disposition of soul and character which each member of a social organization must have if, eventually, people are completely to have no need of rulers. They call the social organization that fulfills these requirements the ‘virtuous city’ [Al-Madīna al-fadīla]. The norms observed in this connection are called ‘government of the city.’ They do not mean the kind of government that the members of a social organization are led to adopt through laws for the common interest. That is something different. The ‘virtuous city’ of the philosophers is something whose realization (wuqū’) is rare and remote. They discuss it only as a hypothesis.64

Tamer also questions the political framework of Strauss and his followers. In his discussion of the harmonization of Plato and Aristotle, Tamer claims:

Apparently, Alfarabi had a great influence on Leo Strauss who seems to agree with him on the irrelevance of the philosophical differences between Plato and Aristotle. The political philosophy Strauss introduces in the philosophical discourse of modernity claims to possess a unified Platonic-Aristotelian character. Whereas Alfarabi tries to harmonize the teachings of the two philosophers on the basis of Neoplatonic metaphysics, Strauss tries to achieve the same by assuming the centrality of politics in the teachings of both philosophers. In Strauss’s conception, metaphysics is replaced by politics.65

Henry Corbin, (whom Gutas has classified under the Illuminationist approach) in his discussion of Fārābī, fervently rejects a political reading. Following Ibrahim Madkour, Corbin completely discards the idea that Fārābī’s thought is political in the modern sense of the word.66 He claims that Fārābī’s “theory of the ‘perfect city’ bears a Greek stamp in virtue of its Platonic inspiration, but it fulfills the philosophical and mystical aspirations of a philosopher of Islam.…It is not a ‘functional’ political programme.”67 Hermann Landolt notes Corbin’s

dismissal of a political interpretation of Farābī, but asks “why Farābī could not be considered both a political philosopher and a mystic?”

Landolt’s question and its implications are unacceptable to the Straussians, but it will be of the utmost importance for us. What is it about this question that is so disagreeable? The extraordinary claim that “the political side of Plato disappeared from philosophy in Late Antiquity and that prior to Machiavelli (1469-1527 CE) the only major contributor to political philosophy is the early fourth/tenth century Muslim, al-Farābī,” is extremely significant for Strauss and other scholars. This assertion allows certain scholars to claim that Farābī somehow rediscovered the political side, i.e., the true meaning, of Plato after it had lain dormant for centuries. By this line of reasoning, Farābī possessed the Straussian “key” to the true meaning of Plato. It should come as no surprise, therefore, when Mahdi claims that “all of a sudden” Farābī materializes with a political understanding of Plato and a political philosophy that had no precursor in Islamic philosophy, or for that matter, the Christian tradition. But why must this magnificent feat rest upon Farābī’s shoulders

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68 Hermann Landolt, “Henry Corbin,” 489.
69 Walker, “Philosophy of Religion,” 89. But Walzer insists that “there is no reason to assume that political Platonism had completely died in later Antiquity and that al-Farābī was the first to revive it when the political climate was right for it again.” Walzer, Virtuous City, 11.
70 Walker, “Philosophy of Religion,” 89. See also Parens, Metaphysics as Rhetoric, 22; Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy.
alone? Is there really no foundation, however slight, for Fārābī’s political philosophy? Had the continuity of philosophy, in truth, been broken? For the scholars who place Fārābī solely in a political context there is no room for other elements such as mysticism or even Neoplatonism.

II. The Neoplatonic Problem.

In fact, the scholars who place Fārābī in an exclusively political context seem to want to lessen the Neoplatonic element in Fārābī’s texts. Accordingly, Mahdi prefers to examine the school of thought preceding Neoplatonism, i.e., Middle Platonism, which flourished between 25 BCE to 250 CE. According to Charles Butterworth, this allows Mahdi to focus on the politics or the political concerns of Plato as found in the thought of Fārābī. This indicates that the Middle Platonists were somehow more political than their successors and that there was a definite break in the continuity of Plato’s political philosophy. However, Butterworth notes that “Mahdi makes no

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73 Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, xii.
attempt here to identify putative sources upon which Alfarabi may have drawn.”

Clearly, those scholars who see Fārābī as a political philosopher, grow skeptical when examining his Neoplatonism. Mahdi insists that Fārābī:

understood the value of the Neoplatonic philosophic tradition for bringing together, or harmonizing, philosophy and religious orthodoxy and for constructing a Platonism for the people. It is therefore understandable that historians of philosophy who had not studied his works with sufficient care should have thought that he must have followed the Neoplatonic tradition that had dominated the Platonic school in Alexandria and Athens. Yet the complete absence from his authentic writings of the central Neoplatonic philosophic doctrines—of the One, Intellect, and Soul—should have been sufficient to suggest to students of Islamic philosophy who read him that they were in the presence of a philosopher who made use of certain elements drawn from the Neoplatonic tradition but whose Neoplatonism must remain suspect.

Mahdi’s explanation of Fārābī’s use of Neoplatonism includes the need to harmonize philosophy and religion (which as noted above, Gutas alleges to have stemmed from the “Orientalist” approach). Mahdi explains:

gradually, it became clear to philosophers, just as it was clear to the theologians and jurists of the revealed religions, that division in the rank of the philosophers was detrimental to the cause of philosophy— theologians and jurists exploited it at every opportunity—and that it might be prudent to make up their differences and present a common front wherever possible. [Mahdi insists that] the most urgent question [for the common front] was how to protect and preserve Aristotle. This was achieved by hiding him from public view. The common front marched to embrace the revealed religions with Plotinus (the other-worldly Greek sage who enchanted everyone with his divine speech) in front, followed by the divine Plato, with Aristotle kept in the background, hardly to be seen, and not to be read by students unless prepared for reading him first by Plotinus and then Plato.

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74 Ibid., xi.
75 Ibid., 2-3.
76 Ibid., 33-34. Mahdi continues this explanation with “it is well known that at some undetermined date a clever fellow decided that Aristotle deserved to become known as the author of certain extracts from Plotinus’s *Enneads* and Proclus’s *Elements of Theology* put together under the title the *Theology of Aristotle.*” Ibid., 34. But, F.W. Zimmermann disagrees that the misascription was done on purpose. F.W. Zimmermann, “The Origins of the *Theology of*
Why must there be a pretext for Fāрабī’s use of Neoplatonic elements? The predominant explanation that scholars proffer for denying Fāрабī’s Neoplatonism is that the Neoplatonists were not concerned with the political writings of Plato nor indeed, with politics in general. For example, Parens argues that “the single most important fact about Neoplatonists’ is their studied lack of concern for political or worldly affairs. This lack of concern is complemented by the undivided attention they pay to metaphysical matters, above all to *metaphysica specialis* or theology.” This conventional view is a cliché and has been invoked by scholars to such an extent that it is almost impossible to peruse a book concerning Fāрабī without reading a statement such as this.

A. The Counter-Argument of Dominic O’Meara.

In fact, Dominic O’Meara sets forth a solid case for shelving this conventional view. He acknowledges that Plotinus and later Neoplatonic philosophers, in general, have not been typically regarded as political philosophers and, moreover, that they were uninterested in social and political life; however, he challenges this view. He first examines the notion of political
withdrawal that is commonly ascribed to Neoplatonism and provides examples for it even prior to Plotinus. Passages from Plato’s *Apology* and *Republic* allow the reader to see the longing of both Socrates and Plato to withdraw from political life.\(^8^0\) This notion of “Socratic withdrawal” is also found in Epicurean as well as Stoic writings.\(^8^1\) And of course, O’Meara observes that Plotinus often implored his friends to withhold themselves from the world of politics. However, O’Meara insists that “if so many philosophers advocated some form of withdrawal from politics, it does not follow that they necessarily refused political responsibilities, as can be seen in the case of Marcus Aurelius, or took no interest in the elaboration of a political philosophy, as seems to be the case for Plato.”\(^8^2\)

In looking at the conventional view of Neoplatonism, O’Meara contends that the goal of Neoplatonism, i.e., the “divinization” of man or “the assimilation of man to god,” does not exclude political life but actually includes it.\(^8^3\) He scrutinizes the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics and demonstrates that, according to all of these philosophers, the best life for man is a divine life and moreover, that this divine life is not a solitary one, but has a


\(^{8^1}\) O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, 6-7. O’Meara writes that “the obvious case is that of Epicurus who, well hidden in his garden, tells us that ‘we must liberate ourselves from the prison of routine business and politics’, and that the sage ‘will not engage in politics’. ’ O’Meara also notes that “another heir to Socratic withdrawal is the Stoic sage, who retreats into the inner citadel of vicissitudes of politics, even if he be, like Marcus Aurelius, emperor.” Ibid., 6.

\(^{8^2}\) Ibid., 7.

\(^{8^3}\) Ibid., 5.
O’Meara insists that “the divinization of man in Plato is not simply an *imitatio dei*. The suggestion is also made that there is a divine element in man...the highest aspect of soul, which has an affinity with the transcendent Forms...and which, on separation from the body, may join the company of the gods.... This, however, can only be achieved through the practice, here below, of the highest degree of *imitatio dei*, of moral assimilation to the gods.”85 In his examination O’Meara analyzes the Plotinian Triple Hypostases of One, *Nous*, and the World Soul and shows how each intelligible functions. According to O’Meara’s interpretation of Plotinus, the World Soul’s function is two-fold: to contemplate what is above it, and to “bring order and form to matter, without losing its orientation to divine Intellect and the One, therefore without succumbing to vice.”86 O’Meara, furthermore, claims:

Human nature, in this context, is, at the root, soul and therefore divine, and is dynamically linked to the divine Intellect and to the One. This means that the divine, at all levels, is always present to us and available to us, whatever our aberrational preoccupation with material things and forgetfulness of our essential nature and divine ‘homeland’. We are therefore anchored in divine Intellect and a part of us always remains ‘there’....The human self is mobile: we can live our lives at different levels, depending where we place our interests and activities. We can live the life of beasts, or the life of the gods. Indeed we can become a god, or rather come back to live the life of the gods that we essentially are.87

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84 Ibid., 32-36.
Rist has touched upon a similar idea in his discussion of the dual role of the individual soul, concluding that philosophy itself represents that dual function: “Philosophizing for its own sake is a concept unintelligible for Plotinus.” And he asks:

Why bother to teach anyone else? Surely for Plotinus all that should matter is one’s own contemplation. There is no explicit answer to any such query in the *Enneads*, but the lines on which Plotinus tackles it are perhaps not unclear. There is a harmony in the whole of the universe. All things derive from the One and are, in Plotinus’ language, in the One. All souls are striving to greater or lesser degrees to return to him. When any individual soul returns and is joined in communion with its source, it must be presumed to share in its source’s creativity and causal energy. In other words, each soul will become responsible in its way for the creation and maintenance of all things. It will even love all things in so far as all things contain the principle of unity, for the One loves itself both in itself and in the rest of the cosmos.88

For both O’Meara and Rist, the duty of Soul/soul can be seen in a political/social context; in their view, the Neoplatonic goal of the divinization of man actually includes a political life.

In addition, O’Meara examines the scale of virtues and the scale of sciences and reveals yet another political aspect of Neoplatonic thought. The scale of virtues, which begins with the lower virtues and ascends to the higher “purificatory” virtues, reveals the progressive stages of divinization.89 These virtues, of course, are found in Plato’s *Republic* and for Plotinus, and later Neoplatonists, the political virtues are considered among the lower virtues on the ascent to the divine.90 O’Meara next examines the scale of sciences wherein the virtues are acquired; he finds that the scale of sciences found within the

89 O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, 40.
90 Ibid., 40-41.
Neoplatonic schools follow the Aristotelian division into the theoretical and practical. Such a differentiation solidifies the place of the political virtues and the political sciences on the lower level of the scale of virtues and sciences that leads to the divinization of the soul.

The notion that the soul can attain union with the One while also caring for the world is touched upon again when O’Meara examines the Philosopher-King and Queen. Once the philosopher is released from “the dark cave of ignorance and opinion,” the philosopher asks: why he must return. “Why must the philosopher become king?” The same question is posed in Plato’s Republic; it is the very question that all Neoplatonists must contend with. The various reasons for the philosopher’s descent are found in the thought of Plotinus. One such, according to O’Meara, arises when the soul achieves union with the One, “a union that may be followed by an announcing of this union to others, an activity described also as ‘political’ and compared to the activity of a legendary legislator among the Greeks, Minos, who, having been in communion with Zeus, legislates ‘in the image’ of this communion.” According to O’Meara, this concept of legislating once the soul has union with the One is strongly conveyed in later Neoplatonism as well, for example, in Proclus, Hierocles, Isidore, et al.

The Neoplatonic view of the political, i.e., of political virtues and political life, is obviously important as a facilitator toward divinization of the soul.

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91 Ibid., 50-55.
92 Ibid., 73.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 74.
95 Ibid., 76-78.
individual soul and this, according to O’Meara, is essentially the same as the idea that civic divinization is but a step on the ladder to the divinization of the individual soul. O’Meara examines the various models of the Neoplatonic State, beginning with the Republic where Plato writes, “You mean that he’ll be willing to take part in the politics of the city we were founding and describing, the one that exists in theory, for I don’t think it exists anywhere on earth. But perhaps, I said, there is a model of it in heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other.” O’Meara explains that the scholars who hold the conventional view of Neoplatonic philosophy consider the relation between the ideal city of the Republic and that put forward in the Laws as revealing that “the ambitious political reformer of the Republic, disappointed by his experience in Sicily, produced in his old age a more modest project, that of the Laws.” On the contrary O’Meara claims that the Neoplatonists would never have aspired to bring to fruition the ideal city of the Republic. Rather

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96 Ibid., 116-117.
97 Plato, Republic 592-592b. As we shall see, this notion found in Plato’s Republic allows scholars, such as, Strauss to claim that only philosophers can attain happiness.
98 O’Meara, Platonopolis, 92.
99 Ibid. O’Meara discusses a “project with which Plotinus approached the emperor Gallienus….Plotinus proposed to revive a ‘city of philosophers’ that long lay in ruins in Campania, which if the emperor granted the surrounding land, would be colonized (Plotinus would join, with his companions) and run according to Plato’s laws and would be called ‘Platonopolis.’” O’Meara asks “What and where was the ruined city of philosophers….What sort of city did Plotinus wish to establish? A kind of pagan monastic community of otherworldly philosophical ascetics? Such an answer is required by the conventional view of the Neoplatonist attitude to politics. Or did Plotinus intend to realize in some way the utopia of Plato’s Republic or rather, as the reference to Plato’s laws suggests, the city projected in Plato’s Laws?” O’Meara, Platonopolis, 15-16. See Plato’s “Republic.” See also Plato’s “Laws,” translated by Trevor J. Saunders in Plato: Complete Works.
they would use the “ideal city of the *Republic*” as a guideline to establish a city or to bring about political reform, but with the full understanding that Plato’s *Laws* reveals that the “second-best constitution” is perhaps more feasible owing to the human condition. Another model that O’Meara examines is found in Plato’s *Timaeus* where he asserts that “the universe as a whole, as a cosmos, an order brought out of disorder…can itself be considered as a natural paradigm for ethical and political order for humans.” This idea of the “‘cosmic city’, as a model of political order” is found in Late Antiquity as well as in Neoplatonism. Again, it is evident that for the Neoplatonists, the ideal city is not to be realized in the material world. O’Meara examines the various possibilities set forth, by the Neoplatonists, to explain the failure to realize the ideal city. These are as follows:

defective theoretical knowledge, a defective grasp of contingent particulars, the heteronomy of action, an overriding of action by the rule of ‘fate’. But whatever the outcome of the philosopher’s action, the measure of failure and success cannot be such criteria as power, prosperity, pleasure, or fame; it can only be the common good, which is itself subordinate (as corresponding to ‘political’ virtue) to higher goods, those represented by the higher levels of the virtues. The greatest imaginable political success cannot therefore go beyond the realization of a general condition of ‘political’ virtue, as a first, preparatory stage leading to the higher levels of divinization….The domain where political divinization could best be achieved in practice often remained, then, that of the philosophical school and the influence it could have.”

It should be obvious by now that the Neoplatonic view of the political, i.e., of political virtues and political life, is but a step toward the divinization of the individual soul. It should also be clear that the Neoplatonists do include the

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100 O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, 92-93.
101 Ibid., 97.
102 Ibid., 97.
103 Ibid., 138-139. The various reasons given are thoroughly discussed in pages 87-139.
political within their philosophical thought. Why discuss the complexities of turning knowledge into action? Why set out to construct the more probable cities in lieu of taking up the ideal city? Why utilize the ideal model city in their discussion of political reform? Certainly, O’Meara’s comprehensive examination is sufficient to nullify the conventional view of Neoplatonism.

After revising this partial view of Neoplatonism, to show that it includes a political realm, O’Meara, now examines Christian and Islamic thinkers to see if their writings reveal a political Neoplatonism. We will examine what O’Meara suggests regarding Fārābī’s Madīnah. O’Meara insists that there is indeed a continuity between political Neoplatonism, albeit later Neoplatonism, and early Islamic philosophy. He begins with an examination of the metaphysical background of Madīnah and notes that the emanation (fāyḍ) of all things from the One is indeed similar to that described by Proclus in his Elements of Theology.104 The emanation sequence reveals the hierarchical structure and the connectedness of all things within the cosmos—both of the material world, and of man himself. Against this metaphysical background, O’Meara scrutinizes Fārābī’s definition of happiness and insists, “Man’s goal is thus the life of pure intellect (as it was for the Greek Neoplatonists), a life which comes as near as possible to that enjoyed by a transcendent immaterial intellect. In this sense the human goal can be described as ‘assimilation to the divine’, a concept transmitted by the later Neoplatonic commentaries to philosophers in Islam and

104 Ibid., 187.
very familiar to them.”\textsuperscript{105} And this attainment of happiness takes place in a social, i.e., political construct. O’Meara sees that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is based upon the hierarchy and the connectedness found within the metaphysical framework of which the city is an imitation.\textsuperscript{106} Consequently, the ruler would be the most excellent of its citizens. In observing the criteria for Fārābī’s ruler, O’Meara claims, “The ruler has reached a high degree of human happiness or felicity, a proximity to the life of the transcendent Agent Intellect which we can compare to the ‘assimilation to the divine’ sought by the Neoplatonic philosopher. Becoming divine-like means for the later Neoplatonist, imitating the divine, not only by leading a life of theoretical wisdom, but also by exercising a providential (i.e. political) role since the divine not only enjoys perfect intellection, but also confers benefit (providence) on what is lower.”\textsuperscript{107} And finally, O’Meara compares Fārābī’s political use of religion to Plato’s political utilization of religion in his \textit{Laws}. In this way, O’Meara reveals the continuity between later Greek Neoplatonism and Islamic philosophy.

\textbf{B. The Role of Plotinus.}

Of course, there are some difficulties to be found in O’Meara’s discussion of Fārābī’s \textit{Madinah}. For example, O’Meara traces various aspects of Fārābī’s thought to later Neoplatonism. However, throughout his own argument, which intends to prove that the Neoplatonists do have a political philosophy, O’Meara utilizes Plotinus as well as the later Neoplatonists in almost every example. And


\textsuperscript{106} O’Meara, \textit{Platonopolis}, 189-191.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 192.
yet, O’Meara completely ignores Plotinus in his discussion of Fārābī. O’Meara, following Walzer, traces the emanation process back to Proclus, but Herbert Davidson, by contrast, examines Fārābī’s schematic of emanation and notes a distinct Plotinian influence. Also, as we have seen above, while O’Meara utilizes Plotinus in revealing how the goal of Neoplatonic philosophy is the “assimilation to the divine,” he ignores Plotinus in his discussion of Fārābī’s theory of happiness. Perhaps O’Meara’s view of Fārābī’s Virtuous City explains his obvious disregard of Plotinus. O’Meara clearly acknowledges that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is a city that is to be established or, more likely, that has already been established since, he, again following Walzer, sees Muḥammad as the supreme ruler. This perhaps is why O’Meara places Fārābī closer to the later Neoplatonists for whom the metaphysical world is a paradigm of the material world. Nevertheless, this, too, is found in Plato’s Republic as well as in Plotinus’ Enneads. In fact, Gerard O’Daly notes a political analogy found in the thought of Plotinus wherein he “talks of an intelligible ‘city above’ and a ‘city of the things below, ordered according to the things above’.” Finally, despite O’Meara’s insistence that Fārābī’s supreme ruler corresponds with the later Neoplatonists, the very comparison he gives also corresponds to Plotinus’ description of the philosopher-king. So, while O’Meara definitely exposes the

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109 See above pages 30-32.
111 See above pages 33.
political aspects of Neoplatonism, he still, for whatever reason, tends to find
too]only between later Neoplatonists and early Islamic philosophy.
Nevertheless, O’Meara’s work undeniably corrects the conventional view of
Neoplatonism. We can no longer dismiss the Neoplatonic aspect of Fārābī’s
thought. We can no longer allow scholars to present Fārābī as the only major
contributor to political philosophy from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance;
indeed, we can no longer accept the notion of a break in the continuity of
political philosophy from Plato to Fārābī. Hence, it should be quite obvious that
Fārābī did not “all of a sudden” materialize as a political philosopher, in fact, he
is simply the heir to a long and continuous philosophical tradition.

O’Meara reveals the political characteristics of Neoplatonic thought,
which have been essentially ignored by scholars and in particular, by Farabian
scholars but, more to our purpose, there have been excellent works by scholars
who do perceive the Neoplatonic elements in Fārābī’s thought. Here, we shall
examine a few of those elements which can be found within the philosophy of
Fārābī. Some scholars correctly perceive that the core of Fārābī’s Neoplatonism
lies in the doctrine of emanation, even though emanationism has long been
considered a controversial subject in Arabic philosophy.¹¹² First, let us consider
why emanation is so important for the Neoplatonists. As Lenn and Madeleine
Goodman insist, “Emanation was perfected by the Neoplatonists, quite
consciously as an alternative to creation because the learned Neo-Platonic
philosophers did not choose to redescend into the anthropomorphic cosmogonies

¹¹² Galston, “A Re-Examination,” 16. See also Reisman, “Al-Fārābī and the Philosophical
from which Aristotle had rescued them with great difficulty only a few centuries earlier.” 113 Ian Netton contends that emanation in fact makes it possible for man to comprehend the “relationship between the transcendent and the corporeal.” 114 And Fakhry tells us that Fārābī’s use of emanation is a component of his ontological argument; for Fārābī, “it is always from God to the world, from the perfect to the imperfect.” 115 Walzer notes that Fārābī’s emanation scheme reveals a harmony that allows us to see the cosmos as a whole, as one thing. 116 Furthermore, the doctrine of emanation essentially allows us to grasp the notion of contemplation. Corbin describes this concept of contemplation within the doctrine of emanation and reveals its Plotinian aspect. “The emanation of the First Intelligence from the first Being, its three acts of contemplation which are repeated in turn by each of the hierarchical Intelligences, and which engender each time a triad composed of a new Intelligence, a new Soul and a new Heaven, down to the Tenth Intelligence,” i.e., the Active Intellect. 117 According to Elmer O’Brien, contemplation is the “central reality” of Plotinian thought. 118 “The Soul is the hypostasis that proceeds from … Nous. Its reason finds its

114 Netton, Fārābī and His School, 33.
115 Majid Fakhry, “The Ontological Argument in the Arabic Tradition: the Case of Al-Farabi,” Studia Islamica 64 (1986), 15. Although Māhdi claims that this is an un-Aristotelian concept. For, “we should approach the unknown through the known.” He implies that Fārābī utilizes the Neoplatonic element of emanation to appease the “ordinary citizen.” Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 59.
116 Walzer, Virtuous City, 361.
117 Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, 161. Davidson also perceives an explicit Plotinian aspect in a very Aristotelian schematic. Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect, 44.
actualization when it contemplates … Nous. So in contemplating, it possesses
the object of its contemplation within itself, as its own.”\(^{119}\) Plotinus tells us that
when we contemplate what is above us, the subject and object become one.\(^{120}\)
This is comparable to Fāraḥī’s claim that theoretical perfection is essentially
man’s theoretical intellect intelleting the Active Intellect, as it were, being
“oned” or united with the Active Intellect.\(^{121}\) The Active Intellect is the last
intelligible being in the intelligible world and there is a relationship between this
intelligible being and the rational faculty of the soul of man; as a result, the
Active Intellect would be the being that man would contemplate, or to use
Fāraḥī’s vocabulary, “intellect.” The Active Intellect brings us to another
important aspect of Fāraḥī’s Neoplatonism. Fāraḥī’s Active Intellect is a point
of great controversy, in which there are discussions of its comparability to the
Plotinian Nous. Walzer notes that it was often equated with the Plotinian Nous
in later Neoplatonism and in the writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā.\(^{122}\) Further
questions include whether Fāraḥī’s Active Intellect is responsible for the
existence of the sublunary world.\(^{123}\) Moreover, there are some questions as to its

\(^{119}\) Plotinus, Enn., V.1.3.
\(^{120}\) Ibid., III.8.6, III.8.8.
\(^{121}\) The Active Intellect “is intellected by man only when he is not separated from it by an
intermediary. In this way, the soul of man itself becomes this Intellect.” Fāraḥī, Falsafat
Aristūṭāṭīs, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dar Majallat Shi’r, 1961), 128:20-129:5; Fāraḥī, “The
Philosophy of Aristotle” in Al-Farabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, tr. Mahdi, 128:20-
129:5.
\(^{122}\) Walzer, Virtuous City, 12. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā or the Brethren of Purity refers to a “group of
thinkers” that flourished in the second half of the tenth century. See Abouzeid, Al-Farabi and
the Brethren of Purity.
\(^{123}\) See Davidson, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect, 29-34; Druart, “Al-Farabi and
Emanationism,” 30; Reisman, “Al-Fārābī and the Philosophical Curriculum,” 60; Fāraḥī, Sharḥ
risalāḥ Zīnūn al-kabīrah al-yūnānī (Commentary on the Treatise of the Greek, Zeno the Great),
7.17. J. Puig, “El Tratado de Zenon el Mayor: un Comentario Atribuido a al-Farabi” Ciudad de
role in man’s attainment of happiness. According to Corbin, the philosopher-king must have union with the Active Intellect in order to lead man to happiness.\textsuperscript{124} Fārābī tells us that the place just below the Active Intellect is the place of all perfected souls.\textsuperscript{125} The Neoplatonic characteristics found in Fārābī’s writings, and which have been discussed by several scholars, form the basis for this dissertation. While we will not ignore the scholarship that minimizes Neoplatonic elements, we will stress Fārābī’s unmistakable use of certain Neoplatonic themes. Beyond this, we shall look at Fārābī’s Neoplatonism as a main tenet of his philosophy and not simply as a means to appease his audience, or to harmonize certain Platonic and Aristotelian concepts, or to harmonize philosophy and religion. Let us now examine more closely the interpretations concerning Fārābī’s Mādīnah.

III. Historiography of Fārābī’s Virtuous City.

By examining the historical context of Fārābī’s life, scholars have put forth a myriad of interpretations of his Mādīnah. Scholars typically treat the Virtuous City as an earthly city. Walzer argues that Fārābī is not discussing “an ethereal, imaginary world: he is concerned with real life.”\textsuperscript{126} Walzer also claims that Fārābī equated the founder of the Virtuous City with Muḥammad; thus

\textsuperscript{124} Corbin, \textit{History of Islamic Philosophy}, 163. In Corbin’s discussion of the illumination doctrine of Fārābī, he notes that it has a mystical element. Corbin denotes the differences in the meanings of “ittiḥād” (meaning a “unitive fusion”) and “ittiṣāl” (meaning “attainment, conjunction without identification”) and reveals that Fārābī’s use of ittiṣāl reveals a “mystical experience.” Ibid., 160. However, Walzer notes that both ittiḥād and ittiṣāl were considered synonymous. Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 410.

\textsuperscript{125} Fārābī, \textit{Mādīnah}, 13.5-6; tr. Walzer, 13.5-6. In \textit{Siyaṣah}, there is a noted variant, wherein perfected man achieves the rank of the Active Intellect, not the rank beneath the Active Intellect. Fārābī, \textit{Siyaṣah}, 32.10; tr. Druart, 32.10.

\textsuperscript{126} Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 9
implying that the Virtuous City has been established.\textsuperscript{127} Some claim that the Virtuous City is an ideal, or an attack on the political milieu of his time. The Virtuous City as a reaction to the political circumstances has been discussed by Ola Abdelaziz Abouzeid.\textsuperscript{128} In view of the political turbulence of his day, a few scholars argue that Fārābī was making a religio-political statement by using language that appeared to be sympathetic to Shi‘a Islam. W.M. Watt asserts that while Fārābī does use language that could support Shi‘ism, it appears that he tries to distance himself from the political struggle.\textsuperscript{129} Najjār, too, considers whether Fārābī was influenced by the Sunni-Shi‘ite controversy,\textsuperscript{130} but concludes that “Fārābī is no apologist for a given or emerging political order. It is quite possible that the Shi‘ites found in his teachings certain arguments to support their claims, or that he may even have concurred with parts of their theories or notions.”\textsuperscript{131} Perhaps one of the most important claims is that the Madīnah is a tool for learning about the human soul and the cosmos; in other words, that it teaches us how to live. Mahdi argues that in Fārābī, “political science” (the study of the structure of society) is the foundation of our knowledge of the microcosm of “psychology” (the study of the structure of the individual soul) and the macrosom of “cosmology” (the study of the structure of

\textsuperscript{127} Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 16, 414, 441-442. See also Fakhry, \textit{Al-Fārābī, Founder}, 103.
\textsuperscript{128} Abouzeid, \textit{Al-Fārābī and the Brethren of Purity}. See also Mahdi, “Al-Fārābī: Islamic Philosophy.”
\textsuperscript{129} Watt, \textit{Islamic Philosophy and Theology}, 54-56. See also Hodgson, \textit{The Venture of Islam}, 433-436.
\textsuperscript{130} Najjār, “Fārābī”s Political Philosophy and Shi‘ism,”57-72.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 72.
the universe). Thus, studying what we can observe allows us to comprehend that which we cannot.132

Is the Virtuous City a philosophical idea, a political ideal or is it meant to be a reality? Fārābī’s Virtuous City has inspired numerous interpretations and yet none is completely acceptable. This is because they all ignore Fārābī’s design of happiness in this life and happiness in the next life. Some earlier scholarship, though more descriptive, helped to define Fārābī’s terminology and provided thorough explanations of his ideas; thus, it laid the foundation for future Farabian scholars.133 Most of these scholars note Fārābī’s claim that man needs assistance in order to attain happiness; hence came the idea that man must live in a city,134 and, still more importantly, the idea that a man must live in a virtuous city, in order to attain happiness. Tying happiness and ultimate happiness to an earthly city in which one lives severely limits the number of those who can attain happiness. For example, Colmo argues that for Fārābī, “what happens to the soul after death depends on the kind of political community one lived in here on earth.”135 Mahdi, too, connects the attainment of happiness with a particular regime. Mahdi claims:

The attainment of happiness means the perfection of that power of the human soul that is specific to man: his reason. This, in turn, requires

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134 Najjār asserts, “Politics is concerned with the realization of happiness for man through the agency of the political association, the city or the state.” Najjār, “Al-Farabi on Political Science,” 95. See also Sajjad, “Al-Farabi's Classification of States,” 253-262.
135 Colmo, Breaking with Athens, 105.
disciplining the lower desires to cooperate with and aid reason to perform its proper activity and also acquiring the highest arts and sciences. Such discipline and learning can be accomplished only by the rare few who possess the best natural endowments and who are also fortunate enough to live under conditions in which the requisite virtues can be developed and noble activities performed. The rest of men can only attain some degree of this perfection; and the extent to which they can attain that degree of perfection of which they are capable is decisively influenced by the kind of political regime in which they live and the education they receive.\footnote{Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 129.}

In this way, both Colmo and Mahdi argue that Fārābī, upholding the ancient tradition, links happiness to the city in which one lives. Now, Strauss and others have described Fārābī’s Virtuous City, like Plato’s \textit{Republic}, as “a city in speech;” thus, implying that it cannot exist. Galston affirms that this is the common view of Fārābī’s Virtuous City.\footnote{Galston, Politics and Excellence, 146. See also: Leo Strauss, “Quelques remarques sur la science politique de Maïmonide et de Fārābī,” \textit{Revue des études juives} 100 (1936),12; Joel L. Kraemer, “The Jihād of the Falāsīfā” in \textit{Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam} 10 (1987),290; Richard Walzer, \textit{Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 243-244; T.J. de Boer, \textit{The History of Philosophy in Islam} translated by E.R. Jones (New York: Dover, 1967), 122-123; E.I.J. Rosenthal, \textit{Political Thought in Medieval Islam} 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 120, 124-125.}

Shlomo Pines asserts that the existence of the Virtuous City is “a philosophical postulate—which may or may not be equated with an actually existent state, e.g. the Islamic.”\footnote{Shlomo Pines, “Philosophy” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Islam Vol. 2: The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization} edited by P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 795.} And Mahdi insists that Fārābī’s political works “present the problem of the harmony between philosophy and Islam in a new perspective—that of the relation between the best regime, in particular as Plato had understood it, and the divine law of Islam. His position in Islamic philosophy corresponds to that of Socrates or Plato in Greek philosophy in so far as their
chief concern may be said to be the relation between philosophy and the city.”

Majid Fakhry has even described Fārābī’s Virtuous City as a blend of Platonic utopianism and Islamic political doctrine. If Fārābī’s Virtuous City is merely a city in speech, a postulate of reason, then how does one go about attaining happiness and indeed, how does one become a citizen of this city in order to achieve the happiness sought? Is happiness, indeed, only for a few? As we shall see, Fārābī indicates that all ranks of the Virtuous City attain happiness.

In contrast to the theory of a city in speech, some scholars assert that Fārābī’s idyllic Virtuous City can be realized. S.B. Drury claims that Strauss, by referring to Fārābī’s Virtuous City as a city in speech, “did not mean that it is unattainable. He meant only that it is improbable because it requires the happy coincidence of philosophy and political powers, or the existence of princes friendly to philosophy: it requires that philosophy win the ear of the powerful.”

Thus, it seems, for Strauss, Fārābī’s Virtuous City might be a possibility, however remote. Mahdi, too, sees Fārābī’s Virtuous City as attainable. In his later work, Mahdi claims, “The Virtuous City and the Political Regime can now be seen as examples, patterns, or models constructed by Alfarabi according to some of the rules described in his account of political science. Such models are meant to be imitated by future founders and lawgivers and to be used by students of philosophy to understand their own political-theological predicament. These two works do not, therefore, embody either

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Alfarabi’s theoretical philosophy or his practical philosophy but are only examples of the kinds of regimes that can be constructed by political philosophy.”

Hence, there is a possibility to establish such a city. However, if the attainment of happiness is connected to an actual city, then how do we go about becoming citizens of this city? Viewing the Virtuous City as an earthly city is problematic because the focus moves quickly to questions concerning its establishment, who founded it, who is a citizen of this city, not to mention the all consuming questions: where was it at the time of Fārābī; indeed, where is it now?

Whether or not the Virtuous City can be established or is simply an ideal, Fārābī discusses virtuous citizens residing in virtuous and non-virtuous cities.

What then about the virtuous citizens found in non-virtuous cities? Some scholars claim that this implies that only philosophers can achieve happiness in non-virtuous cities. Or, as Strauss says, true happiness is only for the philosophers. Strauss argues that Fārābī’s assertion that the attainment of happiness in non-virtuous cities implies that happiness is only for philosophers or “perfect human beings (i.e. philosophers who have reached the goal of philosophy).” However, Strauss also admits that Fārābī “for reasons of philanthropy … was compelled to show a possibility of happiness to men other than philosophers.”

Mahdi, too, sees a discrepancy and argues that “Al-Fārābī was aware of a fundamental tension between the pursuit of private and public

142 Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 6-7.
143 Najjār, “Al-Farabi on Political Science,” 103.
salvation. But he is almost the only Muslim philosopher who chose to explore this tension and in the process brought to the fore philosophy’s philanthropic spirit and the philosopher’s high-mindedness and devotion to the true welfare of his community.”145 And so the question remains: who can attain happiness?

IV. Neoplatonic Sources.

Before we can answer this question—and since we will be examining specifically the Plotinian influence in Fārābī’s thought—we must consider the scholarly evidence concerning the Neoplatonic texts that Fārābī had access to and appears to have utilized.146 The Theology of Aristotle consists of almost all of Plotinus’ Enneads IV-VI.147 Scholars such as F.W. Zimmermann and Peter Adamson, have established that Fārābī had access to this text, but it is unclear


146 For a thorough account of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement that took place between the 8th and 10th centuries C.E. and the politico-social environment in which this movement took place see Dimitri Gutas, Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbāsid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries) (London: Routledge, 1998). Watt correctly points out that “Greek culture made its impact on the Roman in Hellenistic and Imperial times not primarily through translations, but directly through Greek or bilingual education.” Conversely, the eastern philosophers, such as Al Farabi, received "his instruction in philosophy from Christian Syrians, and depended on Arabic translations made by them from Greek and Syriac." Some of these translations are ambiguous and the intent of the original philosophical writing is unclear. Watt also notes that western and eastern philosophers were attracted to and repulsed by different philosophies; for example, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus were not interested in Plato’s political philosophy, whereas Al Farabi fully incorporated Plato’s political thought into his own philosophy. See J.W. Watt, "Eastward and Westward Transmission of Classical Rhetoric," Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East. Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 61 (1995), 63, 71-73; J.W. Watt, “Syriac and Syrians as Mediators of Greek Political Thought to Islam” in Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph Volume L’VII-2004: The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought, edited by Emma Gannagé, Patricia Crone, Maroun Aouad, Dimitri Gutas, and Eckart Schütrumpf (Beyrouth: Université Saint-Joseph, 2004), 121-149.

147 There is an on-going dispute on whether or not Fārābī viewed the Theology of Aristotle as a genuine Aristotelian work. See Galston, “A Reexamination,” 14; Fakhry, Al-Fārābī, Founder, 152; Walker, “Philosophy of Religion,” 89; Paul E. Walker, “Platonism in Islamic Philosophy,” Studia Islamica 79 (1994), 5-25.
whether the text he used was the *Long Version* or what has been called the

*Arabic Plotinus.* Peter Adamson has revealed how the *Theology of Aristotle* was altered by an “Adaptor,” sometimes only to clarify, but at other times new material was introduced that countered the doctrine of Plotinus. Adamson, following Zimmermann, maintains that this Adaptor is Ibn Nā‘ima al Ḥimṣī.148

The *Theology of Aristotle*, according to Gerhard Endress, is one of the most famous works translated “for al-Kindī or under his guidance.”149 Zimmermann supplies a detailed account of the origins of the *Theology of Aristotle*.

Zimmermann writes:

> The *Theology* exists in an Arabic version first printed in 1882, another Arabic version first discovered at Leningrad earlier this century and as yet published only in extracts, and the Latin version first printed in 1519. The printed Arabic version, often called the ‘short’ or ‘shorter’, names Kindi as its editor; the ‘long’ or ‘longer’ Leningrad and Latin versions do not. I shall refer to the ‘Kindi’ version as *K* and to the Leningrad version as *L*. These versions take their place in history as follows. (1) The Latin version derives from the Arabic of *L*, as transpires from the essential agreement between the two versions, particularly in places where they both differ from *K*. (2) *L* derives from *K*, as transpires from the nature of their differences. The common text *LK* is punctuated in both versions by interpolations of varying length peculiar to each. Passages peculiar to *K* include bits of texts authenticated by the Greek substratum, and are generally of a piece with *LK*. They must therefore be regarded as primary, i.e. omitted by *L*. Passages peculiar to *L* are without counterparts in the Greek substratum, and are sometimes at odds with *LK*. They must be regarded as secondary, i.e. added by *L*. (3) *K* derives from *AP*, an Arabic paraphrase (now lost) of selected passages from Plotinus. *AP* is attested by three collections of extracts in Arabic: *K*—the so-called *Theology*, misascribed to Aristotle; *GS*—a text of unknown title, ascribed to ‘the Greek shaykh’ and only known through

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quotations; *DS—a *Treatise on Divine Science, misascribed to the Muslim philosopher Farabi (d.950). *K and *GS overlap, and the identity of the passages they have in common proves the existence of a larger work from which they both derived. *DS does not overlap with either *K or any of the known quotations from *GS. But it is united with the other Plotiniana, not only by a common Greek substratum, but also by a common style, both of Arabic expression and of paraphrase. Plotinus’s text is rendered according to a distinctive formula, which has found typographical expression in the English version published in Henry and Schwyzter. Shortish sequences of paraphrase relatively close to the original (italic) alternate with shortish sequences of amplification (roman), and the whole is interspersed with occasional longer departures from the original (small). The mix is much the same in all three representatives of *AP. The sameness of formula shows that they all come from the same paraphrast. The sameness of Arabic style shows that they come from the same translator. The most natural explanation is that they come from a single Arabic work: *AP. (4) *AP derives, ultimately, from the Greek of Plotinus’s *Enneads IV-VI, much as we have it today. That the (ultimate) substratum is the work of Plotinus is shown by an overwhelming number of parallels (set in italics in the English version). That it is the work of Plotinus in Porphyry’s arbitrary arrangement in *Enneads is suggested by the fact *AP falls within the confines of *Enn. IV-VI, and proved by the reproduction in *K of the unnatural division inflicted by Porphyry’s arrangement on one of Plotinus’s original treatises. So much, then, can be said with assurance. The rest is speculation.150

Zimmermann then adds a few “tentative additions” to his original account. He posits:

Ad (2): *L was produced from *K by about 900. Its editor remains to be identified.

Ad (3): *K originated in the second half of the ninth century as a transcript of a fortuitous collection of pages from the Plotinus (*AP) of the original *Theology. The (unknown) scribe mistakenly attributed *K to Aristotle. The *Theology was a reader compiled, not necessarily in the form of a concrete book, under the title of *Uthulujiyā, i.e. *Theory of Rubûbiyya by a member or members of the Kindi circle in the early ninth century. In addition to *AP, it included (parts of?) Proclus’s *Elements of Theology and some metaphysical treatises by Alexander of Aphrodisias. The underlying Greek texts were in much the same shape as we have them today. There is no evidence of a Syriac intermediary. The dispersal of the *Theology later in the ninth century led to the formation, not only of *K, but also of the *Liber de causis and of Dimashqi’s *Extracts

from the *Theology. *GS and *DS may have been excerpted from the *Theology before its dispersal; but the disappearance of the original led to the anonymity of *GS and the pseudonymity of *DS. Some version *F of the *Theology, including at least Proclus and Plotinus, seems to have survived to the time of Farabi. But Farabi’s evidence is not solid enough to inspire complete confidence.

*Ad (4): *AP was a free paraphrase by Ḥīṃṣī of rather more of *Enn. IV-VI than is covered by the extant fragments. He preserved the order of the original and supplied a detailed table of contents. Other parts of the *Theology may have been contributed by other members of the Kindi circle.151

In reference to addendum three, Endress, too, has noted another text closely connected to the *Theology of Aristotle, which is a translation of selections of Proclus’ (d. 485 C.E.) *Elements of Theology.152 He argues that “in the Arabic manuscript tradition, most of these are being presented as alleged excerpts by Alexander of Aphrodisias (200 C.E.) from the ‘Theology’ of Aristotle.”153 Now Zimmermann has suggested that, in the case of Farābī, he may have had access to L and perhaps a “hypothetical fuller version *F,” but, as noted, Zimmermann claims that the evidence is inconclusive.

