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2023
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Why Does Socrates Recommend the Use of Falsehood to Teach Virtue in his Elementary Education Programme?

An Argument and Evaluation of Permissible Falsehoods in the Search for Truth

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Coursework & Research Report in the Department of Philosophy.

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MA in Coursework and Research Report: ACA00 PT (Phil 2020 A, Research Report PT)

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Acknowledgements

To my wonderful, abundant family and special group of friends: my cousins, my aunts and uncles, my step-parents and step-siblings, who have willed me forward during this journey. Your support and desire for me to succeed gave me the motivation to continue when the sun had set, and I couldn't see clearly amongst the shadows.

This thesis is a labour of love and was born out of a desire to develop myself and further my tertiary education, in the hope of finding myself once again after feeling lost in a whirlwind of grief. It is a tribute to my late mother, who gave me enough love to last a lifetime and whose mothering ability still enlightens and uplifts me every day. Thank you too, to my wonderful siblings, Sarah, Piet, Justin, Krissy, baby Ollie, and Ross for bringing the 'gees' and for helping me have fun throughout. Thank you, dad for encouraging me, from my earliest memories and as an adult; for understanding and supporting my yearning for higher education. This is my childhood dream come true.

To my loves: my darling husband Tyron, and our beautiful golden-haired (for now) children, Hunter and Stevie. You are my heart. Thank you for your tremendous endurance, patience and love. Your love inspires me to be better every day, to seek the goodness in the world and to show it to you. To my young children, who will one day grow up and hopefully be interested in reading this, I wanted to demonstrate that with enough hard work, determination, commitment and grit you can achieve anything that you set your heart and mind to (at any age, and after any hiatus).

Thank you to my fellow student and friend Michelle for the giggles along the way. Thank you to Samantha Vice for your support. Thank you also to Bruce and Rona.

A special thank you to Jane (my stepmom) for helpful, early editing support. Thank you to John, who tutored and taught me so much but most importantly how to become a better writer. Lastly, to my supervisor Dylan, to whom I shall be eternally grateful for this experience. With your help and guidance, the rust eventually wore off. You are a true scholar and a gentleman. Thank you for your enduring patience, your wisdom and professionalism. I know you and the 'muses' willed me forward too.

March 2023

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Introduction

The question of how to design an educational programme is a central and critical one in any society. A window of opportunity exists here—to start the educational process by looking closely at how dispositions and outlooks are formed. An inquiry into the *Republic* provides an opportunity to study virtue, and specifically for my project's purposes, Socrates' educational programme which centres on fostering virtue within the child. Virtue is understood as a quality that benefits both the child and the broader community.

The programme has two parts: first, education of children in music and stories which seeks to produce good habits of soul and body. These habits are a type of virtue required for the pursuit of more advanced studies. The ethically most promising children are then selected to become guardians of the *Kallipolis*. Socrates' advanced programme develops moral character further, with the ultimate goal of cultivating wisdom by means of mathematics and philosophy.

One of the striking features of Socrates' early programme is that falsehood—or perhaps lies—must be told to small children from their earliest years. This is, according to Socrates, required to prime and prepare the child's psyche for rational development in the advanced programme. In other words, he claims that falsehood should be used to develop a capacity for wisdom in children's souls (377a).

Socrates' claim seems at first glance to be a problematic position to take in a debate on the best possible way to advance moral character in the future guardians of the *Kallipolis*. Since falsehood is commonly understood as the opposite of truth, how could falsehood develop a capacity for truth and wisdom? Socrates' position is paradoxical, to be sure, but I think that

there is something true about it, and in this thesis, I seek to understand and clarify its core claims. Socrates is right to say that falsehood of a certain sort is necessary in early education, to set the child up for a philosophically led education in adulthood.

Let me explain how I develop my argument. It proceeds in two stages, where chapters one and two lay the foundations for three, and chapters three and four, in turn, the foundations for five. There is a gradual deepening in my account that corresponds with Socrates' own thinking. Ideas presented earlier are partial and superseded by later accounts.

In the first chapter, I discuss the contours of Socrates' psychological theory, specifically explaining his conception of the soul and how it develops and learns from infancy. Thereafter, in the second, I give an account of civic virtue, which, as I explain is the intermediate state of the soul which the early education programme seeks to cultivate using *mousike*. It is important for my project that civic virtue is not an intellectual state, but one of good habits of the soul.

Chapter 3 draws the first two chapters together as I give a preliminary account of why Socrates thinks that education should begin with false stories. In this chapter, I explain what fault Socrates finds with existing false stories, and what criterion he identifies in the *good* types of falsehoods that he insists must be told by poets and storytellers. The key ideas here are these: first, since children do not have a developed capacity for truth, they cannot recognise the truth for what it is. Thus, using true stories has no purpose. Secondly, since civic virtue is developed by imitation, historical truth is much less important than what I call 'ethical truth.' This is, in short, the provision of exemplary role models that children can identify with and emulate.

In chapter 4, I complicate my account of how a certain falsehood is required to develop truth. I do this by offering an account of Socrates' crucial distinction between true and verbal falsehoods. In this context, I argue that Socrates' distinction does not map onto our conception

of a lie. A true falsehood is not a lie because it is a false belief, and a verbal falsehood is not *always* a lie, because sometimes is not intended to deceive. For example, Socrates regards myths told about ancient events when the truth is not known as verbal falsehoods, though these are not lies. They are stories, designed to orient children to the history of their community and their world. I also provide an account of when verbal falsehoods must be used. The condition most relevant to my project is when the truth cannot be told to someone, for example, on account of deficient rationality. I further argue that permissible verbal falsehoods are designed to lead people to the truth.

In chapter 5, I complete my account by arguing that moral myths are verbal falsehoods. With the insights gained from chapter 4 I show that Socrates' preferred myths are, nonetheless, designed to lead to the truth. Crucially, I suggest that moral myths are destabilising. This is because their false, allegorical nature provides *temporary* structures of understanding in the psyche that collapse once the child matures and is able to comprehend the deeper meaning. This process of destabilisation is essential for moral advancement.

I hope thus to demonstrate that certain, psychologically disruptive falsehoods are effective pedagogical tools appropriate for an ethically led education. Through distinguishing categories of falsehood, and demonstrating how some are intended to be overcome, I hope to clarify Socrates's ultimate vision: the ability of future guardians to transcend their education.

This project is partly exegetical. It aims to consider Socrates' elementary education programme and its first principles. It endeavours to show how the programme provides a framework for children on which their experiences are layered. According to Socrates, falsehood is the means for cultivating a philosophically orientated position within a child's soul at the foundational level. Central to his theory is his conception of the soul and its development within a moral culture. So, before I attend to falsehoods in education, I must contextualise Socrate's views on

the phenomenology of the childhood psychological state, and its relationship with education. This is where I start, in chapter 1.

Chapter 1: Early Childhood Psychological Theory

Introduction

My overarching question is why, according to Socrates, we should use falsehood to educate our young. His reasons must be reconstructed by considering, first, his early psychological theory and second, his account of virtue. The question of education is discussed throughout the *Republic*, beginning in book 2 with a discussion between Glaucon, Adeimantus and Socrates about how best to design a programme to educate the future leaders ('guardians') of the good city.[1] In this chapter, I consider Socrates' remarks on education as a means of drawing out the contours of his psychological theory. For convenience, I start with an overview of his conception of the psyche before moving on to discuss in more depth some of the views which inform this picture. In the next chapter, I consider his account of virtue directly.

Three Features of Socrates' Conception of the Soul

1. The Impressionable Nature of the Juvenile Psyche

The first claim that Socrates makes is that souls (*psychai*, in Greek)[2] are highly susceptible to influence when young.[3] "For that is when [the soul] is especially malleable and best takes on

[1] Myles Burnyeat argues Socrates is demonstrating an understanding of the ways in which the ethos of a society forms the souls who grow up in it. (Burnyeat n.d., 257)
[2] Psychology is an English word, but comes directly Greek, the English connotation is broad, it includes the science of mental activity, while the Greek connotes an account or logos of the psyche (Lear 1992, 184)
[3] The word 'soul' is an English translation of the Greek word *psyche* (Lear 2006, 29). In the context of this paper, I will use the words 'psyche' and 'soul' interchangeably as I conceive them to be one thing.

whatever pattern one wishes to impress on it."[4] Socrates here highlights the receptivity of a child's soul – its potential for forming dispositions of character[5] that will be expressed in how the child comes to think and act. The soul, like the body, has the inherent ability to grow and develop, but it lacks a predetermined orientation or shape. This lack of prior determination is what makes the young soul so receptive to education.

Since young children are so impressionable, it follows that the earliest influences on their souls are the most important. These initial impressions form the foundation of all subsequent 'patterns' – they can be conceived as constructing the psyche's blueprint[6], affecting all subsequent experience. Later patterns come to be realised in a manner that is to some extent determined by the early blueprint, which thus affects the educated psyche's potential for truly receiving new forms. This is perhaps too strong since, as we shall see later, a well-constructed early education will seek to instil a certain potential for disruption. It is upon this unstable foundation that philosophical insight must be brought to bear.

2. The Durable Character of Belief Formation

Socrates makes this fixedness explicit when he says that "the beliefs [that children] absorb at that age are difficult to erase and tend to become unalterable".[7] Early beliefs form dispositions and outlooks constituting a child's character.[8] Trying to mend or influence a distorted outlook in the soul much later in life proves to be difficult, if not impossible.[9] The soul begins as

[4] 377b
[5] The English word 'ethos' is translated from Greek, meaning 'character' (Burnyeat n.d., 256)
[6] Sometimes referred to as the small print or schema of the individual psyche (Lear 1992, 193)
[7] 378e
[8] 'Patterns' are set up by the stories told (379a).
[9] Futter asks: how does Plato get around the already distorted moral views that come with being socialised in the traditions of culture? Having an incorrect moral view would ideally be corrected by building into the moral

receptive, undergoing moral and cultural conditioning gradually and unconsciously over time—we can imagine children's characters as being in a constant state of slowly ossifying development,[10] though this would again be too strong, given what I will argue in chapter 5.[11]

3. The Lack of Capacity for Truth

Socrates also maintains that children lack the capacity for discerning truth from falsity. Perhaps more precisely, he infers that children do not understand that such a clear distinction even exists. This means that their capacity for truth needs to be developed and refined over time, and for Socrates this is one of the main functions of education.[12] This will be an important point for my later argument, and so it is worth explaining it carefully here.

Children at this age cannot discern between truth and falsity, and therefore they internalise stories in their psyche, in such a way that is unfiltered and undetected. When discussing with Adeimantus whether Hera was chained by her son, or Hephaestus thrown from heaven by his father,[13] at 378e Socrates says: "The young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't."[14] This means that young children cannot distinguish the surface meaning of a story from its deeper, symbolic meaning. Young children will psychologically digest the horrid act being

training programme a fool proof mechanism enabling self-reflection and ensuring that incorrect moral intuitions and habits were prevented in the first place. (Futter, The Concept of Persuasion in Plato's Early and Middle Dialogues 2009, 108)

[10] It's difficult to capture the subjective nature of the childhood psychological state with precision. This will be elaborated on further in chapter 5. (Lear, Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic 2006)

[11] Another analogy of education's effect on the soul could picture it as moulding clay or laying cement. The clay can initially be worked with and moulded but once the drying process starts, the material hardens and is no longer pliable. It is now solid and determinate. Similarly, patterning the soul through internalisation (see the discussion following this overview) results in a fixed character.

[12] (Lear 2006, 31)

[13] I discuss this passage again in chapter 5.

[14] 378e

depicted without discrimination;[15] although it will make an impression on their souls (I will explore the nature of this "impression" more carefully in the next chapter), they will not recognise that the tale of Hephaestus' fall contains a moral lesson. Their inability to distinguish to see deeper meaning below the surface of stories provides a crucial insight into the nature of children's psychological states, and an important one in understanding how children develop and learn.

The Soul in its Relationship to Education

In the previous section, I identified three important claims that Socrates makes about childhood psychology. With these in mind, I would like to zoom out a bit and discuss some more general themes drawn from Socrates' discussion of moral education in the *Republic*. Socrates' treatment of education here is informed by and sheds light on his underlying psychological theory. Keeping in mind the impressionability of juvenile souls, their limited period of pliancy and lack of capacity for truth, we can understand Socrates' desire to regulate the stories that children are exposed to in the classroom and the broader culture – stories which seem to emphasise virtue – or a specific understanding of it – over truth.

1. Internalisation

We can think of a child's soul as a blank canvas, and images splashed onto it as paint eventually forming a picture. For Socrates, this process is gradual and largely unconscious. A multitude

[15] Children tend to latch onto fears portrayed in stories, and then over time with experience and age, the fears can be given further form and content. (Lear, Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic 2006, 29)

of images drawn from the culture the child finds himself situated in will gradually accumulate unnoticed in the child's psyche. This raises an essential point that will be of importance throughout this project: the young child doesn't yet have the capacity to filter the images and moral representations being thrown at him, but these images influence the development of his character and disposition, which are constitutive of his ethical point of view.

For Socrates, the impressionable human psyche has the capacity to absorb moral and cultural influences from birth[16] – a process which Jonathan Lear labels 'internalisation'.[17] A distinctive feature of Plato's psychology, according to Lear,[18] is that a dynamic connection between psychic structures and cultural and moral forms exists.[19] Specific kinds of souls come to be what they are on account of their taking in aspects of the social and cultural world. For example, the honour-loving person comes to develop this character on account of the specific forms of valuation present in his community.[20] From this it follows that psychological health is dependent on the health of the community in which the child is brought up.[21] In particular, illness in a human psyche is a matter of a child taking on the pathological structures of the moral and social culture that he is brought up in.[22]

[16] Burnyeat calls this the soul's ability to absorb qualities from the material environment (Burnyeat n.d.). I discuss his example of grace in the *Republic* in chapter 2.
[17] Lear calls the reverse process whereby the psyche fashions something in the external world according to the psyche's likeness 'externalisation'. Internalisations and externalisation are fundamental psychological activities, and are widely accepted psychoanalytic traditions. They can be regarded as the conditions (and first principles) under which the psyche is formed and operates. Lear also terms it an isomorphism (Lear 1992, 199 & 206) Similarly, Burnyeat discusses the relationship between the transmission culture and psychology. He says it constitutes all the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge that is a shared basis for social action. (Burnyeat n.d., 218)
[18] It is also referred to as logical account of transactions inside and outside of a person's psyche i.e. intrapsychic and interpsychic relations (Lear 1992)
[19] (J. Lear, Inside and Outside the Republic 1992, 184)
[20] Whereas Freud understood 'internalisations' of parental figures formed a person's ego and superego (Lear 1992, 184)
[21] It is well known the *Republic* is a study in the health and pathologies of cities and the psyche. A fractured polis will produce a fractured psyche. (Lear 1992, 188)
[22] (J. Lear, Inside and Outside the Republic 1992)

2. The Phenomenology of Childhood Imagination

I would like to make a claim here that goes beyond what Socrates explicitly says in the text: that children experience stories in the world as being particularly evocative and vivid. As we saw in the discussion above, he believes that children don't possess a clear distinction between truth and falsity. It is for this reason, I suggest, that they experience stories in a powerful and lifelike manner.[23] It is the openness and underdeveloped constitution of a child's psyche that enables him to experience life in general, and stories in particular, in a heightened sensory state. It's always fascinating to watch a small child experience something, especially something new. Children's experiences seem less filtered than ours. This is particularly noticeable when watching a small child's inability to control emotions such as fear, in response to, for example, a shiver story (or *temblon*). Children often demonstrate exaggerated responses. Similarly, in a slightly different context, a child's psychological underdevelopment – his lack of understanding – is often exhibited through a tantrum, such as when my toddler wants to take her ice cream into the swimming pool when told that she's not allowed to. She doesn't have the capacity to understand the reasoning behind the prohibition.

Lear discusses the nature of the childhood experience, showing us how the world, although evocative for the child, can also be indistinct. On Lear's reading, Plato characterises the childhood psychological state as 'dreamlike.'[24] The dream comparison explains how it is difficult to locate exact points of subjective learning, before one has the capacity to do so.

[23] (Lear 2007, 29)
[24] (Lear 2006, 28)

Dreams have a likeness to reality.[25] We recognise sights and sounds in our dreams and yet sometimes can't quite locate a memory, or decide if what we recall was just a dream. It is the blurry, dreamlike quality – which Lear terms 'indefiniteness'[26] – that is familiar, and that describes the mechanism by which a moral outlook develops in the soul.[27] We, for example, know how to sing nursery rhymes without remembering the moments we learned them. It is from this similarity and uncanniness to everyday reality that dreams draw their power and influence. Chapter 5 includes further material on childhood psychological state, with a view to explain the process of psychological displacement.

3. The Secondary Importance of Truth

On Lear's account of Plato, the child's psyche is not yet developed enough to grasp the truth; the structures of the mind are in their infancy; as has been said, the psyche has not yet developed conceptions of the difference between truth and falsity, fact and fiction, illusion, allegory or symbolism. These concepts are developed through the acquisition of knowledge and the emergence of the soul's rational faculties (forming part of its virtue). The insight to be drawn from this is that education must be customised to fit the child's level of ability and his stage of psychological development. Whatever education is undertaken, it is clear that it needs to be considerate of the child's psychological status. It is for this reason that one cannot rationalise with, cannot speak truth to a young child; doing so is pointless and ineffective since the child's psyche is not yet capable of understanding. At 402a, Socrates is explicit later in the *Republic* in saying that rational argument can only be understood by older children.

[25] This dreamlike quality of the childhood state is further expanded on in chapter 5 through a discussion of psychological displacement and the experience of 'waking up'.
[26] Another descriptor might be 'amorphous'
[27] (Lear 2006, 28)

Since there is no clear distinction between fantasy and reality for the child, it makes no difference if the story being told to him is true or false at this stage of development. It is for that reason that small children embrace fantasy play so well.[28] Their understanding hasn't yet been developed, so the concepts are not fully grasped. Nonetheless, whatever mixture of fact and fiction is being presented is vividly absorbed. As we will see in chapter 3, because children can't distinguish true stories from false ones, and because false stories are more effective in the development of virtue, Socrates recommends the use of false stories first.

4. The Fixing of Character

There is one more crucial factor, noted briefly above, implicit in Socrates' emphasis on the need for effective early education: the seemingly indelible nature of early impressions. While a child's psyche is open and receptive initially, the internalisation process Lear describes how it hardens as the patterns established in the soul become fixed, shaping the child's character. The psyche develops while simultaneously becoming more fixed and oriented towards certain patterns of reinforced social and moral modes of conduct. As these patterns become imprinted, the receptivity and susceptibility of the soul to change decreases. This means that the possibility of altering existing beliefs or abandoning them for alternative beliefs diminishes. By implication, older people are less able to receive these patterns, presumably on account of the prior determination of their basic potential. The patterns of determination enable the

[28] I see this daily with my two small children aged 5 and 7. When they recount or act out a story to me, it is often a mixture of reality and fantasy; when I explain that the cat is sick, they respond by explaining that it must be because she didn't eat her vegetables.

development of the psyche in one direction, yet they can set up psychological barriers that prevent development in other areas.[29]

Lear provides an interpretation of the figure of Cephalus in the *Republic* that supports this point, which I pick up again later in chapter 5. On his account, the patterns that the child internalises through his early childhood stories determine the direction of his moral trajectory, such that, depending on the nature of those patterns, the result could be a psyche resistant to (or incapable of) later rational function. The seeds planted in the childhood psyche germinate throughout one's life and flower (or to use Cephalus's metaphor, 'detonate') in old age. Socrates cannot reach Cephalus with argument because Cephalus' character is fixed and is unresponsive to reason, the dispositions laid down by the stories he was told as a child leading him to this irrationality. These fixed outlooks seem to creep in at the end of life creating an anxiety around death.[30]

Myles Burnyeat's 'ghost experiment' touches on anxiety, fear, and the unconscious nature of our patterning, even as adults.[31] Burnyeat asks his adult audience to raise their hands if they, firstly, *do not believe* in ghosts, but secondly, *do nevertheless* get anxious or scared when listening to ghost stories. Many of the audience members do so. The point is that our emotional and behavioural responses are driven by irrational fears indicative of how early stories have affected our psyches and circumvented the established beliefs and processes of judgement we later develop.[32] This is a reason why those early formations of character are so crucial: the power of reason cannot undo them even when it recognises that it would be desirable to do so.

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[29] Lear assimilates the human psyche to resin, explaining that cultural and moral influences can impress upon it before it takes on a definite shape. This is similar to my above cement analogy. (Lear 1992, 187)
[30] (Lear 2006, 29)
[31] (Burnyeat 1997, 222)
[32] This is a widely accepted phenomenon in the philosophy of mind. (Burnyeat 1997, 223)

5. The Internalisation of Stories and Model Behaviour

We can see then why storytelling is, for Socrates, a primary teaching strategy. It is engaging and can be participatory, and its purpose is to engender examples of good and bad moral behaviours. Stories are composed of characters performing actions. Children imitate characters that they identify with or admire, and imitate their deeds. Heroes are regarded as exemplars of moral virtue and behaviour by these children; they are idealised although perhaps not fully understood, standing as mysterious yet instructive. Education for Socrates is not simply the task of filling up the soul with knowledge. The imitation of heroes and virtuous acts builds habits and dispositions of moral character, and orients the soul towards virtue.

In early childhood, children play as various characters and act out plots that are a mixture of reality and fantasy. Through this process they unconsciously emulate the traits and behaviours of the characters they portray. This invisibly shapes the soul; there is no conscious awareness in the child of what is happening. That is because the child, lacking the capacity for truth, is unable to judge – proper judgement being a later function predicated on the development of rational faculties in the soul, arising when the guardian ultimately trains in dialectic.

For Socrates then, character is formed through imitation (*mimesis*), and heroic tales provide paradigms for imitation[33]. This is another component of internalisation. For this reason, the goodness and value of role models play a critical role in fashioning character.[34] Repeated

[33]For Socrates, imitators are cultural transmitters, and therefore play a key pedagogical role. They are representative of moral values. (Burnyeat n.d., 244)
[34] (Lear, Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic 2006, 29)

imitation shapes the soul.[35] Emulation of appropriate or admirable ethical behaviour creates a dynamic transactional connection between theory and practice.[36] The stories children are told establish structures of repetition that demonstrate habits and dispositions of admirable character, embodied through the stories' role models. Imitation[37] is responsible for enforcing moral exemplars.[38] The meaning of the habits portrayed are not fully understood at the time by the child.[39] For this reason, Socrates is explicit that inferior traits and behaviours should not be emulated.[40] The form and content of stories have a tremendous impact on how they are received, imprinted, and psychologically absorbed.

Conclusion

Socrates's metaphysical understanding of psychological principles underpins his theory of education. In this chapter, I have tried to draw out the contours of that theory by considering what he has to say about the internalisation of a child's moral and cultural world. Since children are vulnerable, not having formed the ability to detect harmful psychological influences themselves, the stories they are presented with and the role models they emulate must be well chosen. The educational programme must also be cognisant that the ethical determinations produced by psychological patterning eventually become law to the child, until the point that he is sufficiently educated to challenge them, if that becomes a possibility at all. We shall see

[35] (Lear 2007, 29)
[36] This bridges the gap between how one *does* and how one *should* act. One could conceptualise a story and design it to meet the virtue requirement (theory), but acting it out develops the correct associated behaviours (practice).
[37] Lear refers to heroic tales as giving paradigms for imitation as shaping the psyche. (Lear, Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic 2006, 29)
[38] Mimesis has a formative educational role in culture transmission. What a person regularly imitates is what he will become. (Burnyeat n.d., 280)
[39] (Lear 2007, 29)
[40] 396d

later that the worst of all evils for Socrates is to hold a ‘true falsehood’ in the soul about matters of ethical importance.

If we accept that the correct response to these strictures is to favour stories of virtue rather than truth, to create a moral culture first, further questions will need answering. How does Socrates propose to regulate which stories and falsehoods are allowed for young children? Why does he forbid certain falsehoods while encouraging others? Also, if a soul is incorrectly educated, drawn away from reason as with Cephalus, is there an antidote?

The answers to these questions will be clarified in upcoming chapters. With the psychological theory in place, we can now more deeply consider the Socratic conception of virtue and how Socrates’ educational programme is channelled towards it. The development of the right habits and dispositions will create the psychological trajectory, through civic and philosophic virtue, to wisdom in the soul.

Chapter 2: The Socratic Conception of Civic Virtue

Introduction

If we want to understand why Socrates recommends the use of falsehoods to teach virtue, we need to recognise that for him virtue is closely bound up with wisdom, the development of which is the final goal of his educational programme. In this chapter, my purpose is to distinguish two types of virtue – civic and philosophic – and give an account of the former. I will return to philosophical virtue in chapter 5.