However, in Zimmermann’s examination of Farābī’s *Kitāb al-Jamʿ bayn Raʿyay al-Ḥākimayn, Aflāṭūn al-Ilāhī wa Aristūṭālis (The Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages: Plato the Divine and Aristotle) he finds elements of both Plotinus and Proclus. The Plotinian element is found in what Zimmermann calls the “doffing” metaphor. Plotinus writes, “and the attainment of it [beauty] is for those who go up to the higher world and are converted and

151 Ibid., 134-135,128-129.
152 Endress, “The Circle of Al-Kindi,” 53-54; see also Gutas, Greek Thought, Arabic Culture, 120, 145.
strip off what we put on in our descent; just as for those who go up to the
celebrations of sacred rites there are purifications, and stripping off of the
clothes they wore before, and going up naked.”\textsuperscript{154} Plotinus also writes:

Often I have woken up out of the body to myself and have entered into
myself, going out from all other things; I have seen a beauty wonderfully
great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part;
I have actually lived the best life and come to identity with the divine;
and set firm in it I have come to that supreme actuality, setting myself
above all else in the realm of Intellect. Then after that rest in the divine,
when I have come down from Intellect to discursive reasoning, I am
puzzled how I ever came down, and how my soul has come to be in the
body when it is what it has shown itself to be by itself, even when it is in
the body. Heraclitus, who urges us to investigate this, positing
‘necessary changes’ from opposite to opposite, and saying ‘way up and
down’…\textsuperscript{155}

In the \textit{Arabic Plotinus} we find:

\textit{Often have I been alone with my soul and have doffed my body and laid it
aside} and become as if I were naked substance without body, \textit{so as to be
inside myself, outside all other things}. \textit{Then do I see within myself such
beauty and splendour as I do remain marveling at and astonished, so that
I know that I am one of the parts of the sublime, surpassing, lofty, divine
world, and possess active life}. When I am certain of that, I lift \textit{my
intellect up from that world into the divine world and become as if I were
placed in it and cleaving to it, [so as to be above the entire intelligible
world, and seem to be standing in that sublime and divine place.] And
there I see such light and splendour as tongues cannot describe nor
ears comprehend. When that light and splendour overwhelm me and I
have not the strength to endure it, \textit{I descend [from mind] to thought [and
reflection]. When I enter the world of thought, thought veils that light
[and splendour] from me, [and I am left wondering how I have fallen from
that lofty and divine place and am come to the place of thought, when my
soul once had the power to leave her body behind and return to herself
and rise to the world of mind and then to the divine world until she
entered the place of splendour and light, which is the cause of all light
and splendour. Wonderful it is too how I have seen my soul \textit{filled with
light, while she was still in my body} like her appearance, not leaving
it. But when I think long and cast my gaze about and am like one
bemused.] I remember \textit{Heraclitus, for he ordered that one should seek and

\textsuperscript{154} Plotinus, \textit{Enn. I.6.7.4-7.}
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., IV.8.1
inquiring about the sublime substance of the soul and should desire to ascend to that sublime and exalted world…. Now Empedocles says that the souls were in the high and sublime place, and when they erred they fell into this world….156

And finally in Fārābī’s Kitāb al-Jam‘ bayn Ra’yay al-Ḥakīmayn, Aflāṭūn al-Ilāhī wa Aristūṭālīs, he writes:

Sometimes I am alone with my soul a great deal and I cast off my body and become like an abstract, incorporeal substance. I enter my essence, return to it, and detach myself from all other things. I am at one and the same time knowledge, the knower, and the known. I see beauty and splendor in my essence such as to bewilder me with amazement. At that moment, I know that I am a minor part of the venerable world and that by my life I am active. When I am sure of this, I let my mind ascend from that world to the divine cause and become as though I were joined to it. Thereupon, light and splendor such that tongues are too dull to describe and ears to hear radiate to me. When I am immersed in that light, reach my limit, and can no longer bear it, I descend to the world of calculation. When I arrive in the world of calculation, calculation conceals that light from me, and at that moment I remember by brother Heraclitus when he commanded seeking and inquiring into the substance of the venerable soul by climbing up to the world of intellect.157

After examining the Plotinian influence in Fārābī’s text, Zimmermann turns to Proclus’ Elements of Theology. Proclus writes:

Prop. 1. Every manifold in some way participates unity. For suppose a manifold in no way participating unity…each part will itself be a manifold of parts, and so to infinity. For each part of the manifold…must be either one or not-one; and if not-one, then either many or nothing, the whole is nothing; if many, it is made up of an infinity of infinities. This is impossible: for…nothing which is made up of an infinity of infinities (since the infinite cannot be exceeded, yet the single part is exceeded by the sum)…

Prop. 2. All that participates unity is both one and not-one. For if it is not pure unity—for it participates unity because it is something else besides unity…

Prop. 3. All that becomes one does so by participation of unity.

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156 “Theologia” I in Plotini Opera, Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.1
Prop. 5. Every manifold is posterior to the One.
Prop. 62. Every manifold which is nearer to the One has fewer members than those more remote, but is greater in power.
Prop. 21. …the manifold may be carried back to a single common cause of all the co-ordinate terms…for the One which is prior to all things there is the manifold of the henads, and for the henads the upward tension linking them with the One.158

In Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Jam‘ bayn Ra‘yay al-Ḥakīmayn, Aflāṭūn al-Īlāhī wa Aristūlīs*, he writes:

(a) Unity is found in every manifold (*al-wāḥid mawjūd fī kull kathra*). For whatever manifold had no unity in it it would never come to an end. This he [Aristotle] demonstrates in several ways. For example, he says that every single part of a manifold must be either unitary or not. If they are not, they must be either manifold or nothing. If they are nothing, they can constitute no manifold; and if they are manifold, what is the difference between them and the manifold [they constitute]? Also, it would then follow that one infinite was larger than another.

(b) Next, he shows that whatever [part] of this world has unity in it is unitary only in some respects and not in others. For if it is not truly unitary yet has unity (read *al-wāḥid*) in it, the One is other than it is other than One.

(c) Next, he shows that the true One is what he bestows oneness (*wāḥidiyya*) upon other beings.

(d) Next, he shows that Many is posterior to One (*al-kathīr ba‘d al-wāḥid*) without fail, and that the One precedes the manifold.

(e) Next, he shows that whatever manifold is nearer to the true One is less manifold (read *aqall kathratan*) than those more remote, and *vice versa*.

(f) Having established these premises, he ascends (*yataraqqa*) to the corporeal and incorporeal parts of the world and roundly declares that they all come to be because the Creator has originated them, and that it is He who is the efficient cause, the true One, and the originator of everything.159

While Zimmermann provides documentation that Fārābī had access to both

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Plotinus and Proclus, he still insists that it is unclear as to which texts or how many texts Fārābī had in front of him while writing his own treatises. At the very least we know that Fārābī had access to Plotinus. In what follows, we shall examine closely some Plotinian elements found within the thought of Fārābī.160

V. Biographical Information.

While Plotinus, Augustine, and Fārābī are relatively well known, some biographical details may be useful. Plotinus [204/205-270 C.E.] considered to be the founder of Neoplatonism, was born in Lycopolis, Egypt and studied Platonic philosophy in Alexandria with Ammonius Saccaas [232-243]. Although a brilliant philosopher in his own right, “Plotinus saw himself as a faithful exponent of Plato” [428-347 B.C.E.].161 Nevertheless, he also had to contend with the thought of Aristotle [384-322 B.C.E.], the Pythagoreans, and the Stoics. It should also be noted that Plotinus was indebted to Alexander of Aphrodisias, a commentator of Aristotle, and that Alexander’s books were read in Plotinus’ school.162 Franz Rosenthal states that “for Muslims, Plotinus was an Aristotelian commentator.”163 Plotinus’ student Porphyry is responsible for collecting and editing his philosophical essays, the Enneads (so called because arranged by Porphyry in six groups of nine). A.H. Armstrong claims that Plotinus, like other philosophers of his era, is a “practical religious and moral

160 Proclus was a part of the Athenian School of Neoplatonism and was essentially influenced by Plotinus. Even E.R. Dodds betrays the Plotinian influence in Proclus’ Elements of Theology. Perhaps the influence of Proclus needs to be further investigated in future Farabian scholarship. The Elements of Theology translated by E.R. Dodds, xxi-xxiii.
161 See Plotinus, Enn., V.1.
162 Rist, Plotinus, 169, 173.
teacher and also a professional philosopher.”\textsuperscript{164} He also states that “the primary object of all Plotinus’s philosophical activity is to bring his own soul and the souls of others by way of Intellect to union with the One.”\textsuperscript{165}

Aurelius Augustine [354-430 C.E.] is commonly known as Saint Augustine of Hippo. His mother Monica was a Christian and his father was a pagan. He was born in Thagaste. He became bishop of Hippo in 396.\textsuperscript{166} Ernest Fortin claims that in his spare time, Augustine managed “to become the most prolific writer of the ancient world. Possidius, his friend and biographer, who compiled a list of his works, notes that no one could possibly read them all, and Isidore of Seville, echoing him a century and a half later, adds that anybody who claims to have done so is surely a liar.”\textsuperscript{167} Since a major theme of this paper is the Plotinian influence in the thought of Augustine, we shall examine the academic discussion of Plotinus’ influence on Augustine. Anne-Marie Bowery examines the academic discussion concerning Augustine’s familiarity with Plotinus. She writes:

Tracking Plotinus’s influence on Augustine (354-430) presents certain problems. First, the close interplay between Christian spirituality and pagan philosophy discomforts many scholars. Historically, the scholarly literature reveals divergent opinions about the extent of the influence…. Recently a growing consensus has emerged regarding Augustine’s deep affinities with Plotinus….

\textsuperscript{164} Plotinus, \textit{Enn.}, xi. For an invaluable perspective of Plotinus’ life; see Porphyry, “Vita Plotini,” in Plotinus, \textit{Enn.}, volume 1.
\textsuperscript{165} Plotinus, \textit{Enn.}, xxv.
\textsuperscript{166} Peter Brown’s biography of Augustine is still considered to be essential in order to truly understand Augustine and his life. Peter Brown, \textit{Augustine of Hippo: A Biography by Peter Brown} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
Second, scholars debate which “books of the Platonists” Augustine read (conf. 7.9.13). While O’Connell and Solignac establish the pervasiveness of Plotinus’s influence, others assert that Augustine read Porphyry…. Until consensus arose concerning the mistranscription of “Platonis” (b. vita 4), some argued that Plato himself provided Augustine’s primary inspiration….

Third, Augustine’s ability to synthesize ideas makes ascertaining specific influences difficult. Finally, Plotinus so pervades Augustine’s philosophical thinking that talk of borrowing in any traditional sense diminishes the originality of Augustine’s Christian transformation of Plotinus….

Augustine became familiar with Platonism in three ways. First, he encountered Marius Victorinus’s translation of the Enneads in the 380s (conf. 7.9.13). Second, Ambrose’s sermons exposed him to be a Christianized Plotinianism…. Third, Platonism pervaded the intellectual circles of Milan…. 168

Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī (870-950 C.E.)

“The ‘Second Master’ after Aristotle” was probably born in Wasīj, Fārāb in Turkestan. 169 Fārābī was known as Abunaser in the Latin West. 170 We are told that he worked in a garden and vineyard in Damascus and as a laborer he was only able to study and read at night. 171 He supposedly always wore a “brown Ṣūfī garb,” but Walzer insists that “in al-Fārābī’s day no adherence to mystical ‘Ṣūfī’ views was indicated by the use of this garment.” 172 While most of his biographical data is sketchy, we do know that he was one of the inheritors of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement that took place between the eighth and


171 Walzer, Virtuous City, 4.

172 Ibid.
tenth centuries of the Common Era. It is claimed that Fārābī studied and wrote most of his books in Baghdad, “the seat of the ‘Abbāsid caliphs.”\(^{173}\) He was a student of Yūḥannā b. Ḥaylān (d. 908-932 C.E.) and Abū Bishr Mattā b. Yūnus (d. 940. C.E.), both of whom were Nestorian Christians. His most famous student was Yahyā b. 'Adī (893/4-974 C.E.) who was also a Christian philosopher.\(^{174}\) Fārābī eventually accepted “the amir Sayf al-Dawla’s invitation to join the society of his court and to transfer his residence from the capital of the Muslim world to a major provincial town, Aleppo.”\(^{175}\) And perhaps the most significant fact, Fārābī “did not suffer any kind of official or popular persecution such as other ‘deviationists’ in his days had to endure.”\(^{176}\) Besides a few other details, Fārābī's life seems to be so wrapped in myth that Netton equates the search for facts of Fārābī's life with that of the historical Jesus and he insists that there is a need to demythologize his life if we are going to fully understand his works.\(^{177}\)

\(^{173}\) Ibid., 2.
\(^{174}\) Netton, *Al-Farabi and His School*, pp. 4-6.
\(^{175}\) Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 2.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., 4.
Man has desired communion or union with God or the gods throughout the ages. This gives rise to the question: did man once feel at one with God? Is the universal need to return to a paradisiacal setting proof that man once lived and communicated with God? Mircea Eliade equates Paradise with man's nostalgic impulses and with his love of nature, but there is more to it than this: there is a universal feeling or “a longing for something altogether different from the present instant; something in fact inaccessible or irretrievably lost: 'Paradise' itself.” 178 Indeed, this apparent return to Paradise could be seen as man's return to himself or, perhaps, as Joseph Campbell claims, man reaching his full maturity. 179 Eliade sees this process of interiorization as “a journey back toward a world that was both secret and unforgettable because it was simultaneously that of childhood and that of the imagination;” hence, for Eliade, this magical place is indeed Paradise. 180 But could this concept of a yearning for childhood or a return to a paradisiacal dwelling be, in reality, a desire to return to the One, as illustrated in the Plotinian construct of emanation and the Triple Hypostases, wherein souls have union with God and, when these souls are not in their proper place, i.e., the intelligible world, they have a longing for a homecoming?

Plotinus writes:

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The One is always perfect and therefore produces everlastingly; and its product is less than itself. What then must we say about the most perfect? Nothing can come from it except that which is next greatest after it. Intellect is next to it in greatness and second to it: for Intellect sees it and needs it alone; but it has no need of Intellect; and that which derives from something greater than Intellect is intellect, which is greater than all things, because the other things come after it: as Soul is an expression and a kind of activity of Intellect, just as Intellect is of the One. But soul’s expression is obscure—for it is a ghost of Intellect—and for this reason it has to look to Intellect; but Intellect in the same way has to look to that god, in order to be intellect. But it sees him, not as separated from him, but because it comes next after him, and there is nothing between, as also there is not anything between soul and Intellect. Everything longs for its parent and loves it, especially when parent and offspring are alone; but when the parent is the highest good, the offspring is necessarily with him and separate from him only in otherness.181

It is possible that this concept of a yearning represents man’s innate awareness of the One or God and that it stands at the beginning of man’s pursuit of happiness. The nature of happiness unquestionably occupied a central role in classical Greek philosophy. Fārābī and Augustine both search for happiness as well and both agree that all mankind attempts to attain it. Indeed, why does man want to know the principle cause or God? For Augustine, happiness is having knowledge of God. Fārābī, too, sees it as a divine wisdom. Both philosophers insist that this notion of happiness is somehow innate in all humans. While Fārābī does not explain explicitly how the desire to attain happiness is somehow common to all men, he does give us a glimpse of how it is so. Augustine solves this mystery with his examination of Adam, the first human.182 Fārābī and Augustine examine the classical philosophers and their pursuit of happiness, what they meant by happiness, and how man was to attain it, and both utilize

181 Plotinus, Enn., V.1.6.
aspects of the ancient philosophers’ thought to establish their own philosophy for the attainment of happiness. While their considerable use of Plato and Aristotle is obvious and has been thoroughly documented, we shall argue that Fārābī, like Augustine, also utilizes the thought of Plotinus, in particular the Plotinian Triple Hypostases [the One, Nous, and Soul] to illustrate the soul’s journey toward the attainment of happiness. Both Fārābī and Augustine will establish their own paths to happiness and both deem that true or ultimate happiness is to be attained in the intelligible realm. Moreover, both have to contend with a universal, monotheistic, and eschatological religion; thus, each incorporates his own understanding of the attainment of happiness within a particular religious milieu. While Fārābī allows both philosophy and religion as paths to happiness, Augustine rejects philosophy as a means to happiness, even though his own thought is steeped in classical philosophy. For Augustine, there can only be one path to happiness and that is through the mediation of Christ.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Nevertheless, we shall see that Augustine makes exceptions in his definition of a citizen of the City of God.
Chapter Two

Introduction.

Scholars who examine the writings of Farābī consistently single out the two themes of politics and the relationship between philosophy and religion as central to his work. As noted, these themes are discussed all too frequently by scholars and yet, the attainment of happiness materializes as Farābī’s ultimate aim; indeed this salvific theme looms heavily in his works, particularly in Madīnah. Here I will argue that Farābī’s Madīnah should be interpreted predominantly as a text that reveals the paths to happiness instead of the purely political work that it is commonly understood to be. In order to examine the text in this manner we must first decide what Farābī means by happiness. Scholars continue to debate whether it is theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy, or indeed, both, that lead man to happiness. Still, some scholars, such as Muhsin Mahdi and Miriam Galston, take this debate in a new direction by claiming that Farābī has obscured the distinction between the theoretical and practical sciences in his discussion on the attainment of happiness. Perhaps this difficulty can be solved if we examine and compare the thought of Plotinus, at least that found within the Arabic Plotinus, with Farābī’s text. We shall see that, with this comparison, there no longer appear to be any ambiguities between the theoretical and practical sciences. Furthermore, utilization of the Arabic Plotinus allows us to see more clearly how Farābī employed the Plotinian Triple Hypostases to explain how man acquires a primary theoretical knowledge in order to know and

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184 See chapter One. I-II.
desire happiness. In fact, Fārābī maintains that both theoretical and practical
sciences are necessary and are included in both of the paths, i.e., philosophy and
religion, that lead to the attainment of happiness. It has been well documented
that Fārābī utilized the thought of Plato and Aristotle, but consideration of these
two philosophers does not solve the puzzle completely, thus there is not only
scope, but also a necessity to scrutinize Plotinus’ ideas.

I. Fārābī’s Plato.

Fārābī, in his Taḥṣīl, conveys his knowledge of the philosophy of Plato
and Aristotle and their philosophy of happiness. In Aflāṭūn, Fārābī’s Plato
defines human perfection or happiness as “a certain knowledge and a certain way
of life.” Fārābī’s Plato wonders if this knowledge even existed and if it did,
whether man could grasp it. He decides that it indeed exists and begins
examining the “accepted arts and investigations” to see if they could lead man to
happiness. In Fārābī’s examination of Plato’s Meno, Fārābī’s Plato asserts
that man either knows something by “nature” and “chance” or he does not know
it and investigation will not help the man who does not already have this
knowledge. Fārābī’s Plato rejects this claim and argues, instead, that
investigation and study can lead to the knowledge and way of life that he is

\[\text{\footnotesize 185 According to Mahdi, Alfarabi: the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is a trilogy and he insists}
\text{\footnotesize that the very notion that these essays are together implies that the arguments have internal}
\text{\footnotesize agreements.}
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\[\text{\footnotesize 186 Fārābī cites Plato’s Alcibides. Fārābī, The Philosophy of Plato (Falsafat Aflāṭūn) ed. Franz}
\text{\footnotesize Alfarabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, tr. Mahdi, 3:10-15. Page numbers of Rosenthal and}
\text{\footnotesize Walzer appear in the margins of Mahdi. Mahdi has corrected the Arabic text edited by Rosenthal}
\text{\footnotesize and Walzer on the basis of a reexamination of the manuscripts used by them. See also Plato,}
\text{\footnotesize “Alcibiades” translated by D.S. Hutchinson in Plato: Complete Works.}
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\[\text{\footnotesize 187 Fārābī, Aflāṭūn, 3:10-4:10; tr. Mahdi, 3:10-4:10. See also Plato’s “Meno” translated by}
\text{\footnotesize G.M.A. Grube in Plato: Complete Works.}
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searching for.\textsuperscript{188} Here, Fārābī appears to be drawing upon the Platonic doctrine of recollection (\textit{anamnesis})\textsuperscript{189} in his claim that investigation and study can lead to this knowledge; in a later passage Fārābī’s Plato even asserts that the philosophers have a certain knowledge from the outset. Though as Christopher Colmo insists, the Platonic notions of the Ideas, the immortality of the soul, or the doctrine of recollection, are scarcely mentioned or discussed in Fārābī’s version. He points out:

Recollection connects the ideas and immortality. The immortality of our Souls makes possible a timeless knowledge of the ideas. Recollection solves the problem of learning through the thesis that we learn what we somehow already knew; what looks like learning is, in fact, a form of remembering. We know at the beginning what we seek at the end….While Alfarabi does not mention the doctrine of recollection, he presents Plato’s philosophy in such a way that the desired perfection is present and operative from the very first sentence.\textsuperscript{190}

By contrast, Herbert Davidson asserts, “The Platonic doctrine of recollection serves the same function as the Active Intellect.”\textsuperscript{191} Fārābī’s Active Intellect, as we shall see below, is responsible for providing man with a primary knowledge and this knowledge is to enable man to achieve his perfection.\textsuperscript{192} Colmo notes Davidson’s claim and argues, “While the theory of the Active Intellect and the Doctrine of the Recollection both try to solve the same problem, there is at least, one important difference. Alfarabi claims that the Active Intellect is an agent of the same species as the thing that it moves from potentiality to actuality. The

\textsuperscript{188} Fārābī, \textit{Aflāqūn}, 5:9-6:5; tr. Mahdi, 5:9-6:5.
\textsuperscript{189} See Plato’s “Meno” 81c-86c; Plato’s “Phaedo” 72e-76c.
\textsuperscript{190} Colmo, \textit{Breaking with Athens}, 57, 116.
\textsuperscript{191} Davidson, \textit{Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect}, 15.
Active Intellect is a thinking thing, which the Platonic Ideas are not.”193

Fārābī’s Active Intellect will be discussed more thoroughly below, where I will argue that the Active Intellect is more similar to the Plotinian Nous: the Plotinian Nous is indeed a thinking thing. Obviously, Fārābī does not have to discuss the Platonic concept of recollection if the Active Intellect fulfills the same purpose. Fārābī’s Plato continues his investigation only to discover that the accepted methods of investigation do not lead man to the desired knowledge and way of life, they provide only what is “useful” or “gainful.” He deems philosophy to be the sole method of inquiry that is both useful and necessary; indeed, the philosopher has the single “skill” and “faculty” that supply the desired knowledge and the desired way of life (from the outset).194 Accordingly, for Plato, it is the philosopher who will instruct the citizens in order that they may achieve happiness.195

II. Fārābī’s Aristotle.

In Aristūṭālis, Fārābī notes that there is both agreement and disagreement between Plato and Aristotle, but when it comes to the Platonic concept of man’s attainment of happiness, Fārābī takes the position that

193 Colmo, Breaking with Athens, 116.
194 Fārābī cites Plato’s Lovers. Fārābī, Aflāṭūn, 13:5-10; tr. Mahdi, 13:5-10. That the philosopher has this skill from the outset implies that it is inherent, thus, begging the question how he has it. In contrast to the general reading of Plato’s Meno, see Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics i. 1, ii. 9, translated by Jonathan Barnes in The Complete Works of Aristotle edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Bollingen Series LXXI, 1984); Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics vi. 6 translated by W.D. Ross and revised by J.O. Urmson in The Complete Works of Aristotle for Aristotle’s definition of the two kinds of knowledge. See Plato, Rival Lovers, translated by Jeffrey Mitscherling in Plato: Complete Works.
195 According to Strauss, Fārābī’s Plato makes a distinction between perfection and happiness. Theoretical perfection would only be attainable by the few, but happiness could be achieved by the many, since it is connected with a certain way of life. Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 378-79.
Aristotle held Plato's opinion even more ardently than Plato himself did.\textsuperscript{196} According to Mahdi, Plato never claimed that he attained perfection, but it became “evident” to him that it was possible. This possibility was not enough for Fārābī’s Aristotle, who began looking for the four characteristics that all humans desire. Fārābī’s Aristotle supposes that Plato began his quest for the attainment of happiness too late in time, since he examined only the desires of those around him. Mahdi argues that Fārābī’s Aristotle was not satisfied with perfection as merely possible; Aristotle demanded certainty and demonstration. Moreover, he insists that Fārābī could not find an explanation for Aristotle’s departure from Plato’s position within Aristotle’s own writings and so found it necessary to explicate the thought of Aristotle before he examined Aristotle’s texts, thus accounting for the “lengthy introduction” at the beginning of the \textit{Arist}ū\textit{ṭūlīs}.\textsuperscript{197} Mahdi questions why Plato’s philosophy was unsatisfactory to Aristotle: “Is that because Aristotle is the inventor of ‘demonstration’ as a full-fledged art through which what is not self-evident in itself, yet is true necessarily and always, can be demonstrated to be such both to one’s own satisfaction and to the satisfaction of others? Or is Aristotle’s invention of the art of demonstration due rather to his dissatisfaction with the situation that Plato’s view of the perfection of man should remain ‘undemonstrated’?”\textsuperscript{198} Mahdi claims that Fārābī’s Plato seems to insist that men are “given … [their]

\textsuperscript{197} Fārābī, \textit{Aristūţūlīs}. The prolonged introduction includes pages 59-91 or sections 1-3 and part of 4. See Mahdi, “Alfarabi on Aristotle's Starting Point,” 341. See also Druart for a discussion of the liberties that Fārābī takes with Aristotle’s philosophy. Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism,” 29-31.
\textsuperscript{198} Mahdi, “Alfarabi on Aristotle's Starting Point,” 342.
perfection and the means to achieve it rather than having to discover it.”199 It seems that Fārābī’s Aristotle cannot accept the fact that Plato fails to explain why man needs “to search for, find, pursue, and achieve” happiness or perfection.200

In Aristotle’s investigation of the attainment of happiness, he demands to know why man seeks it. He looks at what man has most wanted from his beginning in time.201  (1) All humans desire by nature sound bodies and (2) senses, and all humans desire (3) the sound capacity for knowing how to perceive the things that lead to the soundness of the first two, and all desire (4) the sound power to labor at what leads to the soundness of all of these.202 This knowledge is considered both useful and necessary. Along with these four things, Fārābī’s Aristotle asserts that the “soul desires to understand the sensible things, of what is observed in the heavens and on earth, and of what man sees in his own soul and the state in which he finds it.”203 This desire to understand the immaterial is also found in Plotinus. Plotinus writes that if the soul seeks that which is akin to itself, then it will find it, but if it is seeking something foreign, then Plotinus questions what good seeking will do.204 Also in the Arabic Plotinus, we find the same concept alluded to, namely, that the soul is able to seek what the senses cannot, i.e., the immaterial, the intelligible world. The text states:

199 Ibid.  See also Rist, who claims that “Plato seems to assume that ‘underneath,’ or somehow, we do all have accessible knowledge of the good and a desire for it, even a love of it.” Rist, Augustine, 154.
200 Mahdi, “Alfarabi on Aristotle’s Starting Point,” 345.
201 Ibid., 341-346.
202 Fārābī, Aristūṭālis, 59; tr. Mahdi, 59.
203 Fārābī, Aristūṭālis, 60:1-5; tr. Mahdi, 60:1-5.
204 Plotinus, Enn. V, 1.1
We say that if anyone wishes to perceive the soul and the mind and the first essence, which is the cause of mind and soul and the other things, he will not let the senses perform their functions but will return to his own being and stay in the interior of it and stand fast there a long while and let all his concern be there, though he be far removed from sight and the other senses, for they perform their functions outside it, not inside it. So let him be eager to put them to rest, for, when the senses rest and he returns to his own being and looks within himself, he has the power to perceive that over which, or over the attainment of which, the senses have no power…. [W]hen one of the senses wishes to perceive one of its objects correctly, it rejects the other objects of it and confronts that object alone and then recognizes it accurately. So must he do who wishes to perceive the soul and the mind and the first essence; he must put away and reject the sensory…. 205

This knowledge, according to Fārābī’s Aristotle, is considered to be beyond what is useful and necessary. Fārābī’s Aristotle divides these two desires into sciences, in which the four characteristics desired by all are called practical science, while the desire of the soul is called theoretical science. What is contained within practical science are wants and needs that man shares with the animals and it appears that Aristotle understood these things as the foundation for man to enable him to reach higher. In his discussion of theoretical science, he questions why the soul desires to understand what is considered neither useful nor necessary. 206 He wonders if man can achieve this excellence, but, more importantly, he questions if this excellence is something that man is even meant to attain. 207 Man is not given his perfection at the outset but he is given the

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205 “Theologia IX,” 77-90 in Plotini Opera, Plotinus, Enn., V.1:12,6-20.
206 Fārābī, Aristȳtȳlís, 60-61; tr. Mahdi, 60-61.
207 Fārābī, Aristȳtȳlís, 65: 5-10; tr. Mahdi, 65:5-10. Philip Merlan claims: Aristotle clarifies only what obviously everybody instinctively… desires. And it turns out that the knowledge men are after is wisdom, i.e. the knowledge of first principles and causes—small wonder, then, Aristotle continues, that many would be of the opinion that it is a kind of knowledge which only a god could possess, whereas man should not aspire to it. But this is wrong, says Aristotle. The knowledge man is and should be after (wisdom) is divine indeed and it is so in a double sense: its object matter is god, because as everybody knows god is a principle cause, and obviously it is the knowledge.
tools to labor toward perfection; thus, Aristotle concludes that by not trying to achieve excellence, man might be confining himself to a rank that is beneath his proper one and thus denying himself the attainment of happiness.\textsuperscript{208} With this supposition, Aristotle insists, “man is forced to consider what is the substance of man, what is his final perfection, and what is the act the performance of which leads to the final perfection of his substance.”\textsuperscript{209}

Fārābī’s Aristotle begins his inquiry by examining what man has been given by nature; he concludes that nature alone is insufficient for man to attain his end. He then considers the soul and again, admits that this too is inadequate. Nature and the soul are something that man shares with the animals. When Aristotle asks what ultimately separates man from the animals, he concludes that it is speech. And speech proceeds from the intellect; hence, Aristotle must investigate the intellect.\textsuperscript{210} After examining the various parts of intellect, he realizes that the theoretical part of the intellect is what renders man substantial and that nature, soul, and the other parts of the intellect are all for the perfection of that theoretical intellect.\textsuperscript{211} Fārābī’s Aristotle concludes that man’s goal is the Active Intellect—it is this Intellect which gave man the principle to labor toward his perfection and yet, at the same time, it is also man’s perfection. He states, “It is a principle in three respects: as an agent, as an end, and as the

\hspace{1cm} which god possesses, and divine in this sense. In short: man desires the knowledge of god.


\textsuperscript{208} Fārābī, \textit{Aristuṭālis}, 66-70; tr. Mahdi, 66-70.

\textsuperscript{209} Fārābī, \textit{Aristuṭālis}, 68:1-3; tr. Mahdi, 68:1-3.

\textsuperscript{210} Fārābī, \textit{Aristuṭālis}, 122-123; tr. Mahdi, 122-123.

\textsuperscript{211} Fārābī, \textit{Aristuṭālis}, 130-131; tr. Mahdi, 130-131.
perfection that man attempts to approach. It is therefore a separate form of man, a separate end and a prior end, and a separate agent; in some manner, man becomes united with it when it is intellected by him…it is intellected by man only when he is not separated from it by an intermediary. In this way, the soul of man itself becomes this Intellect.” For Fārābī’s Aristotle, it seems, the very being, i.e., the Active Intellect, that gave man the principle to pursue happiness is also what is to be attained by man.

III. Fārābī On Happiness.

Fārābī begins his own discussion on the attainment of happiness (ṣaʿādah) with the statement, “The human things through which nations and citizens of cities attain earthly happiness in this life and supreme happiness in the life beyond are of four kinds: theoretical virtues, deliberative virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts.” With these four things, it appears that both theoretical and practical sciences are required for the attainment of happiness. What exactly is happiness? Fārābī tells us in Madīnah that felicity “means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in (its) existence where it is in no need of matter for its support, since it becomes one of the incorporeal things and of the immaterial substances and remains in that state continuously for ever. But its rank is beneath the rank of the Active Intellect….Felicity is the good which is pursued for its own sake and it is never at any time pursued for obtaining something else….“ He also tells us that happiness is achieved by certain voluntary actions. Some of these actions are mental and others are

\[\text{212} \quad \text{Fārābī, Aristūtālīs, 128:9-129:2; tr. Mahdi, 128:9-129:2.}
\text{213} \quad \text{Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 2:1-5; tr. Mahdi, 2:1-5.}\]
bodily. As mentioned above, there is in the Siyāsah, a noted variant, according to which perfected man achieves the rank of the Active Intellect, not the rank beneath the Active Intellect.

Before we examine the various definitions of happiness and perfection, it should be noted that the concepts of happiness and perfection come to Fārābī from numerous sources and we are in no way arguing that it comes to him solely from Plotinus—although Plotinus uses these terms. It is simply being argued here that the knowledge of happiness—or rather how man comes to possess knowledge of happiness—can and perhaps should be examined within a Plotinian construct. John Rist examines the various definitions of happiness found in Greek philosophy. He claims that Plato views happiness as man possessing the Form of the Good in one’s own soul. Happiness or εύδαιμονία (eudaimonia) is generally understood to mean “having one’s daimon in good shape; and in the Timaeus a man’s daimon is his mind (νοῦς).” Aristotle, who would eventually reject Plato’s notion of happiness, considers happiness to be a universal desire and devoted much of his ethical works to determining what happiness is. Plotinus, who is greatly influenced by Aristotle, defines happiness as the attainment of the Good through possession of Nous. He, too, sees it as a universal desire and even claims that all men hold the actuality and potentiality to attain happiness. However, Plotinus insists that happiness is a condition of the immaterial. Walzer, too, correctly notes:

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214 Fārābī, Madīnah, 13.5-6; tr. Walzer, 13.5-6.
215 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 32.10; tr. Druart, 32.10.
216 Rist, Plotinus, 140, 139-142. See Plato, Timaeus, 90c.
Since the time of Plato felicity as the aim of human life was a main topic of all Greek philosophy. With the exception of the Epicureans, all the schools extend its scope beyond the earthly life. Platonists and Aristotelians assign this other-worldly felicity to man’s immaterial immortal soul or to the rational part of it. It is well known that the few statements on immortality which Aristotle makes in his lecture courses are inconclusive and ambiguous; but they are made definite and consistent by the later Peripatetics who all upheld the survival of the nûs. 217

In Al-Fārābī’s Philosophical Lexicon we find his definitions of happiness and supreme happiness:

“Happiness”: [Tanbih, 2,2]: ‘Happiness is the utmost object of desire for all humans. Anyone who directs himself towards it does so because it is a kind of perfection.’ (See vol. 1, 175). [Millah, 52,10]: ‘Happiness, as taught by political science, is of two sorts: that which is surmised to be one without [actually] being so, and that which is sought for its own sake, never for the attainment of anything else.’ (See vol. 1, 176). [Ārā’, 206,7]: ‘Happiness is the good which is pursued for its own sake, never at any time for gaining something else, and there is nothing greater beyond it for man to gain.’ (See vol. 1, 176). [Tanbih, 3,8]: ‘Happiness is the most preferable, the greatest, and most perfect of [the kinds of] the good.’ (See vol. 1, 176). [Siyāsah, 72, 15]: ‘Happiness is the absolute good.’ (See vol. 1, 176). [Ārā’, 294,15]: ‘Happiness means that the human soul reaches the degree of perfection in [its] existence where it is in no need of matter for its support [any longer]. [This is so] because it joins the incorporeal things and the immaterial substances, in which state it remains permanently forever.’ (See vol. 1, 177). “The Supreme Happiness”: [Millah, 52,10]: ‘Happiness, as taught by political science, is of two sorts: that which is surmised to be one without [actually] being so, and that which is truly happiness and is that which is sought for its own sake, never for the attainment of anything else. Indeed, all other things are only sought in order to gain this [type of happiness], and when it is gained, the search is over. This [happiness] does not exist in this life, but rather in the after-life, and is called “the supreme happiness”.’ (See vol.1, 177). [Fuṣūl, 121,4]: ‘The final perfection, which is ultimate happiness, is the absolute good. It is that which is chosen and desired for itself and is not chosen at any time whatever, for the sake of anything else.’ (See vol. 1, 177). [Tahsīl, 32,13]: ‘Man’s specific perfection is called “supreme happiness”, and to each man, according to his rank in order of humanity, belongs the specific supreme happiness pertaining to his kind of man.’ (See vol. 1, 177). Jālinūs, 39,18]: ‘Man’s ultimate goal

217 Walzer, Virtuous City, 457-458.
is the perfection of [his] theoretical knowledge…This is the supreme happiness defined as (lit. in) the perfection of the soul, a perfection that is reached by humans *qua* humans.’ (See vol. I, 178). [Siyāsah, 55,9]: ‘This supreme happiness is the best kind of perfection one can reach.’ (See vol. I, 178). “The True Supreme Happiness”: [Siyāsah, 82,9]: ‘Similar souls contact with one another, that belong to the same group…Whenever the [number of] similar separate souls increases and they unite with one another, the “pleasure” of each increases. Whenever another [soul] joins them later, the pleasure of the newly-joining soul increases [too], thanks to its meeting those who have passed. The pleasure of those passed increases thanks to the contact of those joining them in the present, as each intelligizes itself as well as those of the same quiddity many times over: what is intelligized by them increases by the joining of those succeeding them. The pleasure, therefore, of each increases infinitely with the passing of time. This is the state of every group [of them] and is the true supreme happiness, which is the goal of the active intellect.’ (See vol. I, 178).218

It should be apparent from the various definitions of happiness that happiness and what Fārābī calls perfection are intimately connected. So we must also know what Fārābī means by the concept of perfection. We also find in Fārābī a variety of definitions of perfection:

“This Absolutely Perfect” [Taḥsīl, 39,16]: ‘He who is absolutely perfect possesses with sure insight, first, the theoretical virtues, and subsequently, the practical. Moreover, he possesses the capacity for bringing them into nations and cities in the manner and the measure possible with reference to each.’ (See vol. I,419) “Primary Perfection” [Taʿlīqaṭ, 3,3]: ‘Philosophers (lit. the wise) call that which is needed by a thing for its existence and permanence “the primary perfection”.’ (See vol. I, 420).

“The Final Perfection” [Fuṣūl, 121,4]: ‘…the final perfection, which is the supreme happiness, i.e., the absolute good. It is that which is chosen and desired for its own sake and is not chosen, at any time whatsoever, for the sake of anything else. All else is chosen for its use in the attainment of happiness.’ (See vol. I, 420). [Siyāsah, 65, 8]: ‘A thing is at its final perfection whose nature it is to produce actions which are simultaneous with itself and which happen immediately with no time [lapse]. It is [only] due to an obstacle external to its essence that an action of a thing at its final perfection is delayed.’ (See vol. I, 420). “[Human] Primary Perfection” [Fuṣūl, 120,16]: ‘The primary perfection

218 Alon, *Al-Fārābī’s philosophical Lexicon*, 616-618.
is that a man performs the actions of all the virtues, not that he is merely endowed with a virtue without performing its actions.’ (See vol. I, 420).219

Robert Wisnovsky provides a comprehensive account of what Fārābī means when he uses the terms primary and ultimate perfection. Wisnovsky claims that they are based on what he calls the “Ammonian synthesis” 220

Wisnovsky writes:

In view of the fact that actuality (al-fīl) is tied to form (aṣ-ṣūrā) (since a thing is in actuality only when it possesses its form), while potentiality (al-qawwā) is tied to matter (al-mādda) (since a thing is in potentiality when it only possesses its matter), al-Fārābī asserts that being in actuality is more perfect in respect of existence (akmalu wujjudan) than being in potentiality. Al-Fārābī appeals to the criterion of causation to defend this assertion: the matter exists only in order that the form which inheres in it may exist, but in no sense is the form for the sake of the matter. In other words, the actual is a more perfect type of existent than the potential because a thing which is in actuality is a cause, while a thing which is in potentiality is not; and because causes are better than effects, a thing which is in actuality is more perfect and more excellent than a thing which is in potentiality. Al-Fārābī’s use of causality as the distinguishing feature of perfection and the perfect is of course a familiar Neoplatonic move. But al-Fārābī not only follows the Neoplatonists’ move to causation here. He pushes the Ammonian synthesis forward by attempting to incorporate more fully the Neoplatonists’ distinction between first and second perfections into Aristotle’s distinction between first and second actualities.

Al-Fārābī’s distinction between first and second perfections—actually, the terms he uses are Themistius’, “initial” (awwah) and “ultimate” (akhīr) —rests on the criterion of causation, just as Proclus’ distinction had done. And in one passage in his Siyāsa madaniyya al-Fārābī clearly echoes Proclus’ distinction, saying that terms signifying perfection (kamāl) and excellence (fālīla) are divided into those that

219 Ibid., 671-672.
220 Wisnovsky explains that the “Ammonian synthesis” is “the project of the Aristotle-commentator Ammonius and his students to integrate the greater sumphônia of reconciling Aristotle and Plato into the lesser sumphônia of reconciling Aristotle and Aristotle — is that it is crucial but unappreciated background both to the word choices made by the various Greco-Arabic translators, and, partly for that reason, to the theories of the soul and of causation of the Arabic philosophers al-Fārābī and Avicenna.” Robert Wisnovsky, Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 64.
point to some characteristic which the thing in question has in and of itself, such as “existent” and “one”; while others point to some characteristic which the thing has in relation to something else other than it, such as “just” and “generous.”

However, al-Fārābī seems to have Aristotle’s distinction between first and second entelekheiai in mind when in other passages he departs subtly from Proclus’ distinction. Proclus had said that a first perfection referred to a thing’s perfection when the thing was viewed in and of itself, and that a second perfection referred to a thing’s perfection when the thing was viewed as a cause of something else. Al-Fārābī asserts, however, that a thing’s initial perfection refers to the state something is in when what normally would issue as an effect from it does not do so. The ultimate perfection, on the other hand, refers to the state the thing is in when what normally would issue from it as an effect in fact does so.

The criterion of causation is present in both distinctions, but it is applied differently in each. For Proclus, something to which the term “first perfection” is correctly applied may well be a cause—in fact, it is certainly a cause—but it is not viewed qua cause. Only something to which the term “second perfection” is correctly applied is viewed qua cause. Al-Fārābī, on the other hand, asserts that something which is in a state of first perfection is not, in fact, a cause at all: no effect issues from it. By contrast, something which is in a state of second perfection is a cause: the effects that normally issue from it cannot help but issue from it. In short, both distinctions rest on the criterion of causation, but whereas for Proclus the criterion of causation is understood as referring to whether or not a thing is viewed as the cause of some effect, al-Fārābī held that the criterion of causation referred to whether or not a thing is in fact the cause of some effect. That al-Fārābī had Aristotle’s distinction between first and second entelekheiai in mind seems clear from the fact that he uses one of Aristotle’s De Anima examples—being asleep and being awake—to illustrate what he means. That he also had the Physics distinction in mind seems clear from the fact that in his distinction he uses the terms that Themistius invented—prōtē/awwal and hustatē/akhīr—in order to distinguish between the state of change and the state of being changed.

What I am getting at is that al-Fārābī’s distinction between first and second perfections, based on the criterion of not-being-a-cause/being-a-cause, seems intended to reconcile not only the Aristotelian distinction with the Neoplatonic distinction, but also to reconcile the Physics distinction with the De Anima distinction. Al-Fārābī’s reasoning seems to proceed along the following lines. The state of being changed into something actual (the first entelekheia of the Physics commentators) retains some potentiality, and is therefore not the cause of anything; possessing the capability to perform a function (the De Anima’s second entelekheia) is an inactive state, and is therefore not the cause of anything; a thing taken in and of itself (Proclus’ first teleiotēs) is not
(viewed as) the cause of anything. Second perfections are slightly trickier. The state of having changed into something actual (the second entelekheia of the Physics commentators) is the final cause of the change; contemplating (the De Anima’s second entelekheia) is the final cause of the acquisition of knowledge; and a thing’s perfection taken in relation to a lower thing (Proclus’ second teleiotês) is the final cause of that lower thing, at least when both cause and effect are viewed as elements of reversion.

Al-Fārābī’s attempt to merge the three distinctions into one is interesting, and it certainly earns him a place of honor in the Ammonian synthesis. 221

We will examine what Fārābī calls the “initial” or primary perfection of man in this chapter. However, to use Wisnovsky’s words, the ultimate perfection is a little trickier. Fārābī does provide an obvious description of what appears to be the ultimate perfection, but it only includes the ultimate perfection of the “philosopher-prophet-lawgiver.” 222 He is, however, rather vague as to when the virtuous citizens of all ranks achieve this ultimate perfection. Walzer, in his discussion of perfection, notes that “after it has been established beyond doubt that a particular superlunar intellect affects the human mind and enables it to function, the development of man’s rational faculty becomes the main topic. Its successive stages have to be indicated. Its highest level is at the same time the highest felicity which human beings can reach: its last perfection presupposes the ultimate separation of body and mind: it establishes the unending and ever increasing felicity of the immortal souls of the citizens of the Perfect State.” 223 So, we will examine some possibilities as to when this perfection is achieved by all virtuous citizens.