The Distinction between Civic and Philosophic Virtue

Given that the attainment of virtue is a central topic in the *Republic*, the first question to ask is what virtue is. I think there is no single answer to this question, for we can discern distinct types of virtue under discussion in the text. It is clear that we can distinguish between what I will call 'civic virtue' and 'philosophic virtue'. In this section, I explain the difference between the two by reviewing the evidence in the *Republic*.[41]

We must begin by reviewing briefly what the early education programme involves. At 376e, in his discussion of the guardians, Socrates asks Adeimantus: "What will their education be? Or is it hard to find anything better than that which has developed over a long period – physical

[41] There are two phases to the education programme, the early phase discussed predominantly in books 2 to 4, and the advanced discussed mainly in books 7 and 8.

training for bodies and music and poetry for the soul? Now, we start education in music and poetry before physical training, don't we?"[42]

Socrates indicates in this passage that early education is education in music and poetry. But what does education of this sort aim to achieve? Socrates gives the answer later when he refers to "the music and poetry we described before" and says that it "educated the guardians through habits". "Its harmonies gave them a certain harmoniousness, not knowledge; its rhythms gave them a certain rhythmical quality; and its stories, whether fabulous [or mythical, *muthodes*][43] or nearer the truth, cultivated other habits akin to these." [44] I will refer to the state of character—habits and harmonies—that early education seeks to produce as 'civic virtue'. Socrates himself uses the term 'civic courage' in book 4 to refer to this state of soul.[45] We note that he says that a fuller discussion of courage should be conducted at some other time. This would suggest that courage and virtue founded on habit is partial in some way.

As we have seen, the early education programme with its emphasis on music and poetry is centred on the development and training of the body and psyche in terms of *habit formation.*[46] By contrast, the advanced programme begins instead with mathematics ("number and calculation"), a component of every craft and science,[47] and includes the study of geometry, astronomy and harmonics.[48] What kind of soul does the advanced education programme seek to produce? The answer if we are to judge from the allegory of the cave and Socrates' explicit

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[42] The Greek term used for 'music and poetry' here is *mousike*, which has a wider connotation than our modern concept. It includes song and theatrical performance, central to ancient Greek culture.
[43] In ancient Greece *muthos* was a true story, a story that unveils the true origin of the world and human beings. Our modern day understanding of a myth is something to be "debunked": a widespread, popular belief that is in fact false. In ancient Greece, the memorable was transmitted orally through poetry, which often relied on myth. Dictionary.com
[44] This quote takes place within the context of the allegory of the cave in book 7. (522a)
[45] 430c
[46] Sophie Bourgoult argues the early education programme seeks to cultivate a 'non-reflective type of virtue' in children (Bourgoult 2012, 60)
[47] 522c
[48] 526e

remarks is philosophic *knowledge or understanding* of the world. Knowledge of this sort seems to be constitutive of, not partial civic virtue, but true philosophical virtue—virtue based on wisdom.

The two phases of Socrates' education programme differ in their focus because they aim to develop different types of virtue – a state of the psyche concerned with habits of response as opposed to philosophical understanding. In what follows, I explain the nature of civic virtue in more depth by further considering the target, mode and desired outcome of the early education programme. I also introduce and discuss two examples of civic virtue.

Three Approaches to Civic Virtue

1. The Psychological Target of Early Education

A key difference between the early and the advanced education programmes is the part or parts of the soul that each is mainly concerned to develop, or, as I will say, "targets." In order to explain this, I must draw on Socrates' discussion of the soul's tripartite psychology in book 4 of the *Republic*. The early programme focuses primarily on the training of the appetite and spirit – the bottom and second order of the soul respectively. Reason – the third order – rules over them, or, at least, does so when the soul is organised correctly. By targeting the development of reason, the advanced programme aims to produce a just soul, ascending towards wisdom.[49] However, the prerequisite of this achievement is steadfast and consistent

[49] This is a high-level summary of the tripartite psychology outlined in book 4.

management (through habit creation) and training of the soul's appetites. We could frame this by talking of the way that early education seeks to harmonise the different parts of the soul.[50]

Civic virtue is the education of the non-rational parts of the psyche insofar as they bear on reason. [51] It is the practised and habitual training of spirit and appetites in matters such as the control of emotion, fear and pain, and the management of desires. The full development of rationality must wait until the advanced programme through training in dialectic. Socrates indicates that appetite and spirit develop before reason. As he says at 441b: "Even in small children, one can see that they are full of spirit right from birth, while as far as rational calculation is concerned, some never seem to get a share of it, while the majority do so quite late".

We find further evidence of the difference between the early and advanced programmes in book 7. At 518e, Socrates says "Now, it looks as though the other so-called virtues of the soul are akin to those of the body, for they really aren't there beforehand but are added later by habit and practice. However, the virtue of reason seems to belong above all to something more divine, which never loses its power but is either useful and beneficial or useless and harmful, depending on the way it is turned." The virtue of reason – philosophic virtue – is predicated on the civic virtues of the soul. In the terms of the cave, the proper habits of response constitutive of civic virtue enable the soul to turn around and make the ascent to wisdom.

[50] 410b-e
[51] Civic wisdom is called *euboulia*, or 'good judgment or counsel' – the inborn virtue of reasoning.

2. Early Education as Habit Formation

As discussed in articulating the distinction between the two types of virtue above, early education is not focused on knowledge per se, but on the preconditions for coming to know. The early physical programme involves the supervision of the body which leads to its conditioning, enabling children to manage their responses.[52] Socrates indicates that the purpose of training the body is harmonising spirit with reason.[53]

The aim of education in poetry and stories is to produce certain responses in the psyche, such that these responses,[54] if practised,[55] develop into habits and dispositions. Through the reinforcement of certain activities, habits are created, and through these habits character is formed. In Socrates' words: "imitations practised from youth become part of nature and settle into habits of gesture, voice and thought."[56]

Jonathan Lear gives a useful example of habit formation in the young and impressionable. When a child who is told a story that frightens him is reassured by his parents that it is only a story, he trusts their evaluation (considering his parents to be authorities).[57] If, whenever confronted with a new scary story, he is told (or better yet, tells himself) that 'it is only a story' a pattern of response is developed in him. At 438c, Socrates says "We hold from childhood certain convictions about just and fine things; we're brought up with them as with our parents, we obey and honour them." This pattern of response over time develops a skill of self-assurance to manage fear effectively in the child.[58] This type of habituated response can be trained and

[52] Supra, Chapter 1
[53] 410b-d.
[54] This refers to emotional responses to pleasure and pain, which are regarded as the first sensations felt by human beings. (Rocconi n.d., 115)
[55] Bourgoult comments that Plato's early recognition of the effect of music on brain development, human bonding and collective citizenry is significant (Bourgoult 2012, 61).
[56] (Bougoult 2012, 62)
[57] (Lear, Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic 2006, 28)
[58] (Lear 2006, 31)

practised, building an internal resilience in the psyche.[59] This is not—it is important to notice—because the child understands the words being repeated to him, but because he loves and trust his parents, and accepts they are trying to provide some sort of explanation why not to be frightened.

3. The Desired Outcome of Early Education

The final difference I would like to highlight between the early and advanced programmes is the outcome of each. This can be described in terms of the state of soul each programme aims to produce. At 403a, Glaucon agrees with Socrates that the outcome of the early programme is "the right kind of love [which] is by nature the love of order and beauty that has been moderated by education in music and poetry."[60]

The early programme is aimed at developing civic virtue, while the advanced programme is aimed at cultivating 'philosophic virtue.' Such an achievement will in some cases enable the guardians to become rulers of the *kallipolis*; the best of those completing the whole programme will be selected to become the philosopher kings.[61]

[59] This is common place understanding of the term many parents of young children use to describe the child's ability to 'self sooth'.
[60] (Burnyeat 1997, 219)
[61] (540a) It is roughly now – at 50 years of age – that the students are ready for contemplation of the Forms, especially the Form of the Good.

4. Civic Virtue as an Intermediate Condition

Now, given the difference between the early and advanced programmes, how do they produce the two types of virtue? The word use of 'habits' is significant here. Children hate and love without truly understanding the basis for their emotional reactions. Their virtue and capacity for good judgement is incomplete, as they are not yet able to express a coherent account of goodness. The training of appetite and spirit and harmonising of these parts with reason means that the training of the soul is developed further in the advanced programme. Therefore, we can conceive of civic virtue as being an intermediate psychological condition required by the guardians in order to move onto the final part of the programme – the development of reason for the attainment of wisdom, i.e., philosophic virtue. Civic virtue is a preparatory state of the soul, a precondition for the type of rational education that follows.[62] In the advanced programme, the focus is on transforming habit into understanding.[63] The final stage of the programme aims to produce a knowledgeable psyche, one exhibiting philosophic virtue, or wisdom. At 428b Socrates asks Glaucon "What is this knowledge, and who has it?" To which he responds "It is guardianship, and it is possessed by those rulers we just now called complete.[64] This is not the complete account of knowledge contained in books 7 and 8. Rather, referred to above as a kind of civic wisdom, viz. good judgement.

Given my claim that civic virtue is an intermediate psychological condition, what habits does Socrates have in mind to cultivate it? They must be those that underpin the development of philosophic virtue. If we are to judge from the discussion of book 4, there are four cardinal

[62] While the early programme is about developing 'habitual virtue', *mousike* acts as a bridge across the two types of virtue (civic and philosophical), such that it produces within children patterns of beauty and goodness that as adults would strive to discover via philosophical reflections (Bourgoult 2012, 62).
[63] 525a–530
[64] 428d

virtues: wisdom, moderation (or temperance), justice, and courage. But each of these is interpreted in terms of dispositions and habits, as I have explained above.

To deepen our understanding of these virtues, I am going to now discuss two examples of the kind of habits aimed at by the early education programme, namely civic moderation and civic courage. These are examples how the civic virtues, if nurtured correctly, provide the necessary foundation for advancement into philosophic virtue.

Examples of Civic Virtue

1. Civic Moderation or 'Sophrosune'

'Sophrosune' has a very wide meaning in the *Republic:* self-control, good sense, reasonableness, temperance, and (in some contexts) chastity.[65] Someone who can remain steadfast in the face of temptation or pressure exhibits *sophrosune* (or 'moderation'), and a guardian child who undergoes the early education programme should develop the capacity for retaining his composure. He should be able to manage his desires, fears and ambitions, having had the habits and dispositions promoting self-moderation instilled into his soul.[66] Moderation is present when the body and the psyche are in order, enabling the lowest, largest part of the soul – the appetitive part – to be controlled (enabling, in other words, 'self-control').[67] It demonstrates a certain mastery of pleasures and desires.[68] Bodily appetites include matters of thirst, food and sex and these pleasures and desires have emotions and fears associated with them. For example, someone who does not overindulge at feasting time might take pride in

[65] 430e
[66]412d–e
[67] The expression is ridiculed by Socrates. (431a)
[68] 430e

their ability to moderate their bodily appetites by exercising self-control. In short, moderation involves effectively managing one's fears and desires. [69] Socrates' early programme cultivates this virtue, aiming to ally the spirit more closely with reason than appetite.

Mousike, music and stories, is the means of developing moderation in guardian children, aiming at the conditioning of the body, formation of appropriate desires and emotions, and an alignment between the parts of the soul. *Mousike* should, as I will explain in the next chapter, express the right values about what is believed to be good for the community and delivered in the right sort of pattern and harmony.[70] This, in turn, cultivates moderation-as-gracefulness.[71] Myles Burnyeat conceives of gracefulness in the *Republic* as a quality that can be absorbed from the material environment (i.e. the moral culture) and internalised in the mind and spirit.[72] It can describe a person's elegant movement just as well as their refined and sophisticated conduct.

At 402d, Socrates says, "if someone's soul has a fine and beautiful character and his body matches it in beauty and is thus in harmony with it, so that both share in the same pattern, wouldn't that be the most beautiful sight for anyone who has eyes to see?" What Socrates means is that living well, governing the spirit and appetites by reason, is more harmonious than irrational appetitive excess.

*Mousik*e is thus a means of stimulating desire for the correct things in the correct way. The outcome of this training is a love for the beautiful. Through stories in poetry and songs the

[69] Some commentators of the *Republic* call this a 'well regulated' character. Annas describes the early education as a framework for managing and controlling the different types of desires inherent to human beings (Annas 2010, 83 & 84)
[70] (Rocconi n.d., 130)
[71] (Bougoult 2012, 61)
[72] As discussed in Chapter 1, Lear highlights the process of how moral and cultural influences develop the psyche which he terms 'internalisation'.

'good' (the appropriate moral and aesthetic taste) is represented, influencing the opinions held by the community.[73] The correct opinions about what should be desired and rejected are supported by the law in the *kallipolis*

2. Civic Courage

Courage is also closely tied to the 'good.' The dispositions that it shapes, Socrates believes, are stepping-stones towards the ability to assess one's own life. It is perseverance of character and training it forms a template in the psyche for a consistent, self-regulated disposition. Although they are located in the spirited part of the soul they are allies of reason. In what follows, I try to demonstrate this through focusing on the role of lawfulness in the development of courage. This allows us to see how courage is a paradigmatic 'civic' virtue, and how it can lead to philosophic virtue.

A courageous character is developed by forming habits relevant to the types of ethical conduct and social modes of behaviour associated with the spirited part of the psyche.[74] Emotions, in other words, such as pride, fear and shame are habitually developed in the right way, making courage possible. Possessing civic courage then, means embracing and acting on correct opinions – those based on the authority of the law.

The training of appetites, fundamental to the early education programme, the need for exercise and practise in the mastery of desire, is inherently law-inducing[75]. Courage is instilled in the

[73] (Rocconi n.d., 126)
[74] See Chapter 1, supra.
[75] Kosman argues that Socrates is trying to develop good states of character that will result in the appropriate actions for moral virtue. His account reviews virtue as a function of good character. (Kosman 2007, 129)

student in this way, and thus closely links the concept of lawfulness with civic virtue.[76] In book 4, Socrates explicitly links the use of law-abiding games in education to the production of 'excellent', law-abiding men, who benefit the city as a whole.[77] He says: "But when children play the right games from the beginning and absorb lawfulness from music and poetry, it follows them in everything and fosters their growth, correcting anything in the city that may have gone wrong before – in other words, the very opposite of what happens where the games are lawless."[78]

Civic virtue is, as I have noted, a midway position designed to be overcome by the advanced programme. While civic virtue is a state in the soul supporting law-abidingness, the actual creation of laws and the reasoning required to assess them requires philosophic virtue.[79] One might say that the creation and arbitration of laws should be done by the philosophers of the *kallipolis*, requiring, most essentially, good judgement. But the development of the sense of lawfulness exhibited through courage is the foundation on which the exercise of this good judgement is built. In the well-ordered – in the just – soul, reason and rational inquiry sit atop the lower orders and guide the guardian in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. This is what Socrates conceives of as philosophic virtue viz. wisdom and is the final outcome of his education programme. All the orders of the soul operate in harmony; the habit formation, discipline and moderation of desires and spirit cultivated by the early programme underwrite this sort of philosophically led life.

[76] Courage can be instilled through exercise and practise which results in a 'good individual.'(Lutz, p.570)
[77] (Lutz 1997, 566)
[78] 425a
[79] Annas discusses how the early education system promotes character development of its' citizens in such a way that their dispositions to obey laws would be reinforced (Annas 2010, 74).

Conclusion

We have seen how habituation develops the body and psyche, developing the characters of children, and aiming at the intermediary condition that I named civic virtue. Given the two conceptions of virtue I have distinguished, how does Socrates propose to use falsehood as a means of developing a guardian child's capacity for virtue in the appropriate way for a moral education? In the next chapter, I take up this question directly in an exposition of how Socrates proposes to use falsehood to teach virtue.

Chapter 3: Falsehood for Truth

Introduction

Why does Socrates deem falsehoods necessary for the early moral development of potential guardians?[80] In this chapter, I argue for the utility of a specific sort of falsehood, showing it to be a compelling device for cultivating civic virtue in the soul. My argument draws on Socrates' psychological theory, discussed in chapter one (specifically on the 'internalisation' process described by Lear and on imitation as a theory of early learning), and on chapter two's conception of civic virtue as good habits of the soul.

I first examine the text to determine the sense of 'falsity' intended by Socrates when he recommends falsehoods in early education. Secondly, I identify what fault Socrates finds with false stories indiscriminately told to children. This enables me to identify the distinctive criterion present in certain falsehoods that Socrates considers conducive to cultivating civic virtue, and to develop a further sense of 'truth'. Finally, I link these insights to the previous chapters' claims.

In the next chapter, I present an account of specific types of falsehood; here, however, I begin on a general level by reviewing Socrates' claims about how to commence education.[81] As I outlined in chapter two, the early Socratic programme starts with poems, stories and songs: that is, with *mousike.*

[80] 376e
[81] 377e

Stories: False and True

1. 'Pseudos' as Partial Truth

> *Socrates: Do you include stories under music and poetry?*
>
> *Adeimantus: I do.*
>
> *Socrates: Aren't there two kinds of story, one true and the other false?*
>
> *Adeimantus: Yes.*
>
> *Socrates: And mustn't our men be educated in both, but first the false ones?*
>
> *Adeimantus: I don't understand what you mean.*
>
> *Socrates: Don't you understand that we first tell stories to children? These are false, on the whole, though they have some truth in them. And we tell them to small children before physical training[82] begins.[83]*

In the original Greek of the text quoted above, the word used for 'false' is *'pseudos'*. But that term is ambiguous and can give rise to an interpretive difficulty, as we shall see in chapter 4. Some philosophers argue that the term 'falsehood' implies that the false stories Socrates recommends should be understood as *fictional* ones.[84] On this initial reading then, Socrates says that early education begins with fiction.[85] But what might he mean by this?

Although Socrates notes "two kinds of story", he suggests three: those true or false, or those partially true. What Socrates seems to be saying is that some stories are historically true, some are historically false, and a third kind is some mixture of the two. For example, the legend of 'Bigfoot' is untrue and fits into the third category – it is an early falsehood, a mythical tale told

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[82] Not central to this topic, but Heather Reid discusses the role of athletic mimesis in Platonic education (Reid 2020)
[83] 376e–377a
[84] (Schofield 2007, 144-146)
[85] Verbal falsehoods formed part of oral culture. The depictions contain sentiments and associations fostered by the poet. (Burnyeat 1997, 241) Hannah Arendt argues that falsehoods containing half-truths have always pretty much, controlled public life. Her argument is derived from a post-holocaust context.

to young children. Legends and myths are stories that might contain a historical core or component but are largely false[86] – they are fictional.[87] For example, modern archaeology finds evidence of the Trojan War, but stories about Achilles' encounter with Hector are fictional – they have no strong evidentiary support.

We shall see shortly that Socrates objects to some of the false stories children are first exposed to, but not all of them. What this means is that Socrates is not opposed to the use of falsehood in early education – in fact, he advocates precisely for it, but for falsehood of the right kind.

2. The Problem with Careless Falsity

Socrates is clear that the first stories children hear are, on the whole, false ones. Moreover, as established in chapter one, these stories have a pervasive influence on children's souls, making them the most important.

At 377b, he asks: "Then shall we carelessly allow the children to hear any old stories, told by just anyone, and to take beliefs into their souls that are for the most part opposite to the ones we think they should hold when they are grown up?" Adeimantus agrees that they should not but asks what fault Socrates finds with these stories. And the first fault he finds is "if the falsehood isn't told well".[88]

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[86] Immanuel Kant would disagree within his 'refrain from making untruthful statements' *simpliciter*. Cholbi argues Kant would prohibit polite falsehoods and telling of tales (Cholbi 2009, 17)

[87] Dictionary.com describes a myth as: "1. A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events." Other similar stories of this genus include folklore, legends, fable, tale, allegory and parable. Or, "2. A widely held but false belief or idea".

[88] Many of these stories contain images related to castration, cannibalism and patricide. Socrates questioning this content is fully justified. (Simpson 2007, 5)

Here we see Socrates drawing a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate false stories. He clearly finds fault with some of the false stories about the gods composed by poets. The problem does not seem to be that they are false, in some 'factual' sense, but that they are badly told, creating fear and depicting the gods as something other than good, which Socrates establishes as a misrepresentation.[89] Socrates's point is that false stories about the gods and heroes must be 'true' to their nature as gods and heroes.

Socrates frames the discussion by attending to 'major' stories – those of Hesiod and Homer primarily – as a matter of importance (as he claims that the smaller ones exhibit the same patterns and produce the same effects).[90] So, what is a story badly told? "When a story gives a bad image of what the gods and heroes are like, the way a painter does whose picture is not at all like the things he's trying to paint… telling the greatest falsehood about the most important things doesn't make a fine story".[91] Socrates condemns the story of Athena urging Pandarus to break the truce at Troy (and thereby inciting war) because it represents Athena badly.[92] Heroes and gods are emulated by children; their emotional responses, fears and desires are moulded through these depictions; and so the development of their characters, their civic virtue is ultimately affected by the type of story told.

Given a child's lack of capacity for truth, the distinction Socrates is making is that some false stories are ethically appropriate while others are not; the bad stories portray heroes and gods behaving badly – behaving falsely to themselves.

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[89] 382e-383
[90] 377c
[91] 377e
[92] *Iliad iv*.73–126

3. The Criterion of Beauty

And how does Socrates propose to select falsehoods that are *appropriate* for the cultivation of virtue? He says: "We'll select [the poets'] stories whenever they are fine or beautiful and reject them when they aren't".[93]

What is a 'fine and beautiful' story?[94] One which is true in the sense of being appropriate – that is, as I will say, 'ethically true'.[95] To be ethically true, the myth must have a good ethical lesson to it, and the gods and heroes must be portrayed as morally good – properly representative of their true natures.

At 401a, Socrates depicts the opposite of the 'fine and beautiful' as "gracelessness, bad rhythm, and disharmony [,] akin to bad words and bad character…". Inhibiting proper development are stories involving depictions such as, for example: [96]

> *'Cocytus' and 'Styx,' and also the names for the dead, for example, 'those below' and 'the sapless ones,' and all those names of things in the underworld that make everyone who hears them shudder. They may be all well and good for other purposes, but we are afraid that our guardians will be made softer and more malleable by such.*[97]

And, finally, the imperative to depict the fine and beautiful extends to all craftsmen responsible for the environment in which children are raised. Socrates elaborates:

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[93] 377c
[94] Anne Wiles argues these are edifying fables that include attractive presentations of the truth and have the ability to enchant children. (Wiles 2009, 3)
[95] Hannah Arendt calls the distinction rational truth which is distinguished from factual truth. (Arendt 1967, 2)
[96] Sometimes translated as 'dangerous fictions' about the gods. (Burnyeat 1997, 238)
[97] 387c

Or must we rather seek out craftsmen who are by nature able to pursue what is fine and graceful in their work, so that our young people will live in a healthy place and be benefited on all sides, and so that something of those fine works will strike their eyes and ears like a breeze that brings health from a good place, leading them unwittingly, from childhood on, to resemblance, friendship, and harmony with the beauty of reason.'

The Secondary Importance of Historical Truth

The psychological theory and account of civic virtue presented in previous chapters ground four claims I would now like to make. First, we can understand why the historical truth of stories isn't central for Socrates:[98] the emphasis in childhood character development is to cultivate virtue. It is clear that Socrates relies on an ethical criterion of appropriateness for false stories. The ethical criterion – of presenting virtuous role models well – is indispensable in fashioning children's characters, and it works through *mimesis*, or imitation. The representation of the appropriate moral role models in the falsehoods told to children outweighs any factual or historical accuracy.

The reason for this is that, as we have established, the emulation of the behaviours of characters in the stories told to children is how early learning takes place. Socrates seems to think that through proper imitations in one's youth, one constitutes oneself as a certain type of person. Becoming a noble or brave, or cowardly, person depends on the myths one hears in childhood. The young are socialised into traditions of moral character through the relevant falsehoods told.

[98] Facts and events have proven to be fragile – Arendt explains their quality of 'flux' within the ever changing affairs of the world, and the ever changing minds of men (Arendt 1967, 3).

My second claim is predicated on the recognition that young children don't yet possess a capacity for truth.[99] For this reason, details and complex facts are wasted on them – they are unable to understand and appreciate them. Moreover, the attempt to make a story intelligible to a child leads inevitably to falsity. The simplification of a story to a child's level requires the omission of facts and certain details rendering the story not entirely true. Overuse of facts and the inclusion of excessive detail is overwhelming for small children. The ability to grasp detail and complex concepts comes later – we are starting with the basics. At this point stories must be uncomplicated, depicting simple scenarios portraying basic moral situations of good and evil, hero and villain.