221 Ibid., 108-110.
223 Walzer, Virtuous City, 406.
We know that Fārābī claims that those who are absolutely perfect have both theoretical and practical perfection and can lead others to these perfections. Also in Siyāsah, Fārābī insists that happiness can be known and perceived only by the theoretical rational faculty while the practical rational faculty deliberates and decides what to do in order to attain it.\textsuperscript{224} Still, we must ask: what are the means to attain this final perfection and thereby achieve supreme happiness? Is it theoretical; thus, essentially contemplative? Or is it practical, such that its perfection is in the realm of action? Fārābī typically defines theoretical perfection as the perfection of the theoretical rational faculty. The function of theoretical reason is “to become aware of the intelligibles which cannot be translated into action.”\textsuperscript{225} And practical perfection is the perfection of the practical rational faculty. The function of practical reason is “to direct action towards present and future particulars.”\textsuperscript{226}

Miriam Galston has provided an excellent account of the academic discussions about the various ambiguities perceived in this aspect of Fārābī’s philosophy. She attempts to clear up some of the murkiness ensconced in his writings by arguing that Fārābī’s “works proceed on several levels

\textsuperscript{225} Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 14:7; tr. Walzer, 14:7.
\textsuperscript{226} Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 14:7; tr. Walzer, 14:7.
simultaneously because they are dialectically written.”

Nevertheless, Galston concedes that Fārābī’s definition of happiness is perceived as a fundamental problem among scholars. She examines the various definitions of theoretical and practical philosophy observed by scholars and compares these definitions with what she perceives as Fārābī’s understanding of happiness. The source of the problem, according to her, is that Fārābī views theoretical and practical philosophy as anything that deals with human happiness and misery, and it is this view that leads to the ambiguity found in his writings. Galston begins her argument on the problems of happiness with the view of happiness found in Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Jadal* 69:10-18/224r3-12; it is this view that she compares to all others. Fārābī writes:

“Practical philosophy is not what investigates everything subject to human control, in whatever manner or condition it occurs. After all, mathematics investigates many things that tend to be the product of voluntary action—for example, the science of music, the science of military strategy, and much of the contents of geometry, arithmetic, and the science of optics. Likewise, natural science investigates many things that result from art or volition. Yet not one of these sciences is part of political science. Rather, they are parts of theoretical philosophy, since they do not inquire into these things from the perspective of what is base or noble, nor from the perspective of what makes human beings happy or miserable when they do them. When, however, the objects of inquiry in these arts are taken up from the perspective of human happiness or misery that results from doing them, they belong to practical philosophy.”

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227 In arguing this, Galston admits that she is essentially in agreement with Muhsin Mahdi and Fauzi Najjār, who claim, “The philosopher was guided by a master plan or an overriding purpose in the composition of many of his works.” Thus for Galston, there does not seem to be an evolution in Fārābī’s works. Galston, *Politics and Excellence*, 10-11. See also Miriam Galston’s “The Theoretical and Practical Dimensions of Happiness as Portrayed in the Political Treatises of Al-Farabi,” in *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy*. Ed. Charles E. Butterworth. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). In contrast, for arguments claiming a progression of Fārābī’s thought see D. M. Dunlop’s edition and translation of Fārābī’s *Fusul Al-Madani (Aphorisms of the Statesman)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 9-17. See also Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 1, 20.

She notes further that modern scholars perceive at least three distinct views of happiness in Fārābī's thought and she argues that the difficulty seems to be that these scholars have chosen to place Fārābī in a narrow category of either theoretical or practical philosophy.

The three views of happiness put forth by scholars are theoretical activity exclusively, practical activity exclusively, and a combination of both theoretical and practical activity. Galston examines the three views of happiness found in Fārābī’s text. Happiness defined by political or practical activity exclusively is found only in Fārābī’s commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. Happiness defined as purely political or practical focuses on happiness in this life, which suggests that Fārābī excludes happiness in the afterlife. Theoretical perfection identified with human happiness is found in Madīnah, Risālah fī al-‘Aql, Siyāsah, and Fuṣūl. Theoretical happiness is typically regarded as the ultimate or supreme happiness but does not appear to include the notion of

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231 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 60-61.
happiness on earth. And finally, the combination of both theoretical and practical activity defining happiness is found in *Tahṣīl*.232 This claim allows that happiness can be found and attained both in this life and in the afterlife. However, Galston then suggests that *Madinah, Risālah fī al-ʿAql, Siyāsah*, and *Fusūl* provide evidence that supports the possibility of both theoretical and practical activity leading to human happiness. As noted, Galston had previously placed these texts within the context that theoretical activity exclusively leads to happiness; however, she now claims that there is evidence within these texts that support her conclusion that they can also be placed in the category that is generally considered practical philosophy.233 Galston argues that Fārābī's concept of happiness, or the attainment of happiness, must be viewed “against the backdrop of his understanding of the meaning of theoretical perfection and practical perfection.”234

Nevertheless, Galston takes her argument—that a combination of theoretical and practical philosophy is necessary in the attainment of happiness—even further when she suggests that Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Jadal* and *Tahṣīl* undermine the established dichotomy between the theoretical and practical sciences.235 As already noted, Galston begins and ends all inquiries concerning happiness and its attainment with the view of happiness found in *Kitāb al-Jadal*. She includes the theoretical sciences within the practical whenever her inquiry entails bringing about happiness or avoiding misery. With

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232Ibid., 64. As noted above, earthly happiness is only mentioned once in this text. See Mahdi, *Alfarabi: Political Philosophy*, 173-174.
234 Ibid., 55-94.
235 Ibid., 69.
this, she implies that if the purpose of any inquiry is to bring about happiness, then it must come under practical science, but she fails to note that there appears to be an innate desire for happiness and knowledge of the intelligible world, which is after all what theoretical sciences include and indeed, strive to realize. Fārābī’s Plato and Aristotle both seem to make this desire clear. But does the inclusion of practical science within theoretical science change the notion of happiness; in other words, is practical science responsible for ultimate happiness? Strauss disagrees. Strauss, who sees happiness as exclusively theoretical, holds that “the happiness of this world is naturally distinguished from, and inferior to, the happiness of the other world: the virtuous way of life does not lead to the happiness of the other world.”

With this in mind, let us now examine what Fārābī himself says on this subject.

In Tahṣīl, Fārābī begins with an examination of the sciences that he deems necessary for theoretical perfection, namely, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, and finally, political or human science. According to Fārābī, these sciences essentially allow the separation between what can be perceived with the senses and what can be discerned with the mind. Within each of these sciences, Fārābī utilizes the principles of instruction, which demonstrates that a thing is, and the principles of being, which reveals why a thing is. The science of

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237 Fārābī states:
The primary cognitions relative to every genus of beings are the principles of instruction in that genus, provided they possess the states and conditions through which the student is led to the certain truth about what he seeks to know in the genus. If all or most of the species comprised by the genus should possess causes by which, from which, or for which these species exist, then these are the principles of being of the species comprised by the genus, and one should attempt to know...The principles of being are four: (1)
mathematics comes first because it can be grasped without any regard to material.  Fārābī asserts that this would eventually lead to the next science that is conceived with reference to material.  Fārābī claims that “one is now forced to include principles other than what, by what, and how.  He has come to the borderline between the genus that does not have any other principles of being apart from what it is, and the genus whose species possess the four principles.  It is at this point that the natural principles come into view.”238 The science of nature or physics can only be perceived by the intellect when the thing being examined is in various degrees of matter.239 Fārābī claims that such an examination of the material world will lead man to “inquire into bodies and into things that are in bodies,” and in this way, man will discover his own soul.240 This move inward leads to the science of metaphysics, which is to inquire about those things “that are not bodies or in bodies, and that will never be in bodies.”241 It is here, within the science of metaphysics, that man will discover the first principle and understand the ultimate causes of all beings inferior to this principle.  Finally, Fārābī claims that political science, or human science, is then necessary to understand “the what and the how of the purpose for which man is made, that is, the perfection that he must achieve.”242 In this science, the

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What, by what, and how the thing is—these have the same meaning [inasmuch as they signify the formal cause]. (2-3) From what it is. (4) For what it is [which signifies the final].

Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 4.15-5.15; tr. Mahdi, 4.15-5.15.
Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 10.15-11; tr. Mahdi, 10.15-11.
Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 10-12; tr. Mahdi, 10-12.
Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 11:5-10; tr. Mahdi, 11:5-10.
Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 13:5-10; tr. Mahdi, 13:5-10.
Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 15:18-20; tr. Mahdi, 15:18-20. In his examination of metaphysics, Fārābī claims that another “genus” will be discovered. Mahdi’s translation states that it is different from the metaphysical, however, in his notes he concedes that, based on other Farabian texts, this
similarity between the organization of the city and the organization of the cosmos is exposed, thereby illustrating how man is intended to live. When these four sciences have been fully comprehended by man, this is, according to Fārābī, theoretical perfection and such theoretical perfection is necessary for the attainment of supreme or ultimate happiness.

Fārābī’s inclusion of political science within the theoretical sciences in Tahṣīl has led both Galston and Mahdi to conclude that theoretical perfection includes practical philosophy. Galston claims that because Fārābī comprises within theoretical perfection things that depend upon human volition, such as political associations, which are aspects of practical philosophy, he is incorporating practical science within theoretical science. Of course, she explains that these things are known by the intellect merely as “intelligible ideas (maʿqūlāt), that is, in terms of their essential features or underlying structure independent of the particular attributes they assume when they exist in concrete situations. In other words, the practical sciences partake of the theoretical character of inquiries into nonhuman things as long as they remain on a universal level.” Mahdi agrees, but appears to be initially troubled by the incorporation could be translated “to read: ‘different from the physical [or natural]’.” Mahdi explains that “in any event, at the end of the preceding section and in what follows the ‘genus of things’ in question is stated: the ‘rational principles’ with which man labors toward his perfection. ‘Different from the metaphysical’ could mean: understood as principles of ‘political science’...rather than of ‘divine science’...or of the ‘practical’ rather than the ‘theoretical’ intellect.” His translation seems to support his claim that the practical sciences are included within the theoretical. Mahdi, Alfarabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, 135. Section 18, footnote 1.

243 Strauss, who obviously disagrees with such a theory, insists that to include the practical arts with the theoretical is to ignore the distinction that Fārābī’s Plato established. Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 363-366.

244 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 69. She also notes Millah 47:2, Hurūf 151:18-152:1, 153:2-3, Ihṣāʾ 127:3-7). Mahdi discusses the notion of intelligible ideas as well. Mahdi claims,
of political science within theoretical perfection. According to Mahdi, Fārābī’s discussion of political science “concludes with the startling statement ‘This, then, is theoretical perfection.’” Mahdi concedes that it could be construed that Fārābī is stating that the sciences which he has just discussed within theoretical sciences are what is necessary for happiness; nevertheless, after further examination, Mahdi goes on to argue that what Fārābī meant is that the sciences discussed within theoretical science are only part of what leads man to happiness. He claims that political science provides the knowledge of “right action,” and so should be considered a practical science; and political science will provide man with the knowledge of the four human things that Fārābī claims will lead man to happiness on earth and the afterlife. However, in his notes, Mahdi admits that “according to this account, the theoretical sciences include a ‘theoretical’ human or political science whose objects are the ‘intelligibles’ or ‘ideas’ of voluntary things as distinct from their actual existence at particular

“Temperance and Wealth, like man, are intelligible notions, but unlike the notion of man they are not natural but voluntary. Therefore, ‘if we decide to bring them into actual existence,’ we have to know how their attributes vary in time, place, and so forth.” But Mahdi claims, “In the case of natural beings, [i.e., man,] it is sufficient to know the intelligible notions, for nature itself brings the particular natural beings into existence and supplies them with the required attributes.” Muhsin Mahdi, “Remarks on Alfarabi’s Attainment of Happiness” in Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science, ed. George F. Hourani (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 56-57. Fārābī claims that when man exists outside the soul there are states and accidents that accompany him and these also vary with time and place. Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 18: 15-19:5; tr. Mahdi, 18: 15-19:5.

245 Mahdi, Alfarabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, xxx.
246 Ibid. For a thorough discussion see also xiv-xvi, xx-xxii. See also Galston’s theory that the practical sciences do not require theoretical perfection. Galston, Politics and Excellence, 95-145. As noted above, Fārābī claims that “The human things through which nations and citizens of cities attain earthly happiness in this life and supreme happiness in the life beyond are of four kinds: theoretical virtues, deliberative virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts.” Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 2:1-5; tr. Mahdi, 2:1-5.
times and places.” But Mahdi fails to note that Fārābī includes the natural intelligibles as well. In his discussion of theoretical science, Fārābī states:

Things perceived by the intellect are as such free from the states and accidents that they have when they exist outside the [thinking] soul. In what remains numerically one, these accidents do not vary or change at all; they do vary, however, in what remains one, not numerically, but in species. Therefore when it is necessary to make the things perceived by the intellect and remaining one in their species exist outside the soul, one must join to them the states and accidents that must accompany them if they are to have actual existence outside the soul. This applies to the natural intelligibles, which are and remain one in their species, as well as to voluntary intelligibles Fārābī suggests that the intellection of a thing does not necessarily imply actual existence outside the intellect and he claims that investigating things that have actual existence requires something besides theoretical science. And since the theoretical sciences do not examine intelligibles that possess states and accidents, Fārābī does not appear to be discussing things that have actual existence. If Fārābī is not discussing actual existence, then perhaps he is not including practical science within theoretical perfection (this seems to be what Galston and Mahdi are arguing.) But why would Fārābī place man outside of actual existence, which is, in essence, what theoretical science examines?

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249 Fārābī, *Tahṣīl*, 17: 5-10; tr. Mahdi, 17:5-10. See also the Arabic Plotinus, wherein it states, “The mind is all things and contains all things: it does not contain them as a substrate to them, but as their maker, and it is to them as a cause. All things are there together, but yet are distinct from one another.” “Epistola De Scientia Divina”, 18-21, in *Plotini Opera*, *Plotinus Apud Arabes: Theologia Aristotelis et Fragmenta quae supersunt* Collegit, edit et prolegomenis instruxit ’Abd al-Rahman Badawi (Kuwait: Editio Tertia, 1977), 168, 20-169, 4; Plotinus, in his discussion of rational forming principles, insists that “if they are eternal and not subject to affections, they must be in Intellect, and in an intellect of this kind, one which is prior to condition and nature and soul: for these are potential.” Plotinus, *Enn*. V.9.5. S.A. Shaïda claims that we have to go “beyond theoretical science, i.e., to practical wisdom whose function is to satisfy the demands of volition. The going beyond theoretical sciences to effect a change in the world is what characterizes any attempt to do or undo, to make or unmake things or objectives. As Fārābī says, it is true of both ‘natural intelligibles’ and ‘voluntary intelligibles’.” Shaïda, “Al-Fārābī on Deliberative Rationality in Morals,” 211.
Thérèse-Anne Druart’s theory of Fārābī’s emanationism can perhaps solve the problem of political science within theoretical perfection. She argues that Fārābī’s “methodology of going from principles of instruction, i.e., primary cognitions, to principles of existence or being is an ascent. Once these principles of existence have been discovered, they become principles of instruction for a descent towards unknown inferior beings originating from these principles.”  

According to Druart, metaphysics is, in essence, an ascent to the One, the cause of all inferior beings; and therefore, a descent should follow. In Tahṣīl, Fārābī, in his discussion of theoretical sciences, begins with arithmetic and then moves to physics and finally arrives at metaphysics only to examine political science or the science of man. But he returns to his discussion of metaphysics merely to descend once again to political science. Is this the model of ascent and descent that Druart outlined? Surely, man is considered to be an inferior being who exists only because of the One, thus possibly explaining why Fārābī places political science within the sciences pertaining to theoretical perfection. Both discussions concerning man include what is necessary for his perfection together.

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250 Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism,” 34. Colmo rejects the notion of ascent from principles of instruction to principles of being. Colmo, *Breaking With Athens*, 148. Druart explains that the principles of instruction show that a thing exists, whereas principles of being reveal the causes for the thing’s existence. Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism,” 30. Whether or not emanationism is a serious tenet of Fārābī is being debated. While both Ghazali and Avveroes claim that Fārābī indeed embraced emanationism, some modern scholars disagree. This disagreement varies from outright rejection that Fārābī used emanationism to the degree of seriousness of which he utilized it. Shlomo Pines completely rejects Fārābī’s use of emanationism, but Druart notes that Pines’ rejection is completely based on Fārābī’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and is therefore suspect. Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism, 23-24.” See also Mahdi who insists that Fārābī only used emanationism in his popular works. Mahdi, *Alfarabi Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 3-6, 9. See Galston who argues that Fārābī knew that there was no place for emanationism in his faithful Aristotelian works. Galston, “A Reexamination,” 13-32. See also Rafael Ramón Guerrero, “Al-Farabi y la ‘Metafísica’ de Aristóteles,” *La Ciudad de Dios* 196 (1983): 211-40.

with the notion of political associations. The inclusion of political science within the theoretical sciences is central to the argument that practical science contributes to theoretical perfection, but does Fārābī see political or human science as theoretical or practical? As noted, Galston claims that “political associations” form a pertinent element of political science since they imply volition.

Political associations are also consistent with the associations of disembodied souls in the Plotinian intelligible world. In the *Arabic Plotinus*, there are references to souls dealing with their neighbors, i.e., other souls.252 Indeed, these “heavenly souls” appear to have associations with one another, in which “they perform their actions there naturally and invariably, with order and arrangement, not shifting from that order, because that one is perfectly right.”253 When examining the Plotinian intelligible world, there are indications that there are incorporeal souls living in what is described as a “city.” In the *Arabic Plotinus* it states: “the words of the universe resemble the words of the city, which control the affairs of the city and put everything of them in its place, and they resemble the custom whereby the people of the city distinguish what they must do from what they must not and whereby they are guided to praiseworthy things and kept away from reprehensible things, and whereby they are rewarded

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252 “Sapiens Graecvs” II, 11-19 in *Plotini Opera*. This appears in a discussion questioning if souls in the intelligible world speak to one another. See also Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.3: 18, 2-19.

253 “Sapiens Graecvs” II, 11-19 in *Plotini Opera*. 
for their good actions and are punished for their evil actions.” Also in another

passage we find:

So the souls are attached to the mind in the upper world, while their power is spread over the lowly sensory world, shining upon all the bodies…. And though they pour forth their light on the earthly bodies, yet they do not depart from their intellectual world: they are in it together with the universal soul, and together with her they govern the heavenly bodies, as though she were a mighty king with dominion over all things, governing them and ruling them, without descending or departing from that high, noble and kingly place. For the many souls do not depart from the universal soul or from that high and noble place, but are always in it, together with the universal soul, so long as they remain in themselves: I mean, so long as they desire to be there and to be alone by themselves.

Of course, the city in the Plotinian intelligible world is actually the “World Soul.” Fārābī does not use the term World Soul, but in his discussion of theoretical perfection, he does discuss a city that appears to exist outside actual existence. Is Fārābī, in his inclusion of political science (or at least a theoretical political science) within theoretical perfection, telling us that man, as an intelligible being, exists in associations in the intelligible world in what appears to be a city?

Now, we know that Fārābī claims that the perfected human soul will become one of the intelligible beings and that its rank in the intelligible world lies beneath the rank of the Active Intellect. Fārābī illustrates the progression

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254 “Theologia” VI, 1; 2-21; 2-5 in Plotini Opera, Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.4: 32, 1-4; IV.4: 39.9-40, 14; IV.4: 39.9-17; *Plotinus Apud Arabes*, Badawi, 74, 4-6; 74, 7-76,11; 74, 7-76,11.


256 Plotinus also claims, “The individual soul transcends itself becoming ‘completely other,’ a fully actualized member of the intelligible world.” And of course, in Plotinus’ cosmology, the souls will exist in the World Soul, which is beneath or really within the Nous. Plotinus, *Enn.*, IV.4.2.23-32, IV.7.10.28-37, V.1.5.1-4, V.3.4.10-14, VI.5.12.16-25, VI.7.35.4. See also John Bussanich, “Plotinus’s Metaphysics of the One,” in *Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56. Rist asserts that Plotinus’ claim “that each of us
of man’s theoretical perfection of the intellect in his *Āristūṭālīs*, and in his *Taḥsīl*, he tells us which sciences will make this perfection possible. Fārābi’s Aristotle explains that theoretical perfection is essentially man’s theoretical intellect intelleccting the Active Intellect, that is, being made one or united with the Active Intellect.²⁵⁷ Fārābi insists that man must achieve theoretical perfection; and furthermore, that he must achieve it to be able to utilize the other virtues that lead to happiness on earth and in the afterlife.²⁵⁸ If theoretical perfection is necessary to attain supreme happiness, then this perfection is something that must be attained here, in the material world.²⁵⁹ And if theoretical perfection means intelleccting the Active Intellect, does our intellect see what the Active Intellect sees?²⁶⁰ Druart, who, as noted, treats Fārābi as a

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²⁵⁷ The Active Intellect “is intelleccted by man only when he is not separated from it by an intermediary. In this way, the soul of man itself becomes this Intellect.” Fārābi, *Āristūṭālīs*, 128:20-129:5; tr. Mahdi, 128:20-129:5.

²⁵⁸ Fārābi insists that all four virtues are connected, but the deliberative virtue, moral virtue, and practical art are essentially tenuous without the theoretical virtue. Fārābi, *Taḥsīl*, 26:15-27; tr. Mahdi, 26:15-27. The virtues other than theoretical are dealing with actual existence—it would seem that they clearly fall under the description of the practical sciences.

²⁵⁹ Presumably, it is to be attained to acquire the knowledge of the One and man’s place in the world so that he can share this information with others—for we must have this knowledge to bring about these things. Fārābi claims, “The false philosopher is he who acquires the theoretical sciences without achieving the utmost perfection so as to be able to introduce others to what he knows.” Fārābi, *Taḥsīl*, 45.10-13; tr. Mahdi, 45:10-13. Mahdi disagrees; he argues that theoretical perfection is not “a necessary condition for right action, which consists in working toward that perfection by making use of the rational principles or rules that are the foundations of the human virtues and arts. Right action means to aim at the mark and presupposes knowledge of where the mark lies and of the instruments with which one aims at it. This knowledge is provided by a political science that comprises knowledge of the perfection of the theoretical virtues as well as knowledge of the deliberative virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts, with which the perfection of the theoretical virtues is to be realized.” Mahdi, *Alfarābī’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, xxxi.

²⁶⁰ See John Rist, “Notes on Aristotle’s De Anima 3.5” in *Journal of Classical Philology* 61, no.1 (January 1966): 8-20, for the knowledge that Aristotle’s Active Intellect possesses. Walzer claims that Fārābi is against any notion of a mystical union, but he admits that Fārābi does consider a link between man and the Active Intellect. Walzer examines Fārābi’s descriptions of man’s quasi union with the Active Intellect. He notes that in Fārābi’s *Risālat fi’l-‘Aql (On the Intellect)*, man’s intellect reaches an “utmost nearness” to the Active Intellect. This description
Neoplatonist, holds that Fārābī’s Active Intellect “thinks first the most perfect beings…wheras we acquire most intelligibles by abstracting them from matter….The intelligible forms which it [Active Intellect] thinks originally exist in it qua indivisible.”

This is similar to Plotinus’ description of Nous, wherein he claims that the Nous generates “all realities” and “it is full of the beings which it has generated and as it were swallows them up again, by keeping them in itself…."

Also in the Arabic Plotinus it states:

The things are in the intellect, and the intellect is in them. The things got into the intellect, because their forms are in it and have broken forth from it and entered the things, because the intellect is the cause of the lower things. However, although the intellect is the cause of the lower things, it is not the final cause of a thing. It merely is the cause of the form of the thing, and not the cause of its identity. The First Agent is a final cause. He is the immediate cause of the identity and form of a thing; and the cause of the identity of the soul and the forms of the things through the medium of the intellect. The soul and all things are pre-formed in the intellect, and not in the First Cause, although they emanate from it.

Instead of arguing that Fārābī has blurred the distinction between theoretical and practical science, a distinction that is quite clear in his other texts, we could just as well argue that his inclusion of political science within theoretical sciences forms a description of what the intellect sees when it is intellecting the Active Intellect: the Active Intellect sees those beings that exist in it and thus, not things that exist outside of it. Moreover, the Active Intellect also thinks what is echoed in Fārābī’s Siyāsah. In Madīnāh, Fārābī describes a union “as it were” between man and the Active Intellect. Both Madīnāh and Aḥṣārās reveal a closeness between the Active Intellect and man. But Walzer also admits that Fārābī’s Active Intellect is a source of emanation wherein it is accountable for the development of human reason and is responsible for divine revelation. Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 409-410, 439-443.

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262 Plotinus, *Enn.* V.1.7.
263 “Dicta Sapientis Graeci” I, 10-16 in *Plotini Opera*.
above it; hence, it thinks the One. Surely, by intellecting the Active Intellect
man can make the ascent to the One and then consider all of the intelligible
beings below the One; this, in fact, is what Druart claims the science of
metaphysics does. It is only when man, or, indeed, intelligible ideas have actual
existence that accidents and attributes must accompany them, and it is this
which has created a need for sciences other than the theoretical. Shall we flatly
reject Farabi’s claim that the theoretical sciences examine only those things that
are perceived by the intellect and, as a result, examine only those things that do
not have actual existence outside the “thinking soul?” Or may we allow the
conjecture that the political or human sciences found within Farabi’s discussion
of the theoretical sciences consider man as an intelligible being, in his proper
place, which is beneath the Active Intellect?

IV. Comparison of Farabi’s Active Intellect and the Plotinian Nous.

It is quite possible that Farabi draws upon the thought of Plotinus in his
assessment of the Active Intellect. At this point, it is important to explore the
possibility that Farabi’s Active Intellect is similar to the Plotinian Nous in its
function as well as its relation to the lower principle beings, i.e., soul, form, and
matter. Herbert Davidson provides a foundation by comparing Farabi’s
Active Intellect with the Plotinian Nous and in particular, by examining the
Greek sources that equate the Active Intellect with the Neoplatonic Intellect or

264 For the principles of being below the Active Intellect, see Farabi, Siyāsah, 31; tr. Druart, 31.
In order to compare the two, it is necessary to examine the creation of the cosmos in both Farābī and Plotinus.

Plotinus divides the cosmos into four realms: the One, *Nous*, Soul, and Matter. Plotinus writes:

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265 Davidson, *Alfarābī, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 16, 24. Richard Walzer also notes that some later Neoplatonists equated the *Nous*/Intelligence with the Active Intellect. Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 12.

266 In Plotinus' cosmology, the intelligible world includes the three primal hypostases. Matter or the material world represents obviously what can be perceived through the senses; therefore it is not included as a part of the intelligible world. Plotinus claims that the intelligible world ends with the World Soul. Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.1.7. For Plotinus, we have (a) The One, (b) Intelllect (*Nous*), (c) The Soul, and (d) the material world. Herbert Davidson provides a schematic to show how Farābī used Plotinus' concept of emanation. "For (a) the deity, called by Alfarabī "the First," eternally emanates (b¹) the first intelligence ( *aql*-*nous*); and the latter in turn eternally emanates (c¹) what Alfarabī calls both the "soul," and the "Intellect," of the first sphere, and also (d¹) the body of the first sphere. The first intelligence initiates a similar subseries by eternally emanating (b²) the second intelligence, which emanates (c²) the soul and (d²) the body of the second sphere. And so forth." With Davidson's schematic, we can assume that Farābī's cosmos is as follows:

(a) The One and Mind or The First
(b¹) The First Intelligence
(c¹) Soul/Intellect (d¹) The First Heavens
(b²) The Second Intelligence
(c²) Soul/Intellect (d²) The Fixed Stars
(b³) The Third Intelligence
(c³) Soul/Intellect (d³) Saturn
(b⁴) The Fourth Intelligence
(c⁴) Soul/Intellect (d⁴) Jupiter
(b⁵) The Fifth Intelligence
(c⁵) Soul/Intellect (d⁵) Mars
(b⁶) The Sixth Intelligence
(c⁶) Soul/Intellect (d⁶) Sun
(b⁷) The Seventh Intelligence
(c⁷) Soul/Intellect (d⁷) Venus
(b⁸) The Eighth Intelligence
(c⁸) Soul/Intellect (d⁸) Mercury
(b⁹) The Ninth Intelligence
(c⁹) Soul/Intellect (d⁹) Moon
(b¹⁰) The Tenth Intelligence (Active Intellect)
(c¹⁰) Soul/Intellect (*Virtuous City?*) (d¹⁰) ___

Sublunary World
1. Animals--endowed with speech and thought.
2. Animals--lacking speech and thought
3. Plants
4. Minerals
5. Elements
6. Matter
The One is not being, but the generator of being. This, we may say, is the first act of generation: the One, perfect because it seeks nothing, has nothing, and needs nothing, overflows, as it were, and its superabundance makes something other than itself. This, when it has come into being, turns back upon the One, and is filled, and becomes Nous by looking towards it. Resembling the One thus, Nous produces in the same way, pouring forth a multiple power—this is a likeness of it—just as that which was before poured it forth. This activity springing from the substance of Nous is Soul.

In the Madīnah, Fārābī utilizes Plotinus' philosophy of emanation to reveal how the cosmos was created, he explains that this natural order is essentially how all being came into being. It becomes clear when examining Fārābī's account of the creation of the universe that, as Davidson notes, it “is fashioned of Aristotelian bricks and of mortar borrowed from Neoplatonic philosophy.” Fārābī's theory of the cosmos is clearly comparable with Plotinus' concept that everything in the cosmos comes from the “First Existence,” which he calls “One and Mind.” For Fārābī, this “First Existence” is absolutely perfect and incorporeal, and it owes its existence to nothing. Fārābī writes:

From the First emanates the existence of the Second. This Second is, again, an utterly incorporeal substance, and is not in matter. It thinks of (intelligizes) its own essence and thinks the First. What it thinks of its own essence is no more than its essence. As a result of its thinking of the First, a Third existence follows necessarily from it; and as a result of its substantification in its specific essence, the existence of the First heaven follows necessarily. . . .

The sublunary world has ascending orders from least to greatest. Fārābī’s intelligible world will end with the Active Intellect, like Plotinus, Fārābī deems that the intelligible world can only be perceived by the intellect. So the eleven Existences comprise the intelligible world and the heavenly bodies shown above would be a part of the entire cosmos. Plotinus, Enn. V.1.1-V.1.12; Fārābī, Madīnah, 3, 4; tr. Walzer, 3, 4. Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect, 45-46. See footnote 9, 10.


268 Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect, 44.

269 Walzer, Virtuous City, 2.

270 Fārābī, Madīnah, 3.1; tr. Walzer, 3.1. There are variations in the cosmic design of Plotinus and Fārābī. Fārābī utilizes the Aristotelian First Principle, while Plotinus, who disagreed with Aristotle, separated the One and Mind. According to Merlan, “Plotinus claims Aristotle was
Here, within Farābī’s universe the Aristotelian concept of the Active Intellect is introduced. It is open to question as to why Farābī chose to end the emanation process with the Active Intellect. Even so, Davidson regards the Active Intellect as the cause of the existence of the sublunar world, as attested in both Greek and Arabic philosophical sources. His examination also includes Farābī’s own texts and here he notes that Farābī’s claims correspond to those found in the Arabic Plotinus to which he certainly had access.271 Druart, too, notes that in Farābī’s presentation of the Posterior Analytics, he inquires about the correlation between the Active Intellect, soul, heavenly bodies, and nature.272 He asks if the Active Intellect is responsible for the existence of the lower principles such as soul, form, and matter.273 Also in Sharh risālah Zīnūn al-kabīrah al-yūnānī (Commentary on the Treatise of the Greek, Zeno the Great), a commentary attributed to Farābī, it is stated that the Active Intellect is responsible for creating the rational soul.274

familiar with the concept of a ‘first’, which would be analogous to Plotinus’ ‘first’, had Aristotle not relapsed into treating it as intelligizing.” Philip Merlan, Monopsychism Mysticism Metaconsciousness, 7-8. See Plotinus, Enn. V.1.9 where Plotinus writes,” Aristotle makes the first principle separate and intelligible, but when he says that it knows itself, he goes back again and does not make it the first principle.” Also Walzer notes that the bodies of “the outermost sphere of the First Heaven; the sphere of the Fixed Stars and the spheres of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon, [are] arranged in the order established in the second century A.D. by Ptolemy.” Walzer, Virtuous City, 363. Reisman asserts that Farābī’s “cosmology integrates an Aristotelian metaphysics of causation with a highly developed version of Plotinian Emanationism situated within a planetary order taken from Ptolemaic astronomy.” Reisman, “Al-Farābī and the Philosophical Curriculum,” 56.

271 Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect, 29-34.
272 Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism,” 30. See also Farābī’s Arīṣṭūṭālīs.
273 Druart, “Al-Farabi and Emanationism,” 30. In contrast to the theory that the Active Intellect may have any relation to the lower principle beings, see Reisman, “Al-Farābī and the Philosophical Curriculum,” 60.
Furthermore, both Plotinus' Nous and Fārābī’s Active Intellect are presumed to be the cause of human thought.\textsuperscript{275} In an Arabic paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads*, it is claimed that, "An intellect must exist which brings about actual thought in soul, because potentiality passes to actuality only through a cause that is in actuality similar to [what] the [former is in] potentiality."\textsuperscript{276} Thus the notion of an intellect causing that which is potential to become actual underlies the argument that it is the Active Intellect that is responsible for actual thought in humans.\textsuperscript{277} Again, according to Davidson, Plotinus used this argument to establish that the Intellect or Nous was “above” or prior to the World Soul; however, the Arabic paraphrase leaves the question open as to whether “soul” means the World Soul or an individual human soul.\textsuperscript{278} Fārābī’s own description of the Active Intellect is quite similar to the paraphrase of *Enneads*, wherein Fārābī writes:

> the human intellect which arises in man by nature from the very outset is a disposition in matter prepared to receive the imprints of the intelligibles, being itself potentially intellect [and ‘material intellect’]

\textsuperscript{275}Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 24.
\textsuperscript{276}Ibid. Davidson claims that with this statement, “Plotinus employed what was to become the standard argument for the existence of the Active Intellect as an argument for the existence of his own cosmic Intellect.” Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 24. See also Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.9.4; “Epistola De Scientia Divina” 12-17 in *Plotini Opera*, Plotinus *Apud Arabes*, Badawi, 168, 13-18; 168, 18-20.
\textsuperscript{277} Davidson *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 29. See also Plotinus, *Enn.*, IV.7.8; “Theologia” III, 36-45; III, 46-61 in *Plotini Opera*.
\textsuperscript{278} Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 24. While Davidson is correct in his claim that this argument is designed to prove that the hypostasis Intellect is prior to Soul, it also illustrates that Intellect, as a cause, produces Soul. Plotinus asks, “For in what way will the potential become actual, if there is no cause to bring it to actuality? For if it happens by chance, there is a possibility of it not coming to actuality. So we must assume that the first realities are actual and without deficiencies and perfect; but the imperfect ones come after and derive from the first, being perfected by their begetters as fathers perfect their originally imperfect offspring…” Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.9.4; “Epistola De Scientia Divina” 12-17in *Plotini Opera*, Plotinus *Apud Arabes*, Badawi, 168, 13-18; 168, 18-20.
and being also potentially intelligible. The other things which are in
matter or are matter or have matter are neither actually nor potentially
intelliets. They are, however, potentially intelligible and can possibly
become actually intelligible, but their substances lack the wherewithal to
be actually intelligized of their own accord. Again, neither the rational
faculty nor what is provided in man by nature has the wherewithal to
become of itself intellect in actuality. To become intellect in actuality it
needs something else which transfers it from potentiality to actuality, and
it becomes actually intellect only when the intelligibles arise in it.

The potential intelligibles become actual intelligibles when they
happen to be intelligized by the intellect in actuality, but they are in need
of something else which transfers them from potentiality to a state in
which [the intellect] can make them actual. The agent which transfers
them from potentiality to actuality is an existent. Its essence is an actual
intellect of a particular kind and is separate from matter... It is therefore
called 'Active Intellect.'

So, while it is not certain that Farabi’s Active Intellect, like the Plotinian Nous,
“created” the beings beneath it, it is at least conceivable; moreover, it is
apparently a notion that Farabi himself considered. Whether the Active
Intellect, like the Nous, is above something that can be perceived as the World
Soul or whether it is merely above the individual soul has yet to be determined,
and we will reexamine this point later. Nevertheless, Farabi’s depiction of the
Active Intellect intelligizing the rational faculty of the soul is clearly comparable
to the function of the Plotinian Nous.

Alexander of Aphrodisias’ commentary on Aristotle’s *De Anima*. He, too, follows Alexander’s
understanding that Aristotle’s Active Intellect is external, thus not part of man. However, as
scholars have noted, Alexander identifies the Active Intellect with Aristotle’s first cause,
whereas Farabi’s Active Intellect is the last incorporeal being in the intelligible world.
Athanasios Fotinis argues that Alexander may have been trying to “harmonize Aristotle’s ‘first
cause’ with Plato’s ‘supreme good’.” Walzer, too, notes that Farabi appears to be presupposing
“a blend of the Peripatetic and neo-Platonic traditions.” Alexander of Aphrodisias, *The De
Anima of Alexander of Aphrodisias: a Translation and Commentary* translated by Athanasios P.
401. See also See Rist, “Notes on Aristotle’s De Anima 3.5,” passim.
Fārābī’s Aristotle tells us that the Active Intellect gives man the principle to achieve his perfection.\(^{280}\)  In his initial discussion of the theoretical virtues, Fārābī claims:

Theoretical virtues consist in the sciences whose ultimate purpose is only to make the beings and what they contain intelligible with certainty. This knowledge is in part possessed by man from the outset without his being aware of it and without perceiving how he acquired it or where it comes from. This is primary knowledge. The rest is acquired by meditation, investigation and inference, and instruction and study.\(^{281}\)

This notion of a primary knowledge is also found in his \textit{Madinah}, where Fārābī asserts that there are intelligibles that all men share:

The common first intelligibles are of three kinds, (a) the principles of the productive skills, (b) the principles by which one becomes aware of good and evil in man's actions, (c) the principles which are used for knowing existents which are not the objects of man's actions, and their primary principles and ranks: such as the heavens and the first cause and the other primary principles and what happens to come to be out of those primary principles.\(^{282}\)

Fārābī argues that the presence of the first intelligibles represents man’s first perfection and that they are provided to him by the Active Intellect only in order for him to achieve supreme felicity.\(^{283}\) With this, it appears that Fārābī is conceding that the knowledge of, and the desire for, the attainment of happiness is somehow innate in all men. What, then, are we to make of man’s first perfection? Actually, there seem to be a few perfections taking place here. The two transformations (discussed above) from potential to actual are confirmed by Fārābī in his claim that "since it has been made clear that the Active Intellect is the cause of the potential intelligibles becoming actual and of the potential


\(^{282}\) Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 13.3; tr. Walzer, 13.3.

\(^{283}\) Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 13.3-13.5; tr. Walzer, 13.3-13.5.
intellect becoming actual; and that it is the rational faculty which is made to become actually intellect.”

The transformation of the potential intelligibles and the potential intellect into actual intelligibles and actual intellect is compatible with the first perfection in the “Ammonian synthesis” as discussed by Wisnovsky. But what the intelligibles provide to man can be examined within a Plotinian framework. Here, Farabi seems to be looking at the thought of Plotinus as to what the Active Intellect provides to the rational faculty of the soul. In Plotinus, man’s first perfection (entelechía) can be viewed as soul entering body or body being ensouled. In the Arabic Plotinus, we find the notion of the soul perfecting the body: “She is perfection because it is she that perfects the body so that it comes to possess sensation and intellect.” This is analogous to what the Active Intellect impresses on the rational faculty of the soul. The intelligibles are “(a) those which are in their very substances actually intellects and actually intelligible (intelligized)—namely the immaterial things—and (b) those which are not actually intelligible through their very substance.”

The second arises from the “sensibles.” Walzer explains that there are two classes of intelligibles that are impressed on the rational faculty. The first intelligible “is passed on to the rational faculty from sense-perception through ‘representation’ and impressed upon it; they are thus, for the

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286 I am using Peter Adamson’s translation of “sensation” and “intellect.” Peter Adamson discusses Plotinus’ criticism of Aristotle, but he argues that the adaptor appears to agree with Plotinus on the claim that soul can exist separately from the body—Aristotle would claim no—Plotinus disagrees. Adamson, The Arabic Plotinus, 50-54.
287 Farabi, Madinah, 13.1; tr. Walzer, 13.1.
288 Farabi, Madinah, 13.2; tr. Walzer, 13.2.
time being, potentially intelligible—becoming actually intelligible when they are abstracted from matter…. The other class of intelligibles is not the result of abstraction: they are by their very nature immaterial, transcendent and everlasting. They are known by an act of rational intuition, and not by abstraction from matter. One becomes aware of them without the support of sense-perception and representation.”

The Active Intellect impresses these intelligibles in a manner similar to light, “which the sun provides to the sight of the eye.”

The similarity between what the individual soul gives to the body via the Nous and what the Active Intellect provides to the rational faculty of the soul is striking. At this point, some questions can be asked. When and where is this taking place? Does it occur in the intelligible world? If the Active Intellect is intelligizing the rational soul in the intelligible world, then is this, perhaps, similar to what the Plotinian Nous brings about when generating Soul and, consequently, individual souls? If so, does this imply that Fārābī perceives that human souls share a common origin? Or does the Active Intellect impress these


290 Fārābī, Madīnah, 13.2; tr. Walzer, 13.2. See also David Reisman who suggests that when the Active Intellect impresses these intelligibles upon the human intellect, the human intellect can now intellect the Active Intellect. Reisman, “Al-Fārābī and the Philosophical Curriculum,” 62-63. See Walzer’s discussion of the Active Intellect being equated with the sun. Alexander of Aphrodisias equated the Active Intellect with light, whereas Fārābī equates it with the sun. Walzer, Virtuous City, 403-406. See also the Arabic Plotinus, wherein “The Pure One resembles the light. The second one which is referred to some other thing resembles the sun. The third thing resembles the moon which receives the light from the sun. In the soul, there is an acquired intellect which illuminates it through its light and causes it to become intellectual.” “Dicta Sapientis Graeci” I, 17-19 in Plotini Opera, Plotinus, Enn., V.6:4,19-5, 16; Plotinus Apud Arabes, Badawi, 186, 2-9.
intelligibles upon the rational faculty when man is in actual existence? If so, can we draw a parallel to the Plotinian descent of the soul? According to Peter Adamson, the translator and/or “adaptor” of the Arabic *Plotinus* often conflated Intellect and soul, so if Intellect descends in order to impress these intelligibles upon the rational faculty, then soul also descends. Of course, the question remains as to whether the rational faculty of the soul possesses the intelligibles when it enters man in actual existence. Colmo makes an interesting point when he claims that:

\[\text{[Fārābī] doubts that the knowledge human beings seek is somehow present from the outset, either through Recollection, as Plato describes it, or through the Active Intellect….If the eternal truth is not inside the mind from all eternity, it cannot be placed there later because this would imply a change in what is eternal. In this sense, what is unknown remains unknown forever (Plato sec. 6). Is there then a kind of knowledge that is the product of an ascent from a beginning clouded in unknowing to a position of greater knowledge? Can one gain knowledge of what is outside the mind?}\]

So, if this union or conjunction between the rational faculty of man and the Active Intellect occurs—and Fārābī claims that it does—and if it is to satisfy Colmo’s stipulation that it must be in the mind from all eternity, then this conjunction must take place within the Intelligible world. Yet, the knowledge impressed by the Active Intellect is surely an eternal knowledge, so whether this conjunction occurs in the intelligible world or in the material world should not affect the fact that the knowledge of the Active Intellect, like the Plotinian *Nous*, is a timeless eternal knowledge emanating from the One. Here, again, the Active Intellect appears to be comparable with the Plotinian *Nous*. This

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certainly accounts, as Fārābī’s Aristotle noted, for the soul’s desire “to understand the sensible things, of what is observed in the heavens and on earth, and of what man sees in his own soul and the state in which he finds it.”293 Indeed, man’s first perfection via the Active Intellect explains why man desires happiness, but Fārābī remains vague as to when and where this occurs.