Given Socrates' indifferent attitude to historical accuracy and the requirement that falsehoods need to be impactful on the psyche, a level of poetic licence is necessary to capture the imagination and attention of small children. I'd like to link this third claim to one made in chapter one. Due to children's underdeveloped psyche, they experience stories in a powerful and lifelike manner. Lear expresses this point by saying that "precisely because childhood stories float in a sea of imaginative life [,] they exercise a certain power, a power which inclines us to describe stories as 'having a reality of their own'".[100] The 'dreamlike,' subjective nature of the childhood state is one in which a child experiences stories in an evocative and powerful way. Often the imaginary part is what brings about the 'pleasing' quality of the learning process. [101] The thrill of the story provides a falsehood with its educative impetus.[102] Drawing on a previous point, the use of stories in moral education requires simplicity and imagination,

[99] I must note here that telling the truth to children about normal, everyday things is common sense. My discussion above emphasises the psychological status of the child's development. See chapter 1.
[100] (Lear 2006, 28)
[101] Imagination helps build empathy, an important emotion for active, good, collective citizenry (Carroll 2002, 13).
[102] (Lear 2006, 28)

rather than a factual correctness children cannot recognise. This 'thrill factor' is important, as I want to consider the connection between poetic stories and ethical truths. [103]

My fourth claim picks up on Socrates' point that "the young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable".[104] This is to say that stories, especially thrilling ones, make lasting impressions on a child's psyche, unconsciously. For this reason, caution in the use of such poetry must be exercised. Recognising this, Socrates promotes a certain censorship. As I mentioned in chapter 1, it makes a lasting impression to hear that Hera was chained by her son Hephaestus, who was thrown from heaven by his father; a deeper impression to learn that this family of gods has a tradition of turning against their parents and children. [105] These stories depict the gods at their worst:

> *I mean Hesiod telling us about how Uranus behaved, how Cronus punished him for it, and how he was in turn punished by his own son. But even if it were true, it should be passed over in silence, not told to foolish young people. And if, for some reason, it has to be told, only a very few people—pledged to secrecy and after sacrificing not just a pig but something great and scarce—should hear it, so that their number is kept as small as possible.*[106]

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[103] 424e. Socrates is explicit that children learn through play. Gavin Ardley wrote an interesting paper on the role of play in Plato's philosophy, focussing on the connections of the early programme and the dialectic in the advanced programme. (Ardley 1967)

[104] 378e

[105] Take the modern day fairy tale the "Ugly Duckling' as an example. Initially, what the child responds to is the engaging characters who are often made up of a mixture of human, animal, and spiritual traits (embodied through the mommy duck, or the sad, left-out, ugly duckling). The characters and the story leave an impression on a child's psyche but realising the deeper meaning contained in the falsehood only happens much later, once the child has the capacity to reflect on allegory. The initial imprint is that of a story with talking ducks. The later, recovered ethical truth makes explicit lessons concerning judging by appearances and cultivating a sense of belonging in the right community.

[106] 378a

Children internalise the horrid acts depicted without understanding[107]. Tales about the gods' behaviour served as moral representations for the ancient Greeks, making the falsehoods told morally paradigmatic in the sense of being both authoritative and instructive. Our culture may differ but our stories carry the same force. If imitation is the first mode of early learning, the depiction of gods and heroes as vicious affects young children's beliefs, moral outlooks and ultimately their habits.[108] This is what Socrates finds dangerous, the unconscious instilment of moral beliefs in small children through exposure to certain falsehoods. Many of the existing tales about piety demonstrate unethical behaviours, which is the opposite of what education should produce.

How Falsehood Develops Civic Virtue in the Soul

Since the goal of early education is to shape character, how do suitable falsehoods contribute to the desired state of civic virtue in the soul?

As discussed in chapter 2, what is important in a story is not propositional truth, but the ability to cultivate virtue in the soul. Said differently, what is critical for Socrates is the story's ability to shape character from an ethical perspective. And since imitation is key, presenting children with morally sound role models that they will naturally and unconsciously emulate is paramount. Because heroes and gods are role models for young children to emulate, and because these stories about morality have the power to benefit or harm children indelibly, more

[107]Wiles argues that ultimately the use of falsehood and fables in education of moral sentiments rests of the metaphysics of the person. She echoes Plato's sentiments in a modern context, arguing some of the Aesop fables should be banned because they are false in every way and can do moral harm to anyone that hears and accepts them. (Wiles 2009, 3)

[108] Nicholas Baima describes these falsehoods as pernicious because they create and sustain psychological disharmony. (Baima 2017, 1)

care needs to be put into the first false stories told to them. Therefore, ethical truth can be more fully understood as the authentic presentation of relevant, appropriate role models through falsehoods. The ethical component of the story is seeded unconsciously into the psyche through the child's imitation of its characters, beneath the detection of nascent critical thought.[109]

An example of how this occurs is explained by Jonathan Lear in his paper 'Myth and Allegory in Plato's *Republic*'.[110] Lear discusses a little boy who has heard the tales of Achilles. The boy acts out the heroic habits and dispositions of Achilles when he plays 'good guys and bad guys'. By embodying the myth, he demonstrates habits of courage without yet understanding what courage is. The image that he re-enacts demonstrates how the boy's psyche has been "Achillized". He has taken on Achilles' perspective without having an understanding of it and without being conscious of it.[111] The falsehood facilitates structures of repetition in the habits and dispositions formed in the child, at a time in which he lacks understanding.[112]

The goal of early education is the cultivation of civic virtue, which concerns the training of responses to emotion, desires, inclinations and fears. Young children have not yet developed a capacity to manage fear effectively. The myth of Achilles the brave – potentially, a falsehood embodying an ethical truth – can provide consistency in training this type of emotional response through emulation.[113] Conversely, poems or stories containing falsehoods promoting irrational fear and cowardice in the vivid imaginary landscapes of young children are, for Socrates, to be censored. This is evident in Cephalus' case, who retained and acted upon the

[109] Lear terms this is the 'under-thought' of the falsehood. Also discussed in chapter 5. (Lear 2006, 27)
[110] (Lear, 2006)
[111] In Ancient Greece, when an athlete re-enacts the deed of a hero, the deed and virtues become his own through his performance. The athlete does not become the hero, but represents a hero's virtues aesthetically which is experienced by the community (Reid, Performing Virtue: Athletic Mimesis in Platonic Education n.d., 269)
[112] (Lear 2006, 30)
[113] Reid indicates that the general idea for Socrates is, by emulating only virtuous characters, the guardians will themselves gain virtue. In her article she discusses the synergy between *mousike* and *gymastike* (Reid, Performing Virtue: Athletic Mimesis in Platonic Education n.d., 264 & 265)

(for most of his life, dormant) fears he developed from the early falsehoods he was told in childhood.[114]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued, first, that given children's underdeveloped sense of truth, certain falsehoods are more effective in developing a *capacity* for truth, than telling the truth directly. In order to tell moral truths to children, one must avoid including too many details, inevitably creating a degree of falsity. But this is psychologically appropriate for a child's level of development. I return to this in chapter five, where I refine my account of how myths should be used as pedagogical devices to attend to the deficiency.

Secondly, young children are unable to differentiate between what is allegorical and what is not. This means that they cannot recognise the deeper or hidden meanings contained in stories. My intention in chapter five is to show *how,* through the appropriate Socratic falsehoods, these deeper meanings can be psychologically displaced and later understood in adulthood.

Thirdly, I have developed the idea that the way to fashion character in moral education is through imitation and mimesis, acted out through storytelling to children. Children emulate role models from inspiring tales. If the representations are comprised of the gods acting irrationally and unethically, then children will come to assimilate this. The idea that children's psyches are most malleable when they are young supports Socrates' position that the falsehoods

[114] It is widely understood that fear is a barrier for psychological development.

told to children must demonstrate admirable and ethically sound behaviour, as models to be emulated.

I have established in this chapter how existing falsehoods convey unconscious moral beliefs through ethical aspects of falsehoods, and I have shown how historical accuracy carries a secondary importance for Socrates. How does Socrates classify specific falsehoods and how does he propose to select certain falsehoods based on their ethical appropriateness for inclusion in the early education programme, however? I attempt to answer this question through my account of verbal and true falsehoods presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Verbal vs True Falsehoods: the Distinction Elucidated

The Question of Lying: an Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that, for Socrates, falsehood is a necessary tool in the development of a child's character. I discussed falsehood and false stories broadly, under the assumption that the word *pseudos* means something like 'fiction'. However, it seems that Socrates recommends not only fictions in his *Kallipolis* but what we would call *lies*. The ambiguity of *pseudos* gives rise to interpretive difficulty: does it signify a 'lie', a 'fiction', an 'error' or a 'falsehood'?[115] This matters because a 'lie' – that more deliberate deception[116] – does not carry the neutrality of a 'falsehood'.

What should we understand by *pseudos* then? I take up this question by introducing a key Socratic distinction: that between 'true' and 'verbal' falsehoods. Let me say upfront that the distinction is unclear in the text. If *pseudos* is taken to mean 'lie', then Socrates' distinction is between verbal and true lies. Therefore, what follows is an exegetical exercise in clarifying the distinction and its application. The distinction is important in the *Republic* since it regulates what falsehoods are permitted in education and, more importantly, determines whether they constitute lies in our sense, or something weaker, such as fictions.

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[115] Reeve (whose translation of the *Republic* I am using) prefers the term 'falsehood' (Plato 2004). Whereas, Malcolm Schofield argues the term 'lie' translated from the *Republic* is a more appropriate. (Schofield 2007, 138) Arendt discusses it in terms of deliberate falsehood, lie or error. (Arendt 1967, 12) Catherine Rowett indicates sometimes the term 'pretence' is used. (Rowett 2016, 1)

[116] There are multiple commentators on lying in the *Republic*. Hannah Arendt discusses the relationship between lying and falsehoods and its sacrifice of truth for political gain. (Arendt 1967, 1) Schofield echoes some of her sentiments about lying being representative of a moral culture. (Schofield 2007, 142)

In what follows, I give an account of what Socrates might mean by true and verbal falsehoods. I aim to tease out the distinction through his examples, drawing out its moral implication. In doing so, I aim to clarify the relationship between these falsehoods and the *state of the soul* (psyche).[117] By the end of this chapter, I will have answered three questions: what is the distinction between true and verbal falsehoods? Is this a distinction between different kinds of lies or something else? And, under what conditions, if any, may one use these falsehoods?

The Meaning of True and Verbal Falsehoods: a Socratic Account

1. True Falsehood as False Belief

As we have seen, when Socrates lays out the principles for his elementary education programme, he begins by distinguishing true stories from false ones.[118] Later on, he introduces a distinction[119] between two types of falsehood.[120] The latter distinction is drawn in a conversation about how the poets depict the gods problematically, presenting them as liars deceptive to one another and to mankind.[121]

In this context, at 382a-b,[122] Socrates introduces the idea of a *true* or *pure falsehood*.[123] A true falsehood, Socrates says, is a state of being false in one's *soul* – that is, of being mistaken in a fundamental way; it is a falsehood taken into the soul and held to be true.[124] He questions

[117] I will say that a verbal falsehood 'hoodwinks' us rather than deceiving our souls on a fundamental level. I borrow Schofield's term (Schofield 2007, 140)
[118] Supra, chapter 3
[119] Many commentaries on Plato note this distinction is obscure. (Simpson 2007, 7)
[120] 381a-e
[121] 381d-e,377e
[122] The text of *Republic* at 382a-d and 383a is of particular interest to my project.
[123] Not an 'unadulterated falsehood' (Schofield Oxford, 2007, 146)
[124] 383a

Adeimantus by saying, “What? Would a god be willing to be false, either in word or deed, by presenting an illusion? Don’t you know that gods and humans hate a true falsehood, if one may call it that?”[125] Adeimantus is perplexed by this.[126]

In response, Socrates proclaims, perhaps ironically, that he is not saying anything deep: “I simply mean that to be false to one’s own soul about the things that are, to be ignorant and to have and hold falsehood there, is what everyone would least of all accept, for everyone hates a falsehood in that place most of all”.[127] He continues: “Surely, as I said just now, this would be most correctly called true falsehood—ignorance in the soul of someone who has been told a falsehood.” In simple terms, a true falsehood is a false belief or state of ignorance, a state where the deception lies in the soul unnoticed.[128]

It is important to notice that the paradoxical term ‘true falsehood’ indicates something that is *not* a lie in our sense. A lie is a speech act, but a true falsehood is not a speech act; it is, instead, a false belief. One is unaware that one is deceived about the truth concerning important things or, to put the point differently, is ignorant of having absorbed a false view into one’s soul. Socrates claims that no one wants to be deceived about the most important things in life, and in “that place” least of all. “That place”, he clarifies, is the rational part of the soul, the part into which true falsehood is absorbed.’[129]

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[125] 382a-b
[126] 382b
[127] 382a-b
[128] 386c We see this play out through the discussion on justice in book 1, and the discussion on piety in book 3.
[129] 382a-b

2. An Example

One example of a true falsehood relevant to the construction of the *Republic's* early education programme is the idea that death is the greatest calamity. This view would, for Socrates, constitute a true falsehood if absorbed into the soul and lived out. Soldiers who believed it would not be willing to risk death for the *polis*; they would be incapable of military courage.[130] At 386b, Socrates discusses with Adeimantus what it means to be courageous. He asks, "Shouldn't [potential guardians] be told stories that will make them least afraid of death? Or do you think that anyone ever becomes courageous if he's possessed by this fear?" Adeimantus does not. "And can someone be unafraid of death, preferring it to defeat in battle or slavery, if he believes in a Hades full of terrors?' Again, Adeimantus agrees that one cannot.