V. Philosophy and Religion as Paths to Happiness.

With this primary knowledge in hand—a knowledge, which is, in essence, a theoretical knowledge—how do we, in our actual existence, go about attaining happiness? Can we all achieve theoretical perfection? Or is this something that only philosophers and their followers can accomplish? Fārābī suggests that not all men can achieve this perfection via philosophy.294 What, then, can the rest of us do? Fārābī presents two paths to the attainment of happiness, i.e., philosophy and religion.295 There are various theories concerning why Fārābī included

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293 As noted above, Aristotle classified this desire as the theoretical sciences. Fārābī, *Aristīḡālīs*, 60:1-5; tr. Mahdi, 60:1-5.
294 Fārābī, *Madīnah*, 17.2; tr. Walzer, 17.2.
295 For Fārābī, the question of whether philosophy or religion is the correct path for the attainment of happiness is not easily answered. There is an ongoing debate among scholars but at present no agreement. Some scholars claim that Fārābī is striving to reconcile philosophy and religion. M.A. Bertman claims that Fārābī rejected the notion that philosophy and religion were in opposition because the pursuit of both provides man with happiness. Bertman argues that Fārābī’s political and social thought is not at variance with religious concepts; in fact, he equates Fārābī’s thought with the Augustinian notion “Believe that you may understand.” In this vein, Bertman explains that Fārābī’s “Lawmaker” provided the framework, which allows man to achieve happiness while he is pursuing supreme happiness. Of course, with this line of reasoning, the philosopher is in the most excellent position since the “contemplative mode of knowing . . . is best suited for discovering the basic principles and leading the mind to God.” According to Bertman, Fārābī perceives religion as the ultimate educator and guide to happiness. While other scholars agree with the idea that Fārābī tried to fuse philosophy and religion, they are not as willing to give religion the superior position nor are they quite as zealous as Bertman in their interpretation of Fārābī. Hans Daiber argues that religion and philosophy have the same goal, which is the attainment of happiness. He claims, “Religion appears to be an instrument for the realization of the philosophical doctrine about the relation between true virtues and reality; true virtues cannot exist generally, but only in ethical acts.” According to Daiber’s argument, religion is an instrument of philosophy; thus making philosophy, to a certain extent, dependent upon religion. Mahdi, too, sees Fārābī struggling to harmonize classical philosophy with the religion.
religion as a means to the attainment of happiness. Perhaps he was a “philanthropist,” as Strauss has suggested.296 Maybe, like Aristotle, he was uneasy about the question of private and public pursuit of salvation.297 Or, perhaps, he was aware of the need to incorporate religion within his philosophy to make it more palatable to his audience. Or just maybe, Fārābī actually sees that both philosophy and religion are paths to the attainment of happiness. For whatever reason, Fārābī chose to establish religion as a path to happiness. In his Tahṣīl, Fārābī asserts that both theoretical philosophy and religion afford an account of the ultimate principles of beings and both supply man with the knowledge necessary for him to attain his end, ultimate happiness; therefore, both have the same goal.298 That Fārābī includes religion as another path to of Islam, but he admits that Fārābī will not allow religion to take a superior position over philosophy. Fārābī specifically states that both religion and philosophy are “kinds of knowledge . . . [he states that knowledge] can be known in two ways, either by being impressed on their souls as they really are or by being impressed on them through affinity and symbolic representation.” Thus, Fārābī insists that philosophical knowledge will always be superior to religious knowledge since it discerns truth as it is and not truth cloaked in symbol. If the attainment of happiness is to be sought and achieved there can be no room for misinterpretation thus the need for philosophy. Michael Marmura also sees religion as accommodating philosophy and “not the other way around.” Nelly Lahoud argues that “what is important to note with regard to al-Fārābī is that the intellectual environment in which he lived did not yet have a place for philosophy as a thriving independent discipline. It is therefore alongside the established disciplines of fiqh [jurisprudence] and kalām [theology] that al-Fārābī wanted to find a place for falsafa [philosophy].” Lahoud asserts that Fārābī, in reality, “wanted a place for falsafa above that of fiqh and kalām.” M.A. Bertman, “Al Farabi and the Concept of Happiness in Medieval Islamic Philosophy” Islamic Quarterly 14 (1970), 123-124. Hans Daiber, The Ruler as Philosopher: A New Interpretation of al-Farabi’s View (New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1986), 14; Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 125, 114; Fārābī, Madīnah, 17.2; tr. Walzer, 17.2. Michael Marmura, “The Islamic Philosophers’ Conception of Islam,” in Islam’s Understanding of Itself, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian and Speros Vryonis Jr. (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 97, 101; Colmo, Breaking with Athens, 95; Nelly Lahoud, “Al-Fārābī: On Religion and Philosophy” in Mêlanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph Volume LVII-2004: The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought, edited by Emma Gannagé, Patricia Crone, Maroun Aoud, Dimitri Gutas, and Eckart Schüttrumpf (Beyrouth: Université Saint-Joseph, 2004), 285. Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 378-379. See footnote 143. 298 Fārābī, Tahṣīl, 40.5-41.15; tr. Mahdi, 40.5-41.15. See also Fārābī, Kitāb al-Milla wa Nuṣūs Ukhra (Book of Religion) ed. with an introduction and notes, by Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), 46-47. Fārābī, “Book of Religion” in Alfarabi The Political Writings: Selected
happiness suggests that it is not only the philosophers who can achieve happiness in this life and in the next.

In any case, it is clear that Fārābī views religion as inferior to philosophy, for he states:

Now when one acquires knowledge of the beings or perceives instruction in them, if he perceives their ideas themselves with his intellect, and his assent to them is by means of certain demonstrations, then the science that comprises these cognitions is philosophy. But if they are known by imagining them through similitudes that imitate them, and assent to what is imagined of them is caused by persuasive methods, then the ancients call what comprises these cognitions religion.299

It is obvious that Fārābī regards theoretical philosophy or the theoretical sciences as the means for man to attain supreme happiness, and thus necessary. Within the theoretical sciences he also allows religion as a path. However, the knowledge attained by theoretical philosophy and religion is perhaps insufficient, since Fārābī also includes the practical sciences within his discussion of the attainment of happiness; it may not be enough to know what happiness is without the means to bring it into actual existence.

In his Taḥṣīl, Fārābī includes the practical sciences or arts in the attainment of happiness on earth and happiness in the afterlife. Practical philosophy allows man to bring into existence those things that can lead to

299 Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 55; tr. Mahdi, 55. See also Fārābī, Madīnah, 17.2; tr. Walzer, 17.2. Here, Fārābī mentions that religion is for those who are incapable of philosophy. And he insists that the knowledge acquired by philosophy is more excellent. For an in-depth discussion of religion as an imitation of philosophy, see Joep Lameer, “Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics: Greek Theory and Islamic Practice,” Islamic Philosophy Theology and Science: Texts and Studies, eds. H. Daiber and D. Pingree, Volume XX (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 259-289.
happiness, but only after they are known through the theoretical sciences.\textsuperscript{300}

Thus, the theoretical virtues, the deliberative virtues, the moral virtues, and the practical arts are what allow man to attain happiness on earth and in the afterlife. Religion, too, comprises both the theoretical and the practical sciences.\textsuperscript{301} In \textit{Millah}, Fārābī claims that religion requires both theoretical, i.e., what must be known, and practical, i.e., what actions must be performed.\textsuperscript{302} Only when man has knowledge can he act upon it. For Fārābī, action is requisite since it can produce a good or bad disposition in man’s soul and so affects the quality of felicity attained.\textsuperscript{303} In his \textit{Madinah}, Fārābī explains how action affects the level of happiness attained. He claims:

The kinds of felicity are unequal in excellence and differ in three ways, in species, quantity and quality; this is similar to the difference of the arts in this world of ours. The arts differ in excellence according to their species, in the way in which arts varying in species exist, one being more excellent than the other: as, for example, weaving and the art of drapery; the art of making perfumes and drugs and the art of sweeping; the art of dancing and the art of jurisprudence; philosophy and rhetoric. In this respect, then, the arts which vary in species are unequal in excellence. Moreover the people who practice the arts which belong to the same species are unequal in excellence with regard to the quantity of their knowledge. Take for instance, two scribes, one of them knowing more of the parts of the secretarial art, another mastering fewer of them. For instance, this art comprehends the knowledge of some language and some rhetoric and some calligraphy and some arithmetic. One of them will have mastered, for example, calligraphy and some rhetoric, and another language and some rhetoric and calligraphy, and another all four.

Difference in quality means that two have knowledge of the same parts of

\textsuperscript{300} Fārābī, \textit{Tahṣīl}, 56; tr. Mahdi, 56. As noted above, both Mahdi and Galston disagree with this statement.
\textsuperscript{303} Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 16.2, 16.5-6; tr. Walzer, 16.2, 16.5-6. Walzer notes that, for Fārābī, “the right ‘habit’ (hexis = malaka) of the soul is established by habituation, by continuously repeated right actions.” He comments on Fārābī’s comparison of the actions of the scribe with actions that attain happiness. Walzer claims that Fārābī inherited this comparison from the Greek tradition. See Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, Bk. II.4; \textit{The Arabic Version of the “Nicomachean Ethics,”} Bk. 2.4; Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 462-463.
the secretarial art, but one of them is more proficient and better trained than the other. This then is meant by difference in quality. The kinds of felicity are also unequal in excellence in these respects.\footnote{Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 16.5; tr. Walzer, 16.5.}

Is Fārābī telling us the quality of felicity that we can attain? He writes, “The kinds of felicity are unequal in excellence and differ in three ways, in species, quantity and quality.”\footnote{Fārābī, \textit{Madinah}, 16.5; tr. Walzer, 16.5.} The species is then compared to the arts of the world, i.e., the professions. The quantity is associated with how well one knows his art or profession. And quality is linked to how proficient one is in that art or profession. The notion that action affects the soul and the quality of felicity that it attains weakens the claim that happiness is solely theoretical. This strongly suggests that the scholars who claim that Fārābī included both theoretical and practical sciences within the attainment of happiness are correct.

Conclusion.

For Fārābī, the attainment of happiness is desired by all men. His examination of the thought of Plato and Aristotle showed which sciences are necessary to attain perfection. Despite the disagreements on this point it does appear that Fārābī views both theoretical and practical sciences as requisite in order for man to achieve happiness in this life and in the afterlife. Even so, it seems clear that the practical sciences remain precarious without the theoretical sciences, and the theoretical perfection which flows from them. Instead of accepting the argument that Fārābī has blurred the distinction between these two sciences, a distinction that both Fārābī’s Plato and Aristotle made, I argue that Fārābī utilized the Plotinian triple hypostasis in his examination of man as an intelligible being who
exists beneath the Active Intellect. And instead of agreeing that political science does not rely on theoretical sciences, because perfection is not required in order for “right action,” I would affirm that Fārābī typically views any philosophy without a claim to theoretical perfection as a false philosophy.  

While Mahdi and other scholars claim that there are no Neoplatonics elements found in Taḥṣīl, pointing out that Fārābī does not specifically cite the Theology of Aristotle, or Arabic Plotinus, it can be shown that elements of Plotinus’ thought appear undeniably to have been utilized both in this work and in others. As we have seen, the Active Intellect and the Plotinian Nous operate in a similar manner. By examining the text against the thought of Plotinus, the arguments claiming that the practical sciences are included within the theoretical sciences are weakened. The theory that all men have knowledge of and a desire for happiness from the outset is perhaps better illustrated with reference to Plotinus’ thought. Indeed, it is this primary theoretical knowledge that drives man to attain happiness on earth and in the afterlife. Finally, Fārābī’s claim that the perfected human soul becomes one of the intelligible beings that will exist beneath the Active Intellect is fully consistent with the thought of Plotinus.

Of course, Fārābī understands that not all men can achieve theoretical perfection; hence, the need for another path to the attainment of happiness. He allows both philosophy and religion as possible paths to happiness. Both include knowledge of the intelligible world, knowledge of man’s place in that world, and

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306 As stated before, Fārābī claims, “The false philosopher is he who acquires the theoretical sciences without achieving the utmost perfection so as to be able to introduce others to what he knows.” Fārābī, Taḥṣīl, 45.10-13; tr. Mahdi, 45:10-13.
finally, knowledge of what man needs to do to attain happiness. Thus, both of these paths require correct knowledge and right action. Of course, Farabi maintains the pre-eminence of philosophy. Now, let us examine Augustine’s use of Plotinus and examine what correlations may exist with Farabi’s philosophy of the attainment of happiness.
Chapter Three

Introduction.

The quest for happiness is a theme found throughout Augustine’s *Confessions* (*Confessiones*); at the same time, the work has been described as the ascent of the mind to God. Augustine's search for happiness actually begins with his desire to know God. This is clearly revealed in the first nine books. In Book Ten, this restless journey continues, but it is no longer just an ascent, for here Augustine confronts “memory” and “remembering,” and there is now a realization that the soul is essentially returning to God. In Book Ten, the dual nature of Augustine's past becomes known. From the very beginning, Augustine wishes to know God and it is during his search—and perhaps because of it—that he strays ever so far from the truth. He begins his search in the external world and finally makes the move inward. It is within the self that Augustine “encounters memory.” In his exploration of memory Augustine recognizes that humans have some sort of innate sense of what is true.\(^\text{307}\) However, Augustine forsakes his examination of memory for the very act of remembering.\(^\text{308}\) And it is in remembering that Augustine affirms that humans have a memory of God.

It has been generally observed that Augustine utilizes the Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* in placing the knowledge of God in the memory. Augustine substantiates his claim that man has a memory of God by identifying the one thing all men desire. It is in remembering that Augustine pinpoints what


\(^{308}\) Ibid., 208.
he is searching for, which is something that he has almost forgotten: the happy life. Augustine claims that the search for, or indeed, the knowledge of, the happy life is, in actuality, the search for truth, and therefore God.\textsuperscript{309} He insists that the desire for happiness is common to all men. Since all are seeking this life, it implies that there is some innate knowledge of the happy life; thus, it is knowledge held by all; and since it is known by everyone, Augustine decides that this knowledge must be in the memory.\textsuperscript{310} Augustine, building on Plato’s philosophy of \textit{anamnesis}, develops his own theological doctrine of happiness, i.e., that it lies in knowledge of God. In his endeavor to explain how happiness exists in the memory, he examines Adam, the first human. In considering Adam, Augustine will refine his own theory of Original Sin and further maintain his assertion of the immateriality of the soul. For Augustine, Adam is more than just the first human, he is the source of all souls; and so, he is also the source of our knowledge of happiness as well as the source of Original Sin. This assessment of Adam has prompted scholars, such as Rist, to allege that Augustine draws on Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases in which Adam is the Plotinian World Soul. In fact, there is evidence to substantiate that Augustine Christianized both the Platonic doctrine of \textit{anamnesis}, as well as the Plotinian Triple Hypostases. That he Christianized both of these tenets can be seen, particularly in his affirmations that the soul has a memory of God and in his insistence that the soul yearns to return to Him.

\textsuperscript{309} Augustine, \textit{Conf.}, Bk. X.xxiii.33.
\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., Bk. X.xx.29-X.xxi.31.
I. Augustine’s Quest for Happiness.

In Augustine's search for God, he persists in questioning the material world even though both the external world and his inner self appear to be shouting to him to look elsewhere. He questions what the object of his love is. He concedes that the object of his love does not clearly reveal itself through the bodily senses; and yet, he perceives that his spiritual senses somehow know and yearn for God:

Yet there is a light I love, and a food, and a kind of embrace when I love my God—a light, voice, odour, food, embrace of my inner man, where my soul is floodlit by light which space cannot contain, where there is sound that time cannot seize, where there is a perfume which no breeze disperses, where there is a taste for food no amount of eating can lessen, and where there is a bond of union that no satiety can part. 311

In spite of this, Augustine continues his exploration of the material or sensible world. He asks the earth, the sun, and the sea if they are the “object of his love” and they reply, “We are not your God, look beyond us.” 312 It is through the examination of the material world that Augustine comes to realize how humans are led astray because they mistakenly give their love to created things instead of to their creator. They are merely listening to their bodily senses and ignoring the inner voice that tells them the truth: “Your God is not earth or heaven or any physical body.” 313 In Book Seven of his Confessions, Augustine acknowledges that he knew that what he was looking for was internal and yet he was still fixed on the external world. 314 Augustine writes:

311 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. vi.8.
312 Ibid., Bk. X. vi.9.
313 Ibid., Bk. X. vi.10.
314 Henry Chadwick notes that Augustine's realization of the need to look within is reminiscent of Porphyry and his "Neoplatonic thesis that the knowledge of God is knowledge of nothing
Late I have loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you.
And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you
there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely created things
which you made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely
things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence
in you, they had no existence at all. You called out and cried out loud
and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to
flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now
pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You
touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.315

This futile search for God in the external world impels Augustine to turn inward.

With this inward turn, Augustine will end his investigation of the science of
physics and begin his examination of the science of metaphysics.

Once Augustine looks within himself, he finds “the vast palaces of
memory” and questions how he can find both the material and the immaterial in
his memory and he wonders how these matters entered into his memory.316

Once his examination of memory begins, Augustine realizes that what is
contained within is inestimable and maybe even unknowable. The memory
retains everything that enters into it through the bodily senses, but it also holds,
in its domain, intangibles, such as “laws of numbers,” “emotional states,” and
“passions of the mind.”317 Nevertheless, he makes an important discovery in this
vast exploration of his mind: the realization that learning is, fundamentally,
nothing other than recollection. What supposedly entered into the memory was

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315 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. xxvii.38.
316 Ibid., Bk. X. viii.12.
317 For a comprehensive account of what is contained in the memory, see Nello Cipriani's article
“Memory,” in Augustine Through the Ages: Ed., Allan Fitzgerald (Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans,
1999), 553-555; Brian Stock, Augustine the Reader, 207-242; O’Daly, “Memory in Plotinus and
two early texts of St. Augustine” in Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and
Augustine, 461-469. See also Rist’s discussion of memory and impressed intelligibles. Rist,
Augustine, 73-85.
perhaps already there. Augustine asks, “Then how did these matters enter into
my memory? I do not know how. For when I learnt them, I did not believe what
someone else was telling me, but within myself I recognized them and assented
to their truth.”318

With this in mind, Augustine rises above memory to the act of
remembering. He questions how he will seek for God or even know that he has
found Him if he does not know what he is looking for in the first place.319 Thus,
Augustine confronts the same problem found in Plato's Meno:

Meno: How will you look for it, Socrates, when you do not know at all
what it is? How will you aim to search for something you do not know at
all? If you should meet with it, how will you know that this is the thing
that you did not know?
Socrates: I know what you want to say, Meno. Do you realize what a
debater’s argument you are bringing up, that a man cannot search either
for what he knows or for what he does not know? He cannot search for
what he knows—since he knows it, there is no need to search—nor for
what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for.
Meno: Does that argument not seem sound to you, Socrates?
Socrates: Not to me
Meno: Can you tell me why?
Socrates: I can ….As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has
seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it has
not learned; so it is in no way surprising that it can recollect the things it
knew before, both about virtue and other things. As the whole of nature
is akin, and the soul has learned everything, nothing prevents a man, after
recalling one thing only—a process men call learning—discovering
everything else for himself, if he is brave and does not tire of the search,
for searching and learning are, as a whole, recollection.320

318 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. x.17.
319 Augustine ingeniously writes about the woman who lost her drachma and concludes that she
had to have known what she was looking for in order to recognize it when she found it. "We do
not say we have found the thing which was lost unless we recognize it, and we cannot recognize
it if we do not remember it. The object was lost to the eyes, but held in the memory." Augustine,
Conf., Bk. X. xviii.27. See also Gerard O’Daly, “Remembering and Forgetting in
Augustine, Confession X” in Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and Augustine,
31-46.
320 Plato, “Meno,” 80d-81d.
Although Augustine's solution is found in the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis, Augustine will reject Plato's explanation of memory through past lives.  

In his account of how man has a memory of God, Augustine searches and finds a notion or desire that all men share: that of the happy life. “When I seek for you, my God, my quest is for the happy life.” Augustine wonders how he is seeking this happy life: is it by remembering as though he had forgotten? Or has he forgotten it so completely, or even never known of it, so that it arises from an urge to learn something quite unknown? Augustine decides that the knowledge of the happy life must be in the memory and he insists that if it is, indeed, in the memory, then “we had happiness once.” What exactly is the happy life for Augustine? “The happy life is joy based on truth. This is joy grounded in you, O God, who are the truth….” Augustine is so insistent that all have this desire for happiness (and by implication, a desire to know God) that he even examines “those who think that the happy life is found elsewhere” and

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321 According to Rist, Augustine had for some time at least tolerated the Platonic idea of a preexistence of the soul and the notion of impressed intelligibles, which explains why humans have knowledge of God. Moreover, Rist argues that the preexistence of the soul was at the center of Augustine’s assertion that humans had an existence in Adam. Rist, Augustine, 50-51. For further discussion of Augustine’s acceptance of the soul’s preexistence see: Robert O’Connell, “Pre-existence in Augustine’s Seventh Letter,” Revue des études augustiniennes 15 (1969): 67-73; O’Daly, “Did St. Augustine ever believe in the soul’s pre-existence?” Augustinian Studies 5 (Villanova, PA, 1974): 227-235; Roland Teske, “Augustine’s Philosophy of Memory” in The Cambridge Companion to Augustine Edited by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 148-158.

322 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. xx.29.

323 Ibid. Henry Chadwick notes "Augustine develops the notion of memory by associating it with the unconscious ('the mind knows things it does not know it knows'), with self-awareness, and so with the human yearning for true happiness found only in knowing God." Augustinian Studies, Conf., Bk. X. viii.12. fn. 12

324 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. xx.29.

325 Ibid., Bk. X. xxii.33. Cicero's influence is obvious here since he too argued that all humans seek happiness and that philosophy is a way of life in search of truth. Ibid., Bk. III. iv.7-8. Chadwick notes that Augustine is using Cicero’s Hortensius, which is lost except for quotations. Cicero’s Hortensius is based heavily on Aristotle’s Protreptikos (also extant only in fragments). Ibid., Bk. III. iv.7. fn.11.
concludes that they are pursuing “another joy and not the true one.” Even so, Augustine maintains that, “Their will remains drawn towards some image of the true joy.” Following Augustine's argument, a modern scholar remarks aptly, “God is present to memory as its illumination, but as transcendent over its immutability.” Indeed, Augustine implies this when he writes, “Where then did I find you to be able to learn of you? You were not already in my memory before I learnt of you. Where then did I find you so that I could learn of you if not in the fact that you transcend me?” Nonetheless, this does not explain how this desire for happiness is actually in the memory and Augustine must account for this since he is essentially adhering to the Platonic doctrine that seeking and learning are nothing more than recollection.

II. Adam as the Plotinian World Soul.

Augustine asks whether man has knowledge of happiness because he once had it in Adam, the first human; but beyond this, he must explain how we still retain this in the memory if we indeed died in Adam. As noted, for Augustine, Adam is more than the first human; he is the source of all souls. If all souls were in Adam before “The Fall,” then this explains how all souls have a memory of God. And it was in “The Fall,” with the committing of Original Sin that all souls died in Adam, i.e., they fell into matter, becoming the individual bodies that exist in the material world. Because of Original Sin, Augustine claims that “We were born into a condition of misery” and yet, he insists that we still have

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326 Ibid., Bk. X. xxii.32. Certainly, this theme is found throughout the Confessions wherein it appears that Augustine cannot really escape God. See also Plotinus, Enn., III..5.9.
328 Augustine, Conf., Bk.X. xxvi.37.
this knowledge of happiness. This now leads him to inquire if knowledge of the happy life could be transmitted like Original Sin. Tertullian and his followers had argued earlier that we “inherited guilty souls by a ‘propagation’ from Adam, just as we inherited lustful, weak, and mortal bodies.” Since this theory is a useful explanation for the transmission of Original Sin—and with it, guilt—it could also be used to explain how happiness too is in the memory and is transmitted. Augustine recognizes the potential application of Tertullian's theory to the transmission of Original Sin, but he rejects Tertullian's account

329 Augustine, Conf., Bk. X. xx.29.
330 Ibid. Augustine writes "Banished [from Paradise] after his sin, Adam bound his offspring also with the penalty of death and damnation, that offspring which by sinning he had corrupted in himself, as in a root; so that whenever progeny was born (through carnal concupiscence, by which a fitting retribution for his disobedience was bestowed upon him) from himself and his spouse—who was the cause of his sin . . .." Augustine, Enchyridion ad Laurentium de fide spe et caritate (A Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love), 26.27 in Karen Armstrong, A History of God: the 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 123-124. See also Augustine, Enchyridion ad Laurentium de fide spe et caritate (A Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love), 26.27, edited with a new introduction by Henry Paolucci with an analysis and historical approach by Adolph Von Harnack, (South Bend Indiana: Regnery/Gateway, 1961). E.R. Dodds discusses an ancient Greek concept of paying for ancestral sins. He writes, "The successful sinner would be punished in his descendants, or . . . that he would pay his debt personally in another life." Dodds also examines the complaints by the writers of the day, claiming "of the unfairness of a system by which 'the criminal gets away with it, while someone else takes the punishment later'." However, Dodds also argues that this curse can be broken. This ancient notion certainly has parallels with the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. See E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 33-34. Elaine Pagels notes that Augustine views all of humankind as enslaved to sin, "humanity is sick, suffering, and helpless, irreparably damaged by the fall." This claim is based on his argument that original sin is transmitted to all humans, because all of humanity comes from the first human, Adam. Pagels claims that most Christians found this claim to be destructive. She writes, "many traditional Christians believed that this theory of 'original sin' -- the idea that Adam's sin is directly transmitted to his progeny--repudiated the twin foundations of the Christian faith: the goodness of God's creation; and the freedom of the will." Moreover, she asserts that most Christians believed that baptism removed all sin--"Adam's sin and our own." Elaine Pagels, Adam, Eve, and the Serpent (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 99, 131. 331 Rist, Augustine, 123. In his discussion of Tertullian's, and his followers', materialist account of the soul, Rist cites Rufinus, Apology ad Anastasium, 6. On Tertullian's "mad materialism" (dementia) Rist cites Augustine, Letter 190.4.14-15.
because it implies that the soul is a material substance; for Augustine, the soul is immaterial.  

Augustine is quite adamant on the immateriality of the soul, but it entails that he account for the co-existence of an immaterial soul marred by Original Sin together with a memory of happiness. Rist argues that Augustine never accepted that an “immaterial soul could be transmitted in the same way as a material one.” For Augustine, according to Roland J. Teske, there were only four possible hypotheses which offered valid accounts of the human soul:

(1) The view, later called traducianism, that 'the souls of all human beings who are born are drawn from the one soul God created'; (2) the view, later called creationism, that 'souls are individually created in those who are born'; (3) the view that 'souls already existing in some secret place assigned by God are sent to animate and to govern the bodies of individuals who are born'; and (4) the view that 'souls situated elsewhere are not sent by the Lord God, but come of their own accord to inhabit bodies.'

Augustine found none of these hypotheses viable; none was compatible either with his theory of an incorporeal and immaterial soul or with his doctrine of Original Sin. He had to look elsewhere to justify his theories on the soul.

To some extent, Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases resolved Augustine's dilemma of adhering to the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis while at the same time, it gives him a viable framework for his own doctrines of happiness, the

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332 Rist, *Augustine*, 123.
333 Ibid., 123, 317-320.
334 Teske argues that Augustine particularly rejects the traducianist view because it implies that "souls are generated from souls in the same way as bodies are generated from bodies," which is similar to what Tertullian was promoting. Teske, "Soul" in *Augustine Through the Ages*, 807-812. See also O’Daly, “Augustine on the Origin of Souls” in *Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and Augustine*, 184-191; Roland Teske, “Augustine’s Theory of Soul” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* Edited by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 116-123.
335 Teske, “Soul,” in *Augustine Through the Ages*, 807-812.
immateriality of the soul, and Original Sin. Plotinus taught that not only do all souls share a unity of origin [i.e. the World Soul], but that the World Soul remains “intact and undivided.” 336 In Rist’s view, Augustine essentially Christianized Plotinus' theory of the World Soul, so that, for Augustine, Adam is himself the World Soul. 337 Augustine's assertion, “I do not now ask whether we were all happy individually or only corporately in that man who first sinned, in whom we all died and from whom we were born into a condition of misery,” suggests that all men are part of Adam literally, not figuratively. 338 Before our present day “individual” lives, Augustine claimed that “we were happy in Adam ‘collectively;’ [and] after Adam's fall we were unhappy in him.” 339 We do not share in Adam's individual life because that ended at his death, but we do share in his common life. 340 In Rist's comparison, he writes, “Though in Plotinus Soul cannot fall—to the individuals which are ‘parts’ of it. Such a hypostasis is no abstraction; without it, Plotinus' individual souls would not exist and ‘we’ therefore would not be men. Similarly, it seems for Augustine Adam is in us and beyond us, and yet we share in him, and in his guilt.” 341 He substantiates this by considering Eve, since she, too, is formed from a part of Adam; thus, “there can be no ‘man’ who does not share in Adam, and who is not Adam. . . . Adam can also exist ‘separately’ from his ‘parts’ [and] the Plotinian hypostasis can

336 Plotinus, *Enn.*, IV.3
338 Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. X. xxix.20; See also Augustine, *City*, Bk. 13.14.
340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
exist ‘apart’ from individual souls; as a one and many.” Rist argues that Augustine's World Soul, i.e., Adam, is historically distinct from the fallen souls of each individual, whereas Plotinus' “individual souls” are only “metaphysically distinct from the hypostasis.” For Augustine, the entire human race was in Adam, the Christianized World Soul, before he sinned; this is why we share Adam's guilt. However, this also illuminates how we share in Adam's prelapsarian happiness, as well as in his knowledge of God. This effectively solves the problem of Augustine’s use of the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis: it confirms that all souls share a unity of origin. And Augustine’s notion that Adam's sin is itself “The Fall,” resulting in the “fall” of souls into individual human beings, supports his contention of the immateriality of the soul.

Plotinus too discusses the possibility of a “sin committed freely,” in a way reminiscent of the notion of “Original Sin;” and for him, this might explain why the soul partially descends into a body in the first place. For individual souls, Plotinus writes, “There comes a point at which they come down from this state, cosmic in its dimensions, to one of individuality. They wish to be independent. They are tired, you might say, of living with someone else. Each steps down into its own individuality.”

342 Ibid.
343 Ibid.
344 There is much controversy surrounding Augustine's doctrine of the soul. Did he hold “a doctrine of the fall of the soul” when he wrote the Confessions and perhaps later? The language throughout the Confessions does suggest that Augustine perceives the soul as fallen. "The angel fell, the human soul fell, and thereby showed that the abyss would have held the entire spiritual creation in deep darkness unless from the beginning you had said 'Let there be light, and light was created' . . . By the wretched restlessness of fallen spirits.” Roland J. Teske, S.J., "Soul," 807-812. See also Augustine, Conf., Bk. XIII. viii.9.
345 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4-5.
346 Ibid., IV.8.4.
writes, “What is it, then, which has made the souls forget their father, God, and be ignorant of themselves and him, even though they are parts which come from his higher world and altogether belong to it? The beginning of evil for them was audacity and coming to birth and the first otherness and the wishing to belong to themselves. Since they were clearly delighted with their own independence, and made great use of self-movement, running the opposite course and getting as far away as possible, they were ignorant even that they themselves came from that world; just as children who are immediately torn from their parents and brought up far away do not know who they themselves or their parents are.”\(^{347}\) However, the notion of Original Sin perhaps does not lie completely with the individual souls, but with Soul itself. In his repudiation of Armstrong’s view that Plotinus considered Nature or Matter a hypostasis, Rist pointed out that Nature was not created in a similar fashion. Rist writes, in referring to Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.2.1, Nature was not produced by Soul contemplating the being above it, but instead out of Soul’s desire to have something inferior to itself. From this perspective, Soul can be perceived as committing Original Sin.\(^{348}\) Now, for Augustine, this action of Soul is tantamount to *hubris*. For him, pride is the worst sin and it is, in essence, the first sin. Perhaps Augustine even had this in mind when he made Adam the World Soul—it was Adam’s sin that caused the individual souls to fall into individual bodies.\(^{349}\)

\(^{347}\) Ibid., V.1.1.
\(^{348}\) Rist, *Plotinus*, 92.
\(^{349}\) Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. XIII. xx.28.
III. Augustine and Plotinus’ use of Logos.

Augustine will further utilize the thought of Plotinus in his examination of why the soul yearns to know God and longs to return to its proper place. For Plotinus, what is begotten always yearns for its begetter; the soul not only desires to know its creator but wants to be near it.\(^350\) Similarly, throughout the *Confessions*, Augustine claims that the soul aches to return to God. “You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself and *our heart is restless until it rests in you.*”\(^351\) The restlessness that humans experience is, in essence, a disturbance of the soul:

> By the wretched restlessness of fallen spirits, manifesting their darkness as they are stripped naked of the garment of your light, you show how great a rational creature you have made. Whatever is less than you can never be sufficient to provide itself with the rest of contentment, and for this reason it is not even a source of contentment to itself . . . . Because our soul was 'disturbed' within ourselves, we 'remembered you' . . .. Our darkness displeased us. \(^352\)

Both Augustine and Plotinus recognize that all souls desire to return to God, their proper place, and both utilize the concept of the *logos* in order to stir souls to return. Plotinus asserts that the *logos*, which is a function of the World Soul, descends from the highest part of the World Soul to the “visible world.”\(^353\)

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\(^{350}\) Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.1.6.

\(^{351}\) Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. I. i. (italics mine)

\(^{352}\) Ibid., Bk. XIII. viii.9; Bk. XIII. xii.13.

\(^{353}\) John Rist, in his examination of Plotinus’ understanding of the nature and function of the World Soul, claims:

> We know that there is a Soul of the world and that there are particular souls, and that in some sense the existence of the one implies the existence of the others. Of this Soul or souls there are, as all commentators agree, two parts. One part is engaged in eternal contemplation of its priors; the other has ‘come down’ and created the world of material objects and particulars. The part which always remains ‘above’ in the Intelligible World will not be recognized by us unless we have attuned the *whole* of our soul to live in accordance with it.

The “logos can be understood first as a creative force deriving providentially from the higher soul (and ultimately from Nous), and secondly as the opposite force to the creative procession, namely the return of the emanated products to their source.” Rist also concludes that logos has a further aspect “which is also peculiarly connected with Nous, that is, an aspect which represents the power to turn back to one’s source and in such turning to find one’s own order in the universe.” This feature is perhaps what prompts Plotinus to assert, “Let the soul, taking its lead from memory, merely ‘think on essential being’ and its shackles are loosed and it soars.” Augustine disagrees with the notion that the soul is able to return on its own; for him, the only way that the fallen soul is able to return to God is through Christ. Christ, for Augustine, has a twofold role in

354 Ibid., 97.
355 Ibid.
357 Augustine rejects the presumptuous notion held by the Neoplatonic philosophers that the soul can attain unity by itself, but he also disapproves of the Neoplatonic rituals of theurgy. Most likely, Augustine's knowledge of theurgy comes from Plotinus and Porphyry, but Henry Chadwick insists that he knew of Iamblichus' writings as well since he mentions him by name in the *City of God*. Augustine, *Conf.*, xix. Gregory Shaw notes that Iamblichus was once praised as "the benefactor of the entire world, Universal blessing of the Hellenes, and [the] one appointed by the gods to be the savior of the entire Hellenic world." Unlike Porphyry, Iamblichus' teacher, Iamblichus never directs his arguments against Christianity instead; he concentrates on the disruptive problems between the "old ways" and the "new ways" of religious beliefs or really between "ancient tradition inspired by the gods and those recently invented by man." According to Shaw, "Iamblichus believed that the world described by Plato in the *Timaeus* was being torn apart by a new kind of Platonism that denied the sanctity of the world and elevated the human mind beyond its natural limits . . .[and] such rationalistic hubris threatened to separate man from the activity of the gods . . ." Iamblichus rejects his predecessors' doctrine of the undescended soul and what he sees as a "gnosticized Platonism," wherein matter is viewed as evil, the human soul is linked to the World Soul, and that the primary objective of the soul is to "escape" the "desacralized and demonic cosmos." Iamblichus presents theurgy as a way to restore the proper relationship between humans and the gods. Theurgy allows all humans the chance to return to the gods, thus it goes against the philosophical elitism that was alienating the common person; many of whom were seeking salvation in Christianity, which also offered salvation to all. Iamblichus claims that in Plato's taxonomy of the cosmos, there are five propositions: 1. There is a cosmic order that permeates every level of reality; 2. This cosmic order is the divine society of the gods; 3. The structure and dynamics of this society can be discerned in the movements and patterned juxtapositions of the heavenly bodies; 4. Human society should be a microcosm of the divine society; 5. The chief responsibility of priests and kings is to attune human order to the
bringing souls back to God, that is, Christ as *logos* (Word) and Christ as man.

This duality is found in the famous opening of the *Gospel of John*, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . ..And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”\(^{358}\) Thus, Christ as *logos* came into the visible world just as the Plotinian *logos* descended to the material realm, though, of course, in the world, Christ is revealed in the form of a man. In Augustine’s view, it is Christ, as *logos*, who calls fallen souls back to God, but it is Christ, as man, who is the true mediator between God and man; in effect, Christ offers the only way for the soul to return permanently to God.\(^{359}\) He claims, “It is [Christ] as man that he is mediator. He is not midway as Word; for
the Word is equal to God.” And it is Christ as *logos*, that man can collectively attain salvation through Him. Here, there seems to be a correlation between the individual and the common life of both Adam and Christ. Adam, in his individual life, which we do not share, sinned, but we collectively share in his guilt and punishment. So, Christ, in his individual life, which, again, we do not share, was a mediator between man and God. Christ died willingly, so he too shared in the punishment of Adam; yet, by doing so, Christ offered redemption to mankind. Thus in Christ's common life man can escape the guilt of Adam, with its punishment of death and return to God.

IV. Augustine on Contemplation and Action.

To know Christ as the soul’s path to happiness necessitates knowledge of both the theoretical and practical sciences. Although Augustine thought that true happiness could be attained only in the afterlife, he considered contemplation and action necessary for its attainment. Unavoidably, tension exists between the two sciences. The recurrent question of whether contemplation or action should take the superior position sounds throughout Augustine’s writings. On the one hand, contemplating Christ, as the Word (*logos*), is certainly of the utmost importance since it is Christ who calls the souls to return to their proper place in the intelligible world. On the other hand, Christ was human and in that form he advocated new ideas and performed

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360 Ibid.
362 Rist notes that Augustine, in his *The Happy Life*, deemed that Christians could attain happiness in this life, but in his later work *On Human Responsibility*, it becomes clear that for Augustine “no one can be happy, only on the road (iter) to happiness;” thus, true happiness is not attained in this life. Rist, *Augustine*, 169.
charitable works. Surely, the imitation of Christ is, as well, a commendable position. Augustine struggled to resolve the tension between the two. Augustine asks, “To what extent can the inner life of the spirit (and a single-minded focus upon God) be harmonized with an active apostolate and the performance of charitable works?” Augustine struggled with this issue in his own life—wanting to contemplate—but needing to fulfill pastoral duties. In his De Civitate Dei, considered to be his most mature thought, he declares, “That no one has a right to lead a life of contemplation to the neglect of temporal responsibilities, but no one should be so immersed in active service as to relinquish the delight of truth completely.” Thus, a balance is required, but again, one must have knowledge before one can act. With contemplation and action, the soul will attain happiness and return to its appropriate place in the intelligible world.

V. Augustine on the Return of the Soul.

If the soul is to attain happiness and return to its proper place in the intelligible world and if Adam represents Plotinus' World Soul, then the individual soul’s return to Adam (the Christianized World Soul) would seem not only logical but in accordance with Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases [The One, Nous, and World Soul]. However, the possibility of sin, which is, according to Augustine, how the human race began, rests in the realm of Adam/World Soul. Augustine writes, “If Adam had not fallen from you, there would not have
flowed from his loins that salty sea-water the human race."  

Rist, in his explanation of Augustine’s theory of the soul’s journey, claims, “As we were all one in Adam and ‘fell’ in Adam, so we (not just I or any one of us individually) are also all one in Christ, and in a sense Christ is ‘all of us.’ Christian this certainly is, though we cannot but be reminded also of the saying of Plotinus that we are each an intelligible world (kosmos noētos, Ennead 3.4.3.22). Certainly for a Christian Plotinus to be one in Christ would involve being one in something ‘higher’ than in Soul (i.e. in Adam).”  

It does appear that Augustine affirms that through Christ the soul will rise above its original station in which a second fall is impossible (non posse peccare). If Augustine is utilizing Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases, then the souls perhaps are ascending to the higher part of the World Soul, which, as noted, has the sole function of contemplating Nous or perhaps the souls are ascending to Nous itself. Augustine, in his modification of Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases, argues that the “heaven of the heaven” or the City of God is the final resting place for the soul. “It now begs of you and makes this single request, that it ‘may dwell in your house all the days of its life.’”  

Augustine, continuing in this vein, writes:

Again you said to me, in a loud voice to my inner ear, that not even the created realm, the ‘heaven of heaven’, is coeternal with you. Its delight is exclusively in you. In an unfailing purity it satiates its thirst in you. It never at any point betrays its mutability. You are always present to it, and it concentrates all its affection on you. It has no future to expect. It suffers no variation and experiences no distending in the successiveness of time. O blessed creature, if there be such: happy in cleaving to your felicity, happy to have you as eternal inhabitant and its source of light! I

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366 Augustine, Conf., Bk. XIII. xx.28.
367 Rist, Augustine, 128-129.
368 Augustine, Conf. Bk. XII. xi.13. Plotinus also claims that the Intelligence “is the place of every soul. There is eternal rest.” Plotinus, Enn., V.1.4.
do not find any better name for the Lord’s ‘heaven of heaven’...than your House. There your delight is contemplated without any failure or wandering away to something else. The pure heart enjoys absolute concord and unity in the unshakeable peace of holy spirits, the citizens of your city in the heavens above the visible heavens.  

Augustine's description of the “heaven of heaven” or City of God is surely congruent with Plotinus’ depiction of Nous. The claim that everything is in Nous has been examined previously. Plotinus writes:

Let him see pure intellect presiding over them, and immense wisdom, and the true life of Kronos, a god who is fullness and intellect. For he encompasses in himself all things immortal, every intellect, every god, every soul, all for ever unmoving. For why should it seek to change when all is well with it? Where should it seek to go away to when it has everything in itself? But it does not even seek to increase, since it is the most perfect. Therefore all things in it are perfect, that it may be altogether perfect, having nothing which is not so, having nothing in itself which does not think; but it thinks not by seeking but by having. Its blessedness is not something acquired, but all things are in eternity, and the true eternity, which time copies, running round the soul, letting some things go and attending to others. For around Soul things come one after another: now Socrates, now a horse, always some one particular reality; but Intellect is all things. It has therefore everything at rest in the same place, and it only is, and its “is” is for ever, and there is no place for the future for then too it is—or for the past—for nothing there has passed away—but all things remain stationary for ever, since they are the same, as if they were satisfied with themselves for being so.

Augustine writes “No doubt the 'heaven of heaven' which you made in the beginning is a kind of creation in the realm of the intellect. Without being compared to you...it nevertheless participates in your eternity. From the sweet happiness of contemplating you, it finds power to check its mutability.”

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369 Augustine, Conf., Bk. XII. xi.12.
370 Plotinus, Enn., V.1.4.
371 Augustine, Conf., Bk. XII. ix. 9. Henry Chadwick notes that “Augustine interprets Genesis I not to describe any material creation, but the intelligible realm of mind. His ‘heaven of heaven’ is, like the world-soul in Porphyry (Sententiae 30), created but eternally contemplating the divine.” Augustine, Conf., Bk. XII. viii.9. f.n. 9.
Conclusion.