A question that arises here is whether true falsehoods are, for Socrates, restricted to ways of being deceived about *ethics* or whether the concept encompasses what might be described as factual error.[131] Initially, it appears that he means to refer only to ethical ignorance, signified by his invocation of "the most important things".[132] But this initial reading seems to be incorrect, for when Socrates clarifies his meaning, he is talking "about the things that *are*…" (*ta onta*), which suggests a broader understanding in which ethical falsehood is only a central component.[133] And this, I will argue, is confirmed by his examples of verbal falsehoods, discussed below. I will then assume, as a working hypothesis, that ethical errors, being mistaken about how to live, or what is important, are the most *serious* true falsehoods, but that

[130] Cf. chapter 2
[131] Hannah Arendt discusses the fragility of facts and events in her paper *'Truth and Politics",* originally published in the New Yorker. She explains that facts are not independent of interpretation and opinion, so a story is told from a perspective that differs from its original occurrence (Arendt 1967, 7).
[132] 382a Nicholas Baima refers to these as 'normative commitments' (Baima 2007)
[133] 382b My emphasis.

the category also includes matters of factual accuracy, such as the content of ancient events or the location of the Athenian cavalry in a battle. [134]

3. Verbal Falsehood as Imitation

After giving an account of true falsehoods, at 382d, Socrates introduces the idea of a verbal falsehood or a falsehood in words. He says that "a falsehood in words is a kind of imitation of this affection in the soul, an image of it that comes into being after it and is not a pure falsehood".[135] By "this affection", he means the ignorance in the soul that he has just identified as a true falsehood. A verbal falsehood is, here, an assertion in words that seems to express the ignorance in the soul constitutive of true falsehood. This is what it means for the verbal falsehood[136] to appear as an imitation of the state of the soul and come into being afterwards. However, a false statement might *not* actually express a false state of one's soul.[137] Verbal falsehoods are varied. Socrates is trying to distinguish between a deceived state of the soul and a falsehood in words,[138] which 'represents' but does not 'express' this state of deception.[139] As we will see later, he has a definite view about the potential usefulness of some of these false

[134] The reason that Socrates disputes what Schofield calls the 'factual truth' of these accounts is that they are contrary to the conceptions of gods and moral virtue that should inform a guardian's early education. (Schofield 2007, 143) Hannah Arendt says that public and political life is most often concerned with the distortion of factual truths. (Arendt 1967, 3)

[135] 382b-c

[136] David Simpson calls a verbal falsehood a faded copy of a true falsehood. (Simpson 2007, 8 & 11) He argues, that true falsehoods about Forms are held in the reasoning part of the soul.

[137] The experience that Socrates describes as irony would be a straightforward example of this. This will be discussed as a product of psychological displacement in chapter 5.

[138] Nietzsche in his later work denies that truth is an object, or a property of sentences. Instead truth should be understood as a process or a practice of affirming or holding true. All truth claims are therefore ineradicably conditioned by our psychological limitations and inherited values born by language, culture and morality. (Simpson 2007, 12 & 13)

[139] Arendt discusses how the need for man's communication of reason often results 'men thinking one thing and saying another'. (Arendt 1967, 4)

verbal assertions. They are ethically mandatory in certain circumstances. But the key point, for now, is that verbal falsehoods don't always correspond with a false belief in the soul.

After articulating the notion of a true falsehood, which is always undesirable, Socrates goes on to give three examples of verbal falsehoods that are, in his view, justified. By paying attention to these examples, I will be able to refine my account of what a verbal falsehood is beyond calling it an imitation of a true falsehood. This will enable me to reinforce the distinction and determine whether verbal falsehoods correspond to lies in our sense. Answering this last question helps determine whether Socrates thinks that early education must involve lying rather than falsehood of another, perhaps weaker, type, such as fiction.

Socratic Verbal Falsehood Examples: Are They Lies Too?

After explaining the distinction between true and verbal falsehoods and getting his interlocutor to agree that both gods and humans hate true falsehoods,[140] Socrates goes on to suggest that *verbal* falsehoods are not always undesirable. He says at 382b:

> *What about a falsehood in words? Aren't there times when it is useful, and so does not merit hatred? What about when dealing with enemies, or with so-called friends who, because of insanity or ignorance,[141] are attempting to do something bad? Isn't it a useful drug for preventing them? And consider then case of those stories we were talking about just now – those we tell because we do not know the*

[140] 382c "And the thing that is really a falsehood is hated not only by the gods but by human beings as well."
[141] i.e. When someone shows extreme mental deficiency. Literally from Greek, when one is "without mind" (*Anoian)*

truth about those ancient events involving the gods. By making a falsehood as much like the truth as we can, don't we also make it useful?

The first kind of verbal falsehood that Socrates mentions here is applicable when dealing with 'enemies'. In a general sense this might pertain to dealing with someone hostile to oneself or one's family, beyond mere military opponents. This example can, I believe, be understood straightforwardly.[142] If an enemy were hell-bent on the destruction of one's city, truthfulness with the enemy would not be useful in defending against the threat. In such circumstances, a lie would be appropriate, indeed, required. Suppose that a general spoke falsely in such a circumstance, deceiving the enemy about the location of the navy in order to allow the citizenry to escape. He would, it is clear, need to know the truth in order to lie effectively. Moreover, this would not be a case where the subject possessed a false belief in his soul; rather, it is a case where, while not being deceived about the truth, he attempts to get the enemy to believe something false about reality. His use of a verbal falsehoods of this sort *amounts to* lying—these sorts of falsehoods are lies in our sense, as they are acts of intentional deception. Whether this means that the enemy comes to have a true falsehood in his soul is a question I will take up later.

Socrates' second example of a useful verbal falsehood involves a lie told to somebody (a "so-called friend")[143] not of sound mind, for its utility in preventing them from doing wrong[144]. This case seems to recall an objection that Socrates raised in an earlier conversation with

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[142] Hannah Arendt calls this a 'traditional lie' which is concerned only with deceiving enemies. This is when people don't fall prey to their own falsehoods, meaning that they can deceive others without deceiving themselves, She discusses how it is used in modern times, for example the Nazi's use of lies in World War 2 to fuel anti-Semitic and anti-western propaganda. (Arendt 1967)

[143] Or, in a more literal translation, "those being called friends who have gone mad". The implication is perhaps that one can't really be friends with mad people. This connection is highlighted by Schofield.

[144] Simpsons argues that George Vlastos' distinction between 'evaluative' and 'sentential' truth is not the best way to understand the distinction. According to Simpson, the value of the truths regarding appearances is conditional on their contribution to one and others well-being. (Simpson 2007, 11)

Cephalus, in book 1, about whether justice requires telling the truth and returning what one owes to a person who has gone mad.[145] At 331c, he says:

> *Everyone would surely agree that if a sane man lends weapons to a friend and then asks for them back when he is out of his mind, the friend shouldn't return them, and wouldn't be acting justly if he did. Nor should anyone be willing to tell the whole truth to someone who is out of his mind.*

In short, if a friend lent you weapons and now, depressed and not of sound mind, wants them returned, then telling the truth would be unjust. Socrates seems to be saying that one would act well towards this friend by telling him a falsehood, since, by so doing, one would prevent him from engaging in immoral action. Telling a falsehood about the whereabouts of his weapons is an obvious and, for Socrates,[146] the correct choice.[147] Although this verbal falsehood is different from that found in the first example (since one is here telling a falsehood for the sake of benefitting another person, rather than oneself or one's city) it involves intentional deception.[148] This sort of verbal falsehood is, in short, a lie.

Socrates' third example of a useful verbal falsehood refers to the false stories that I considered in the preceding chapter. At 382d, he says: "And consider then the case of those stories we were talking about just now – those we tell because we do not know the truth about those ancient events involving the gods. By making the falsehoods that they contain as much like the truth as possible, don't we make them useful?" Adeimantus agrees, and Socrates follows up

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[145] (Schofield 2007, 147)

[146] Kant would disagree that this is the correct choice. In his example, if one is asked by the murderer for the whereabouts of the innocent victim he intends to kill, then a moral wrong would be committed if one lied to the murderer. Whether this really is the correct moral choice, although interesting, is not the focus of this chapter. (Cholbi 2009, 2)

[147] 331c

with the suggestion that it would be ridiculous for a god to make "false likenesses of ancient events because of his ignorance of them".

This an example of the mixture between true and false stories previously discussed. It confirms that Socrates regards the telling of at least certain myths to children, in conditions when the truth is not known, as the telling of verbal falsehoods. And yet we would not regard this as lying. The reason is that neither the motivation for telling *nor* the intent of the story is deception. It follows that some verbal falsehoods are not lies.

Verbal Falsehoods and Lies: Conditions of Use

Clearly, Socrates thinks specific verbal falsehoods and, indeed, lies are required in certain circumstances. How does this relate to education? How are lies or falsehoods applicable when teaching children? Drawing from the Socratic examples discussed in the previous chapters, here I outline four conditions for telling an acceptable verbal falsehood.

I have established that a true falsehood is a false belief. From this, the first condition follows – that a true falsehood cannot be *told*. A true falsehood is, by my definition, a state of soul. This state can be expressed in words but remains distinct from them. For Socrates, holding a falsehood in one's soul is one of the worst things in life; no one would want to be mistaken about the fundamentals of life – the important things. If a person holds a true falsehood in his soul inadvertently, then the false verbal expressions representative of the false belief are not lies. The speaker is expressing what he thought to be the truth, and the speech act is not intentionally deceptive.

The second condition relates to the state of soul of tellers of falsehoods. For Socrates, one cannot tell a verbal falsehood if one does not know the truth. People who tell verbal falsehoods must know the truth or know that they don't know.[149] Said slightly differently, if one is to express a verbal falsehood, one must be in a position to do so – the falsifier cannot be a victim of a true falsehood. The general who lies to the enemy to protect his people is not the victim of a true falsehood. He does not hold a false belief in his soul about the ethical thing to do or about the specific matter of fact that he lies about. He acts upon the ethical belief to protect his city and navy.

If one is confused about the important things, then one cannot tell a verbal falsehood about them. How come? In order to tell a verbal falsehood one must know one's position relative to the truth. This is because the verbal falsehood is an imitation of a true falsehood, but this could not reliably be the case if the teller was himself a victim of a true falsehood. Furthermore, because a verbal falsehood is a speech act, it does not necessarily express a falsehood in the soul[150]. It is important to remember that, on the view I am putting forward, true falsehood can include factual or ethical content. This all justifies a third, clear-cut, condition for Socrates: only verbal falsehoods that do not produce true falsehoods in the soul are permitted. By this I mean that the hearer should not as a result of a verbal falsehood import a false belief into his soul or be deceived about the most important things in life.

[149] Arendt says the allegory of cave expresses the viewpoint of the truth teller, the tendency to transform fact into opinion, blurring the dividing line between them. She also says that facts and opinions, though must be kept apart, belong in the same realm and are not necessarily antagonistic of each other. (Arendt 1967, 6 & 7)
[150] Kant interestingly looks at how inner statements can become internal lies (Kant 1996, 553-554).

Finally, the fourth condition relates to the question of why one might need to use a falsehood at all. I think the answer is that verbal falsehoods are sometimes required because one *cannot* tell the truth.[151] I give two reasons in support of this claim.

Consider, first, the situation in which a falsehood is needed because one does not know the truth about ancient events. Socrates seems to say that when one doesn't know the truth, one should approximate it. When one is designing stories about ancient events for educational purposes, one would try to approximate the truth as accurately as possible. Fidelity to truth motivates this inquiry, under the recognition that the account offered is untrue. One simply cannot tell the truth one nonetheless aims at.

Next, consider that situation not of the teller but of the hearer. I suggest that verbal falsehoods are sometimes necessary when the hearer is not fully rational – specifically, where the hearer is not in a position to grasp the truth. [152] This is true where the friend in the earlier example has lost his mind. This seems to imply that the friend cannot be persuaded by *reason*, which can be understood as being incapable of receiving the truth.[153] This highlights a crucial constraint in the soul of the hearer. If the agent to whom the lie is being told has limitations in knowledge or reason, then the use of verbal falsehood is required. In the example of the depressed friend, the teller believes that he would do or come to harm if he found his weapons. The deliberate use of a verbal falsehood – the (non-reasonable) lie – is a persuasion tactic to redirect the friend

[151] Lear depicts this as a position in which the speaking of truth is an unavailable option. (Lear 2006, 31)
[152] In terms of a hearer's ability to receive the truth, Arendt says 'truth can neither be gained nor communicated among the many' (Arendt 1967, 5).
[153] Soren Kiekegaard discusses the importance and utility of indirect communication and its ability to do what direct communication cannot. He also discusses the difference between passive and impassive learners (hearer or child) and the ramifications of the knowledge acquired. (Aumann 2010)

towards goodness or simply, away from danger.[154] There is no alternative – we can assume, for the sake of the example – that would derive a better moral consequence.[155]

This point also applies to the example of teaching children,[156] in a slightly different way .[157] As I argued in chapter 1 (where I presented Socrates' psychological theory) children lack the capacity for truth. The overall purpose of education is to develop precisely this capacity. Children have no real knowledge (this only comes later), and their soul is lacking in virtue making them prime candidates for receiving verbal falsehoods. I will develop and finalise this idea in chapter 5.