As we have seen, Augustine's *Confessions* tells the story of the fallen soul's restless journey back to God. Augustine’s quest for happiness essentially begins with his desire to know God. Augustine begins his search in the sensible world but ultimately his investigations turn inward. With this inward turn Augustine confronts memory and realizes that there is an infinite abyss of material that he cannot explain nor can he account for its origins. Augustine ceases exploring memory and turns to the very act of remembering. It is in remembering that Augustine recognizes that what he has been searching for is the happy life, which for Augustine is the knowledge of God. He realizes that all humans yearn for this same thing; thus he determines that it must be in the memory, and therefore, he concludes humans had happiness once. The Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* proves to be a valuable tool for Augustine, but he rejects the notion of past lives in order to explain how humans have a memory of God, instead he examines Adam. Augustine effectively Christianizes the Plotinian Triple Hypostases, wherein Adam becomes the World Soul. We all lived in Adam and consequently fell in Adam, which explains how we share in Adam's guilt and in his pre-fallen happiness, and, as a result, we share his memory of God. By examining Adam, Augustine is able to work out his theory on happiness and Original Sin while defending his case that the soul is immaterial.

Augustine continues to employ the thought of Plotinus in his discussion of the fallen soul's return to God, but not without modification. For Plotinus the soul only has to contemplate the intelligible realm in order to ascend to the One.
On the contrary, Augustine insists that it is only through Christ that the soul can return and furthermore the soul would not even know to return to God without Christ, since He is the light that reveals the darkness of the fallen souls, now and in the beginning. Christ has a dual role in the salvation of men. Augustine utilizes the function of the logos wherein Christ comes into the visible world and beckons the souls to return to God. And Christ in His human form is the mediator between man and God. Thus, Christ is the path for the soul to attain happiness and return to the intelligible world. However, the soul's final destination is not just a return to Adam, i.e., the World Soul. Because the possibility of sin rests in the realm of Adam/the Christianized World Soul, Augustine claims that we are to ascend higher through the mediation of Christ so that we can achieve union with God. This higher station, which John Rist calls the improved or perfected Adam, is either the upper level of Soul or perhaps Nous. Although Augustine essentially uses the framework of the Plotinian doctrine of the Triple Hypostases to prove his theory, he does modify Plotinus' model in order for the souls to obtain eternal salvation.

Both Fārābī and Augustine, like their Greek predecessors, recognize that man’s ultimate desire is the attainment of happiness. The knowledge of and desire for happiness is not something that man learns or discovers, but is something that is already in man from the beginning. Indeed our desire for happiness is bestowed upon us by the intelligible world; even when we are not consciously seeking it, we still yearn for happiness. In developing their theories that humans have a knowledge of happiness from the outset, Fārābī and Augustine realize the importance of the Platonic doctrine of Recollection (anamnesis), but they both modify Plato’s doctrine. Both Fārābī and Augustine view happiness as knowledge of the One or God and the knowledge of man’s proper place within the intelligible world. Their understanding comes from the fact that each has made an ascent to the One through the various philosophical investigations. Obviously, they are both influenced by Plato and Aristotle’s philosophy of happiness. However, it appears that Plotinus is perhaps a more useful guide in explaining why man desires happiness and where man achieves true or ultimate happiness. In Augustine and Fārābī’s attempt to explain how this is so, they employ the Plotinian construct of emanation and the Triple Hypostases. Both Fārābī and Augustine contend that man has a relationship with the intelligible world, an intelligible being, and, really, the One or God at the outset. Fārābī discusses the Active Intellect, via emanation, intelligizing the rational faculty of the soul. As noted, the Active Intellect is essentially a
substitute for Plato’s doctrine of recollection. Yet, Fārābī’s Active Intellect functions in a manner reminiscent of the Plotinian *Nous*. However, the question concerning the relationship between the Active Intellect and the material world remains unresolved. Augustine observes Adam, the first human, as essentially Plotinus’ World Soul, which is generated by *Nous*. Thus, by equating Adam with the Plotinian World Soul, Augustine reveals how man has a memory of happiness because he actually has a memory of God.

Fārābī and Augustine both reveal that the perfected soul’s proper place is in the intelligible world. They also provide us, man in the material world, with a plan to attain this happiness. Fārābī allows both philosophy and religion as a means to attain perfection, but Augustine rejects the philosophical means of attaining happiness and offers Christianity as the sole path. For Fārābī, philosophy and religion include both the theoretical and practical sciences that are necessary for perfection. The theoretical sciences are required in order for man to know the intelligible world and his place in it and the practical sciences are necessary since Fārābī sees that action affects the soul. Augustine, too, sees that contemplation and action are indispensable on the path to happiness. And both Fārābī and Augustine argue that the perfected soul will exist in the intelligible world in a sort of quasi-relationship with an intelligible being that in many respects resembles the Plotinian *Nous*, thus connecting the individual soul to the One or God.

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373 See chapter II.IV and III.V above.
Both Augustine and Fārābī are in search of happiness, but more significantly, they are seeking ultimate happiness. As noted above, there was a time when Augustine believed that happiness could be attained on earth and in the afterlife, but he came to reject the notion of happiness in this life in which one is only on the path; now, he deems that true happiness can be achieved only in the afterlife. Fārābī maintains that happiness can be attained both on earth and in the afterlife, but he makes a clear distinction between happiness in this life and supreme happiness, which is to be found in the next life. Fārābī insists that ultimate happiness “only happens by man’s becoming separated from bodies, and in no need for his subsistence, of something else which would be

Augustine writes: “Of true happiness, which is not attained in our present life.”

For if we consider the matter more carefully, we shall see that no one lives as he wishes unless he is happy, and that no one is happy unless he is righteous. Even the righteous man, however, will not live as he wishes unless he arrives at that state where he is wholly free from death, error and harm, and is certain that he will always be free from these things in the future. For this is what our nature desires, and it will not be fully and perfectly happy unless it attains what it desires. What man is there at the present time who can live as he wishes, when living itself is not within his power? He wishes to live; he is compelled to die. In what way does he live as he wishes, then, when he does not live as long as he wishes? Even if he should wish to die, how can he live as he wishes, when he does not wish to live at all? And if he wishes to die, not because he does not wish to live, but so that he may have a better life after death, he still does not yet live as he wishes, but will do so only when, by dying, he has achieved the object of his wish. Behold, however, the man who lives as he wishes because he has forced and commanded himself not to desire what he cannot have, but to choose only what he can have, as Terrence says: ‘If you cannot do what you want, want what you can do.’ Is such a man happy because he is miserable patiently? If he does not love the life he has, it is certainly not a happy life. Moreover, if he does love his life, and is therefore happy, he must necessarily love it more dearly than all other things, since whatever else he loves must be loved for the sake of a happy life. Again, if it is loved as it deserves to be loved—for a man cannot be happy if he does not love his life as it deserves—he who so loves it must necessarily wish it to be eternal. Life, therefore, will only be truly happy when it is eternal.

Augustine, City, Bk. XIV, ch. 25. (italics mine)
lower than himself, such as body, or matter, or accident, and by his remaining forever in that perfection.”

According to Augustine, by contrast, there are two criteria for happiness: the first is “the enjoyment without interruption of the immutable Good which is God” and the second is “certain knowledge, free from all doubt and error, that it will remain in the same enjoyment for ever.” For Augustine, true happiness requires the certainty that happiness will be continuous and permanent; it cannot be affected by change.

Fārābī, too, discusses an eternal happiness; implying that for him too supreme happiness cannot be affected by change.

Where then is this ultimate happiness attained? If the corporeal world is always subject to change because it is in time, that is, in motion and therefore corruptible, then we must ask whether true happiness can ever be realized on earth or must we look elsewhere? The quest for ultimate happiness, it seems, places the focus on the afterlife. This is perhaps puzzling, since both Augustine and Fārābī envision that ultimate happiness is somehow connected to a city, in fact in order to attain this happiness one must be a citizen of either the City of God or the Virtuous City, respectively. Unquestionably, the notion of happiness being attained in a city reaches Augustine and Fārābī from classical Greek philosophy; however, both developed their theories of ultimate happiness and where it can be achieved within an eschatological and monotheistic religious

375 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 33.5-32.10; tr. Druart, 32.5-32.10.
376 Augustine, City, Bk. XI, ch. 13.
377 Ibid. See also O’Daly, Augustine’s City of God, 139-140.
milieu. In this way, both deviate from their Greek predecessors because they fuse the attainment of ultimate happiness, i.e., happiness in the afterlife, with a city. Furthermore, both Farabi and Augustine appear to break away from the ancient tradition of uniting the afterlife to the particular city in which one lives here on earth or in the material world.379

If ultimate happiness is to be achieved in the afterlife, then what does a city have to do with it? We have seen that Plotinus describes the World Soul as a city even though it exists in the intelligible world. Plotinus’ World Soul is the starting point for the individual souls before they descend into matter and it is where souls return when they have separated from matter and attain happiness.380 Augustine, too, describes a city where happiness is attained and it is clearly not a city that exists in the material world.381 We know from Chapter Three that Augustine equates Adam, the first human, with Plotinus’ World Soul. All men have their origin in Adam and it is through Adam’s fall that man descends into matter. We also know that for Augustine, Adam or Plotinus’ World Soul is not the place where those who will attain happiness will return. As noted, it is not clear whether these souls ascend to the upper level of the

379 As noted in Chapter One, both Mahdi and Colmo keep Farabi within the ancient tradition that the afterlife of an individual is dependent upon the political community in which one lives here on earth. As we shall see below, Richard J. Dougherty insists that Augustine’s City of God breaks this fusion of the afterlife and the city in which one lives. Surely, if Farabi’s Virtuous City is a city in the intelligible world and as we shall see he discusses virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities, then we can perhaps argue that Farabi too is breaking from the classical tradition. Colmo, Breaking with Athens, 105; Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 129; Richard J. Dougherty, “Citizen” in Augustine Through the Ages, 194.

380 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.3; IV.3.12.

381 In section 6.1 we will examine the academic discussion concerning Augustine’s City of God as an earthly city.
World Soul or to Plotinus’ *Nous*, but Augustine calls this place the “heaven of heaven” or the City of God.

Fārābī’s Virtuous City is the place where its citizens will attain happiness on earth and ultimate happiness. While there are aspects of this city that appear earthly, Fārābī never provides any details as to where, when, or even if this city was ever established, or could be. While there are indications that the Virtuous City is an earthly city, there are signs that suggest that this city may exist on a metaphysical plane or in the intelligible world. Can man even establish such a city? Is it correct, in fact, to continue to examine the Virtuous City only as an earthly city, which has been established or will be founded, or as an ideal—a city in speech? There seems to be too much at stake. Fārābī has fused ultimate happiness, i.e., salvation in the afterlife, to this city. Can we accept that this city, which is so important to our happiness in the afterlife, is capable of being destroyed or worse, not established? When we examine Fārābī’s Virtuous City, we may well ask: where is this place that seemingly is no place?

Augustine is discussing two cities: the City of God, which exists in the intelligible world and is the place where true happiness is achieved, and the City of Man, which exists in the material world but where its citizens do not achieve true happiness. Fārābī, like Augustine, is also discussing two cities. The Virtuous City is the city where its citizens attain ultimate happiness and the non-virtuous cities are cities where its citizens will not achieve happiness. Let us take this a step further and suggest that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is a city that exists in the intelligible world and that his non-virtuous cities exist in the world
in which we live, i.e., they exist in the material world. We will examine the possibility that Fārābī, like Augustine, utilizes the thought of Plotinus. We will consider the further possibility that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is comparable to Plotinus’ World Soul, and so, exists in the Intelligible world within the Plotinian Nous or, to use Fārābī’s terminology, within the Active Intellect. We will compare Augustine and Fārābī’s description of their citizens, the citizens of the City of God and the virtuous citizens, with Plotinus’ account of the individual souls that reside in the World Soul. And we will examine how the virtuous citizens, and the citizens of the City of God who are on earth, are similar to those whom Plotinus describes as souls in the material world remaining ‘above’ in the world of Nous, constantly functioning in perfect contemplation of the forms, and unspotted by material life. Furthermore, only the virtuous citizens will attain happiness; in fact, they will attain it even if they do not reside in the Virtuous City. So, we must ask, what is so remarkable about the Virtuous City that its citizens can attain happiness even if they do not dwell there? How can virtuous citizens possibly originate in non-virtuous cities? How do they adhere to the virtuous way of life? How do they know what this life entails without the Virtuous City having been established, since, as we shall see, their knowledge includes knowledge of the Virtuous City and its supreme ruler and/or founder and his successors? These questions are more difficult to answer when we consider Fārābī’s Virtuous City as an earthly city. Augustine, too, discusses

382 See above Chapter II section IV.
383 Rist, Plotinus, 146. See also Plotinus, Enn., I.4; IV.8.8.
384 Chapter sixteen of Fārābī’s Madinah shows explicitly that it is only the virtuous citizens who attain ultimate happiness and that this happiness is also attained by those virtuous citizens who live in non-virtuous cities.
the citizens of the City of God. How can man live in the City of Man and still be considered a citizen of the City of God? What defines such a citizen? What is the difference between a citizen of the City of God and a citizen of the City of Man? Is it geographical, a connection to a particular government, or is it, as Fārābī’s Plato suggests, a certain knowledge and a certain way of life?

What, then are we to make of Fārābī and Augustine’s cities? These are cities without borders; in fact, they are universal, and their citizens are wide-ranging. Their sole aim is happiness and indeed, happiness is the only aspiration of its citizens. It has citizens on earth—because those who search for happiness and live a certain way of life are indeed its citizens. Both Fārābī and Augustine explain that it is one’s aims which define one as a citizen of the Virtuous City or the City of God. In this section, we will examine the origins and structure of Augustine’s City of God and of Fārābī’s Virtuous City. We will also examine the most important aspect of these cities, that is, their ultimate aims. Furthermore, we will compare these eternal cities with Augustine’s City of Man and with Fārābī’s non-virtuous cities. We must also account for the fact that there are citizens of the Virtuous City and the City of God on earth and that these citizens have the potential of leading virtuous lives on earth. The proper place for all souls may be the intelligible world, but for now, it seems that the two cities, i.e., the eternal city and the earthly city, as Augustine claims, “are in the present world mixed together and in a certain sense, entangled with one another.”

385 Augustine, *City*, Bk. XI ch. 1.
Chapter Four
Cities in the Intelligible World.

Introduction.

Do cities exist in the intelligible world? In order to understand how Fārābī and Augustine’s cities are comparable to Plotinus’ World Soul, it is important to know the fundamentals of Plotinus’ universe. In examining Plotinus’ cosmology and in comparing his universe with both Augustine’s and Fārābī’s, we see that, while there are obvious differences, Augustine’s universe (and in particular his City of God) corresponds closely to the structure of Plotinus’ Triple Hypostases and it also functions in a similar manner. We shall decide if Augustine’s City of God meets the criteria for happiness and note the problems that concerned Augustine. While we have demonstrated that Augustine utilized Plotinus in his discussion of Adam, we will also confirm that his City of God exists in the intelligible world. Fārābī’s Virtuous City has yet to be scrutinized. Though when we compare Fārābī’s universe, we find that it, too, is comparable in key respects to Plotinus’ cosmos. In particular, Fārābī’s Virtuous City functions very much like Plotinus’ World Soul. This entails examining the standard description of his Virtuous City, which implies that it has an earthly existence. Nevertheless, we will examine texts that show this city in a different light and will show that when compared with that of Plotinus, Fārābī’s Virtuous City does not necessarily have to be merely an earthly city. We shall also examine the role of the supreme ruler to show that he does not

386 The intelligible world has been discussed above in footnotes 10 and 11. Again this intelligible world is the world that can only be perceived by our intellect and is not perceived by our senses.
necessarily have to be an earthly ruler. More importantly we will examine what Fārābī judges as an eternal species—and show that all men, i.e., all souls, were at one point a part of the Virtuous City, hence they share a common genus, implying that the Virtuous City and its citizens are eternal. If all souls or men were at one point a component of the Virtuous City, then it seems reasonable to suggest that the Virtuous City is neither earthly nor ideal, but an entity existing in the intelligible world. Finally, is Fārābī’s Virtuous City, like Plotinus’ World Soul, a place to which the eternal souls who attain happiness return? Still, as we shall see, not all souls attain happiness, nor are all souls eternal.

I. The Cosmos of Plotinus.

Plotinus divides the cosmos into four realms: the One, Nous, World Soul, and Matter. According to Plotinus, the One “is the productive power of all things.”387 The One eternally emanates or generates the Nous and the Nous in turn generates the World Soul and all of the individual souls therein.388 The Nous is an image of the One, and thus, is inferior; however, it is conscious of the One’s power.389 The World Soul is governed by Nous. “The offspring of … [Nous] is a rational form and an existing being, that which thinks discursively; it is this which moves around … [Nous] and is light and trace of … [Nous] and dependent on it, united to it on one side and so filled with it and enjoying it and sharing in it and thinking in it, but, on the other side, in touch with the things

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387 Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.1.7.
388 Ibid. Each existent contemplates what is above it; thus, essentially connecting them to the One.
389 Ibid.
which come after it [i.e., Matter] ….” With the last of the three primal hypostases, the intelligible world or the “divine realities” ends. In Plotinus' discussion of the World Soul, he tells us to think of a city as having a soul of its own with each of its citizens having an individual soul; furthermore, all of these souls will have a common essence, that of the World Soul. Within this city, there is a hierarchy of souls based on their ability to reason, since some souls are considered more rational than others. While individual souls remain in the World Soul, they “can share in its government, like those who live with a universal monarch and share in the government of his empire.” Furthermore, while the individual souls remain in the World Soul they are essentially in Nous. Plotinus tells us that Nous is “the place of every soul” and that it is here that the soul finds eternal rest. While the individual souls remain in the World Soul, i.e., in Nous, they are not subject to change; as a result, happiness is found in the World Soul. If these individual souls do descend into matter, they are subject to affections, and so, their primary goal must be to return to their place of origin, i.e., the World Soul. Plotinus writes:

The souls of men, seeing their images in the mirror of Dionysius as it were, have entered into that realm in a leap downward from the Supreme: yet even they are not cut off from their origin, from the divine Intellect; it is not that they have come bringing the Intellectual Principle down in their fall; it is that though they have descended even to earth, yet their

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390 Ibid. Only the translated word “Intellect” has been removed and replaced with the original Greek Nous.
391 Ibid.
392 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4. The World Soul can be considered to be the genus while the individual souls are considered to be the species. Plotinus writes that “there had to be many souls and one soul, and the many different souls springing from the one, like the species of one genus…”
393 Ibid., IV.8.3.
394 Ibid.
395 Ibid., V.1.4
396 Ibid., V.9.5.
higher part holds for ever above the heavens. Their initial descent is
deepened since that mid-part of theirs is compelled to labour in care of
the care-needing things into which they have entered. But Zeus, the
father, takes pity on their toils and makes the bonds in which they labour
soluble by death and gives respite in due time, freeing them from the
body, that they too may come to dwell there where the Universal Soul,
unconcerned with earthly needs, has ever dwelt.397

II. The Cosmos of Augustine.

Augustine’s universe is not identical to that of Plotinus. Plotinus’
universe is the product of emanation. Augustine’s universe, however, was
created out of nothing and it was not created in time, but, to be precise,
simultaneously with time. In the Confessions, he states “In the beginning, that
is from yourself, in your wisdom which is begotten of your substance and you
made it out of nothing... out of nothing you made heaven and earth, two entities,
one close to you, the other close to being nothing; the one to which only you are
superior, the other to which what is inferior is nothingness.”398 In his De
Civitate Dei, he claims that “the world was made not in time, but simultaneously
with time. For that which is made in time is made both after and before some
time: after that which is past, and before that which is to come. But there could
have been no ‘past’ before the creation, because there was then no creature by
whose changing movements time could be enacted.”399 Augustine’s City of God
appears to have a unique status in this respect, for he claims that, in the City of
God, “we do not find there was time before it, because it precedes the creation of

398 Augustine Conf., Bk. XI.vii.8.
399 Augustine, City, Bk. XI ch.6. See also John M. Quinn, “Time” in Augustine through the
Ages, 833-837; Hiram Canton, Saint Augustine’s Critique of Politics, 441-442.
time; yet it is created first of all things." That it is created and yet does not exist in time suggests that this city exists in the intelligible world. So, contrary to Plotinus, Augustine’s universe is not a product of emanation, but a creation ex nihilo, created not out of necessity, as emanation entails, but by an act of God.

However, in its structure Augustine’s City of God does correspond to the Plotinian cosmos and it appears to function in a similar fashion. Augustine states:

No doubt the ‘heaven of heaven’ which you made in the beginning is a kind of creation in the realm of the intellect. Without being coeternal with you, O Trinity, it nevertheless participates in your eternity. From the sweet happiness of contemplating you, it finds power to check its mutability. Without any lapse to which its createdness makes it liable, by cleaving to you it escapes all the revolving vicissitudes of the temporal process. But even that formlessness, the ‘invisible and unorganized earth’, is not counted among the days of creation week. For where there is no form, no order, nothing comes or goes into the past, and where this does not happen, there are obviously no days and nothing of the coming and passing of temporal periods.

The One or God is both prior to and above Augustine’s City of God because God created this city; it is not coeternal with Him. If we accept the argument presented in the previous chapter on happiness, then the City of God most likely exists within the upper level of Plotinus’ World Soul and therefore, within Nous. Augustine claims that it was created and yet exists in the realm of the Intellect, i.e., it exists in the intelligible world. As the City of God was created it is subject to change; however, because it continuously contemplates what is prior to it, it prevents its own corruptibility. Plotinus tells us that in contemplation

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400 Augustine, Conf., Bk. XII.xv.20.
401 Ibid., Bk. XII. ix. 9.
the subject and the object become one. Because it cleaves to what is above it, there is no separation between the entities, and so the being becomes one with its prior. Is this not what Augustine is suggesting when he returns to Jerusalem “my home land, Jerusalem my mother, and above it yourself.” From this it seems plausible that Augustine has the thought of Plotinus in mind in his discussion of the City of God.

As in Plotinus, we find a rational hierarchy in Augustine’s universe as well as in the City of God. Ernest Fortin claims that this hierarchy is probably based on Augustine’s own theory of natural law. Fortin explains a crucial aspect of this theory when he notes that “‘all things be properly ordered in the highest degree,’ or that at all times the lower be subordinated to the higher both within

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402 Plotinus, *Enn.*, III.8.6, III.8.8. Also, as noted in chapter three, Plotinus discusses the notion of contemplation wherein when the hypostasis Soul contemplates what is above it, “it possesses the object of its contemplation within itself, as its own.” Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.1.3. I am using O’Brien’s translation here.

403 Or the existent becomes one with what precedes it in being. Plotinus, *Enn.*, V.1.5.

404 Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. XII. xvi.23.

the individual and in society at large.” Fortin suggests that, for Augustine, natural law is essentially divine reason, thus there can be no deviation from, or violation of, the natural order neither in the universe nor in man. Fortin admits that while Augustine recognized that human beings, in their fallen state, could never live up to the ideal enunciated in his theory of natural law, they could do so in the City of God. In the City of God every citizen has his proper place and function and, as Augustine states, there is no jealousy, for everything is exactly as it should be. That Augustine would claim that there is no jealousy implies that some souls have more than others and this too is consistent with his theory of natural law, which is based on a flawless hierarchy. Of course, it resembles Plotinus’ rational hierarchy found within his cosmos and the World Soul.

The individual souls that have always existed in the City of God and the souls that attain happiness resemble the individual souls that reside in Plotinus’ World Soul. In his De Civitate Dei, Augustine explains that initially the City of God was filled only with angels, “those spirits to whom He gave intelligence, making them capable of contemplating and comprehending Him.” Augustine tells us that the angels who “voluntarily” abandoned God were cast out and punished with everlasting unhappiness. Man too fell away from God, and yet, Augustine claims that “out of this mortal progeny, so deservedly and justly

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407 Ibid., 33-34.
408 Ibid., 34.
409 Augustine, City, Bk. XXII ch.1
410 Ibid., Bk. XXII ch.1. See also Bk. XI, ch. 9, 20, 13, 12.
411 Ibid., Bk. XXII ch. 1.
condemned, God is by His grace gathering together a people so great that, from it, He will supply and fill up the place left in the Heavenly City by the fallen angels. Thus, that City will not be defrauded of its full complement of citizens; indeed, it may, perhaps, rejoice in a yet more numerous body of such citizens.”

In his *Confessions*, Augustine claims that the blessed souls or the souls that have attained happiness will reach the ‘heaven of heaven:

O blessed creature, if there be such: happy in cleaving to your felicity, happy to have you as eternal inhabitant and its source of light! I do not find any better name for the Lord’s ‘heaven of heaven’ (Ps. 113: 16) than your House. There your delight is contemplated without any failure or wandering away to something else. The pure heart enjoys absolute concord and unity in the unshakeable peace of holy spirits, the citizens of your city in the heavens above the visible heavens.

From this, we know that the blessed angels and those men who attain happiness will reside in Augustine’s City of God and furthermore, that the citizens of this city share similar traits with the individual souls found within Plotinus’ World Soul.

Of course, there are difficulties found in Augustine’s thought concerning the fall of the angels and these could lead to the uncertainty of everlasting happiness within the City of God. In his explanation of the creation of the angels, which took place during the first six days, Augustine claims that when God said, “Let there be light,” this light was indeed the angels. However,

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412 Ibid.
413 Augustine, *Conf*, Bk. XII. xi. 12
414 I am including this because it seems to be a matter that concerns Augustine and his criteria for happiness, but this is really a conversation pertaining to God’s foreknowledge and the freewill of His creation and so beyond the scope of this discussion.
415 In Augustine’s *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis (De Genesi ad litteram)*, he interprets this light as the angels. Augustine, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, 2.8.18-19, 4.24.41. Further he writes in his *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book*, “And
when the angels turned away from God, they were either to live in the darkness or literally to become the darkness.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{City}, Bk. XI, ch. 9.} Augustine signals this separation of the holy and wicked angels when he writes, “God divided the light from the darkness. . . . For only He could make this division, Who could also foreknow before they fell that they would fall.”\footnote{Ibid., Bk. XI, ch. 20.} Did God, knowing that these angels would sin, separate them before, perhaps facilitating their fall, or after, when they had already fallen by their own free will? Augustine also suggests that the angels were perhaps not created equally. The angels who continued to cleave to God seemed to have a sense of certainty, but for the angels who turned away from God this certainty is noticeably absent. Even Augustine questions this possible inequality, but he solves the problem by claiming that either they were indeed created equal or the angels that remained with God received certain knowledge after the wicked angels were separated from them.\footnote{Ibid., Bk. XI, ch. 13} However, this solution is problematic, especially since Augustine claims that all of the angels of light were blessed, but the angels that would eventually fall were not blessed; if they were truly blessed, Augustine notes, they would not have turned away from God. Augustine maintains that there are two criteria for blessedness: first, “the enjoyment without interruption of the immutable Good which is God” and
second, the “certain knowledge, free from all doubt and error, that it will remain
in the same enjoyment for ever.” Therefore, the assertion that perhaps the
good angels were given certain knowledge only after the fall of the wicked that
implies that none of the angels were blessed until after the wicked were
separated is invalid; indeed, Augustine specifically states that the angels were
blessed from the very beginning. Furthermore, he claims that if the devil had
“remained steadfast” with God he too could have “remained in the blessedness
with the holy angels;” therefore, Augustine perceives that the angels were indeed
already blessed before the fall, even though there were some angels lacking the
requirements to be truly blessed. The uncertainty does not end with
Augustine's examination of the angels; there was also a sense of insecurity for
the first humans. Augustine claims that the first humans were blessed before
they sinned; however, he admits that these humans did not know how long their
blessedness would last; so according to Augustine's own criteria for blessedness,
stated above, the first humans were not blessed. Despite such concerns,
Augustine is certain that the citizens of the City of God will attain ultimate
happiness. And he is adamant in his belief that the City of God is the place

419 Ibid.
420 Ibid.
421 Ibid., Bk. XI, ch.12. In fact, in his De Civitate Dei, Augustine claims that the Christians of
his day have more certainty than the first humans in Paradise. Another point that Augustine
makes is about the concept of nature being created out of nothing. In Bk. XIV, ch. 13, Augustine
argues that the actual partaking of the fruit was done by already evil human beings. Then he
begins discussing an evil fruit, which "could have come only from a corrupted tree. Moreover,
the corruption of that tree came about contrary to nature, because it certainly could not have
happened without a defect in the will, and such a defect is against nature. But only a nature
created out of nothing could have been perverted by a defect. Thus, though the existence of the
will as a nature is due to its creation by God, its falling away from its nature is due to its creation
out of nothing." Can it be argued that since man and his will are both created out of nothing that
this defect or falling away from its nature is unavoidable?
where the criteria for true happiness are met. Nevertheless, Augustine points out that because of the fall of man we must start here in the material world, and we must have certain knowledge; moreover, we must make the choice to follow the path to become a member of the City of God so as finally to attain ultimate happiness. He writes:

The Supreme Good of the City of God, then, is eternal and perfect peace. This is not the peace which mortal men pass through on their journey from birth to death. Rather, it is that peace in which they rest in immortality and suffer adversity no more. Who can deny, therefore, that this is the supremely blessed life, or that the life which we now lead, no matter how filled with goods of soul and body and external circumstance, is most miserable in comparison? Nonetheless, if any man uses this life in such a way that he directs it towards that end which he so ardently loves and for which he so faithfully hopes, he may without absurdity be called happy even now, though rather by future hope than in present reality. Present reality without that hope, however, is a false happiness and a great misery, since, in that case, the true goods of the soul are not enjoyed. For no wisdom is true wisdom if it does not direct all its prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice towards that final state where God shall be all in all in an assured eternity and perfect peace.422

III. The Cosmos of Fārābī.

Fārābī begins his discussion of the Virtuous City with the One and the creation of the cosmos. He draws on Plotinus' philosophy of emanation to describe how the universe was created and, again following Plotinus, he explains that this natural order is essentially how all being comes into being. It is in his discussion of the cosmos that Fārābī establishes a rational hierarchy both within the intelligible world and the material world.423 Fārābī's intelligible world ends

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422 Augustine, City, Bk. XIX ch. 20.
423 In his Siyāṣah, Fārābī divides the universe into six beings. The first three beings are not bodies nor are they in bodies: these beings are the first cause, the second causes, and the Active Intellect. After these, the three beings that are not bodies but are in bodies are soul, form, and matter. In Selected Aphorisms, Fārābī states that “there are three worlds: spiritual, celestial, and material.” Fārābī, Siyāṣah, 31-32; tr. Druart, 31-32. Fārābī, Fūṣil Muntaz‘a (Selected Aphorisms), 31-32; tr. Druart, 31-32.
with the Active Intellect. It is obvious that the material world imitates the heavens; even so, the world below the moon is portrayed not as a continuation of the emanation process, but as an ascent. Fārābī places the lowest existences, those of least value, first and then describes the upward ladder where animals with rational thought are last, i.e., at the top of the hierarchy. He states that this natural ranking of the intelligible world can be seen within the human soul and body.

In order to demonstrate that the natural ranking of the intelligible world can be seen in both the human soul and the body, Fārābī scrutinizes the human soul and the healthy human body, and on this basis, depicts how the Virtuous City should be organized.424 Beginning with the five faculties of the soul, Fārābī

424 This examination is typically viewed as what constitutes the earthly elements of Fārābī’s Virtuous City. Fārābī begins this discussion with the following statements:

In order to preserve himself and to attain his highest perfections every human being is by his very nature in need of many things which he cannot provide all by himself; he is indeed in need of people who each supply him with some particular need of his. Everybody finds himself in the same relation to everybody in this respect. Therefore man cannot attain the perfection, for the sake of which his inborn nature has been given to him, unless many (societies of) people who co-operate come together who each supply everybody else with some particular need of his, so that as a result of the contribution of the whole community all the things are brought together which everybody needs in order to preserve himself and attain perfection. Therefore human individuals have come to exist in great numbers, and have settled in the inhabitable (inhabited?) region of the earth, so that human societies have come to exist in it, some of which are perfect, others imperfect.

There are three kinds of perfect society, great, medium, and small. The great one is the union of all the societies in the inhabitable world; the medium one the union of one nation in one part of the inhabitable world; the small one the union of the people of a city in the territory of any nation whatsoever. Imperfect are the union of people in a village, the union of people in a quarter, then the union in a street, eventually the union in a house, the house being the smallest union of all. Quarter and village exist both for the sake of the city, but the relation of the village to the city is one of service whereas the quarter is related to the city as a part of it; the street is a part of the quarter, the house a part of the street. The city is a part of the territory of a nation, the nation a part of all the people in the inhabitable world.

The most excellent good and the utmost perfection is, in the first instance, attained
describes each of them in an ascending order; he demonstrates that each has a specific association both with the physical body and with higher thought. The first faculty of the soul is the nutritive faculty (al-quwwa al-ghādhiya) whose ruling faculty resides in the heart (qalb). Fārābī argues that this faculty has both subordinates and auxiliaries and the “ruling faculty among these faculties governs the other faculties by nature, whereas the other faculties conform in their actions to the natural aim of their ruler who resides in the heart.”425 The second part of the soul is the faculty of sense perception (al-quwwa al-ḥāssa) and it is likened to “carriers of news, each of whom is charged with a particular genus of news or with news from one province of the realm.”426 The third faculty is the faculty of representation (al-quwwa al-mutakhayyila), which serves to connect the lower faculties to the higher faculties. According to Walzer, both Fārābī and Alexander of Aphrodisias claim that this faculty “discriminates” and “passes judgment.”427 Next, Fārābī discusses the appetitive faculty (al-quwwa al-nuzu‘iyya) which is connected to all parts of the soul except for the nutritive.

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Finally, the highest faculty is the rational faculty (*al-quwwa al-nātiqa*); its rule extends over all others.428

Fārābī’s five faculties of the soul correspond to the five classes of citizens in his perfect state429 and these too are given in ascending order.430 The fifth rank consists of “those people who are mainly concerned with material gain,” this group represents the economic element of the community.431 The fourth includes “soldiers.” The third rank comprises “people who practice mathematics and its applications.”432 The second rank consists of “persons whose activities are confined to particular nations, languages, and religions,” (orators and poets are included in the second rank) and finally, philosophers are within the first rank.433

Fārābī then discusses the healthy human body, this time in a descending order.434 The ruling faculty of the body is the heart and “the heart comes to be first and becomes then the cause of the other organs.”435 From the heart, the brain (*dimāq*) comes into being, which both rules and is ruled. Fārābī likens the brain to a household steward because a steward is the master’s representative.436

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428 Fārābī, *Madinah*, 10.4-10.5; tr. Walzer, 10.4-10.5.
429 This correlation is most likely a Platonic influence, since Plato ascertained three parts of the soul and three classes in his *Republic*.
431 Walzer claims that this class includes the “farmers, animal breeders, traders, and ‘others of this kind.’” Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 437.
432 This rank includes “arithmeticians,” “accountants,” “geometers,” “physicians,” and “astronomers.” Ibid.
433 Walzer notes that the first and second ranks are understandable considering Fārābī’s presentation of philosophy and religion. Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 437.
434 For another example of the analogy between the human body and city see Fārābī, *Fusūl*, 41-42; tr. Butterworth, 41-42.
This progression continues until it reaches the organs, which are ruled only.\footnote{Farābī, Madīnah, 11.1-11.8; tr. Walzer, 11.1-11.8. See also Farābī, Madīnah, 15.4; tr. Walzer, 15.4.} The ruler is equated with the heart because it rules only and “the ruler of this city must come to be in the first instance, and will subsequently be the cause of the rise of the city;” the ruler is associated with the rational faculty of the soul because all of the subordinates perform what the ruler desires.\footnote{Farābī, Madīnah, 15. 5; tr. Walzer, 15.5.} From this ruler comes the next level, which both rules and is ruled. This process continues until the lowest echelons that are ruled only are reached.\footnote{Farābī, Madīnah, 15. 4; tr. Walzer, 15. 4} Farābī insists that the ranks found in the city are due to nature.\footnote{Farābī, Madīnah, 15. 4; tr. Walzer, 15. 4} The underlying premise is that the ruler of the Virtuous City, the rational faculty of the soul, and the heart are equated with the role of The First [One and Mind] and so every inferior level of being is working for what The First, the rational faculty of the soul, the heart, and the ruler wish. In Siyāsah, Farābī argues:

> The city becomes similar to the natural beings; the ranks of order in it similar to the ranks of order of the beings, which begin with the First and terminate in prime matter and the elements; and the way they are linked and fitted together will be similar to the way the beings are linked and fitted together. The prince of the city will be like the First Cause, which is the cause for the existence of all the other beings. Then the ranks of order of the beings gradually keep descending, each one of them being both ruler and ruled, until they reach down to those possible things—that is, prime matter and the elements—that possess no ruling element whatever, but are subservient and always exist for the sake of others.\footnote{Farābī, Siyāsah, 84-84.10; partial tr. Najjār, 54; tr. Druart, 84-84.10.}

Farābī, like Plotinus and Augustine, establishes a rational hierarchy in the intelligible world. As in Plotinus’ World Soul and Augustine’s City of God, a
similar hierarchy exists within the Virtuous City. The structure of the Virtuous City imitates the intelligible world. The inhabitants of the Virtuous City live as The One intends. But who should be the ruler of this city?

IV. The Ruler of Fārābī’s Virtuous City.

Fārābī, as well as Plato and Aristotle, deems that a specific type of ruler is needed for a Virtuous City; but he differs from his predecessors in his view of how the ruler should be chosen. Plato writes that a “philosopher king” should govern the city because he has ascended to this position. “Then the philosopher, by consorting with what is ordered and divine and despite all the slanders around that say otherwise, himself becomes as divine and ordered as a human being can.”442 Similarly, Aristotle writes, “The best men are manifestly those who are the most virtuous . . . the education that makes a man virtuous will be the same education that makes him aristocratic or kingly.”443 Both Plato and Aristotle argue that the ruler becomes the ruler by imitating the divine as well as through proper education. Although Fārābī obviously agrees with his predecessors, his ruler becomes the ruler in a more certain way. While Fārābī’s ruler too has to be properly educated, he is also predisposed to be ruler.444 Fārābī claims, “The ruler of the excellent city cannot just be any man, because rulership requires two conditions: (a) he should be predisposed for it by his inborn nature, (b) he should have acquired the attitude and habit of will for rulership which will develop in a

442 Plato, “The Republic,” Bk. 6 500 c-d.
444 Walzer, Virtuous City, 475.
man whose nature is predisposed for it.” Faрабї then presents the twelve characteristics that the founder/ruler of the Virtuous City must possess. Next, he discusses the six qualities that his successor must have and, if these qualities cannot be found in one man, he explains how they should be divided between two men. Crone argues that Faрабї’s supreme ruler is similar to the ideas found in the writings concerning the Hellenistic kingships. She writes:

The Hellenistic king, attested in divine forms and varying shades of humanity and divinity, was a supremely virtuous man endowed with a fullness of power over all things spiritual and material. As Eusebius cast him, he was the image of the supreme God, a copy of divine perfection, the representative (hyparchos) of God on earth, a bearer of divine light and carrier of the divine name (of king), a replica of the logos, a philosopher and an interpreter of God’s word whose earthly court was an image of the divine realm and whose task it was to lead men back to knowledge of God. Only the distinction of being living law (nomos empsychos) was denied him. Eusebius’s picture of Constantine contributed substantially to the view of the emperor in Byzantium, where

445 Faрабї, Madinah, 15.7; tr. Walzer, 15.7. For the Platonic and Aristotelian connection, see Hans Daiber, The Ruler as Philosopher, 5-8.
446 Walzer notes that the inborn qualities of this ruler derive clearly from Plato’s Republic, but Farabi’s qualities are slightly different. See Walzer, Virtuous City, 445. See Plato’s Republic Bk. VI. The twelve characteristics of the founder of Farabi’s Virtuous City are as follows:

(1) . . . he should have limbs and organs which are free from deficiency and strong . . .
(2) He should by nature be good at understanding and perceiving everything said to him . . .
(3) He should be good at retaining what he comes to know and see and hear and apprehend in general, and forget almost nothing.
(4) He should be well provided with ready intelligence and very bright.
(5) He should have a fine diction . . .
(6) He should be fond of learning and acquiring knowledge.
(7) He should be by nature fond of truth . . . and hate falsehood.
(8) He should by nature not crave for food and drink and sexual intercourse.
(9) He should be proud of spirit and fond of honor.
(10) Dirham and dinar and the other worldly pursuits should be of little amount in his view.
(11) He should be nature be fond of justice and just people, and hate oppression and injustice.
(12) He should be strong in setting his mind firmly upon the thing which, in his view, ought to be done, and daringly and bravely carry it out without fear and weak-mindedness.

The successor to the founder of the Virtuous City must have the following characteristics:

(1) He will be a philosopher.
(2) He will know and remember the laws and customs (and rules of conduct) with which the first sovereigns had governed the city . . .
(3) He will excel in deducing a new law by analogy . . .
(4) He will be good at deliberating and be powerful in his deductions.
(5) He will be good at guiding the people.
(6) He should be of tough physique in order to shoulder the tasks of war, mastering the serving as well as the ruling military art.

he was occasionally cast as living law as well. It was as such a supremely virtuous emperor of the Hellenistic type that Plato’s philosopher king came to be understood. ‘There has been revealed in our age that time of felicity which one of the writers of old prophesied as coming to pass when either philosophers were kings or kings were students of philosophy.’ Agapetus told Justinian; ‘pursuing the study of philosophy, you [Justinian] were counted worthy of kingship; and holding the office of king, you did not desert the study of philosophy.’ ‘A man who is a philosopher king and a king-philosopher, after the manner of Him whose copy and image he is—otherwise he would not be a true king, but would only bear idly an empty name,’ as the dialogue on ‘political science’ from Justinian’s time declares. It was on the same reservoir of Hellenistic kingship ideas that al-Fārābī drew for the naturalization of philosophy in the Islamic world….What can be surmised in the present state of research is that al-Fārābī and his successors created their version of the philosopher king by reading the Hellenistic king as they knew him from their own tradition back into Plato and Aristotle.447

While understanding the various influences that Fārābī drew from in his model of the supreme ruler is important, the problem is that the descriptions of the Virtuous City and the ideal ruler thus far suggest that for Fārābī, there can be no happiness until this ever-elusive city is established by this exceedingly idyllic ruler. Perhaps, at this point it is time to discontinue examining the Virtuous City as an earthly city and instead, consider the possibility that this city exists in the intelligible world.

V. Fārābī’s Virtuous City as the Plotinian World Soul.

Clearly, the texts that we have examined thus far do not suffice to establish that the Virtuous City exists in the intelligible world; therefore we shall probe a little further. While there are earthly elements in Fārābī’s description of the Virtuous City, there are also details that suggest that this city exists in an unearthly realm. For Fārābī tells us in his discussion of those who

447 Crone, God’s Rule, 193-195.
missed the right path, “Therefore they thought it right to assume that the natural existents as observed in this state have another existence different from the existence observed today [i.e. in our earthly life] and that this existence which they have today is unnatural for them, indeed contrary to the existence which is natural for them.” Furthermore, he writes, “They thought that only man’s corporeal existence calls for associations in the city.” This suggests that Fārābī perceives that the associations that man has within the cities of the material world are comparable to the associations man will have in the afterlife.

In the *Arabic Plotinus*, it states:

> When he sees these sensible things which are in this lowly sensory world, let him raise his mind to the real upper world, of which this world is but an image, and cast his gaze on it; for he will surely see all the things he saw in this world. But he will see them as intellectual, everlasting, filled with virtues and life pure and unsullied by any vileness. He will see there the noble mind ruling and controlling it by an ineffable wisdom and by the power which the originator of both the worlds put into it. He will see the things there filled with light and mind and wisdom, there being no frivolity there and no play, because the absolute earnestness there is due to the light that pours forth on them and because each of them desires to ascend to the rank of his neighbour, and to approach the first light, which overflows onto that world. That world encompasses all the everlasting things which die not, and encompasses all minds and souls. That world is in eternal rest because it is at the limit of perfection and beauty, so it does not need motion in transferring itself from state to state.