Are Verbal Falsehoods Fictions?

I have hinted throughout the chapter that falsehoods may include fiction as some weaker form, without definitively stating whether falsehood is fiction. My discussion of Socrates' views on falsehood in education in chapter 3 assumed as much. Given the discussion in this chapter, we can see that verbal falsehoods include historical myths and stories. And myths and legends are quite different to fiction.

How so? As I noted, Socrates' example of a verbal falsehood told to children in situations of the teller's ignorance about factual truth properly concerns the telling of myth. The purpose of

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[154] (Schofield 2007, 159)

[155] Prof Layne argues there are two typical approaches of Socratic myths. The first is appetitive, Socrates uses poets and interlocutors in appealing to the more irrational part of the soul that's stirs up emotions and feelings that lead non-philosophical individuals to accept the values appealed to in the arguments. The second approach is cognitive. This sort of myth adds colour to dry, technical and difficult material, such that it aids in the cognition of philosophical discourse. (pg. 2, slides: Institute for Philosophy and Technology Lecture Series Nov 2021)

[156] Many theorists explain why Socrates regards these verbal falsehoods as medicinal. This is a theme runs throughout the Republic, such that, verbal faslehoods can be viewed as *pharamkon* that drug children into virtue. (Simpson 2007, 9) Lear also discusses this theme. (Lear 2006, 31)

[157] In chapter 2 the point was made that the excessive use of factual content is inappropriate for young children as too much detail is overwhelming for and wasted on them.

myth and stories about ancient events is to provide the recipient with some sort of historical knowledge, understanding, or perhaps, orientation. Fundamentally, it aims to address inevitable gaps in the knowledge of the speaker while cleaving towards truth. In having this function, myths are quite unlike fictions, which are not told to inform. Fiction in our sense refers to stories which are not concerned to teach history or even to provide historical orientation, such as a sense of one's past.

Now, my concern in this project is less with *historical* myths and legends, and more with the use of *moral* myths[158] in elementary education. If Socrates regards moral myths as verbal falsehoods, then my chapter 3 account of falsehood for virtue will have to be revised; and if they are verbal falsehoods, then they will be subject to the conditions of permissibility that I outlined in this chapter. It will follow too that verbal falsehoods[159] are not fictions. [160]This is because, judging from Socrates' explicit examples, verbal falsehoods share a crucial common element: they are told in conditions of deficient rationality and are underpinned by an ethically admirable goal. They all lead the hearer closer to the truth. In this sense, they have a function akin to that of a verbal falsehood told to deal with someone gone mad as they both intend on leading the recipient towards what is morally true and good.

In summary, then, some verbal falsehoods are lies, but not all are. And, crucially, at least some of the stories and myths that Socrates says must be told to children in elementary education are not fictions but verbal falsehoods in a sense distinguished from lies. To this extent, they work

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[158] A point of clarification is required here. Origin stories that Socrates explicitly refers to (ancient events, foundation of Athens, say) are historical myths, whereas moral myths include the representations of heroes and gods as engaged in good and bad acts. For example Zeus, Hercules, Achilles, Hera etc

[159] Simpson argues that Socrates' verbal falsehoods have an ethical framework, not necessarily apparent and are well disguised. (Simpson 2007, 10)

[160] Verbal falsehoods can address limited rationality in a person and can indirectly lead the hearer to the truth. How they do that is discussed in the next chapter. Fiction is not concerned with either of these. According to Noel Carroll, fiction does not provide a reliable source of evidence, as it has no justified true belief (referred to as knowledge). (Carroll 2002)

as other verbal falsehoods do in guiding individuals to the truth in conditions of limited rationality.

In chapter 5, I complete my project by drawing on Lear's conception of Socratic moral myths and how they achieve psychological displacement in the hearer (the child), which is required for moral advancement. This will explain how myth-as-verbal-falsehood sets up a child's psyche for a moral education. In this sense, it will explain how falsehood can be employed for truth.

Chapter 5: A Mythic Education is Required for a Moral Education

Moral and Religious Myths are Verbal Falsehoods

In chapter 4, I developed an interpretation of verbal falsehoods. I focussed on one part of the text that gives explicit examples, but I now wish to return to a claim that indicates something more than what is explicitly stated, viz. that Socrates counts appropriate moral and religious myths as verbal falsehoods. These are the false stories Socrates suggests we tell small children to begin with.[161] His discussion of these stories precedes the introduction of the distinction between true and verbal falsehoods. So, it makes sense for us to wonder whether this later distinction applies to them. We know that it does in the case of the historical myths,[162] since Socrates says so, but he does not explicitly say that moral myths are verbal falsehoods.

Now, as I have noted, Socrates says that education must begin with false stories. He says this in the context of the claim that the poets, Homer and Hesiod in particular, tell the greatest falsehoods about the most important things.[163] But, as I argued in chapter 3, it soon becomes clear that his objection isn't about historical or factual truth, but what I called ethical truth. Socrates implies that when a falsehood renders a poor depiction,[164] then it isn't well told, and many of these stories should be discarded. He thus implies that other stories, false and better (more ethically appropriate), should be told. So, it is clear that he is operating with the realm

[161] 377a
[162] I refer to my specific discussion in chapter 4.
[163] 377e, 379d-e, 380a-c
[164] Uranus and Cronus, Cocyx an Stix, Athena and Pandarus are examples of bad verbal falsehoods mentioned in chapter 3

of falsehood, distinguishing good falsehoods from bad ones. It seems likely that the good falsehoods are verbal falsehoods, since these are permissible and necessary in some circumstances.[165] And crucially, as I argued in chapter 4, a verbal falsehood is permissible only when it does not lead to a true falsehood such as a mistaken understanding of the gods. But this is precisely what Socrates is concerned with in these passages—in short, the use of false stories to create "true" images of the gods.[166]

Further support for the claim that appropriate moral myths are verbal lies can be derived from 378a, where Socrates says the following:

> *But even if [some inappropriate story about the gods] were true, it should be passed over in silence, not told to foolish young people. And if, for some reason, it has to be told, only a very few people—pledged to secrecy and after sacrificing not just a pig but something great and scarce—should hear it, so that their number is kept as small as possible.*

The implication here is that the true and inappropriate story should be told only to a few, and that other stories, false and morally better ones, should be told to the many. All of this suggests that he's thinking of verbal falsehoods, which are, as we saw in the preceding chapter, in some sense better than the truth. I discussed Socrates views on the secondary importance of factual truth in chapter 3, and we can return to that claim here: factual truths can also be inappropriate if they represent morally wrong portrayals that develop and lead to a bad character. Socrates seems to say that inappropriate truth about important things such as misbehaviour of the gods should not be told to "foolish young people" and, in fact, the majority of people in the city.[167]

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[165] We can logically infer that the bad ones are regarded as lies, albeit mostly unintentional.
[166] 383a-c
[167] Whether the Gods can actually misbehave is unlikely. Socrates asserts Gods are only good. 380a-b

This point is akin to the idea of persuading a friend who has gone mad with edifying falsehood. For these reasons, then, I am on strong ground when I assert that Socrates' appropriate moral myths and stories count as verbal falsehoods.

Moral Myths and Conditions of Use

As we saw in the preceding chapter, Socrates gives an account of the conditions under which it would be acceptable or required to tell a verbal falsehood. Now that I have provided some evidence for thinking that moral myths fall within the scope of the true vs. verbal falsehood distinction, I want to consider their conditions of use. Since I am applying the conditions I discussed in the preceding chapter to the moral myths, there will be some repetition of content. But my goal now is slightly different—to lay the foundations for an explanation of my claim that Socrates' moral myths are designed to lead children towards the truth.

The first two conditions are as they were before: first, one cannot tell a true falsehood,[168] and secondly, one cannot tell a verbal falsehood if one doesn't know the truth or at least, doesn't know that one does not know. Verbal falsehoods are useful to employ when there are clear epistemic gaps in knowledge and conditions of the truth are unknown.[169] The myth attends to deficiencies in both types of knowledge. I here refer back to my previous discussion in chapter 3 differentiating ethical truths and factual truths. Cephalus' case, discussed in chapters 1 and 3 and above, illustrate the point. Cephalus' description of his old-age fears show that stories communicate a conception of the afterlife and what it means to be just and settling what one

[168] The verbal falsehood should not originate from a true falsehood.
[169] For example, circumstances of limited rationality.

owes.[170] The myths told to Cephalus as a young child, whether they successfully developed his soul towards the good or not, are a clear mix of ethical and factual content.

The third condition the myth must satisfy is this—only verbal falsehoods that do not produce true falsehoods in the soul are permitted. This condition regulates the use of myth for Socrates. The wrong myths are those that produce true falsehoods. Myths are impermissible when they lead to true falsehoods. This is a condition of using myth as verbal falsehoods. Given this addition, it is clear that the above-mentioned stories told to Cephalus about Hades would be blacklisted, as they don't promote virtue.[171] I would suggest that Socrates' myth of Er is a better myth of this type, that is, one that gives a picture of the afterlife and paying one's dues.

The fourth condition is that verbal falsehoods are sometimes needed when one cannot tell the truth. This is either due to the fact that the truth is not known, or because the hearer is unable to receive or grasp the truth. As I argued in chapters 1 and 3, children lack a developed capacity for truth and it is for this reason that the myths need to be false.[172] As I noted earlier, permissible verbal lies have an ethically admirable goal—they are designed to lead the hearer towards the truth. Socratic myth can be used to develop a child's capacity for truth. How it performs this function, is the subject of the next two sections.

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[170] Lear borrow Freud's term and describes Cephalus' experience as a 'traumatic cocktail'. (Lear 2006, 29)
[171] 330e, 331c-d, 332a-e & 377c. Socrates brings into doubt the poet Simonides's account of what it means to be just. He uses the example of the friend whose gone mad and then moves to the example of the enemy. Refer chapter 4.
[172]i.e. facts are simplified, distorted, the truth has to be captured by a subject i.e. child or interlocutor

How Do Myths Lead Children to the Truth?

I have now argued that appropriate moral myths are verbal falsehoods. These are, for Socrates, acceptable falsehoods, and part of what makes them acceptable is that they lead toward the truth. But how do these myths work to lead children to the truth? In order to answer this question, I will draw on Jonathan Lear's account of education in myth.[173] This account is based on Socrates' psychological theory, which I discussed in chapter 1.

As we saw in chapter 1, for Socrates, children don't have the capacity to recognise allegory. This is a feature constitutive of the childhood psychological state, and, according to Socrates, part of the reason why so much care must be taken with early story telling.[174] A key passage for my project, which I discussed in chapters 1 and 3, but will I reproduce here is 378d-e:

> *We won't admit stories into our city—whether allegorical or not—about Hera being chained by her son, nor about Hephaestus being hurled from heaven by his father when he tried to help his mother, who was being beaten, nor about the battle of the gods in Homer. The young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't, and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable.*

What Socrates seems to be saying is that myths contain deeper meanings, which cannot be recognised by children—they only perceive the surface level or face value of the stories. This is connected to the point that children at this age cannot discern between truth and falsity, and therefore they internalise stories in their psyche in the wrong way. But the key point for now

[173] (Lear 2006)
[174] Socrates account of early education with myth and stories occurs in the text after a failure and breakdown of rational argument between Socrates and Thrasymachus. (Lear 2006, 27)

is that Socrates emphasises that there is a disconnection between the surface of the story and its real meaning, or "underthought" (the Greek word is *uponoia*).

Lear refers to the childhood inability to recognise allegory as a lack of orientation.[175] And he points out that it--this lack of orientation—has the same formal structure as dreaming.[176] In dreams, we experience images without recognising them as images and without understanding their deeper meaning.[177] Part of what it means to be awake is to be able to exercise the capacity to distinguish between awake and dream states, and it is this capacity that goes to sleep when we are asleep.[178] Dreams are powerful not because one thinks one is awake, but because we lose the capacity to recognise the dream as a dream, and therefore determine what the dream was about.[179] At 476c, Socrates says:[180] "Isn't this dreaming: whether asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness but rather the thing itself that it is like?" Given the similarity between dreaming and being unable to recognise allegory, the dreamer and child lacks orientation and cannot distinguish between surface-level content and the deeper meanings that underlie it.[181] In a dream state,[182] sights, sounds and images appear as reality but lack lucidity.[183]

Now, and this is a key point for my purposes, Lear argues that a verbal falsehood has the same structure as an allegory not recognised as one. Therefore, insofar as appropriate myths are verbal falsehoods, as I have argued, they have the structure of allegories that are not recognised

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[175] (Lear 2006, 33&35)
[176] (Lear 2006, 33)
[177] (Lear 2006, 30)
[178] (Lear 2006, 30)

[179] (Lear 2006, 30)
[180] (Lear 2006, 30)
[181] Nor identify a Form, for that matter i.e. The Form of the Beautiful (Lear 2006, 30)
[182] Catherine Rowett is another commentator on difference between awareness of reality and living in a dream, and it being a recurrent theme than runs throughout the *Republic.* The contrast of dreaming and awake is brought up again in the allegory of the cave (sometimes referred to as a motif) (Rowett 2016, 71).
[183] Lear call this 'quasi-realistic' power. (Lear 2006, 33)

as such.[184] They are imitations or images reflective of a deeper ethical truth. [185] What it means for the story to be a verbal lie is for it to comes to rest in the soul without being connected to its deeper meaning.[186] But this deeper meaning can be recovered at a later stage when the capacity to understand allegory is more fully developed.