In this light, let us examine some elements that suggest that the Virtuous City may not be an earthly city. We have already observed the parallels that the Virtuous City has with the intelligible world. Furthermore, in Fārābī’s *Millah*, there is evidence that he is not discussing an earthly city at all. In this text, he juxtaposes the Virtuous City with the world and, as it turns out, they are

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connected and yet quite different. Indeed, his examination of these two entities is similar to how one would compare the soul with the body, or the intelligible world with the material world. Farabi begins with the claim that God is the governor of both the Virtuous City and the world. He insists that God’s governance is somehow different for each of these entities, but that there is a “relation between the two kinds of governing, and there is a relation between the parts of the world and the parts of the virtuous city or nation.”\footnote{Farabi, *Millah*, 65; tr. Butterworth, 65; tr. Berman, 60a.} Next, he examines “the connection, composition, order, and cooperation with respect to actions,” which are found in both the Virtuous City and the world. But the things that are found in the parts of the world “derive from the natural qualities which they have, [so] necessarily their counterparts in the divisions of the virtuous nation should derive from the voluntary habits and qualities which it has.”\footnote{Farabi, *Millah*, 65; tr. Butterworth, 65; tr. Berman, 60a.} Farabi claims,

And just as the governor of the world put into the parts of the world natural qualities by means of which they were composed, ordered, connected, and cooperated through their many actions until they became, despite their manyness and the manyness of their actions, like one thing which performs one action for the sake of one goal, in the same way the governor of the nation [and the city] must place and impress upon the souls of the divisions of the nation and the city voluntary habits and qualities which will induce in them that composition and connection with each other and their cooperation in actions until the nation and the nations despite the numerousness of their parts and the difference of their ranks and manyness of their actions become like one thing which performs one action by means it achieves one goal...And just as the governor of the world has given the world and its parts, in addition to the constitutions and temperaments which he has fixed in them, other things through which the existence of the world and its divisions are permanent and remain continuously in accordance with the way that he [originally] formed them naturally for very long times, so we ought to say the same
thing with respect to the governor of the virtuous nation. For he ought [not] limit himself to impressing the virtuous qualities and the habits into souls so that they become composed, connected, and cooperate in their actions without giving to them other things in addition by means of which he seeks to make them [practice] permanently and continually the virtues and the goods which he has instilled in them from the very beginning.

From this, it seems as though the Virtuous City could be considered as something existing apart from the natural or material world. Its counterparts are intangible—dispositions and souls—when compared to the tangible natural qualities, constitutions, and temperaments of the world. Also, it is clear that both the material world and the Virtuous City are eternal entities. And finally, God is the governor of the Virtuous City and is responsible for creating both the world and the Virtuous City. So, we have a description of the Virtuous City that does not quite give the impression of a city in the material world. And we also have a claim that God is the governor and creator of both the Virtuous City and the world. Mahdi argues that this particular examination “explains the correspondence between the universe and the city and that the king needs to follow in God’s footsteps in founding and preserving the city. Therefore the founder of the excellent city must have a comprehensive knowledge of theoretical philosophy so as to understand how God governs the universe and to be able to imitate Him.”

We revert, and say that the first essence, which is the first light, is the light of lights and an endless light; not failing or ceasing to illumine and shine on the world of mind, everlastingly. Therefore the world of mind does not fail or pass away. This world of mind, being everlasting, produces its branch to rule over this world. I mean by ‘branch’ the

454 Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 121.
heavenly world and, in particular, the lords of that world. For if it did not accord with that world it would not govern this world. If it abandons the quest for the light which is above it, and occupies itself in governing this world, it is not easy for it. The first light is the governor of the intelligible world, the governor of the heavenly world is the intelligible world, and the governor of the sensible world is the heavenly world, all these governments being empowered by the first governor, he being the one who supplies them with the power to rule. The intelligible world is governed by the first essence, he being the first originator, and the governor of the heavenly world is the intelligible world, but the first originator is of enormous power, infinite in beauty, and therefore the intelligible world becomes beautiful in the extreme, shedding as it does beauty and light from the brightness.455

Perhaps this raises new issues concerning the ruler of the Virtuous City.

In the discussion of the ruler of the Virtuous City we see a particular connection between such a man and the Active Intellect. Now, we know that the Active Intellect is the last being in the intelligible world. In his Siyāsah, Fārābī calls this being the “Faithful Spirit” (al-rūḥ al-amīn or al-rūḥ al-qudus) because its purpose is to take care of the rational animal and attempt to bring him to happiness.456 And he calls its rank “the Kingdom” because it includes human beings who have attained ultimate happiness.457 The ruler of the Virtuous City, according to Fārābī, “holds the most perfect rank of humanity and has reached the highest degree of felicity. His soul is united as it were with the Active Intellect.”458 Fārābī claims that the ruler “can only attain this [union with the Active Intellect] by first acquiring the passive intellect, and then the intellect called the acquired; for …union with the Active Intellect results from possessing

456 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 32.5-32.10; tr. Druart, 32.5-32.10.
457 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 32.5-32.10; tr. Druart, 32.5-32.10.
458 Fārābī, Madīnah, 15.11; tr. Walzer, 15.11. See also Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-79.15; partial tr. Najjār, 49; tr. Druart, 79.5-79.15.
the acquired intellect.”

This ruler knows how the attainment of happiness is achieved and he is capable of guiding his citizens to felicity. Furthermore, Fārābī claims that because the ruler is united with the Active Intellect, he is essentially receiving revelation (wahy) from the First Cause via the Active Intellect. He declares “The rule of this man is the supreme rule; all other

459 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-80.5; partial tr. Najjār, 49-50; tr. Druart, 79.5-80.5.
Fārābī states,

For man receives revelation only when he attains this rank, that is, when there is no longer an intermediary between him and the Active Intellect; for the passive intellect is like matter and substratum to the acquired intellect, and the latter is like matter and substratum to the Active Intellect. It is then that the power that enables man to understand how to define things and actions and how to direct them toward happiness, emanates from the Active Intellect to the passive intellect.

460 Walzer, Virtuous City, 410.

461 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-80.5; partial tr. Najjār, 49-50; tr. Druart, 79.5-80.5. Fārābī’s Supreme Ruler receives divine revelation from the One via the Active Intellect. But this description is different from how the prophet receives revelation. Fārābī, in his description of prophecy, states:

It is not impossible, then, that when a man’s faculty of representation reaches its utmost perfection he will receive in his waking life from the Active Intellect present and future particulars of their imitations in the form of sensibles, and receive the imitations of the transcendent intelligibles and the other glorious existents and see them. This man will obtain through the particulars which he receives ‘prophecy’ [nubūwah] (supernatural awareness) of present and future events, and through the intelligibles which he receives prophecy of things divine. This is the highest rank of perfection which the faculty of representation can reach.

Fārābī, Madiḥah, 14.9; tr. Walzer, 14.9.
Walzer claims that this man is a true visionary. He is a prophet (nabīy). Walzer, Virtuous City, 421.

In Fārābī’s description of the supreme ruler, he writes:

There are thus two stages between the first stage of being a man and the Active Intellect. When the perfect Passive Intellect and the natural disposition become one thing in the way the compound of matter and form is one—and when the form of the humanity of this man is taken as identical with the Passive Intellect which has become actually intellect, there will be between this man and the Active Intellect only one stage. And when the natural disposition is made the matter of the Passive Intellect which has become actually intellect, and the Passive Intellect the matter of the Acquired Intellect, and the Acquired Intellect the matter of the Active Intellect, and when all this is taken as one and the same thing, then this man is the man on whom the Active Intellect has descended. When this occurs in both parts of his rational faculty, namely the theoretical and the practical rational faculties, and also in his representative faculty, then it is this man who receives Divine Revelation, and God Almighty grants him Revelation through the mediation of the Active Intellect, so that the emanation from God Almighty to the
human rulerships are inferior to it and are derived from it. Such is his rank. The men who are governed by the rule of this ruler are the virtuous."462 So Fārābī’s supreme ruler does not just hold the highest rank of the Virtuous City, he has the highest rank of all humanity. Moreover, to hold that all human rulerships are inferior and derive from this supreme ruler is to make this ruler analogous with The One, to whom all beings are inferior and from whom all are derived. This kind of association goes far beyond the relationship we have previously seen in which the supreme ruler is guiding his citizens to attain happiness, and by doing so, doing what The One wishes. It begins to look instead as if all other rulerships originate from this supreme rulership.463 Is the supreme rulership merely ancestral, an archetype,464 or is it an existence that emanates, as the One and the ten separate intelligibles do? If the supreme ruler is a being that emanates “all other human rulerships,”465 then can we suggest that this ruler does not necessarily reside in the material world? In his Fūsūl, Fārābī writes:

When at some time someone exists who is completely disposed by nature

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462 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-80.5; partial tr. Najjār, 49-50; tr. Druart, 79.5-80.5.
463 The derivation of all other human rulerships implies not just the virtuous rulerships, but all rulerships stem from this supreme rulership; so can we suggest that the rulerships for even the non-virtuous cities come from this supreme rulership? Nonetheless, this is beyond the scope of this paper.
464 Mircea Eliade has warned scholars that it is irresponsible to use this term in the post Jungian era without properly defining it. It is not being used here in the Jungian sense, i.e., “archetypes are structures of the collective unconscious”; instead I am simply using it to signify an original model. See Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), xiv.
465 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-80.5; partial tr. Najjār, 49-50; tr. Druart, 79.5-80.5.
for all of the virtues and they are then established in him by custom, this human being surpasses in virtue the virtues found among most people to the point that he almost goes beyond the human virtues to a higher class of humanity. The Ancients used to call this human being divine...he is of a higher rank according to them than being a statesman who serves one of the cities. Rather he governs all cities and is the king in truth.466

Now, it has been proposed that it is from the supreme rulership that all rulerships originate and it is the supreme ruler who governs the virtuous citizens. It is this supreme ruler who must establish the Virtuous City. Fārābī states,

“The ruler of this city must come to be in the first instance, and will subsequently be the cause of the rise of the city.”467 Once established, it is also this supreme ruler “who assigns to groups and to every individual in each group the rank they deserve, i.e., either a rank of service or one of rulership. So there are ranks close to his own, ranks slightly far from it, and others very far from it.”468 Walzer observes that once this city is founded, it “appears to be static and no longer developing; people always belong to the same ‘rank,’ one generation following the other in succession; it does not look as if any ‘change’ is contemplated or considered possible. The same differences appear to exist in the upper world: the souls join other souls, released before, which are similar to them both in rank and in individual qualities.”469

There is a similar orderliness found in the Madīnah. In his chapter concerning the afterlife, Fārābī states that “the kings of the excellent cities which succeed each other at different times are all of them like one single soul and are as it were one single king who remains the same all the time. When it

466 Fārābī, Fusūl, 33; tr. Butterworth, 33.
467 Fārābī, Madīnah, 15.5; tr. Walzer, 15.5.
468 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 83.10-84; partial tr. Najjār, 53; tr. Druart, 83.10-84.
469 Walzer, Virtuous City, 464.
happens that a number of such kings exist at the same time either in one city or many cities, they are all of them in the same way like one single king and their souls like one single soul.** Moreover, in his Siyāsah, Fārābī, though not discussing the afterlife, makes a similar claim. Fārābī states:

> If at any one time a group of these princes happens to reside in a single city, in a single nation, or in many nations, then this group is as it were a single prince because they agree in their endeavors, purposes, opinions, and ways of life. If they follow one another in time, their souls will form as it were a single soul, the one who succeeds will be following the way of life of his predecessors, and the living will be following in the way of the ones who have died.**

This association is also found in each of the classes of the Virtuous City. Fārābī states, “Equally when the people of each class of such a city succeed each other at different times they are all of them like one single soul which remains the same at all times.”** Furthermore, he states, “In the same way, when a (greater) number of people of one class exists at the same time, either in one city or in many excellent cities, their souls are like one soul, whether that class is a ruling class or a subordinate class.”** In examining this association, Walzer correctly states:

> To say: all kings are like one king, all the individuals of a particular class are like one individual, is similar to saying that the species ‘man’ is eternal while single human beings are born and die. This has become a kind of commonplace, which can be applied in various ways; cf. for

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**Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.1; tr. Walzer, 16.1.
**Al-Fārābī, Siyāsah, 80.10-81; partial translation of the second part by Najjār, 50; tr. Druart, 80.10-81.
**Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.1; tr. Walzer, 16.1. Walzer notes Henry Corbin’s claim that “all of the twelve Imāms of the Twelver-Shi’a are said to be one and the same light, one and the same essence, but exemplified in twelve different persons.” While this explains the rulers of the Virtuous City, it ignores the fact that the lower ranks of citizens are described in the same way. Walzer, Virtuous City, 461-462. See Henry Corbin, Histoire de la philosophie islamique, 1: Des origines jusqu’à la mort d’Averroès, avec la collaboration de Seyyed Hossein Nasr et Osman Yahya (Collection Idées, 38), [Paris, 1964] I, 74.
**Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.1; tr. Walzer, 16.1.
example Augustine: ‘The whole human race is like the life of one single man from Adam up to this century.’ The question of whether all the souls are one was discussed by Plotinus.”

However, Walzer ignores the reason why “the whole human race is like the life of one single man” or “all the souls are one.” For Plotinus, the World Soul is where all souls originate, thus they have a common essence, and it is also the place where souls reside before they enter into matter and it is where they will return. For Augustine, individual human souls stem from an existence that he calls Adam, an entity which may be equated with the Plotinian World Soul; thus, all individual souls reside in Adam before they enter into the material world. Consequently all souls have a common essence, i.e., Adam. It is important to examine the possibility that Farābī is following in this same vein with his concept of the Virtuous City.

With this in mind, let us reexamine Walzer’s statement. According to him, “To say: all kings are like one king, all the individuals of a particular class are like one individual, is similar to saying that the species ‘man’ is eternal while single human beings are born and die.”

Farābī explains how a species remains eternal. In Madīnah, he maintains:

It is not possible that one and the same thing should last perpetually as one in number, but its eternal (perpetual) permanence is established in its being one in species. In order that a thing remain one in species, the individuals of that species must at one time exist and last; then they must perish and other individuals of that species must take their place and last for some time; then they perish, and the place of the individuals which perish is, again, taken by other individuals of that species. And that happens perpetually in this way.

474 Walzer, Virtuous City, 461-462.
475 Walzer, Virtuous City, 461-462.
476 Farābī, Madīnah, 9.2; tr. Walzer, 9.2. Furthermore, Farābī states:
For the preservation of that which lasts as one in species, there must be other
Still, Fārābī is not discussing all men; rather, he seems to be exclusively concerned with the virtuous citizens. It is only the kings of the excellent cities that are like one single soul and it is only the virtuous citizens of each class that are like one single soul. In *Siyāsah*, he states:

> As one group of them passes away, and their bodies are destroyed, their souls have achieved salvation and happiness, and they are succeeded by other men who assume their positions in the city and perform their actions, the souls of the latter will also achieve salvation. As their bodies are destroyed, they join the rank of the former group that had passed away, they will be together with them in the way that incorporeal things are together, and the kindred souls within each group will be in a state of union with one another.  

Also, in *Madinah*, he claims:

> When one generation passes away, their bodies cease to exist and their souls are released and become happy and when other people succeed them in their ranks, these people take their place and perform their actions. When this generation passes away as well and is released [from matter], they occupy in their turn the same ranks of felicity as those who passed away before, and each joins those who resemble him in species, quantity, and quality.

From this it appears that only the kings and the citizens of the Virtuous City can be considered as belonging to an eternal species.

If only the virtuous ruler and virtuous citizens constitute a species that exists eternally, we must also examine the non-virtuous individuals to take the place of that which perishes: they arise and take the place of those which have perished. This can happen in two ways: either the first individuals exist together with other more recent ones—so that, when those first perish, these others take their place and thus at every moment in time an individual of that species exists, either in this place or in some other place; or the individual which takes the place of the first arises some time after the destruction of the first—so that there is an interval in which no individual of that species is in existence.

Fārābī, *Madinah*, 9.5; tr. Walzer, 9.5.

477 Fārābī, *Siyāsah*, 82.5-82.10; partial tr. Najjār, 52; tr. Druart, 82.5-82.10.

478 Fārābī, *Madinah*, 16.4; tr. Walzer, 16.4. As noted in chapter two, species essentially represents the arts of the world or one’s profession. The quantity represents the knowledge that one has of their art or profession and the quality is based upon the proficiency that one exudes in his particular art or profession.
citizens. We need only to look at the afterlife of these non-virtuous rulers and non-virtuous citizens to prove that they are not an eternal species. In Madinah, Farabi discusses what happens when the souls of the citizens of the Virtuous City and of non-virtuous cities separate from matter. The virtuous rulers and virtuous citizens attain ultimate happiness and so attain an eternal afterlife, which can only be described as felicitous. Moreover, as the number of virtuous souls increases, so does the enjoyment of each soul; happiness escalates with each generation. In contrast to the virtuous rulers and virtuous citizens, Farabi examines the “wicked” rulers and “wicked” citizens. Now, because the wicked rulers and citizens held the right views (i.e., the views of the virtuous), their souls are released from matter, but since they have produced bad dispositions in their souls through their bad actions, they will not attain happiness. Farabi claims that when the rational part of the soul becomes “completely isolated from the senses, it feels or becomes aware of the distress produced by these dispositions, so that it remains in great distress through all eternity.” And just as the virtuous citizens’ happiness increases with each generation, the misery of the wicked citizens will also increase as others join them. In a similar fashion, Farabi discusses the ruler and citizens of the “cities that went astray.” In this case, it is only the ruler who suffers eternal misery since he knew the truth and purposefully misled his citizens. Thus, Farabi considers the ruler who led his citizens astray to be a citizen of the wicked cities and the citizens under the rule

479 Farabi, Madinah, 16.8; tr. Walzer, 16.8.
480 Farabi, Madinah, 16.8; tr. Walzer, 16.8.
481 Farabi, Madinah, 16.8; tr. Walzer, 16.8.
482 Farabi, Madinah, 16.9; tr. Walzer, 16.9.
of this man will perish like “the people of the ignorant city.”\footnote{\textit{Farābī}, \textit{Madinah}, 16.9; tr. Walzer, 16.9.} He further examines the rulers and citizens that “deliberately changed”\footnote{\textit{Farābī}, \textit{Madinah}, 16.10; tr. Walzer, 16.10.} the views of the virtuous and once again Fārābī suggests that only the man who is responsible for the change will know everlasting wretchedness, since he deems this man to be a citizen of the wicked cities. Again, it appears that the citizens of this city will perish like “the people of the ignorant city.”\footnote{\textit{Farābī}, \textit{Madinah}, 16.7; tr. Walzer, 16.7.} Contrarily, in his discussion of the souls of the people of the ignorant cities, Fārābī states:

The souls of the people of the ignorant cities remain in a state of imperfection and necessarily require matter for their preservation, since no trace of truth whatsoever except the first intelligibles has been imprinted on them. Once the material substratum to which they owed their preservation perishes, those faculties of theirs, which needed that what has perished for their preservation, perishes as well. But the form of that body remains whose preservation was due to those faculties of the soul which perished, which naturally depend for their preservation on that which has perished, and those faculties remain whose subsistence depends on that which survives. Once this too perishes and dissolves into something else, the thing which has remained [in the first instance] becomes a form for that thing into which the remaining matter has dissolved. Whenever it afterwards happens that that is also dissolved into something else the thing which has remained becomes a kind of form for that into which it has dissolved. Eventually it dissolves into the elements. The last remaining thing becomes the form of the elements. After that things proceed differently: various existents arise out of those parts of the elements into which they have dissolved. When the mixture of those parts happens to be such as to bring forth a human being, it becomes again a form for a human being; but when it happens that the mixture is such as to produce another species of animal or non-animal, it becomes again a form for that being. These are the men who perish and proceed to nothingness, in the same way as cattle, beasts of prey and vipers.\footnote{Walzer comments on this gradual deterioration and how “the reverse process of becoming begins.” He claims: The elements are mixed again and new men, animals, plants and minerals are generated, in the same way as has been described before (chapter 9). It is slightly odd to be told that new human beings should be produced in this unusual manner; it not only...}
So, we see that the virtuous citizens are an eternal species. And the wicked citizens, who were once virtuous citizens, can also be considered an eternal species, albeit eternally miserable. It is only the people of the ignorant cities who appear to disintegrate into nothingness, and consequently, are not an eternal species.

How do we explain that some souls are eternal and others perish? In his discussion of the wicked rulers and citizens Fārābī asserts that either they all knew the truth and acted wrongly, or they were led astray by one who knew the truth, or they did not know the truth because someone deliberately distorted it. Thus, it is only the persons who know the truth, and are therefore virtuous citizens (or were at least once considered to be virtuous citizens), that are considered to be eternal species. In fact, Fārābī deems that having this “truth” or this knowledge is a prerequisite for the soul to be released from matter. He states, “The dispositions of the soul which the people of the wicked city have acquired through holding the right views release their souls from matter.”

In his *Siyāsah*, Fārābī claims that these citizens “once believed in, and cognized, the principles [of beings]; imagined and believed in, the actions by which to

contradicts the normal process of life—which has been described at some length in Chapter 12 (‘man produces man’), but it is scarcely compatible with al-Farābī’s conviction that the world and the human species are eternal.

Walzer suggests that this is a contradiction found within the Peripatetic tradition, thus claiming that Fārābī is not responsible for introducing such an inconsistency. Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 467. 487 Fārābī, *Madīnah*, 16.8; tr. Walzer, 16.8. In his discussion of the cities not aiming toward happiness, Fārābī claims that “the souls of such individuals remain chained to matter and do not reach that perfection by which they can separate from matter, so that when the matter ceases to exist they too will cease to exist.” Fārābī, *Siyāsah*, 83.5-83.10; partial tr. Najjār, 53; tr. Druart, 83.5-83.10. Colmo maintains that for Fārābī, “we acquire immortality through good actions.” But, it seems, that we cannot reach immortality without having the correct knowledge or views. See Colmo, *Breaking with Athens*, 119.
attain happiness.” Thus it would appear that the wicked rulers and their citizens were indeed at one stage virtuous citizens; thus they were, at one point, part of the Virtuous City. Can we say the same about the rulers and the people of the ignorant cities? Their souls are not released from matter, and so they perish into nothingness. The ignorant souls still had the first intelligibles provided by the Active Intellect, but did not use them to attain the truth or the right views. Hence, we can reasonably claim that the people of the ignorant cities were never virtuous citizens and therefore are not eternal.

Does this mean that the people of the ignorant cities were never a part of the Virtuous City? If we examine Fārābī’s Siyāsah, it appears that the people of the ignorant cities are actually the weeds (nawābit) or the “opposition” of the Virtuous City. Ilai Alon claims:

Of the fourteen groups of the Nawābit, three major parties and one subgroup share explicitly the goals of the ignorant. These groups are the Mutaqannisun (who are after honour [karāma], rule [riʿāsa], or wealth [yasar] the Muharrifa the group which I have labeled as (( those of ignorant goals)) [whose emphasis is laid on power (galaba ) ] and the ((distressed)) who are basically after honour or wealth.

Alon categorizes Fārābī’s Nawābit, or “weeds,” into six major parties and eight subgroups and argues that they were all a part of the Virtuous City. Alon states that they are citizens of the excellent city; however, Fārābī never actually calls them citizens. In his Siyāsah, he claims, “These then, are the classes of

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488 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 103.10-103.15; partial tr. Najjār, 73; tr. Druart, 103.10-103.15.
489 Ilai Alon, “Fārābī’s Funny Flora Al-Nawābit as ((Opposition))” in Arabica no. 37, 1990, 56.
490 Ibid., 66. Alon concludes “that the goals of the Ignorant Cities beyond the borders of the excellent ones are the same as those of the Nawābit within them.” Ibid.
491 Ibid., 56-57.
492 Ibid., 66. Fakhry claims that Fārābī does not view the “weeds” as citizens. They “will never constitute a city or even a significant community, but will always be a peripheral fringe of the
Weeds growing among the citizens of the city. With such opinions, they constitute neither a city nor a large multitude; rather they are submerged by the citizen body as a whole.⁴⁹³ Also, as we shall see in the next chapter, Fārābī stresses that in order to be a virtuous citizen one must have certain knowledge, but the “weeds” that can be considered ignorant do not appear to have attained this knowledge. While the people of the ignorant cities do not appear to be citizens of the Virtuous City, they do appear to have initially been a part of the city.

Therefore, the virtuous, the wicked, and the ignorant were all once components of the Virtuous City. So, we could claim that the Virtuous City is the origin, or genus, of the species man; for this reason, we could posit that Fārābī, like Plotinus and Augustine, sees that all souls are one. Like Plotinus’ World Soul and Augustine’s Christianized World Soul, Adam, Fārābī’s Virtuous City is the origin or genus of all souls, and so, its souls have a common essence, that of the Virtuous City. The Virtuous City, again like Plotinus’ World Soul, is the place where souls reside before descending into matter and it is where all souls strive to return. In his Fiṣūl, he claims that the “regime [taken] without qualification is not a genus for the rest of the sorts of regimes, but is rather a

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⁴⁹³ Fārābī, Siyāsah, 107.15-107.20; partial tr. Najjār, 76; tr. Druart, 107.15-107.20. Michael Kochin notes that some of the weeds will eventually become philosophers and those who follow philosophy. In his Madinah, Fārābī writes, “When he rejects all the symbols as false and he has the strength and gift to understand the truth, he will be placed into the class of those who take the philosophers as their authorities. If he is not yet satisfied with that and desires to acquire philosophical wisdom and has himself the strength and gift for it, he will be made to know it.

Michael S. Kochin, “Weeds: Cultivating the Imagination in Medieval Arabic Political Philosophy” in Journal of the History of Ideas 60.3 (1999), 404; Fārābī, Madinah, 17.4; tr. Walzer, 17.4.
kind of ambiguous name for many things that are consistent with it while differing in their essences and natures. There is no partnership between the virtuous regime and the rest of the sorts of ignorant regimes.” On the contrary, despite Farabi’s assertion, the Virtuous City appears to be the genus to which the species man belongs whether they are virtuous, wicked, or ignorant. A similar pattern is found in the Arabic Plotinus wherein it states:

Plato said…. If mind is one and multiple, then soul is one and multiple: the many and various souls come into being from the one soul, just like the many forms from one genus, amongst them the better and nobler and the worse and viler. Just so are the many and various souls, although they come from one soul. For some are better than others and some are worse than others, the reason being that some of the souls are intellectual in actuality, while others are intellectual not in actuality, because they have a weak mind.495

If all souls were once a part of the Virtuous City, it appears to be more difficult than ever to regard this city as an earthly city. But it also makes it even harder to claim that Farabi’s Virtuous City is an ideal, like Plato’s Republic. It seems neither to be a paradigm for an actual city nor is it that heavenly city of which Plato writes, “You mean that he’ll be willing to take part in the politics of the city we were founding and describing, the one that exists in theory, for I don’t think it exists anywhere on earth. But perhaps, I said, there is a model of it in heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no

494 Farabi, Fusul, 92; tr. Butterworth, 92.
If we continue to allow the Virtuous City to be examined as an ideal, then we must ask: why would Fa\text{"}r\text{"}a\text{"}b\text{"}i include non-virtuous citizens in his perfect city? Furthermore, if we permit the Virtuous City to be examined as an earthly city, then we should also ask: why would Fa\text{"}r\text{"}a\text{"}b\text{"}i link happiness, in this life and in the next, to a temporal city that might never be established or even if it is established can be destroyed? If all souls originate in the Virtuous City, then it cannot be an ideal city or an earthly city: it must be an actual entity that exists in the intelligible world and which is analogous to the Plotinian World Soul.

If we claim that the Virtuous City is the Plotinian World Soul, and therefore the place to which all souls strive to return, then is the description of the Virtuous City analogous to the description of the afterlife? Walzer, as noted above, observed that once the Virtuous City has been founded it “appears to be static and no longer developing; people always belong to the same ‘rank,’ one generation following the other in succession; it does not look as if any ‘change’ is contemplated or considered possible. The same differences appear to exist in the upper world: the souls join other souls, released before, which are similar to them both in rank and in individual qualities.\text{"} Fa\text{"}r\text{"}a\text{"}b\text{"}i writes:

When one generation passes away, their bodies cease to exist and their souls are released and become happy and when other people succeed them in their ranks, these people take their place and perform their actions. When this generation passes away as well and is released [from matter], they could occupy in their turn the same ranks of felicity as those who passed away before, and each joins those who resemble him in species, quantity and quality. And since they are not bodies their association, whatever number it were to reach, would never get in each other’s way, since they are not in space at all, and they do not meet and join.

\text{"}496\text{"} Plato, \textit{Republic} 592-592b.
\text{"}497\text{"} Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 464.
mutually in the same way bodies do. The more similar separate souls grow in number and join each other—in the way that one intelligible joins another intelligible—the more increases the self-enjoyment of each of them.498

Are we to presume that the souls who have attained happiness exist in an empty space of nothingness, somewhere between the last incorporeal existent and the material world? Why is Fārābī silent about where the immortal souls will reside? Even Walzer accuses Fārābī of being too abstract in his description of where this Paradise is, since he could have chosen any of the countless destinations that the ancient philosophers had proposed.499 Moreover, why does he not discuss this place for the perfected souls in his cosmic diagram? Or has Fārābī in fact been discussing this place all along, i.e., as the Virtuous City?

Conclusion.

As we have seen, Augustine’s universe is not identical to Plotinus’, but his City of God is comparable in both structure and function to the Plotinian World Soul. The City of God is both the original homeland for the angels who remained steadfast and the future abode of those human souls who will achieve happiness. Fārābī’s description of the universe shows it to be similar to Plotinus’ cosmos. His Virtuous City both looks and functions like the Plotinian World Soul. In fact, Plotinus describes the World Soul as a city and both Augustine’s City of God and Fārābī’s Virtuous City correspond to Plotinus’ description.500 Augustine’s City of God, which exists within the realm of

498 Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.4; tr. Walzer, 16.4.
499 Walzer, Virtuous City, 464. Here, Walzer notes only the Stoics, who presumed that the souls would inhabit the Milky Way. And further he questions why Fārābī does not join these souls to the Active Intellect, but as we have argued perhaps Fārābī has done so. Ibid.
500 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4.
Intellect or within the Plotinian *Nous*, is the proper place of all souls and it is the place where all souls attain eternal rest; thus, the City of God meets the criteria for ultimate happiness. Does Fārābī’s Virtuous City meet the criteria for ultimate happiness? As noted, there are earthly elements in the description of the Virtuous City, but there is evidence to support a different examination of this city. We have examined a description that suggests that the Virtuous City is not an earthly city. Fārābī’s supreme ruler has a special connection to the One via the Active Intellect and this supreme ruler also functions in a similar manner as the One. Fārābī’s supreme ruler has the highest rank of humanity and is the source of all other human rulerships. Also, Fārābī claims that anyone who is ruled by this supreme ruler is a virtuous citizen. It is this ruler who must establish the Virtuous City. Fārābī’s Virtuous City also appears to be static in that once founded, it remains perfect and unchanging. In fact, the only changes discussed are the generations of souls following each other in succession. Now, Fārābī has claimed that it is the virtuous citizen who will achieve the ultimate happiness of a felicitous afterlife. But it is only, the souls of the virtuous citizens or those who were once virtuous citizens who are even considered to form an eternal species. Nevertheless, all souls, the virtuous, the wicked, and the ignorant, were once a part of this city: the Virtuous City represents the origin of all men. And yet, not all souls will return to the Virtuous City, as not all souls become virtuous citizens. We must now ask what defines a virtuous citizen and further, how does one become a virtuous citizen?
Chapter Five
Citizenship

Introduction.

Like Plotinus, Fārābī and Augustine essentially examine two planes of existence. The first level is the intelligible world, which is the proper place for all souls. The second level of existence is the material world. For Plotinus, the World Soul is the “homeland” of all souls and he claims that the souls that have descended into the material world have a responsibility to return to the intelligible world.\footnote{Plotinus, \textit{Enn.} I.6.8; Rist, \textit{Plotinus}, 155.} It appears that both Augustine and Fārābī have similar theories. As noted, Augustine’s City of God exists in the intelligible world; it is not where souls originate, but it is the place where angels reside and where happiness is attained. Adam, the Christianized World Soul, is not only the source from which all souls come; as Augustine affirms, Adam is also responsible for the origin of the City of Man. The City of Man represents, for Augustine, the earthly cities. I have argued that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is also a city that exists in the intelligible world and, as we shall see, his non-virtuous cities too represent the cities in the material world. So, if we are in the material world, i.e., the earthly cities, how do we get to these cities in the intelligible world and thus achieve happiness? In other words, how do we become citizens of Augustine’s City of God or Fārābī’s Virtuous City?

It is important first to define citizenship. Both Augustine and Fārābī have specific criteria in their definitions of a citizen. Since they are only discussing two types of cities, they are only discussing two types of citizens.
The ultimate criterion for both is the aim of the individual. Either the citizen lives according to God or the One or he lives according to man. Virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God must have a certain knowledge and live a certain way of life. Both Fārābī and Augustine insist that in order to do this we must know our ultimate end.

I. Two Levels of Existence.

We know that, for Plotinus, there are individual souls that exist both in the intelligible world and in the material world. O’Daly notes a peculiar instance of political analogy in the thought of Plotinus. Plotinus “compares harmony in the individual, when the mind rules the body and the passions, with harmony in the city, and he talks of an intelligible ‘city above’ and a ‘city of the things below, ordered according to the things above’.” 502 Nevertheless, the intelligible world, for Plotinus, is a “homeland.” 503 Plotinus writes that “the individual souls, certainly, have an intelligent desire consisting in the impulse to return to itself springing from the principle from which they came into being, but they also possess a power directed to the world here below, like a light which depends from the sun in the upper world but does not grudge of its abundance to what comes after it….Souls, then become, one might say, amphibious, compelled to live by turns the life There, and the life here: those which are able to be more in the company of the Intellect live the life There more, but those whose normal condition is by nature or chance, the opposite, live more the life here below.” 504

502 O’Daly, Augustine’s City of God, 59. Plotinus, Enn., IV.4.17
504 Plotinus, Enn., IV.8.4.
For when these individual souls exist in the material world, many no longer live in accordance with the *Nous* or the One; hence, these souls can become weak and isolated and they can even forget their true home.\(^{505}\) Nevertheless, Plotinus maintains that by contemplating what is above, i.e., the intelligible world, these individual souls can find their way back; and so, achieve happiness.\(^{506}\) Indeed, according to Plotinus, all men have the potential, and therefore the responsibility, to perfect themselves.\(^{507}\) It should be clear that, for Plotinus, souls exist both in the intelligible world and in the material world; and so, Plotinus is discussing two levels of existence.

While the World Soul, for Plotinus, is where all souls come from and where they strive to return, the entity that Augustine calls Adam is where all souls have their origin. Augustine’s City of God is where the angels who remained steadfast with God have always resided and it is the place where those who attain happiness will reach. As we have seen, the City of God is created by God and exists in the intelligible world. Now, we know that, according to Augustine, all men descend from Adam; consequently, the origin of the City of Man, for Augustine, is also Adam. As a result, the cities in the material world stem from Adam. D. J. MacQueen claims that

> For Augustine the beginnings of the *civitas*, as an organized expression of man’s political and social life, antedate the earliest records of secular history. Nevertheless this institution stems from a unity itself prior to even the most ancient forms of communal existence. The unity here in question is actually one of ‘racial stock’ (genus) or origin; and the fellowship to which it has given rise precedes and in a sense transcends the entire domain of the social and of secular politics. Now the source

\(^{505}\) Ibid.  
\(^{506}\) Ibid.  
\(^{507}\) Rist, *Plotinus*, 155; Plotinus, *Enn.*, 1.6.8
and nature of this fellowship depend upon the fact that all men without exception, and irrespective of nationality, language, or physical appearance, are descended from Adam—the first representative of the human race and its patriarch.  

Augustine writes:

Now Cain was the first son born to those two parents of the human race, and he belonged to the City of man; the second son, Abel, belonged to the City of God. We find that, in every case, as the apostle says, ‘that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is animal; and afterward that which is spiritual’. So it is that each man, because he derives his origin from a condemned stock, it is first necessarily evil and fleshly, because he comes from Adam; but if, being reborn, he advances in Christ, he will afterwards be good and spiritual. So it is also with the whole human race. When those two cities began to run their course of birth and death, the first to be born was a citizen of this world, and the second was a pilgrim in this world, belonging to the City of God. The latter was predestined by grace and chosen by grace; by grace he was a pilgrim below, and by grace he was a citizen above. So far as he himself is concerned, he arises from the same lump which was wholly condemned originally; but God, like a potter—and this simile is not impudent, but wisely introduced by the apostle—made ‘out of the same lump, one vessel unto honour, and the other unto dishonour’. But the vessel unto dishonor was made first, and afterwards came the vessel unto honour; for in every case, as I have said already, man is first reprobate. But though it is of necessity that we begin in this way, we do not of necessity remain thus; for later comes the noble state towards which we may advance, and in which we may abide when we have attained it. Hence, though not every bad man will become good, it is nonetheless true that no one will be good who was not originally bad. Yet the sooner each man changes for the better, the sooner will he secure for himself the title belonging to his attainment and hide his former name under the later one. It is written, then, that Cain founded a city, whereas Abel, a pilgrim, did not found one. For the City of Saints is on high, although it produces citizens here below, in whose persons it is a pilgrim until the time of its kingdom shall come. Then, it will call together all those citizens as they rise again in their bodies; and then they will be given the promised kingdom, where they will reign with their Prince, the king eternal, world without end.  

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508 D.J. MacQueen, “The Origin and Dynamics of Society and the State According to St. Augustine” *Augustinian Studies* vol. 4 (1973), 78-79.
509 Augustine, *City*, Bk. XV ch.1.
Thus, the City of Man, it would seem, stems from Adam and this city represents the cities that exist in the material world. While Augustine is indeed discussing two levels of existence he makes it clear that all men begin their journey toward happiness in the material world or in the City of Man. Nonetheless, they do not have to become citizens of this City of Man.

We have also speculated that Fārābī’s Virtuous City exists in the intelligible world, and that it too is an eternal city. Strauss insists:

[Fārābī] declares that not only the happiness of the non-philosophers—of the citizens as citizens—, but the very perfection, and therewith the happiness of the philosophers themselves is impossible except in the virtuous city whose most important part are the philosophers. He calls the virtuous city emphatically ‘an other city’.... ‘The other city’ stands midway between ‘this world’ and ‘the other world,’ in so far as it is an earthly city indeed, but a city existing, not actually, but only ‘in speech.’

Yet again, we confront the question of whether the Virtuous City is an earthly city or a city that exists only in speech, i.e., exists only as an ideal, as found in Plato’s Republic. Strauss claims that it must exist in order for its citizens to attain happiness. While Strauss continues the discussion with Fārābī’s Plato by investigating how the Virtuous City could be actualized and by whom, he never offers a definitive answer. Even more significantly Strauss argues that, for Fārābī, “philosophy and the perfection of philosophy and hence happiness do not require—this is Fārābī’s last word on the subject—the establishment of the perfect political community: they are possible, not only in this world, but even

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511 Plato, Republic 592-592b.
512 Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato”, 379.
in these cities, the imperfect cities.” Strauss uses this statement to further his theory that it is only the philosophers who attain happiness, but as we have already suggested, this is so only because the Virtuous City already exists within the intelligible world; an earthly image of this city is not required.

Strauss, while persisting in this vein, does make an interesting point concerning the non-virtuous cities. He emphasizes that Fārābī’s imperfect cities represent “the world as it actually is and as it will always be.” Crone, too, sees the imperfect cities as cities that would be familiar to Fārābī. She claims that “al-Fārābī’s thought on imperfect constitutions tells us much about his perception of his own world. The overwhelming impression is of alienation. He lived under rulers he disliked, eclipsed by court philosophers, theologians and jurists that he despised, outraged by the intense competition for wealth and power around him and even more so by the hypocrisy, the intellectual manipulation, the self-serving argumentation and the downright dishonesty with which it was accompanied.” In examining the various imperfect regimes, Crone cites several groups that Fārābī could be alluding to such as “the elite in

513 Ibid., 381. See fn 57 where he cites “Fārābī, Plato,” 32; 23;24;25; 30.22; 31;32.22,15. Strauss is probably referring to Fārābī’s Siyāsah, wherein Fārābī claims that philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets are found within the ignorant cities or at least the democratic city. Even so, this statement shows two ranks of the Virtuous City, the philosophers being the first rank and the rhetoricians and poets in the second. Furthermore, Fārābī claims that “it is also possible to glean from it certain [men who form] parts of the virtuous city.” Fārābī, Siyāsah, 101-101.5; partial tr. Najjār, 71; tr. Druart, 101-101.5.

514 Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 381.

Fārābī’s own Baghdad,” “the Turks,” “the Arabs,” etc. If, as we have argued, Fārābī’s Virtuous City is a city that exists in the intelligible world (it is the genus of all souls and it is the place of which all men strive to return in order to attain ultimate happiness), then we must ask, are the non-virtuous cities cities that exist in the material world? If we accept Strauss’s claim, then, we, Fārābī’s audience, are living in the material world, i.e., in the non-virtuous cities, and so our primary goal, it would seem, is to become citizens of that Virtuous City. Indeed, for Fārābī, our journey toward happiness begins in the material world. Fārābī tells us that in order to achieve theoretical and practical perfection and ultimately attain supreme happiness the soul must be in the body for a period of time. For Fārābī writes:

A group of people are of the opinion that the human being who is not wise becomes wise only by separation of the soul from the body, in that the body remains without having a soul—and that is death. If he were wise before that, his wisdom would thereby be increased, completed, and perfected, or would become more perfect and more virtuous. Therefore, they are of the opinion that death is a perfection and that the soul’s being united with the body is a constraint. Others are of the opinion that the evil human being is evil due only to the soul’s being united with the body and that he becomes good with its being separated….Others are of the opinion that the separation of the soul from the body is not a separation in place nor a separation in idea, nor is the body destroyed while the soul survives or the soul destroyed while the body survives without possessing a soul. Rather, the meaning of the soul’s being separated is that for its constitution it does not need the body to be its matter, nor in anything pertaining to its actions does it need to use a tool that is a body or use a faculty in a body. Nor in anything pertaining to its actions does it at all need to have recourse to an action of a faculty in a body. For as long as it is in need of one of those things, it is not separated. That pertains only to the soul particularly characteristic of the human being, namely, the theoretical intellect. For when it comes to this state, it becomes separated from the body regardless of whether that body is living in that
it is nourished and is sense perceptive, or whether the faculty by which is nourished and is sense perceptive has already been abolished. For if with respect to anything pertaining to its actions it comes not to need sense perception or imagination, it will already have come to the afterlife. Then its forming a concept of the essence of the first principle will be more perfect, since the intellect will have seized its essence without needing to form a concept of it by means of a relationship or an example. *It does not arrive at this state except by its previous need for having recourse to the bodily faculties and their actions for performing its [own] actions. This is the afterlife in which a human being sees his Lord, not being defrauded in his seeing nor disquieted.*

So, it appears that Fārābī deems it necessary to be in the material world in order to attain both theoretical and practical perfection and consequently achieve ultimate happiness. Moreover, if our claim that the Virtuous City exists in the intelligible world is correct and if the non-virtuous cities, as Strauss has proposed, are indeed cities that exist in the material world, then Fārābī, too, is discussing two levels of existence.

II. Augustine’s Definition of a Citizen.

How, then, do we define a citizen? Vernon Bourke claims that, for Augustine, “Men only have to look up in order to contemplate the eternal truths. Likewise, they only have to glance downward to lose all notion of what is of permanent value.”

Because of free will, the soul is able to direct its gaze and

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517 Fārābī, *Fusūl*, 86-87; tr. Butterworth, 87 (italics mine). This rather lengthy quote tells us a few things. If we reexamine Fārābī’s claim: “Since we are mixed up with matter and since matter is the cause of our substances being remote from the First Substance, the nearer our substances draw to it, the more exact and the truer will necessarily be our apprehension of it. Because the nearer we draw to separating ourselves from matter, the more complete will be our apprehension of the First Substance. We come nearer to it only by becoming actual [or ‘actually’] intellect. When we are completely separated from matter, our mental apprehension of the First will be at its most perfect.” In both of these passages Fārābī is talking about theoretical perfection—a theoretical perfection that requires a body soul connection. Fārābī, *Madinah*, 1.11; tr. Walzer, 1.11.

518 Vernon J. Bourke, “The City of God and History” in *The City of God: a Collection of Critical Essays*, 292. Augustine writes: “‘O God of hosts, turn us and show us your face, and we shall be
Bourke suggests that this causes the soul to choose between two kinds of love.

Augustine writes, “Two cities, then, have been created by two loves: that is, the earthly by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly by love of God extending to contempt of self.”\(^{519}\) MacQueen further notes that, for Augustine, “to know the object of a people’s love is to know that people.”\(^{520}\)

We know that Augustine is discussing two cities, the City of God and the City of Man, and therefore he is only discussing two types of citizens. In his *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine writes:

> I divide the human race into two orders. The one consists of those who live according to man, and the other of those who live according to God. Speaking allegorically, I also call these two orders two Cities: that is, two societies of men, one of which is predestined to reign in eternity with God, and the other of which will undergo eternal punishment with the devil. But this is their end, of which we are to speak hereafter. For the time being, since enough has been said of the origins of these Cities, whether in the angels, whose number we do not know, or in the first two human beings, it seems to me that I should now undertake to relate their history from the time when those first two human beings began to beget offspring down to the time when the begetting of offspring will cease. For the history of the two Cities of which we are speaking extends throughout the whole of this time or age in which the dying pass away and the newly-born take their place.\(^{521}\)

Indeed, for Augustine, these citizens are “fundamentally marked by the tendency of their wills, toward God or self.”\(^{522}\) So, for Augustine, it is quite clear that

\(^{519}\) Augustine, *City* Bk. XIV. Ch. 28.

\(^{520}\) MacQueen, “The Origin and Dynamics of Society,” 92.

\(^{521}\) Augustine, *City* Bk. XV.ch. 1.

\(^{522}\) Richard J. Dougherty, “Citizen” in *Augustine Through the Ages*, 194. See also Hiram Canton, *Saint Augustine’s Critique of Politics*, 438-441; Kaufman, *Redeeming Politics*
those citizens whose love is God are citizens of the City of God and
those citizens whose love is self are indeed citizens of the City of Man.

In accord with these two aims, citizenship, for both the City of God and
the City of Man, is seen to be universal for Augustine. Dougherty concurs and
adds, “What distinguishes this conception of the citizens most notably from
classical writers on this topic is precisely the universality of citizenship in
Augustine’s view, in contrast to the ancient view which intimately connected
the citizen and the particular political order.”523 In his examination of the cities
of man, O’Daly insists that, for Augustine, “states are judged by their
approximation to, or derivation from, the ideal embodied in the concept of the
City of God.”524 Fortin agrees, claiming that, for Augustine, the various cities of
man, whether they are democracies, monarchies, aristocracies, or a combination
of these types of government, are organized in such a way as to be beneficial for
only a minority of the citizens, or leaders, of the city and are not advantageous
for all citizens.525 Augustine is not claiming that they are all evil, but that they
are substandard in comparison with the City of God. Fortin claims, “Augustine
had no interest in demonstrating that the cities and nations of the earth were true
populi. His basic purpose is rather to show that they did not have everything
that a populus could and should have. They were deficient precisely as regards
justice; and without justice no city can rightfully claim the title of populus or res

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523 Richard J. Dougherty, “Citizen” in Augustine Through the Ages, 194. See also Peter Burnell,
“The Problem of Service to Unjust Regimes in Augustine’s City of God,” in The City of God: a
Collection of Critical Essays, 38.
524 O’Daly, Augustine’s City of God, 210.
publica.” While Augustine offers copious discourses on the cities of man, we shall examine just one example found in his *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine writes:

I shall demonstrate that, according to the definitions proposed by Scipio in Cicero’s book *De republica*, there never was a Roman commonwealth. I shall do this as briefly and as clearly as I can. Scipio briefly defines a commonwealth as ‘the property of a people’. If this is a true definition, however, there never was a Roman commonwealth, for the Roman state was never ‘the property of a people’ which the definition requires a commonwealth to be. Scipio defined a ‘people’ as a multitude ‘united in fellowship by common agreement as to what is right and by a community of interest’. In the course of the discussion, he explains what he means by ‘common agreement as to what is right’, showing that a commonwealth cannot be maintained without justice. Where, therefore, there is no true justice there can be no right. For that which is done according to right is inevitably a just act, whereas nothing that is done unjustly can be done according to right. But the unjust institutions of men are neither to be called right nor supposed to be such; for even men themselves say that ‘right’ [*ius*] is that which flows from the fount of justice [*iustitia*]. As for the definition of justice commonly offered by certain persons who do not understand the matter rightly, that it is ‘the interest of the stronger’: this is false. Where there is no true justice, then, there can be no association of men ‘united in fellowship by common agreement as to what is right’, and therefore no people according to the definition of Scipio or Cicero. And if there is no people then there is no ‘property of a people’, but only a multitude of some kind, not worthy of the name of a people. If, therefore, a commonwealth is ‘the property of a people’, and if there is no ‘people’ where there is no ‘common agreement as to what is right’, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then it follows beyond doubt that where there is no justice there is no commonwealth. Moreover, justice is that virtue which gives to each his due. What kind of justice is it, then, that takes a man away from the true God and subjects him to impure demons? Is this giving to each his due? Or are we to call a man unjust if he takes a piece of property away from one who bought it and hands it over to someone who had no right to it, yet just if he takes himself away from the lordship of the God who made him, and serves evil spirits?

So, while Augustine spends half of his *De Civitate Dei* examining the City of Man, he is primarily concerned with the aims of these cities; in a sense, he is

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527 Augustine, *City* Bk. XIX. Ch. 21.
only discussing the loves of these cities. Hiram Canton raises some of the fundamental concerns that Augustine has with the City of Man. In his view, Augustine perceives the City of Man as “an imitation of God in that its sole objective is the glory of universal sovereignty.” Now, we know that one of the criterions for happiness is that it must be eternal and that the major flaw that Augustine finds in pagan philosophy is the claim that happiness can be attained on earth. Augustine writes, “With wondrous vanity, these philosophers have wished to be happy here and now, and to achieve blessedness by their own efforts.” Canton stresses that “ultimately, the delusion of the human city, and antiquity in particular, is its perverted imitation of God. Its attempt to secure happiness by its own efforts is brought to grief by the simple fact of mortality.” For Augustine, true happiness will never be attained in the City of Man, that is, in the material world.

What distinguishes a citizen of the City of God from a citizen of the City of Man? When Augustine speaks of a citizen of the City of God, he is not merely discussing Christians. Fortin claims that Augustine does not exclude those who are not members of the Catholic Church nor does he include all members of the Church. So, for Augustine, like Fārābī, religion does not appear to be a deciding factor in citizenship. In his Madīnah, Fārābī writes that “it is possible that excellent nations and excellent cities exist whose religions differ,

528 Canton, Saint Augustine’s Critique of Politics, 438.
529 Augustine, City Bk. XIX. Ch. 4.
530 Canton, Saint Augustine’s Critique of Politics, 449.
although they have as their goal one and the same felicity and the very same aim.”

In fact, for Augustine, “Anybody who is wholly dedicated to the pursuit of happiness and moral virtue is implicitly a citizen of the City of God and anybody who abandons virtue for vice is ipso-facto excluded from it.”

We know that Augustine insists that all men desire happiness, but not all men attain it because they confuse true happiness with earthly happiness.

What, then must a citizen know and do? Augustine deems that knowledge comes from God and so it is a divine knowledge and once it is known it leaves the knower with a decision to make. It also provides the knower with what he must do in order to attain happiness or salvation. For Augustine, “The pagan philosophers correctly defined happiness in terms of virtue or excellence, that is to say, in terms of the highest goals to which human beings can aspire, but they are unable to show the way to these goals.”

He writes:

At that time, after reading the books of the Platonists and learning from them to seek for immaterial truth, I turned my attention to your ‘invisible nature understood through the things which are made’ (Rom. 1:20). But from the disappointment I suffered I perceived that the darkness of my soul would not allow me to contemplate these sublimities. Yet I was certain that you are infinite without being infinitely diffused through finite space. I was sure that you truly are, and are always the same; that you never become other or different in any part or by any movement of position, whereas all other things derive from you, as is proved by the fact that they exist. Of these conceptions I was certain; but to enjoy you

532 Fârâbî, Madînâh, 17.2; tr. Walzer, 17.2.
534 Fortin, “Augustine and the Hermeneutics of Love” in The Birth of Philosophic Christianity, 5. See Augustine, Conf., Bk. VII. xx.26
I was too weak. I prattled on as if I were expert, but unless I had sought your way in Christ our Saviour (Titus I: 4), I would have been not expert but expunged. I began to want to give myself airs as a wise person. I was full of my punishment, but I shed no tears of penitence. Worse still, I was puffed up with knowledge (I Cor. 8: 1). Where was the charity which builds on the foundation of humility which is Christ Jesus? When would the Platonist books have taught me that? I believe that you wanted me to encounter them before I came to study your scriptures. Your intention was that the manner in which I was affected by them should be imprinted in my memory, so that when later I had been made docile by your books and my wounds were healed by your gentle fingers, I would learn to discern and distinguish the difference between presumption and confession, between those who see what the goal is but not how to get there and those who see the way which leads to the home of bliss, not merely as an end to be perceived but as a realm to live in. For if I had first been formed in mind by your holy books, and if you had made me know your sweetness by familiarity with them, and then I had thereafter met those volumes, perhaps they would have snatched me away from the solid foundation of piety. Or if I had remained firm in the conviction which I had imbibed to my soul’s health, I might have supposed that the same ideas could be gained from those books by someone who had read only them.535

Furthermore, in Book XIX of his De Civitate Dei, Augustine begins a lengthy exposition of his rejection of the notion that happiness could ever be found in philosophic contemplation. While the devil is in the details, I will provide a foretaste of what Augustine sets out to do in this book. Augustine writes:

I see that I must next discuss the proper ends of these two cities, the earthly and the Heavenly. First, then, let me expound, as fully as the plan of this work permits, the arguments advanced by mortals in their efforts to create happiness for themselves in the midst of the unhappiness of this life. I shall do this in order to make clear the difference between their vain beliefs and the hope which God gives us: a hope which will be fulfilled in the true blessedness which He will bestow upon us. And I shall do it not only by calling upon divine authority, but also, for the sake of the unbelievers, by making as much reason as possible. Now the philosophers have devised a great multitude of different arguments concerning the supreme ends of good and evil. They have devoted the greatest possible attention to this question in the attempt to discover

535 Augustine, Conf., Bk. VII. xx.26. (italics mine)
what makes a man happy. For our Final Good is that for the sake of which other things are to be desired, while it is itself to be desired for its own sake; and the Final Evil is that for which other things are to be avoided, while it is itself to be avoided on its own account. Thus, when we here speak of the ‘final’ good, we do not mean a ‘last’ good in the sense that, after it, good is now finished so that it does not exist; rather, we mean the ‘end’ whereby it is perfected and fulfilled. Again, by the ‘final’ evil we do not mean the finish of evil whereby it ceases to be, but the final end to which its harmful effects lead us. These two ends, then, are the Supreme Good and the Supreme Evil. And, as I have said, the quest for these, and the desire for the attainment of the Supreme Good in this life and the avoidance of the Supreme Evil, has been the object of the labours of those who have made the pursuit of wisdom their profession in the midst of the vanity of this world. And, though they have erred in many different ways, nature itself has not permitted them to wander too far from the path of truth; so that there were none who did not place the Supreme Good and the Supreme Evil in one of three locations: in the soul, in the body, or in both. Beginning from the division of the sects of philosophy into three classes, as it were, Marcus Varro, in his book De philosophia, has by diligent and subtle study identified a range of teachings so broad that, by employing certain principles of differentiation, he has found it easy to distinguish 288 sects in all: not ones already in existence, that is, but sects which could possibly exist.536

Fortin, too, notes that Augustine came to reject the notion that happiness was to be found in philosophic contemplation and instead found it in the “Christian ideal of the love of God and neighbor.”537 According to Fortin, Augustine claims that “people are happy when they are at one with themselves and with one another, and they achieve this harmony when justice prevails both within

536 Augustine, City Bk. XIX. 1. See also Bk. XIX.4 where Augustine addresses “what Christians believe as to the Supreme Good and Evil, as against the philosophers, who have supposed that the Supreme Good lies in themselves.”

Augustine further maintains that the philosophers knew that true justice could never be realized on earth; thus the ideal city is merely a “city in speech.” For Augustine, it is Christ who “both reveals the true goal of human existence and furnishes the means whereby it may be attained. . . . [for] anyone who is ‘taught of God’ (Isaiah 54:13; John 6:45) has been given simultaneously both ‘to know what he ought to do and to do what he knows’.” Thus, loving God and neighbor is, for Augustine, both knowledge and action. He insists that “in these precepts, a man finds three things which he is to love: God, himself, and his neighbor; for a man who loves God does not err in loving himself. It follows, therefore, that he will take care to ensure that his neighbor also loves God, since he is commanded to love his neighbor as himself.”

Augustine writes:

We are taught to love this good with all our hearts, with all our mind and with all our strength. We ought to be led to this good by those who love us, and we ought to lead those whom we love to it. Thus are fulfilled those two commandments upon which hang all the Law and the prophets: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul’; and ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ For in order that a man may know what it is to love himself, an end has been appointed for him to which he is to refer all that he does, so that he may be blessed; for he who loves himself desires nothing else than to be blessed. And this end is attained by drawing near to God. And so, when one who already knows what it is to love himself is commanded to love his neighbour as himself, what else is being commanded than that he should do all that he can to encourage his neighbour to love God? This is the worship of God; this is true religion; this is right piety; this is the service which is due to God alone.
R.A. Markus understands that, for Augustine, the two chief commandments to love God and one’s neighbor require something of their followers. “The latter must include having consideration for one’s fellow men, encouraging them to love God, and being prepared to be thus encouraged by others.” He claims that, for Augustine, this begins in the household and then extends outward to others in society. In this same vein MacQueen asserts that, for Augustine, this notion of harmony is in effect achieving justice. So, he claims that, in essence, Augustine replaces justice with love. In order for a person to comprehend true justice that person must know that God is his final and supreme end.

Now, it is generally known that the pagan cyclical theory of history was prevalent throughout Augustine’s life. With the eschatological aspects found in Christianity, this cycle could presumably end. Bourke claims that “the dominating ancient view was that man lived like a puppet bound to the wheel of fate. Time was thought to be circular and repetitious.” Augustine writes, “From this ridiculous cycle they cannot find a way of freeing even the immortal soul, which, even when it has achieved wisdom, still ceaselessly passes back and

544 MacQueen, “The Origin and Dynamics of Society,” 87. In Farabi’s Fuṣūl, we find a similar concept. He claims, “Some of the parts and ranks of the parts of the city are in concert with others. They are bound by love, and they hold together and stay preserved through justice and the actions of justice. Love may come about by nature, like the love of parents for the child. And it may come about by volition in that its starting point is voluntary things followed by love. That which is by volition is threefold: one is by sharing in virtue; the second is for the sake of what is useful; and the third is for the sake of pleasure. Justice follows upon love.” Farabi, Fuṣūl, 70; tr. Butterworth, 70.
545 MacQueen, “The Origin and Dynamics of Society,” 87.
546 For the authoritative work on the concept of the eternal return, see Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return. For our purposes, see in particular pages 112-137.
forth between false blessedness and true misery. For how can the soul be truly blessed when it has no assurance of being so for all eternity, and if it is either unaware of coming misery because ignorant of the truth, or most unhappy with foreboding even in its blessedness? If, however, the soul passes to blessedness and leaves miseries behind it, never to return to them, then something new comes about in time which does not have an end in time.”548 With this, it seems that the possibility of breaking with this ancient view of human life would make the notion of ultimate ends important and the City of God ideal.549 Augustine, like Farābī, concludes that the soul or citizen must know its ultimate end; for how, he asks, can one be rightly ordered if one does not know his end? He writes, “That eternal life is the Supreme Good, and eternal death the Supreme Evil, and that to achieve the one and avoid the other, we must live rightly.”550 In his De Civitate Dei, Augustine devotes books nineteen through twenty-two to discuss the ultimate ends of the soul. These books illustrate the ends according to the love or aim of the individual. True happiness, heaven, is described for the citizen of the City of God and eternal damnation, the second death, is illustrated for the citizen of the City of Man. So knowledge of the ultimate ends is of extreme importance, because without this knowledge how does one choose the correct path?

548 Augustine, City, Bk.XII. ch. 14. For further discussion of the eternal return, see also BK XII. Chapters 10-14.
550 Augustine, City, Bk. XIX. ch. 4.
III. Fārubī’s Definition of a Citizen.

Though Fārubī describes various cities, he, too, is only discussing two kinds of cities, and two kinds of citizens. E. Rosenthal notes, “If Fārubī describes the various constitutions of the perfect and imperfect States he does so in relation to man’s ultimate perfection and happiness, and because he found them discussed in Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. But as a Muslim he believes in Reward and Punishment and in a Hereafter, and knows that Happiness is twofold, in this and in the next life.” Rosenthal, “The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of Al-Farabi,” 159-160. Eckart Schüttrumpf offers a critical examination of how Plato and Aristotle examined imperfect regimes, see Eckart Schüttrumpf, “Imperfect Regimes for Imperfect Human Beings: Variations of Infractions of Justice” in Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph Volume LVII-2004: The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought, edited by Emma Gannagé, Patricia Crone, Maroun Aouad, Dimitri Gutas, and Eckart Schüttrumpf (Beyrouth: Université Saint-Joseph, 2004), 13-36. The ignorant state (Madinah al-Jahiliyah); the immoral state (Madinah al-Fasiqah); the misguided state (Madinah al-Daillah); the transformed state (Madinah al-Mutabaddalah). See Sajjad, “Al-Farabī’s Classification of States,” 255. Fārubī, Siyārah, 88-88.5; partial tr. Najjār, 58; tr. Druart, 88-88.5.

In the Virtuous City, the aim is happiness in this life and in the next life and the citizens live as the One intends. In his Siyārah, Fārubī discusses in some detail the various non-virtuous cities. He begins with the “ignorant cities” (al-Madinah al-Jahiliyah). Within the ignorant cities Fārubī examines first the “indispensable city” (al-Madinah al-Durūyiyyah) and claims that the aims of the citizens are the “subsistence and safeguarding of the body.” Next he discusses the “vile city” (al-Madinah al-Nazzālah) and how the aims of these citizens are to...
acquire the excesses of what is needed for subsistence and safeguarding the body. The citizens of the “base city” (al-Madīna al-Khasīsah) aim at “sensual pleasures or imaginary pleasures … rather than what sustains or is in anyway useful to the body.” Fārābī notes that they only pursue these aims after they have satisfied the indispensable needs of the body. The aim of the citizens of the “timocratic city” (al-Madīna al-Kirāmah) is “to be honored in speech and deed.” The timocratic city too contains the aims of the indispensable, vile, and base cities, and yet, Fārābī asserts that this city is the best among the ignorant cities. Even so, their love of honor, he says, will eventually turn their city into a despotic city. The pursuit of domination and subjugation constitutes the aims of the citizens of the “despotic city” (al-Madīna al-Taghullub). Finally, Fārābī examines the “democratic city” (al-Madīna al-Jamā’īyah), wherein freedom and safeguarding freedom are the aims of the citizens. He claims that “all the endeavors and purposes of the ignorant cities are present in this city in a most perfect manner; of all of them, this is the most admirable and happy city. Quite possibly, with the passage of time, virtuous men will grow up in it…. It is also possible to glean from it certain [men who form] parts of the virtuous city; this is the best thing that takes place in this city.” Next, he examines the “immoral cities” (al-Madīna al-Fāsiqah), stating that there are as many immoral cities as there are ignorant ones. Fārābī’s main
observation is that they used to be virtuous citizens, but chose to follow the aims of the ignorant cities. The “erring cities” (al-Madinā al-Dāllah) or (al-Madinā al-Mutabaddalah) were given an imitation of happiness, but it was not true happiness, and so their knowledge and actions are not aimed at true happiness.

By focusing on the aims of these cities, Fārābī in effect tells us that these cities are not virtuous because true happiness is not their aim. Furthermore, he demonstrates the faults in the aims of these cities and in the means to these aims:

Bare necessity, wealth, the enjoyment of the pleasures and of play, and honors may be attained by subjugation and domination, or they may be attained by other means. Hence the four cities [the indispensable, vile, base, and timocratic] can be subdivided accordingly. Similarly, the rule that aims at these four things, or any one of them, pursues the achievement of its aim by domination and subjugation, or else pursues it by other means. Those who acquire these things by domination and subjugation, and safeguard what they have acquired by force and compulsion, need to be strong and powerful in body, and to be fierce, rough, rude, and contemptuous of death in moral traits, and not to prefer life to these pursuits; they need skill in the use of arms, and good judgment as regards the means of subjugating others: all this applies to all of them. But as to the pleasure seekers [that is, the citizens of the base city], they develop, in addition, gluttony and lust for food, drink, and sex. Some of them are dominated by softness and luxury, weakening their irascible faculty to the extent that none or very little of it remains. Others are dominated by anger and its psychic and bodily instruments, and by the appetite and its psychic and bodily instruments, which strengthens and intensifies these two faculties, and facilitates the performance of their functions. Their judgment will be equally devoted to the actions of these two faculties, and their souls equally subservient to them. Of these, the final objective of some are the actions of the appetite. Thus they turn their irascible faculties and actions into instruments by which to achieve the appetitive actions, thus subordinating lofty and higher faculties to the lower; that is, they subordinate their rational faculty to the irascible and appetitive actions, and further, the irascible faculty to the appetitive. For they

560 Fārābī, Siyyāsah, 103.10-104; partial tr. Najjār, 73-74; tr. Druart, 103.10-104.
561 Fārābī, Siyyāsah, 104-104.10; partial tr. Najjār, 74; tr. Druart, 104-104.10.
devote their judgment to the discovery of what fulfills the irascible and appetitive actions, and devote the actions and instruments of their irascible faculties to what enables them to attain the enjoyment of the pleasures of food, drink, and sex, and all that enables them to seize and safeguard them for themselves…. 562

The citizens of these cities are neither virtuous in their aims, nor in their ways of achieving them, i.e., by subjugation and domination; but his real point is that the citizens of these non-virtuous cities are not like the citizens of the Virtuous City because they do not live as the One intends nor do they live by their rational faculty, but continually succumb to their bodily appetites. Indeed, the aim of many of these cities is bodily—Augustine would call them, aims of “the flesh.” These bodily or earthly elements are clearly absent from Fārābī’s description of the Virtuous City, so, perhaps, Strauss is correct in his assessment that the “imperfect” cities represent “the world as it actually is and as it will always be.”563 For both Augustine and Fārābī there are really only two cities, virtuous or non-virtuous, and two loves, God or self.

What, then, actually delineates a person as a virtuous citizen? Fārābī has articulated specific characteristics for the Virtuous City and its citizens that are not present in the non-virtuous cities. Based on the natural order of the universe, which is illustrated via the human soul and body, Fārābī has established the hierarchical organization of the Virtuous City. In addition, Fārābī has instituted

562 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 102.5-103.5; partial tr. Najjār, 72-73; tr. Druart, 102.5-103.5. Druart claims that “the irascible is the equivalent of the Platonic ‘thumos’ and must be related to the appetitive faculty of 32.15. Perhaps the irascible is a part of the appetitive since it is distinguished from lust in 102.15. Or, maybe, Fārābī uses different terminologies and schemes of divisions for the faculties of the soul and does not attempt to harmonize them.” Footnote 51 of Druart’s translation. See also Plato, Republic 4.439.e. Plato asks if this spirited part is the “part by which we get angry.”

563 Strauss, “Farabi’s Plato,” 381.
the requirements for its ruler, who is responsible for founding the Virtuous City and who knows the ways to the attainment of happiness. Virtuous citizens, too, possess certain knowledge and perform particular actions; these citizens will ultimately transcend matter and be happy. In his Madinah, he asserts that such virtuous citizens ought to know the following eight things:

(1) In the first place to know the First Cause and all its qualities; (2) then the immaterial existents and their specific qualities and the order of rank of each of them—until one reaches among the immaterial existents the Active Intellect—and the proper functions of each of them; (3) the celestial substances and the qualities of each of them; (4) then the natural bodies which are beneath them, and how they come to be and pass away, and that everything which happens among them happens according to order, perfection, providence, justice and wisdom and that there is neither neglect nor deficiency nor injustice among them in any way whatsoever; (5) then the generation of man and how the faculties of the soul come to be and how the Active Intellect sheds light on them so that the first intelligibles and will and ‘choice’ can arise; (6) then the first ruler and how ‘revelation’ (wahy) is brought about; (7) then the rulers who have to take his place when he is not available at a given time; (8) then the excellent city and its people and the felicity which their souls ultimately reach, and the cities contrary to it and the condition to which their souls are reduced after death, some of them to wretchedness and the others to nothingness; and the excellent nations and the nations contrary to them.\footnote{Farabi, Madinah, 17.1, 16.2, 16.5; tr. Walzer, 17.1, 16.2, 16.5. In the Arabic Plotinus, we find the things that the soul must know, which are: We wish to investigate the mind, and \textit{how it is and how it is originated and how the originator originated it and gave it perpetual sight}. These things and the like of them are part of what the soul is obliged to know, nothing of them escaping her. \textit{She desires also to know the thing which the early sages discussed much and were exercised about, viz., how the pure One with no plurality in it comes in some way to be the cause of origination of the many things} without emerging from its unity or becoming plural; indeed its unity is intensified when it originates plurality, \textit{if we refer all things to the one thing} with no plurality in it. \textit{But we begin by abasing ourselves before God and asking Him for aid and assistance to make that plain. We do not ask Him in speech alone nor do we raise towards Him our perishable hands alone, but supplicate Him with our minds and spread out and extend our souls towards him and abase ourselves before Him and ask Him importunately, unwearying. If we do this He will illumine our minds with His spreading light and will remove from us the ignorance which cleaves to us on account of these bodies, and will vouchsafe to us the aid we asked Him in this. \textit{By this method alone can we resolve this problem and finish at the One}, the Good, the Excellent Alone, who pours forth benefits and virtues on whoever seeks them aright. We begin by saying: Let him who wishes to know how the true One originated the}
The knowledge that virtuous citizens have is almost the same in Farābī’s *Millah*, but they come under the headings of theoretical and voluntary things. Also in *Siyāsah*, Farābī states, “Each one of the citizens of the virtuous city is required to know the highest principles of the beings and their ranks of order, happiness, the supreme rulership of the virtuous city, and the ruling ranks of order in it; then, after that, the specified actions that, when performed, lead to the attainment of happiness. These actions are not merely to be known; they should be done and the citizens of the city should be directed to do them.” So, when we compare the knowledge required of the virtuous citizens as found in *Siyāsah* with *Madinah*, we realize that the entire text of *Madinah* is set up in such a way as to provide the reader not only with the correct knowledge but with a choice to make: in which city does he or she want citizenship? In fact, if we examine the arrangement of *Madinah*, we can see that the chapters correspond to the things that a virtuous citizen must know. Chapters one and two focus solely on “the First Cause and all its qualities.” The knowledge of “the immaterial existents and their specific qualities and the order of rank of each of them—until one reaches among the immaterial existents the Active Intellect—and the proper functions of each of them” are found in both chapters three and six. Knowledge

\[\text{many things cast his gaze on the true One alone, and leave behind all things outside it, and return to himself and stand there, for he will see with his mind the true One reposing, still, superior to all things, the intellectual and the sensible. He will see all other things standing as if they were images and inclining towards it. In this way things come to move towards it; I mean that every thing that moves has something towards which it moves, otherwise it would not be moving at all. The thing that moves, moves only in the desire for the thing to which it belongs, for it wishes to attain it and become assimilated to it.}\]


of “the celestial substances and the qualities of each of them” is found in chapter seven. Chapters four, five, eight, and nine deal with “the natural bodies which are beneath them, and how they come to be and pass away, and that everything which happens among them happens according to order, perfection, providence, justice and wisdom and that there is neither neglect nor deficiency nor injustice among them in any way whatsoever.” Chapters ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen provide the necessary knowledge of “the generation of man and how the faculties of the soul come to be and how the Active Intellect sheds light on them so that the first intelligibles and will and ‘choice’ can arise.” “The first ruler and how ‘revelation’ (wahy) is brought about” are discussed in chapter fourteen and fifteen. Chapter fifteen also includes Ḥarābī’s discussion of “the rulers who have to take his place when he is not available at a given time.” Finally, the knowledge of “the excellent city and its people and the felicity which their souls ultimately reach, and the cities contrary to it and the condition to which their souls are reduced after death, some of them to wretchedness and the others to nothingness; and the excellent nations and the nations contrary to them” is discussed in chapters fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen.567


Miriam Galston examines the texts that make known what the virtuous citizens ought to know. She suggests that “among the beliefs that the citizens of excellence are expected to share are some that seem to have intellectual growth
as their primary motive.” She questions the motivation behind the political community’s need to understand such things as the Active Intellect and the hierarchy found within the intelligible world and instead provides possible explanations of what Fārābī perhaps means for the citizens to comprehend. She concedes that much of this required knowledge goes beyond “the practical needs of the political community” and that some of these things seem to be rather precarious for a “healthy body politic.” With this in mind, Galston concludes that the contents of the opinions in Fārābī’s texts are “appropriate for select groups within a community, although there is no textual authority for confining them thus.” She continues with this supposition and claims that if it is correct:

Then the city of excellence would include among its official teachings some beliefs with relevance for only a small group of citizens (such as the doctrine concerning the agent intellect and the philosophic achievements of the supreme ruler), while it would leave the elaboration of these teachings together with all discussion of further doctrines without utility for the political community as such to individuals obligated because of their citizenship to transmit the theoretical excellences on a quasi-private basis.

Galston seems to suppose that the things virtuous citizens ought to know are not for all citizens, but only for a select few; since some of these items go beyond practical utility and some appear to deal with theoretical things. However, in Galston’s examination of Fārābī’s discussion of what is required for the soul’s ability to transcend matter, she treats the same list of those things which

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569 Ibid., 163-164.
570 Ibid., 165.
571 Ibid.
virtuous citizens should know, specifically those found in Madīnah and Siyāsah, including, “principles of the beings,” “the universe,” “happiness,” and “the supreme ruler.” She notes that his Madīnah, in the chapter concerning the afterlife or “salvation,” Fārābī begins his discussion of only the actions of both the virtuous and non-virtuous citizens. This is not entirely true, for Fārābī writes, “the people of the excellent city have things in common which they all perform and comprehend, and other things which each class knows and does on its own.”

As we have seen, Fārābī claims that it is the knowledge that the virtuous citizens have that allows their souls to transcend matter and it is the lack of said knowledge that keeps the people of the ignorant cities tied to matter. Fārābī, in his Madīnah, places the knowledge of the virtuous citizen in the chapter pertaining to philosophy and religion. As we observed in chapter two, theoretical and practical perfection; and therefore, ultimate happiness, can be achieved via philosophy and religion. Nonetheless, Galston asserts:

The observations are problematic because Alfarabi locates opinion as such in the imaginative faculty of the soul, regardless of whether specific opinions are true or false. In contrast, transcendence in the cognitive realm is ordinarily associated with the actualization of the rational faculty or intellect. It is, then, difficult to see how the possession of particular opinions can be identified with overcoming material existence on a cognitive level. At most one could posit that when the imaginative faculty provides the rational faculty with some of the raw material for intellection, opinions of a certain kind may facilitate the soul’s ability to transcend its material existence in the future.

How is it that Galston sees this type of knowledge at one point only for a selected few, but then reverses herself and dismisses it as pure opinion,

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572 Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.2; tr. Walzer, 16.2.
573 See above, chapter 4.V
574 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 170.
particularly since she has already stated that it was more theoretical than need be for practical purposes? Why is she now discussing the imaginative faculty as helping the rational faculty when this appears to go against Farabi’s claim that only the theoretical-rational faculty can perceive things such as happiness? 575 If this is the knowledge that is required for virtuous citizens and if only the virtuous citizens attain happiness, can we possibly view it as the theoretical knowledge that is necessary to achieve happiness? This list of required knowledge does resemble the knowledge that the theoretical sciences provide, as discussed in chapter two. Galston gives the full title of *Mabādīʾ Ārāʾ Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila*, stressing the word “opinions” (ārā’) as if this is enough to dismiss this so-called knowledge that appears to be dangerous at one point and trivial the next. 576 Farabi, as noted, provides essentially the same list of things that must be known in three separate texts. Farabi, in his *Madīnah*, after listing these eight things, immediately states that this knowledge is knowable by means of both philosophy and religion. 577 So, the knowledge that the virtuous citizens must have is perhaps the outcome of study either through philosophy or through religion, which, as noted, provides both theoretical and practical knowledge.

III. b. Required Actions of Virtuous Citizens.

What about the actions that must be specifically known and carried out in order to be a virtuous citizen? As noted above, in *Siyāsah*, Farabi claims, “These actions are not merely to be known; they should be done and the citizens

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575 Farabi, *Siyāsah*, 73.10; partial tr. Najjar, 43; tr. Druart, 73.10.
577 Farabi, *Madīnah*, 17.2; tr. Walzer, 17.2.
of the city should be directed to do them.”578 The actions that the virtuous citizens must perform vary according to their rank, but Fārābī insists that correct action produces a positive disposition in the soul.579 In his Millah, he discusses the actions of the virtuous:

As for actions, they are, first of all, the actions and speeches by which God is praised and extolled. Then there are those that praise the spiritual beings and the angels. Then there are those that praise the prophets, the most virtuous kings, the righteous rulers, and the leaders of the right way who have gone before. Then there are those that blame the most depraved kings, the profligate rulers, and the leaders of the errant way who went before and that censure their activities. Then there are those that praise the most virtuous kings, the righteous rulers, and the leaders of the right way in this time and that blame those of this time who are their opposites. Then, after all this, are determining the actions by which the mutual dealings of the inhabitants of the cities are regulated—either regarding what a human being ought to do with respect to himself or regarding how he ought to deal with others—and bringing about cognizance of what justice is with respect to each particular instance of these actions.580

So, again, we can see that a virtuous citizen must have a certain knowledge, which the theoretical sciences, via philosophy or religion, provide, and he must live a certain kind of life, wherein he performs the actions that are required for his particular class. Could the required knowledge and actions that enable one to become a virtuous citizen and thereby attain ultimate happiness be the attainment of the “ultimate” perfection as discussed by Wisnovsky? Is this the ultimate perfection for all citizens of the Virtuous City? Wisnovsky, in his discussion of the Ammonian synthesis, writes:

Second perfections...The state of having changed into something actual (the second entelekheia of the Physics commentators) is the final cause of

578 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 84.15-85; partial tr. Najjār, 55; tr. Druart, 84.15-85.
579 Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.2-16.5; tr. Walzer, 16.2-16.5.
580 Fārābī, Millah, 46; tr. Butterworth, 46; tr. Berman, 52b.
the change; contemplating (the *De Anima’s second entelekheia*) is the final cause of the acquisition of knowledge; and a thing’s perfection taken in relation to a lower thing (Proclus’ second *teleioté*) is the final cause of that lower thing, at least when both cause and effect are viewed as elements of reversion.\(^{581}\)

With this analysis of the ultimate perfection, we could argue that if one possesses the required knowledge and performs the necessary actions, then this could be the ultimate perfection in and of itself or at least having this knowledge and performing the actions could allow for the attainment of this ultimate perfection. For Fārābī, possessing this knowledge and performing the actions appear to be the requirements to attain happiness and ultimate happiness. And, as noted above, Walzer claims that ultimate perfection presupposes ultimate happiness.\(^{582}\)

By contrast, the non-virtuous cities do not resemble or function like the intelligible world, nor do the citizens have the same aims as the citizens of the Virtuous City. Furthermore, the citizens of the non-virtuous cities do not have the required knowledge nor do they perform the necessary actions. In his *Madinah* and *Siyāsah*, Fārābī classifies the non-virtuous cities as “ignorant,” “immoral,” and “erring.” The non-virtuous cities do not have the societal organization based on the human soul and body. Though the timocratic city does have a hierarchical structure that is based on honor, Fārābī makes no mention that it is based on the five parts of the soul. While it does bear a resemblance to the Virtuous City in that the ruler of this city is deemed the best

\(^{581}\) Ibid., 108-110.
\(^{582}\) See above chapter 2.III; Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 406.
man and the citizens strive for something more than physical comfort, their aim is not happiness.\textsuperscript{583} The rulers of the non-virtuous cities do not have the same requirements as the ruler of the Virtuous City; they are rulers because of things like ancestry, wealth, or honor.\textsuperscript{584} Fārābī maintains that the rulers of the non-virtuous cities either do not know the ways to happiness or they ignore them. The citizens of the Virtuous City have certain knowledge and perform certain actions that produce a good disposition in their souls. The citizens of the non-virtuous cities do not realize that they are diseased, so they ignore those who try to lead them to a virtuous way of life, and so actions of the non-virtuous citizens produce a bad disposition in their souls.\textsuperscript{585} Fārābī writes: “There are among the physically diseased some people who are unaware of their illness and some who fancy in addition that they are in good health; they fancy this so strongly that they do not listen at all to the words of a doctor. In the same way people whose soul is diseased are unaware of their illness or fancy in addition that they are virtuous and healthy in their souls and hence do not listen at all to the words of a man who leads them in the right path, teaches them and puts them straight.”\textsuperscript{586} The aims of the Virtuous City are all for the attainment of happiness in this life and the afterlife, but this is not so for the non-virtuous cities. The citizens of the ignorant cities appear to be more interested in the gratification of the senses, and are distracted by the hullabaloo of the world.\textsuperscript{587} The citizens of the immoral

\textsuperscript{583} Fārābī, \textit{Siyāsah}, 92.5-94.5; partial tr. Najjār, 62-64; tr. Druart, 92.5-94.5.
\textsuperscript{584} Fārābī, \textit{Siyāsah}, 87.15-103.10; partial tr. Najjār, 58-73; tr. Druart, 87.15-103.10.
\textsuperscript{585} Fārābī, \textit{Madīnah}, 16.2, 16.6; tr. Walzer, 16.2, 16.6.
\textsuperscript{586} Fārābī, \textit{Madīnah}, 16.6; tr. Walzer, 16.6.
\textsuperscript{587} Fārābī, \textit{Siyāsah}, 88-103.10; partial tr. Najjār, 58-73; tr. Druart, 88-103.10. In the \textit{Arabic Plotinus} we find:
The individual soul which is in these individual bodies is noble too, controlling the

204
cities, according to Fārābī, knew the truth and willingly refused to follow the principles needed to attain happiness.\textsuperscript{588} The citizens of the erring city appear to have been given incorrect imitations; “a kind of happiness that is not true happiness is established for, and represented to, them.”\textsuperscript{589} Clearly, happiness is not the aim of the non-virtuous cities or their non-virtuous citizens. However, this does not mean that men cannot attain happiness in these cities. Fārābī even insists that it is possible for virtuous citizens to emerge in non-virtuous cities, albeit only within the ignorant cities.\textsuperscript{590} He claims, “With the passage of time, virtuous men will grow up in” the democratic city because there are elements of the Virtuous City found here.\textsuperscript{591} While Fārābī explores the difficulties of establishing a virtuous ruler in the ignorant cities, he does maintain that it would be easier to establish virtuous rulers and create virtuous cities in the indispensable and in the democratic cities.\textsuperscript{592} So, while there are some elements of the Virtuous City found within the non-virtuous cities, it is clear that these cities do not resemble, nor do they function like, the intelligible world, for the bodies nobly, although she controls them only with fatigue and toil, for she controls them with thought and reflection. She reflects and thinks only because sense-perception has made her busy with the study of sensible things, and pains and sorrows have been introduced into her by such of the things outside nature as have been brought to her. This is what disturbs her and bemuses her and prevents her from casting her gaze on herself or on the part of herself that abides in the world of mind, because immediate concerns have dominated her, such as reprehensible desire and ignoble pleasure, so she rejects her eternal concerns in order to obtain by their rejection the pleasures of this world of sense, not realising that she has removed herself from the pleasure that is true pleasure, since she has chosen the transient pleasures with no permanence in it or constancy.

\textsuperscript{588} Farābī, \textit{Siyyāsah}, 103.10-104; partial tr. Najār, 73-74; tr. Druart, 103.10-104.
\textsuperscript{589} Farābī, \textit{Siyyāsah}, 104-104.10; partial tr. Najār, 74; tr. Druart, 104-104.10.
\textsuperscript{590} Farābī, \textit{Siyyāsah}, 102-102.5; partial tr. Najār, 71-72; tr. Druart, 102-102.5.
\textsuperscript{591} But, he also notes that it is within this city that there is a greater propensity for both good and evil. Farābī, \textit{Siyyāsah}, 101-101.5; partial tr. Najjār, 70-71; tr. Druart, 101-101.5.
citizens of these cities do not live as The One intended. Indeed, these cities and their citizens violate the laws of the intelligible world.

Conclusion.

If there are two levels of existence, i.e., the intelligible world and the material world, and the desire of all men is to attain happiness and thus return to the intelligible world, then man, while in the material world, must first decide whether he is going to live by the will of God or the will of man. Thus, for both Augustine and Fārābī there are only two types of citizens and thereby only two kinds of cities. While they examine various cities, it should be clear that their main concern is the aim of each city and the reader will notice that the non-virtuous cities and cities of man are deficient when compared to the Virtuous City and the City of God. So, for both Augustine and Fārābī there are only two loves and, therefore, two cities.

As we know, both Augustine and Fārābī have very specific ideas as to what constitutes a citizen of the City of God and a citizen of the Virtuous City. Both agree that the citizen has a certain knowledge, which is essentially a divine knowledge, and the citizen must live a certain kind of life. So, correct knowledge and action are prerequisites to being a citizen who will attain ultimate happiness. Fārābī’s required knowledge appears to be the same as the theoretical knowledge that he describes in his Tahṣīl and it is this same knowledge that allows the soul to transcend matter and thus achieve happiness. Contained in this knowledge is the knowledge of the ultimate ends. Fārābī has an entire chapter dedicated to the discussion of the final end of each type of
citizen. For the wicked citizens, the ultimate end is misery, but there is no
description of a final location. The souls of the people of the ignorant cities
simply decay into nothingness. For the virtuous citizen, the final end is
happiness and their proper place is just below the Active Intellect. This type of
knowledge essentially compels the reader to decide which end he will attain. As
noted in chapter two, Fārābī also examines man in a political organization within
his theoretical sciences. Of course, Mahdi and Galston assume that he is
including practical sciences within theoretical sciences, and that he is describing
actual existence, i.e., an earthly existence, but Fārābī could very well be
describing man’s final or ultimate end. If the city that is being described within
the theoretical sciences is the Virtuous City, then perhaps Fārābī is suggesting
that the Virtuous City is the proper place for all men. However correct
knowledge is not enough to attain this happiness; Fārābī insists that actions are
also necessary. Fārābī is adamant that proper actions performed according to
one’s own specific rank in society produces a good disposition within the soul
that is directly connected to the quality of happiness that is achieved.593
Contrarily, bad actions produce negative dispositions in the soul.

For Augustine, too, correct knowledge and action are also prerequisites
for citizenship of the City of God. One must literally choose which direction to
cast their gaze, either upward or downward, to God or self, or to supreme
happiness or gratification on earth; and, as a consequence, decides in which city
he wants citizenship. Augustine’s knowledge is knowledge of God and in order

593 See above, chapter 5.III.b; chapter 2.V. See also Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.2-16.5.
to know God one must love God and love what God loves, thus the citizen of the
City of God must love God and love his neighbors. And it is only by loving God
and loving one’s neighbor that harmony, hence justice, can be achieved. While
Augustine does not suppose that true justice can ever be achieved in the material
world, at least the best possible form of justice can be achieved by the citizens of
the City of God. In order for citizens to understand what true justice is, they
must be rightly ordered; therefore, they must know their ultimate end. As a
result, loving God and loving neighbor is both knowledge and action for
Augustine.
Chapter Six

Virtuous Citizens Residing in the City of Man

Introduction.