Let me give an example of this by considering a moral myth of the sort discussed in book 2. Suppose that the guardian children are told a story of heroism, let's say Theseus's voyage to Crete and encounter with the Minotaur.[187] We can assume that this story is false. And when children grow older, they realise this. They realise that the Minotaur does not exist in any factual sense. Yet this is not the end of the matter, for in recognising that the story is false, they should come to ask about why this story was told. And to ask this is to inquire into and hopefully recognise it's allegorical meaning. What is significant is first the kind of orientation it provides and, moreover, the way it is set up to allow one to say when recognising its historical falsity: "ah, that's what it's [*really*] about".[188] It's about courage, and being willing to face fears, and about kindness and despair.[189]The falsity of the story gives way to the recognition of the moral truth tucked away at a deeper and perhaps hidden level, which is now—since the myth is a verbal lie—a source of understanding, not a source of deception.

Socrates clearly sees the value of verbal falsehoods as a method of introducing children to sound moral and religious ideas. As I discussed in chapter 2, *mousike* is the mode of delivery of stories and myth, targeting the appetitive and spirit parts of the soul. To this end, we can

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[184] The argument from the previous section
[185] Thrasymachus and Cephalus are both characters demonstrative of how early childhood myths have distorted their ethical outlooks away from virtue.
[186] (Lear 2006, 31)
[187] Legend has it that Minos, king of Crete, compelled the Athenians to send seven youths and seven maidens every year to be sacrificed to the Minotaur until Theseus saved them and killed the monster. (Plato 1997)
[188] (Lear 2006, 34)
[189] The Monster had the body of a man, and the head of a bull and was confined to the labyrinth. Referred to in Greek mythology as 'Mino's Bull.'

craft a moral message (or lesson) for inclusion that promotes sound moral character development instead of creating fear or cowardice in the children that hear it.[190] But now we can add something to this account. The appropriate myth should communicate a moral lesson. And they way that this works is by means of allegory. Verbal falsehoods contain deep ethical truths that are presented to children through storytelling before they are in a position to understand them. The lack of connection between the surface and deeper meaning keeps it in its verbal form. But the myth actually points to a deeper moral lesson. And it is this deeper meaning that is designed to be recovered by children as they mature—in fact, this recovery is part of what maturation consists in. Guardians with civic virtue, look out from the right point of view—and the use of myths understood as verbal falsehoods allows them to recover the intelligible basis of this point of view. In other words, it allows them to make sense to themselves.

Destabilisation: the Psychic work of Socratic Myths

My question is about how appropriate moral myths, which are false stories, lead children towards the truth. This is not about the formation of good character through imitation, which I discussed in chapter 3, but something more directly connected to the demanding programme of inquiry that is the *Republic*'s advanced education programme. As we have seen, the answer to this question that Lear gives is that these myths "implant" deeper meanings in the soul which

[190] Burnyeat summarizes Socrates' recommendations in how to fix the existing paradigm succinctly (refer chapter 4). Firstly, Divinity is good and only responsible for good things and not all things that occur. Secondly, Divinity is simple, unchanging and hates a true falsehood. Thirdly, Hades is not as bad as it is made out to be. Lastly, heroes are admirable role models for the young therefore they should not be represented doing anything unethical i.e. rape and sexual passion, longing for food and drink, greedy for money or anything unto wards man or god. (Burnyeat 1997, 259)

are designed to be recognised later on, when the child grows older.[191] They provide orientation in the childhood state of disorientation, but also contain deeper meanings that emerge upon their reflection later in life.

I now want to add a point that has remained implicit until now. It is crucial for the process of recovering deeper meanings that Socrates recommends myths that actually destabilise themselves.[192] In this way, he tries set up the psychic condition in a child, to be able to look deeper into appearances.[193] I referred to this in chapter 1, as the unstable foundation which philosophical thought is brought to bear. The experience can be described as the 'aha' moment that is setup in childhood. In this fashion, it is similar to hearing a joke and only getting the punchline many years later.[194] The outcome can be understood as a philosophical awakening to the dream that is childhood.[195]

A key part of the experience of waking up is *aporia*, or the recognition of one's ignorance. The destabilising aspect of the myths—I return to this shortly— create an awareness of our ignorance we didn't have before. This facilitates the Socratic movement from ignorance to awareness of one's own ignorance and signifies a beginning of waking up,[196] so to speak.[197] The psychological experience of the displacement is unpleasant experience for everyone, if the allegory of the cave is to be our guide.[198] But it is a critical step in "unveiling" veils of ignorance

[191] (Lear 2006, 31)
[192] 414d-415c. The noble falsehood, specifically 'myth of metals' is central to the guardian education, in such a way to reset the psyche of future generations of the *kallipolis* (Lear 2006)
[193] (Lear 2007 33).
[194] (Lear 2006, 34)
[195] 477e
[196] Similarly, Rowett describes the experience as a 'rebirth' (Rowett 2016)
[197] (Lear 2006, 36)
[198] 514-520

around what is perceived to be true, and frees one to pursue knowledge via philosophical reflection.[199]

We can then say that verbal falsehoods are useful first presentations of moral frameworks that are designed to develop a guardian's character through imitation. But such moral frameworks are meant to be dissolved and transcended in adulthood.[200] They are used to communicate ethical truths[201] and concepts disguised in captivating imagery and fantasy. Once the myth is recognised for what it is, that is, a false story it causes the verbal falsehood to collapse in a way that leads to inquiry. The psychological displacement is what follows, resulting in a state of *aporia*,[202] feeling perplexed and even confused. One is then forced to pause and reflect, and seek to recover the underlying meaning in the myth through contemplation and examination.

In the *Republic*, Socrates has carefully selected myths and stories that are designed to guide future guardians to philosophy.[203] One of these is infamously known as the 'noble lie' or 'noble falsehood'.[204]At 414c Socrates asks Glaucon, " How, then, could we devise one of those useful falsehoods we were talking about a while ago, one noble falsehood that would, in the best case, persuade even the rulers, but if that's not possible, then the others in the city?" We notice that Socrates is saying that the "noble lie" is a verbal falsehood.

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[199] The noble falsehood is the most famous myth ('myth of metals') that is told to guardians in their education; it differs from the Homeric myths about the heroes and gods, such that, it contains a philosophical aspiration (Lear 2006, 32)
[200] (Lear 2006, 41)
[201] The Socratic myths are intended to lead or build rational capacity.
[202] Characterized by an irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunction (dictionary.com)
[203] Further treatments of examples of this type of myth in the *Republic* include 'The allegory of the Cave' and the 'Myth of Err'. The myths are included progressively in the guardians' education. Lear argues that these myths, especially the Noble falsehood is a childhood introduction to Platonic Forms. (Lear 2006, 32)
[204] Again, there are multiple commentators on subject. Many Lear goes as far to say that Socrates account of the cave is a repetition and a recreation of the Noble Falsehood. (Lear 2006, 34) This was Plato's adaptation of Hesiod's original. (Schofield 2007, 154)

Socrates presents this falsehood in two stages. In the first, at 414d-e Socrates says:

> *I'll first try to persuade the rulers and the soldiers and then the rest of the city that the upbringing and the education we gave them, and the experiences that went with them, were a sort of dream, that in fact they themselves, their weapons, and the other craftsmen's tools were at that time really being fashioned and nurtured inside the earth, and that when the work was completed, the earth, who is their mother, delivered all of them up into the world.*

Here is then the destabilising aspect of the Noble Falsehood. Socrates recommends a myth that says that mythical education that the children were told as children were like dreams. This amounts to saying that this education presented to them has a surface meaning, which is partial and, on this account, false, but which contains a deeper truth.

In the second part, Socrates tells the "story of the metals." In short, this myth told to the children of the future *kallipolis* allocating a new class structure by divine dispensation, the gods put different metals into their souls i.e. silver - auxiliaries, iron and bronze for the farmers and artisans, gold for the rulers.[205] It seems that the intention behind the myth of the metals is to secure a new political order undergirded by a philosophical aspiration. It even gives a reconceptualization of family.[206]

Lear provides a novel interpretation of this myth. He describes the noble falsehood as providing a 'prophylactic for children against all other misleading myths they may have heard'.[207] Referring specifically to the first part of the account relating to the dreamlike character of their upbringing, Lear points out that this is "epistemically revolutionary"—it is concerned with

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[205] 415a-d
[206] 461
[207] (Lear 2006, 38) The use of verbal falsehood is described in the Republic as medicinal to 'drug' (the Greek word is *pharmakon*) children into the appropriate moral convictions. Refer footnote 43 of chapter 4.

orientating a children's soul towards the truth.[208] Socrates account of the noble falsehood is indicative of the fact that we are born in a moral culture, and by the time we reflect on that culture, we are already a product of it. This means that our souls have been shaped and orientated in such a way that represents how we reflect on that culture. Lear argues it is a 'delegitimising myth' for Socrates,[209] as the intention behind the noble falsehood, is to teach an inherent dissatisfaction with the experience up till now of reality.[210]The cave allegory is arguably a replica of the noble falsehood in its structure, mode and desired outcome.[211] What the cave allegory says is that all our experience of the world is partial and false on account of being partial.

In the second part of the myth, Socrates tells the myth of the metals. At one level, the goal of this seems to be to convince the future children of the *kallipolis* of a new political order and to create loyalty. But even here, Lear argues that this is a verbal falsehood, and what this means is that it expresses the truth of the political community in symbolic terms.[212] All citizens are equal as citizens, yet they have different jobs to do. The justice of the community resides in this ability to play a part in the workings of the whole. Since the falsehood is verbal, its true meaning must be recovered later on. Presumably this will happen in dialectical education, which seeks to know the nature of the forms such as justice.[213]

In conclusion, Socratic myths are meant to be destabilising and ironically didactic. Part of what makes them destabilising is that they are false. By creating a sense of dissatisfaction, they play a critical function in their representation of something ethically deeper, and they play an

[208] The third condition in section 2
[209] (Lear 2006, 34)
[210] (Lear 2006, 34) This propels one to seek truth.
[211] (Lear 2006, 34)
[212] Schofield argues for the term usage of lie. (Schofield 2007, 138)
[213] (Schofield 2007, 159)

important role in setting up the psyche necessary for advanced education. Myth sets up a philosophical distinction between appearance and reality in the psyche, at the inception of education, without it being recognised as such. This is what some argue to be epistemically significant,[214] and in my view, psychologically pioneering.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have interrogated the question of why Socrates says that falsehood should be used in education. I am now in a position to provide an answer. On the account that I have presented, what is apparent is that there are different types of falsehoods that produce initial psychological patterns in the soul, which ultimately affect that soul's moral trajectory. The distinction between verbal falsehoods, true falsehoods and lies is slender but important, as it brings to the foreground the types of falsehoods essential to orientating a child's soul towards virtue at the outset of the education programme. The distinction is also necessary in identifying which existing falsehoods are virtuous and which should be discarded.

Meditating on the difference between types of falsehood enabled me to more deeply understand how the myths told to young children need largely to be false – how we need to lie to children in education – because of a condition of their psyches: an inability to discern truth from falsity. The child's psychological condition has been a crucial factor throughout the project; I gave an account of Lear's depiction of the dreamlike nature of the childhood experience and how Socrates' early education aims to implant allegory, unrecognised for what it is, initially, in the psyche. The types of allegory contained in myths and falsehoods are decisive in creating an

[214] Lear makes this point and he also calls the myth politically conservative, contrary to other commentators. He discusses the values of myths as therapy, picking up the theme of verbal falsehoods and lies to be used as medicine. Refer footnote 52. (Lear 2006, 32)

initial, unstable foundation in the child's psyche. Such a foundation structures understanding, and is later dissolved and overcome in the ascent towards wisdom, when the guardians enter the advanced programme.

Questions about the morality of lying in education, of course, remain. What stays with me, ultimately, is the apparent susceptivity of children's souls, and the ease with which careless stories can negatively impact their psychological development. Through exploring these sensitive souls and the nature of falsehood, I hope to have sketched a sympathetic path towards better education, and ultimately towards virtue.

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