Augustine’s citizens of the City of God must live in the City of Man while they exist in the material world, but they must not become full-fledged citizens of this earthly city and thereby become citizens of the City of Man. Also, as previously suggested, Fārābī’s Virtuous City is an eternal city that exists in the intelligible world, not one to be established on earth. So we concur with Strauss’ claim that Fārābī’s non-virtuous cities are cities that exist in the material world; hence, Fārābī’s virtuous citizens, too, must not become true citizens of these non-virtuous cities. We have also examined the criteria that both Augustine and Fārābī have established for being citizens of the City of God and citizens of the Virtuous City. We know that Fārābī and Augustine are essentially obliging their readers to choose what city he or she wants to be a citizen of. In order to do so one must attain the proper knowledge and perform the correct actions. Both Augustine and Fārābī discuss the citizens of the City of God or rather, virtuous citizens living in the City of Man or the non-virtuous cities. Both Augustine and Fārābī refer to these citizens as “foreigners,” “strangers,” or “aliens.”

Clearly, the idea of living as a foreigner or alien in

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594 In scholarly discussions of Augustine’s citizens of the City of God living in the City of Man, most scholars employ the terms “pilgrims” or “aliens” of this city. Peter Brown and Eugene Tessel fervently insist that the term “pilgrim” weakens Augustine’s use of the word peregrini. Brown insists that the citizens of the City of God are “peregrini in the full classical sense; they are registered aliens, existing, on sufferance, in hoc maligno saeculo. Tessel compares Augustine’s peregrini, i.e., the resident aliens, with the “Metohoi or paroikoi of the Greek cities, the gerim of Ancient Israel.” Peter Brown, “Saint Augustine and Political Society” in The City of God: a Collection of Critical Essays, 25; Eugene Tessel, “The Civic Vision in Augustine’s City of God” Thought vol.62 no.246 (Sept. 1987), 275. For the term “foreigner or stranger in
one’s own city comes to Augustine and Fārābī from Plato. In his *Republic*, Plato writes:

> Then there remains … only a very small group who consort with philosophy in a way that’s worthy of her: A noble and well brought-up character, for example, kept down by exile, who remains with philosophy according to his nature because there is no one to corrupt him, or a great soul living in a small city, who disdains the city’s affairs and looks beyond them. A very few might be drawn to philosophy from other crafts that they rightly despise because they have good natures. And some might be held back by the bridle that restrains our friend Theages—for he’s in every way qualified to be tempted away from philosophy, but his physical illness restrains him by keeping him out of politics. Finally, my own case is hardly worth mentioning—my daemonic sign—because it has happened to no one before me, or to only a very few. Now, the members of this small group have tasted how sweet and blessed a possession philosophy is, and at the same time they’ve also seen the madness of the majority and realized in a word, that hardly anyone acts sanely in public affairs and that there is no ally with whom they might go to the aid of justice and survive, that instead they’d perish before they could profit either their city or their friends and be useless both to themselves and to others, just like a man who has fallen among wild animals and is neither willing to join them in doing injustice nor sufficiently strong to oppose the general savagery alone. Taking all this into account, they lead a quiet life and do their own work. Thus, like someone who takes refuge under a little wall from a storm of dust or hail driven by the wind, the philosopher—seeing others filled with lawlessness—is satisfied if he can somehow lead his present life free from injustice and impious acts and depart from it with good hope, blameless and content.\(^{595}\)

However, Plato’s concept of living as a foreigner or alien in one’s own city does not explain fully how Augustine’s citizens of the City of God and Fārābī’s virtuous citizens of all ranks exist in the material world in the manner of foreigners. Plato’s foreigners are essentially philosophers, but both Augustine and Fārābī include among their citizens more than philosophers. Plotinus actually provides a better explanation for Augustine and Fārābī’s foreigners or

\(^{595}\) Plato, *The Republic* VI. 496 a-e.
aliens. According to Rist, Plotinus deems that everyone is happy, but it is only the philosopher who realizes that he is happy.\footnote{Rist, \textit{Plotinus}, 148. Rist is examining Plotinus, \textit{Enn.}, I.4-I.5.} Rist, of course, is referring to Plotinus’ concept of the undescended soul. It is the philosopher who perceives what the upper part of his soul is contemplating, which is the intelligible world.\footnote{Ibid.} Plotinus writes:

\begin{quote}
Even our soul does not altogether come down, but there is always something of it in the intelligible; but if the part which is in the world of sense-perception gets control, or rather if it is itself brought under control, and thrown into confusion [by the body], it prevents us from perceiving the things which the upper part of the soul contemplates.... \textit{For every soul has something of what is below, in the direction of the body, and of what is above, in the direction of the Intellect.} And the soul which is a whole and is the soul of the whole, by its part which is directed to body, maintains the beauty and order of the whole in effortless transcendence because it does not do so by calculating and considering, as we do, but by intellect, as art does not deliberate.... But the souls which are partial and of a part have also the transcendent element, but they are occupied with sense-perception, and by their [lower] faculty of conscious apprehension they apprehend many things which are contrary to their nature and grieve and trouble them, since what they care for is a part, and defective, and has a great many alien and hostile things around it, and a great many which it desires; and it has pleasures, and pleasure deceives it; but there is a higher part which the transitory pleasures do not please, and its life is comfortable [to its nature].\footnote{Plotinus, \textit{Enn.}, IV.8.8. (italics mine)}
\end{quote}

So, let us examine the citizens of the City of God and those virtuous citizens living in the material world. These citizens are perhaps considered foreigners because by meeting the criterion for citizenship of the City of God and Virtuous City they have become aware of the higher part of their soul, and thus they have assimilated themselves, through thought and action, to the intelligible world.
I. Augustine’s City of God: an Earthly City?

Before we examine the citizens of the City of God living in the City of Man, let us examine the academic discussion which poses the question: did Augustine ever envision the City of God as being established on earth, thereby explaining why there are citizens of the City of God on earth. Reinhold Niebuhr stated that non-Catholics in particular often accuse Augustine of equating the City of God with the visible Church. Jean Elshtain, by contrast, insists that it is the Church, as an institution, that gathers and keeps those pilgrims of the City of God residing in the City of Man, but this does not imply that Augustine perceives the Church as the City of God on earth. So, is Augustine claiming that the Church is the City of God on earth? In his examination of Augustine’s concept of the Church, Tarsicius van Bavel notes that, as with Augustine’s notion of the two cities—one in the intelligible world, the other in the material world—so too Augustine’s Church exists in both realms. He claims that for Augustine “the church here and now is a reality in process that has to pass through several phases to reach its specific goal: it is the reign of God existing in the condition of the church. Therefore the church encompasses both the human world and the world of the angels. It is the celestial church which gives meaning to the church on earth.”

Augustine writes:

One part of the earthly city, by symbolizing something other than itself, has been made into an image of the Heavenly City; and so it is in bondage, because it was established not for its own sake, but in order to serve as a symbol of another City…. We find, therefore, that the earthly

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600 Elshtain, Augustine and the Limits of Politics, 26.
city has two aspects. Under the one, it displays its own presence; under the other, it serves by its presence to point towards the Heavenly City. But the citizens of the earthly city are produced by a nature vitiated by sin, while the citizens of the Heavenly City are produced by grace, which redeems nature from sin…. In the one case, the ordinary human condition is shown, whereas, in the other, we are reminded of the beneficence of God.602

Fortin, too, discusses the possibility of the Church as the City of God on earth. He claims that while Augustine does occasionally associate the City of God with the Church, Augustine is quite adamant in his claims that not everyone belonging to the Church is a citizen of the City of God.603 Augustine also includes as citizens of the City of God those who do not officially belong to the Church. It seems unlikely therefore that Augustine envisions the Church as the City of God on earth.

Continuing in this vein, let us examine Augustine’s conception of a Christian ruler and ask again, does he on this basis perceive that the City of God can be established on earth? Most scholars, when examining the Christian ruler, look to Augustine’s description of the Christian emperors, which is commonly associated with the “Mirror of the Princes.”604 Augustine writes:

For we do not say that certain Christian emperors were happy because they ruled for a longer time, or because they died in peace and left behind sons to rule as emperors, or because they subdued the enemies of the commonwealth, or because they were able to avoid and suppress uprisings against them by hostile citizens. For even certain worshippers of demons, who do not belong to the kingdom of God to which these emperors belong, have deserved to receive these and other gifts and consolations of this wretched life; and this is to be attributed to His mercy, Who does not wish those who believe in Him to desire such things as their highest good. Rather, we say that they are happy if they rule

602 Augustine, *City*, Bk. XV ch. 2.
604 See Deane, “Augustine and the State,” 60. See also Fortin, “Saint Augustine,” 197.
justly; if they are not lifted up by the talk of those who accord them sublime honours or pay their respects with an excessive humility, but remember that they are only men; if they make their power the handmaid of His majesty by using it to spread His worship to the greatest possible extent; if they fear, love and worship God; if they love that Kingdom which they are not afraid to share with others more than their own; if they are slow to punish and swift to pardon; if they resort to punishment only when it is necessary to the government and defence of the commonwealth, and never to gratify their own enmity; if they grant pardon, not so that unjust men may enjoy impunity, but in the hope of bringing about their correction; if they compensate for whatever severe measures they may be forced to decree with the gentleness of mercy and the generosity of benevolence; if their own self-indulgence is as much restrained as it might have been unchecked; if they prefer to govern wicked desires more than any people whatsoever; if they do all these things not out of craving for empty glory, but from love of eternal felicity; and if, for their sins, they do not neglect to offer to their true God the sacrifices of humility and contrition and prayer. We say that, for the time being, such Christian emperors are happy in hope and that, in time to come, when that to which we now look forward has arrived, they will be so in possession.  

Deane argues that scholars use the above text to claim that a Christian state could be truly just and thus prove that Augustine is arguing that the City of God can be established on earth. Fortin, too, observes this line of thought, but notes that there is nothing in Augustine’s writing to conclude that he believed that such a city would ever come about and, even if it did, there is no guarantee that it would continue for any great length of time; so as a result it is difficult to know whether Augustine ever considered establishing the City of God on earth. Augustine consistently argues that the temporal world is in a constant state of flux; as Canton notes, for Augustine, “The inexorable change of the temporal world offers no fixed point, no unshakeable rock, upon which the city

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605 Augustine, City, Bk. V Ch.24.
606 Deane, “Augustine and the State: The Return of Order Upon Disorder” 60.
of man might build a secure habitation.”608 Nevertheless, Augustine does examine the citizens of the City of God who reside in the City of Man.

II. Citizens of the City of God Residing in the City of Man.

In Peter Brown’s examination of the City of God, he asserts that “there are no verbs of historical movement,” and he further notes that there is “no sense of progress to aims that may be achieved in history.”609 But this is not so for those citizens of the City of God residing in the City of Man. Augustine includes in his City of God both Christians and non-Christians; and in particular those individuals who are seeking truth—in other words, God. Furthermore, these citizens are in search of ultimate happiness and so their will is turned toward God. They meet the criteria of Augustine’s definition of a citizen of the City of God. Augustine stresses that the citizens of the City of God must obey God’s commandments to love God and one’s neighbor, which requires both correct knowledge and action. Kaufman maintains that “Augustine urged his readers to accept God’s Grace and God’s governance and to stay within the pilgrim city.”610 Deane examines those citizens who are living in the City of Man who have been “converted by God’s grace.”611 He claims that “since these men have died and been born anew, their loves, their aspirations, and their behavior are completely different from those of the great mass of the unredeemed. However, as long as this world lasts there will never be a society or

608 Canton, “St. Augustine’s Critique of Politics,” 442.
611 Deane, “Augustine and the State,” 51.
a state made up solely or even predominantly of the saved.”612 In this way, Augustine has essentially provided a schema, which anyone can follow to become a citizen of the City of God. While there may not be any “verbs of historical movement” in his discussion of the City of God, it is obvious that in the City of Man, citizens essentially have their work cut out for them in order to become citizens of the City of God. Augustine writes:

So it is that each man, because he derives his origin from a condemned stock, is at first necessarily evil and fleshy, because he comes from Adam; but if being reborn, he advances in Christ, he will afterwards be good and spiritual. So it is also with the whole human race. When those two cities began to run through their course of birth and death, the first to be born was a citizen of this world, and the second was a pilgrim in this world, belonging to the City of God…. But though it is of necessity that we begin in this way, we do not of necessity remain thus; for later comes the noble state towards which we may advance, and in which we may abide when we have attained it…the sooner each man changes for the better, the sooner will he secure for himself the title belonging to his attainment and hide his former name under the later one.613

Obviously, Augustine’s citizens of the City of God must assimilate themselves to the City of God even if they live in the City of Man. This may be akin to what Plotinus has in mind in his discussion of the undescended soul wherein man realizes that the upper part of his soul resides in the intelligible world. Augustine appears to utilize the Plotinian concept of the undescended soul in order to reveal how man can become a citizen of the City of God while living in the City of Man.

612 Ibid.
613 Augustine, City, Bk. XV. Ch. 1.
III. Fārābī’s Virtuous Citizens Residing in Non-Virtuous Cities.

If we may now turn to Fārābī, we may ask his views on the status of the virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities. If we persist in seeing the Virtuous City as an earthly city that has been established, or will be established in the future, or a city in speech, we again confront the subject of happiness. E.I.J. Rosenthal has argued that Fārābī maintains that true happiness can only be achieved in the Virtuous City, Galston disagrees with Rosenthal’s assessment, and indeed, she examines the very possibility of the establishment of the Virtuous City. We have already considered Fārābī’s description of the Virtuous City in his Madīnah. And Galston claims that this description is the standard description of the Virtuous City. Moreover, she notes that the depiction found in his Fusūl is practically identical to the description found in Madīnah. Fārābī, in his account of the Virtuous City, writes, “The virtuous city is the one whose inhabitants mutually assist one another in obtaining the best things for a human being’s existence, constitution, subsistence, and preservation of life.” He continues this line of thought with the two perfections that human beings attain. Fārābī claims that, following Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, there are two perfections that a human being can attain: the primary perfection that is attained in this life and the final perfection that he will attain in the afterlife. He states that “the virtuous city according to them [i.e., these philosophers] is the one whose inhabitants mutually assist one another in obtaining the final perfection,

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615 Fārābī, Fusūl, 45; tr. Butterworth, 45.
which is ultimate happiness.”616 As Galston continues her examination of the possibility of the “excellent city,” she maintains that it is much more indefinable in Fārābī’s Siyāsah. As she says, “the city of excellence is described in terms of its agent—the supreme ruler without qualification—and not in terms of its operation or end.”617 In her view, this text confirms that the Virtuous City does not have to exist in order for there to be virtuous citizens. As we have seen in chapter four, Fārābī discusses the existence of the “supreme ruler” and claims that whoever submits to the rule of this supreme ruler is a virtuous citizen. If the citizens, who submit to the rule of the supreme ruler, reside in a single dwelling-place then that dwelling-place is considered to be virtuous.618 Continuing with her examination, Galston next scrutinizes Fārābī’s Tahṣīl and notes that there are no such expressions as “city of excellence,” “nation of excellence,” “regime of excellence,” and “rule of excellence.”619 Galston contends that both Siyāsah and Tahṣīl force “the reader to ask whether or in what circumstances Alfarabi believes the city of excellence would be either impossible to establish or unnecessary for the attainment of happiness.”620 While Galston holds that both Millah and Ḥişā’ al-‘Ulūm support her claim that the possibility of the Virtuous City is uncertain, she does allow that Madīnah and Millah appear to be the most hopeful about the actual existence of the Virtuous City.

Walzer argues that Fārābī has a very pessimistic view of political society. He states that man is “simply the product of the reigning political principle.

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616 Fārābī, Fūsūl, 45-46; tr. Butterworth, 45-46.
617 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 154.
618 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 80; partial tr. Najjār, 50; tr. Druart, 80.
619 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 155.
620 Galston, Politics and Excellence, 156.
Since all the historical states are faulty...all their citizens are bad as a result of their upbringing. Things would be different in the perfect state: but this is, for the time being, nothing but a dream and a postulate of reason." Of course, Walzer observes that there is one exception to Fārābī’s cynical outlook; the virtuous citizen. From whence do these virtuous citizens come? The essential problem that scholars are faced with is the actual existence of the Virtuous City. Nowhere in the text does Fārābī provide any details as to where this city was established, if it is still in existence, or if it had ever been founded. As Galston has so thoroughly argued, the Virtuous City may be impossible or really unnecessary to establish in order for its citizens to attain happiness. Whether or not the Virtuous City can be or has been actually established in the material world, Fārābī does discuss the existence of virtuous citizens. As noted, Rosenthal insists that happiness is only attained in the Virtuous City; Galston qualifies Rosenthal’s assertion with the point that a person does not necessarily have to live in the Virtuous City, but must adhere to the way of life of the Virtuous City. Is Galston correct in this assertion? Fārābī does indeed examine virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities and these citizens are able to attain happiness. In Siyāsah, in his discussion of the supreme ruler, he claims:

The men who are governed by the rule of this ruler are the virtuous, good,
and happy men. If they form a nation, then that is a virtuous nation; if they are associated in a single dwelling-place, then the dwelling-place that brings together all those subject to such a rule is the virtuous city; and if they are not associated together in a single dwelling-place, but live in separate dwelling-places whose inhabitants are governed by rulerships other than this one, then these are virtuous men who are strangers in those dwelling-places. They happen to live separately either because no city happens to exist as yet in which they can be associated, or because they were [associated] in a city, but as a result of certain disasters--such as an enemy attack, pestilence, failure of crops, and so forth--they were forced to separate.\textsuperscript{624}

According to this text, those who submit to the rule of the supreme ruler are considered to be virtuous citizens regardless of where they reside. In fact, it appears that Fārābī is only claiming that if a group of these men who are governed by this ruler reside in a city or a nation, then that city or nation can be considered virtuous. He also includes those men who submit to the rule of the supreme ruler but live in cities or nations that are ruled by another kind of ruler.

How do virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities submit to the rule of the supreme ruler? In fact, if we examine the Virtuous City as an earthly city, then how does a virtuous citizen exist without the prior existence of a Virtuous City?

Fārābī also discusses the possibility of the Virtuous City coming into existence and the responsibility of the virtuous citizen to move there. In his \textit{Millah}, Fārābī writes:

\begin{quote}
Now it is not impossible for a human being who is part of the Virtuous City to be living in an ignorant city, voluntarily or involuntarily. That human being is a part foreign to that city, and he may be likened to an animal that happens to have the legs of an animal belonging to an inferior species. Similarly, when someone who is part of an ignorant city lives in a virtuous city, he may be likened to an animal that has the head of an animal belonging to a superior species. For this reason, the most virtuous persons forced to dwell in ignorant cities due to the non-existence of the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{624} Fārābī, \textit{Siyāsah}, 80; partial tr. Najjār, 50; tr. Druart, 80.
Walzer comments on the Platonic conception of the “protected alien” living in any state that is not virtuous. This “foreigner” must live as a stranger in this world while the Virtuous City remains nonexistent, but if it happens to become established, the virtuous citizen would migrate to his true home. Walzer compares the virtuous citizen migrating to where he truly belongs, i.e., the Virtuous City with the early Muslims migrating to Medina. So when the philosopher, and Walzer believes that Fārābī had himself in mind while writing this, “learns that the Platonic Republic has been established in some part of the world, he will join it and leave the unsatisfactory conditions in which he lives at present.”

Fārābī also illustrates that virtuous citizens do not necessarily have to act like virtuous citizens while living in non-virtuous cities. In his Madinah, Fārābī writes:

As to the people of the excellent city who are compelled and forced to act like the people of the ignorant city: since the man who is forced to do this feels discomfort in doing things of that kind, the fact that he persists in doing what he is forced to do does not produce in his soul a disposition which is contrary to the virtuous dispositions; hence these actions do not trouble him so that he becomes like one of the people of the wicked city. Therefore the virtuous man finds himself in that condition only when the man under whose rule he lives is one of the people of the cities opposed to the excellent city or when he is compelled to live in the places of the people of the non-excellent cities.

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625 Fārābī, Millah, 55-56; tr. Butterworth, 55-56; tr. Berman, 56a. Galston remarks on this analogy and claims that it appears to be “contrary to nature” for the virtuous citizen to remain in a non-virtuous city. Galston, Politics and Excellence, 177.
626 Walzer, Virtuous City, 469-471.
627 Fārābī Madinah, 16.11; tr. Walzer, 16.11.
What is most significant about this text is that the soul of the virtuous citizen is not corrupted when he is forced to act like a non-virtuous citizen. Nevertheless, the fact that the virtuous citizen feels discomfort tells us that he has knowledge that what he is doing is wrong, for why else would he feel distress? This perhaps challenges the argument that we examined in chapter two, in which some scholars claim that happiness is based solely on actions. For example, Colmo maintains that for Fārābī, “we acquire immortality through good actions.”

We now know that virtuous citizens residing in non-virtuous cities who are performing less than good actions will achieve ultimate happiness. What, then, is so special about the Virtuous City that its citizens can live in non-virtuous cities and perform acts like those citizens of the ignorant cities and not have their souls corrupted?

In his, Fusūl, Fārābī writes, “The virtuous person is forbidden to reside in the corrupt regimes, and it is obligatory for him to emigrate to the virtuous cities if any exist in actuality in his time. If they are non-existent, then the virtuous person is a stranger in this world and miserable in life; death is better for him than living.” Galston asserts that, with this text, Fārābī is following Plato’s Gorgias which states that “one cannot long remain on good terms with a corrupt

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628 Colmo, Breaking with Athens, 119.
629 We find an example of this in Augustine’s City of God, wherein Lucretia was violated and consequently committed suicide. Augustine writes:

> With clear reason, then, do we say that, when a woman’s body is overpowered but the intention to remain chaste persists nonetheless, and is unaltered by any consent to evil, the crime belongs only to the man who violated her by force. It does not belong to the woman who, forced to submit to violation, did not consent to it by any act of will. Can it be that those against whom we are defending as holy not only the minds, but also the bodies….

Augustine, City, Bk. 1 ch. 19.
630 Fārābī, Fusūl, 95; tr. Butterworth, 95.
regime without oneself coming to commit acts of injustice.” This conclusion is consistent with her theory that practical science and actions lead to happiness. Yet, Fārābī does not, as does Plato, actually claim that the virtuous citizens will “commit acts of injustice.” Furthermore, Fārābī has noted, in Madīnah, that the soul of the virtuous citizen is not corrupted when “he persists in doing what he is forced to do…hence these actions do not trouble him so that he becomes like one of the people of the wicked city.” An added problem with this text is that the virtuous citizen is so miserable in life that even death is preferable. With death being the preferred choice, is Fārābī merely utilizing the Socratic choice found in the Apology? Or is he suggesting that happiness is truly only found in the afterlife? What about the notion that virtuous citizens attain happiness in this life and in the afterlife? Is Crone correct in her claim that, for Fārābī, happiness in this life is attaining intellectual and moral perfection? We have argued that it is through the attainment of these perfections that one becomes a virtuous citizen, thus we could argue that on becoming a virtuous citizen happiness in this life is achieved. We know that Fārābī makes a clear distinction between the types of happiness, i.e., happiness in this life and ultimate happiness in the next life. Although some scholars have claimed that for Fārābī happiness in this life is the only happiness attainable, the claim made in his Fuṣūl weakens this particular argument.

632 Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.11; tr. Walzer, 16.11.
633 See Plato, “The Apology.”
634 Crone, God’s Rule, 177.
While these texts can be interpreted in various ways, there are still unanswered questions. Is Fārābī simply following Plato’s notion of the “foreigner,” and thus suggesting that it is only the philosophers who are virtuous? This, again, leads us to the question: who is attaining this happiness? Are we to agree with Strauss and his supporters that the virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities prove that it is only the philosophers who can attain happiness?\textsuperscript{635} Or, can we take Fārābī at his word and argue that all ranks of society can attain this happiness?\textsuperscript{636} Walzer insists that if Fārābī only meant the philosophers, surely he would have been more explicit.\textsuperscript{637} Another possible question is: are the virtuous citizens merely to wait for the Virtuous City to be established so that they can finally be attached to this city? What if this city never comes about in the virtuous citizens’ lifetime? Fārābī does suggest that this city may not be actualized in the lifetime of the virtuous citizen.\textsuperscript{638} Or is the point of these texts really to show us that virtuous citizens do exist in non-virtuous cities or in the material world? Crone offers a rather interesting theory on what Fārābī is trying to convey about virtuous citizens living in non-virtuous cities. She writes:

Originally, he [Fārābī] had envisaged the madīnah fādira as a real polity, like Muhammad’s Medina (except that there could be several), and ruled that the virtuous man in a city bereft of philosophical leadership had to emigrate to one such polity in order to be saved…if no virtuous polity

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\textsuperscript{635} Strauss’ claim that only the philosophers attain happiness has been noted above. Galston claims that “true happiness can be found in imperfect political communities because some people are born with a natural disposition to achieve the ultimate end of man and a hardness that enables them to realize their potential under adverse circumstances.” Galston, \textit{Politics and Excellence}, 176.

\textsuperscript{636} Fārābī, \textit{Madina}, 16.1; tr. Walzer, 16.1. See also our discussion above, chapter 4.V.

\textsuperscript{637} Walzer, \textit{Virtuous City}, 468.

\textsuperscript{638} Fārābī, \textit{Fusul}, 95; tr. Butterworth, 95.
existed, the virtuous man had to live like a stranger in this world, which would reduce his chances of salvation, for salvation depended on the perfection of virtue, and a virtuous constitution enabled both the ruler and the subjects to achieve a greater degree of virtue that was attainable elsewhere.\footnote{Crone is citing Fārābī’s \textit{Fusūl}, 84, 88/89; \textit{Falsafat Allāṭun}, 19=64; and \textit{Jam’}, 83.} Just as a Muslim had to live with other Muslims under Muslim rule in order to achieve salvation, so a philosopher had to live with like-minded people under philosophical government to reach ultimate happiness. Here the correspondence between Muḥammad’s \textit{umma} and its philosophical counterpart is perfect…Al-Fārābī modified his position, however. There is no obligation to make a \textit{hijra} in his later works. He did reiterate that ‘happiness is not attainable in every city’, but for all that we hear of virtuous people who follow the rules of the First Chief even though they live in a state of dispersal, because they have not yet formed a polity or because their city has broken up, as al-Fārābī explains; either way, they are strangers in their own land, but they are virtuous, good, and happy…without having to emigrate in order to perfect themselves, forming a spiritual aristocracy and a single soul regardless of their separation in space (or for that matter time). Virtuous people who lived in corrupt polities were like chimeras, having the head of one species and the legs of another, he said; the same was true of the vicious people living in virtuous polities. The former ought to emigrate if a virtuous city came to be created. But virtuous people could live in corrupt regimes without losing their virtue, even if they were forced to act corruptly at times: they had to practice a combination of external conformity and internal resistance. Conversely, even perfect cities had ‘weeds’ and pseudo-philosophers among their inhabitants. In other words, the more al-Fārābī thought about it, the more difficult he found it to endow truth and falsehood with separate political embodiments. In real life there would always be a mixture of both wherever one was. The virtuous city was not so much a polity as a brotherhood. Philosophy thus ceased to be a political prescription. It did not have to create a saving polity for itself any more; a fraternity of like-minded men would do. Either al-Fārābī did not need the legitimating bridge anymore or else he realized that the philosophers were not going to make it as the official elite. When it came to it, only revealed religion (\textit{milla}) was a prescription for a polity such as that founded by the Prophet; philosophy transcended it. It was by accepting a \textit{milla} that the philosophers lived in a socio-political community, however imperfect, but the city they formed themselves was a purely spiritual community above it. However dispersed they might live, in whatever degree of subjection to \textit{jāhilī} or corrupt rulers, they could cooperate as devotees of philosophy, forming a single soul and occupying the same rank (\textit{martaba}) in the next world, to live for ever after in jubilant contemplation of the divine.\footnote{Crone, \textit{God’s Rule}, 181-183.}
Here, Crone essentially paints Fārābī as a failure. She sees Fārābī’s highminded goal of establishing a Virtuous City ravaged by the material world. She asserts that Fārābī eventually realized that there would always be a mixture of virtuous and non-virtuous citizens living in any of the cities in the real world. Crone, perhaps compensating for Fārābī’s failure, then allows Fārābī’s virtuous citizens, i.e., the philosophers, to form a “spiritual aristocracy and a single soul regardless of their separation” in space and/or time; an association of likeminded men—a brotherhood if you will. 641 If Crone can allow for a spiritual community for the philosophers that somehow transcends the non-virtuous cities in which they live, then why not consent to a spiritual community for virtuous citizens of all ranks?

Can we suppose that the Plotinian notion of the undescended soul provides a clearer picture of how there are virtuous citizens of all ranks residing in non-virtuous cities? In the Arabic Plotinus, it states:

_We say that the soul does not descend in her entirety_ to this lower world of sense, _neither the universal soul nor our souls, but part of her remains in the world of mind_, not quitting it, since it is not possible that a thing should quit its world completely save by its corruption and emergence from its being. So even though the soul does descend to this world she is attached to her own world, for it is possible for her to be there without withdrawing from this world. If anyone says: Why do we not sense that world as we sense this world? We reply: _Because the sensible world dominates us and our souls have become full of its reprehensible lusts, our ears of the abundant clamour and vociferation within it, so we do not_

641 Ibid., 183. Crone’s reference to the “single soul” is found in Fārābī’s Madīnah. Fārābī states, “When it happens that a number of such kings exist at the same time either in one city or many cities, they are all of them in the same way like one single king and their souls like one single soul.” But Crone ignores Fārābī’s claim that “equally when the people of each class of such a city succeed each other at different times they are all of them like one single soul which remains the same at all times. In the same way, when a (greater) number of people of one class exists at the same time, either in one city or in many excellent cities, their souls are like one soul, whether that class is a ruling class or a subordinate class.” Fārābī, Madīnah, 16.1; tr. Walzer, 16.1.
sense that intelligible world or know what the soul brings us from it. We can sense the intelligible world and what the soul brings us from it only when we rise above this world and reject its base lusts and do not occupy ourselves with anything of its conditions. If the soul can reject sense and the transient sensory things and does not hold fast to them, she then controls this body with the slightest effort, with no fatigue or toil, and assimilates herself to the universal soul and becomes like her in conduct and control, with no difference or variation between them.642

Can we suggest that once a man fulfills the requirements of becoming a virtuous citizen, i.e., attaining the required knowledge and performing the correct actions, he becomes aware of the upper part of his soul and becomes assimilated to the intelligible world? We know that for Fārābī, both philosophy and religion provide the correct knowledge and actions, and so the paths to happiness. Perhaps Fārābī is not a failure, as Crone suggests. If we examine the Virtuous City as a city that exists in the intelligible world and if we admit that the imperfect cities represent the world as it really is and as it will always be, then Fārābī has literally set before us the paths to becoming virtuous citizens and thereby attaining happiness on earth and ultimate happiness in the next life.

Conclusion.

It is doubtful whether the City of God or the Virtuous City can be established and maintained on earth. Even if there are perhaps images of these cities on earth, the constant flux of the temporal world proves to be too strong an adversary. First, there are no guarantees that these cities can be established or can last in the material world and, second, there is no assurance that only the citizens of the City of God and the virtuous citizens will reside in these cities.

Nevertheless, both Augustine and Fārābī examine the citizens of the City of God and the virtuous citizens living in the City of Man and the non-virtuous cities. These non-virtuous cities appear for both to be the world as it is and always will be. Man indeed must reside here, but does not have to become a full-fledged citizen of such a city: hence, the virtuous will be considered foreigners or aliens within the non-virtuous cities. Fārābī’s Madīnah, like Augustine’s De Civitate Dei, clearly outlines what everyone needs to know to become a citizen of this Virtuous City. This involves having a certain knowledge and living a certain way of life. These are the criteria to become virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God. Plotinus’ concept of the undescended soul perhaps provides another way of looking at these virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God, if they can become aware of the upper part of their soul and thus assimilate themselves to the intelligible world. While these citizens must live in the material world, they can still be citizens of those cities that exist in the intelligible world. Fārābī and Augustine show that when the virtuous citizens and the citizens of the City of God are forced to act in a way that opposes what they know to be correct action, the souls of these citizens are not corrupted. Both Augustine and Fārābī reveal that happiness may not always be found on earth, but citizens can live with the hope of achieving ultimate happiness in the City of God and the Virtuous City, which exist in the intelligible world.
Part Three
Conclusion

Both Augustine and Fārābī are seeking ultimate happiness and this happiness is intimately connected with the City of God and the Virtuous City. While Augustine and Fārābī are influenced by Plato and Aristotle, they both utilize the thought of Plotinus in their construct of the cities wherein happiness is achieved. Plotinus’ World Soul is described as a city in the intelligible world, thus it is an eternal city. Within this city, there is a hierarchy of souls based on their ability to reason. This city is governed by Nous, but the individual souls that reside in this city contribute to the orderliness of this city. As long as the individual souls remain within the World Soul they are happy and find eternal rest because they continuously contemplate what is above them, which essentially unites them to the One. If these individual souls do descend into matter, they have the responsibility to make their way back.

Augustine’s City of God is also a city that exists in the intelligible world. It is in this city where the angels who remained faithful to God reside and it is the future dwelling for the citizens who attain happiness. While the City of God is created and therefore corruptible, Augustine, in his utilization of the thought of Plotinus, insists that it is eternal because its inhabitants continuously contemplate God. While both Plotinus and Augustine are clear about the whereabouts of their cities, Fārābī is a little less explicit in his discussion of the Virtuous City.

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644 Ibid.
645 Ibid.

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We have examined the earthly elements of Fārābī’s Virtuous City and have argued that this approach is too limited, since it seems impossible for man to establish and maintain such a city. For even Fārābī suggests that this city may not materialize in the life time of a virtuous citizen. While Fārābī’s description of the Virtuous City does include earthly elements, there are also details that suggest that this city exists in the intelligible world. In his Millah, Fārābī deems the Virtuous City to be an eternal city. This city, like the material world, is created and governed by God. In his comparison of the material world and the Virtuous City, it becomes clear that the Virtuous City is an existence that is not a part of the material world. It actually appears to be a city of souls cooperating and performing actions for one aim. Furthermore, Fārābī’s supreme ruler does not appear to be an earthly ruler. Fārābī insists that the Ancients called this man divine and this ruler holds the highest rank of humanity and all rulers derive from him. Thus, we have suggested that this supreme ruler can be an existent that emanates. Moreover, this supreme ruler is, in essence, connected to the One via the Active Intellect. Also it is this ruler who assigns every individual the rank that they will have on earth and consequently in the afterlife.

There are other qualities of the Virtuous City that imply that it is a city in the intelligible world. Walzer notes the unchanging aspect of this city and this too can be compared to Plotinus and Augustine’s cities that exist only in the

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646 Fārābī, Fusūl, 95; tr. Butterworth, 95.  
648 Fārābī, Fusūl, 33; tr. Butterworth, 33.  
649 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 79.5-80.5; partial tr. Najjār, 49-50; tr. Druart, 79.5-80.5.  
650 Fārābī, Siyāsah, 83.10-84; partial tr. Najjār 53; tr. Druart, 83.10-84.
intelligible world. In fact, the only movement observed is the generations of souls succeeding each other. Furthermore, the Virtuous City is the genus of all souls, thus the virtuous, the wicked, and the ignorant were all at one point a component of the Virtuous City. While all souls originate in the Virtuous City, not all will return. In fact, it is only the virtuous citizens or those citizens who at one time were virtuous who are even considered to be an eternal species, and who have an afterlife. It should be clear that it is only the virtuous citizens who will actually return to the Virtuous City, and there attain happiness. Nevertheless, for both Augustine and Fārābī, man begins his journey to ultimate happiness here in the material world.

That only the citizens of the City of God and the Virtuous City attain ultimate happiness, hence a felicitous afterlife, leads us to the question: what defines a citizen of these cities? Both Augustine and Fārābī examine the loves or aims of various cities and conclude that there are really only two cities; the City of God or the Virtuous City and the City of Man or the non-virtuous city. As noted, Fārābī and Augustine examine the aims of a people to know what they love. And for both, the citizen loves either God, or the One, or self. Both Augustine and Fārābī have requirements for their citizens of the City of God and virtuous citizens. The requirements include both knowledge and action.

While it has been shown that the City of God and the Virtuous City are not to be established on earth, there are citizens of each of these cities living in the City of Man and non-virtuous cities. These citizens have a certain knowledge and live a certain way of life. Having this certain knowledge and
living a certain way of life actually compels the citizens of the City of God and the Virtuous City to live as foreigners or aliens within the cities of the material world. While the influence of Plato is obvious it seems that Plotinus’ notion of the undescended soul perhaps better illustrates what both Farabi and Augustine are claiming. By acquiring such knowledge and performing such actions, the citizens of the City of God and the Virtuous City are perhaps cognizant of the upper part of their souls that reside in the intelligible world.
Conclusion

We began this dissertation with the claim that the varying interpretations of Fārābī’s *Madinah* have tended to ignore the most fundamental aspect of his thought. This is the central importance he accords to the notion of happiness (*saʿādah*). We have shown that the interpretations offered to date by modern scholars differ widely and are often mutually exclusive; and yet, it is just these conflicting interpretations which continue to determine the very questions we ask of Fārābī’s text. Fārābī’s Virtuous City has been predominantly recognized by scholars to be an ideal city as found in Plato’s *Republic* or an actual city that has been founded or will be established at some time in the future. But these interpretations severely limit who can attain happiness in this life and in the afterlife. By examining Fārābī’s Virtuous City within a Neoplatonic, specifically Plotinian, construct allows us to observe the Virtuous City in a different light.

We have argued that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is comparable to the Plotinian World Soul which is the genus of all souls as well as the place where souls strive to return. In this comparison, we found that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is not unlike Augustine’s City of God. The Virtuous City and the City of God, like Plotinus’ World Soul, are where souls attain ultimate happiness. The attainment of happiness, i.e., happiness on earth and happiness in the afterlife materialize as the greatest goal of man. Still, this happiness is for virtuous citizens and citizens of the City of God alone. In order to be a virtuous citizen or a citizen of the City of God one must have a certain knowledge and live a certain way of life. For Fārābī, both philosophy and religion provide the theoretical and practical
sciences, i.e., the correct knowledge and actions, that lead man to become a virtuous citizen. Augustine deems that the Christian ideal of loving God and neighbor guides man to become a citizen of the City of God. So for both Fārābī and Augustine correct knowledge and actions lead man to happiness. The attainability of happiness by all men, who succeed in attaining the correct knowledge and performing the correct actions, seems to be the fundamental point that modern scholarship disregards.

So, where does this leave us? By examining exclusively Fārābī’s Neoplatonism, which includes both political and mystical elements, we are not denying the thoroughly examined and comprehensively established Platonic and Aristotelian influence. These influences and others have already been thoroughly discussed but if we continue to allow scholars to stop the progress of philosophical influence with Platonism or even Middle Platonism, we deny continuity and we are trying to ascertain a continuity with the political philosophy of Plato and the political philosophy of Fārābī. Thus, there is a need to examine the political and mystical aspects of Neoplatonism in the writings of Fārābī. In establishing this continuity of political philosophy, Aristotle, too, is frequently examined. However, the influence of Aristotle in the thought of Fārābī is apparently marred by examining Fārābī’s Neoplatonism. Galston suggests that to examine Fārābī’s Neoplatonism is to “cease taking him seriously as an illuminator of Aristotle.”651 Yet she also admits that by “doing this we

651 Miriam Galston, Politics and Excellence, 14.
prejudge the question of the Platonic strata in Aristotle’s philosophy.” By breaking the continuity of political philosophy, or really philosophy in general, scholars are able to declare that Fārābī appears “all of a sudden” with a political philosophy that had no predecessors in Islamic philosophy, or for that matter, in Christian philosophy. This “political philosophy,” according to Mahdi, “is the political science of the ancients, of Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics.”

Fārābī is indeed a political philosopher—he discusses cities and aims of such cities and its citizens and the actions that are required of citizens—and this, according to Mahdi, is what political science investigates. As we have shown, he is also a Neoplatonist. So, we must return to Landolt’s question: why can he not be both a political philosopher and a Neoplatonist? According to most scholars, Neoplatonic philosophers are not interested in things such as politics. However, O’Meara has presented an excellent case exposing the blunder of the traditional view of Neoplatonism wherein the Neoplatonists were not interested in political philosophy. O’Meara in fact reveals that political philosophy is indeed included in Neoplatonic philosophy. Thus we can no longer allow scholars to fall back on the conventional view in order to marginalize and/or completely dismiss Fārābī’s Neoplatonism.

In revealing a continuity of political philosophy which stems from Plato and Aristotle and continues all the way through Fārābī, we must also ask if there is a continuity with Fārābī’s immediate predecessors and successors. As noted

652 Ibid.
654 Mahdi, Alfarabi: Political Philosophy, 9.
656 See above, chapter 1.II.a.
above, there has been some discussion that political aspects can be found in Abū Yusuf Ya‘qūb Ibn Ishāk al-Kindī (801-866 CE) and Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī’s (854-925 or 935 CE) thought. However Neoplatonic elements are also found in their works. Al-Rāzī, for instance, “maintained that at some future date all men will realize, through philosophy, that their souls belong elsewhere. When they realize this they are reabsorbed into the World Soul.” Another point of continuity can be found in Fārābī’s discussion of the Active Intellect. According to Fārābī, the souls that attain happiness will exist just beneath or within the Active Intellect. So it is not surprising to find in the Rasāʾīl of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity) that the souls who attain salvation return to the Active Intellect. Indeed, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ is significantly influenced by the thought of Fārābī, but the similarities are downplayed by scholars because they derive from two different perspectives, i.e., religion and philosophy respectively. While Abouzeid insists that there is concrete evidence that the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ included into their system the ideas of Fārābī, there are noted differences. Since we have focused on Fārābī’s Neoplatonism perhaps we can posit even more parallels. For example, Abouzeid notes that “for the Brethren of Purity, the virtuous city is not, as it is with al-

657 See footnote 69.
660 Ibid., 2. See also Walzer, *Virtuous City*, 12.
their spiritual society of knowledgeable people who strive for intellectual
perfection while surrounded by a sea of ignorance.”662  This notion of a spiritual
society is reminiscent of Henry Corbin’s claim that Fārābī’s Virtuous City can
be seen more as a city of the “‘latter-day saints’,,” although Corbin still wants to
establish this city in the material world “at the coming of the hidden Imām.”663
However, we have argued that Fārābī’s Virtuous City is a city that exists in the
intelligible world, so Fārābī does not appear to be tying this city to the material
world; thus, the concept of the Virtuous City found in the thought of the Ikhwān
al-Ṣafā and Fārābī does sustain a parallel.  The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, according to
Abouzeid, do not suppose that the ideal can be “represented by any worldly
political regime….This earthly life is important in as much as it represents the
only path man can follow in order to arrive at his ultimate destination. Their
main concern is man and his raison d’être.”664  Surely there are parallels with
these ideas and the ideas of Fārābī as discussed in this dissertation.

By examining Fārābī as we have in this paper, we no longer have to
choose between Fārābī as a political philosopher or as a Neoplatonist: it should
be obvious that he is both.  So, conceivably, we can now reexamine Fārābī’s
works and try to correct some of the problems, as noted by Gutas, with the
approaches and interpretations that are prevalent in the study of Arabic
philosophy in general and Farabian scholarship in particular.  By probing both
political and Neoplatonic elements, we can argue that perhaps Fārābī and his

662 Ibid., 481-482.
663 Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, 163.
664 Abouzeid, Al-Fārābī and the Brethren of Purity, 490, 494.
immediate predecessors and his successors, such as, al-Kindī, al-Rāzī, and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa have more in common than previously thought. We can go further with this line of thought and perhaps suggest that the philosophers who have been notably influenced by Fārābī, such as Ibn Sīnā (980-1037CE), can also be reexamined for further Farabian influence. We have only examined the Plotinian aspects of Fārābī’s thought but there is much more work to be done. We must also examine thoroughly the later Neoplatonic elements found within the writings of Fārābī. Thus, there is a need to reexamine Fārābī’s works, his predecessors, his immediate antecedents, and his successors. By doing this, perhaps, we can come to a better understanding of Fārābī’s works and as a result come to a fuller understanding of Fārābī himself.
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