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More and More Lies. A New Distinction and its Consequences

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Abstract: In this article, we present a distinction (within the category of ‘deceptive lies’) between two kinds of lies: doxogenic and falsifying lies, defined in terms of different conditions they need to satisfy; and we argue for the analytic significance of this distinction, overlooked in the literature on lying. In addition, we contend that the existence of these two kinds of lies pose a challenge to the viability of a unified definition of deceptive lies – and not even a disjunctive definition would prevent us from thinking that we are dealing with different phenomena.

Keywords: lying, deception, speaker’s intentions, belief, falsity.

Resumen: En este artículo presentamos una distinción (dentro de la categoría de ‘mentiras engañosas’) entre dos tipos de mentiras: doxogénicas y falsificadoras, definidas en términos de las distintas condiciones que deben satisfacer; y defendemos la significación analítica de esta distinción, que ha sido ignorada en la bibliografía sobre la mentira. Además, sostenemos que la existencia de estos dos tipos de mentiras plantea un reto a la viabilidad de una definición unificada de las mentiras engañosas, y ni siquiera una definición disyuntiva impediría que pensásemos que estamos ante fenómenos distintos.

Palabras clave: mentira, engaño, intenciones del hablante, creencia, falsedad.

Mendacity is not a minor part of human life. And having a better understanding of how it works may be very helpful in understanding the human. Indeed, the philosophical study of lying has a long tradition and very wise accounts of it have been given. In particular, there are some conditions for what counts as lying that most authors have traditionally endorsed: that the speaker makes a statement, believing that what is stated is false, with intention to deceive the hearer... But recently, some of these traditionally broadly accepted features of lying have been disputed or redefined. Specifically, some authors have offered counterexamples to the idea that lying necessarily involves the intention to deceive. According to them, there would be cases in which the speaker lies by stating something false, knowing or believing that what she states is false, but without the intention to deceive or to be believed – like when a witness gives false testimony in court under a death threat with no hope of being believed.

In this paper we aim to show two things of a similar significance to what the defence of those non-deceptive lies has meant for the traditional definition of lying. On the one hand, we will propose a novel distinction between two kinds of lies, within the category of ‘deceptive lies’ – those to which the traditional definition of lying would still apply – and, on the other hand, will argue that this traditional definition cannot account for ‘deceptive lies’ as a whole either. The existence of these two kinds of lies, we will contend, challenges the viability of a unified (and non-disjunctive) definition of lying valid for all ‘deceptive lies’.

We begin by commenting on the most accepted definitions and conditions of lying (§1), consider ‘bald-faced lies’ and the distinction between them and ‘deceptive lies’ (§2), and then present the two kinds of ‘deceptive lies’ that we want to tell apart: doxogenic and falsifying lies (§3 and §4 respectively). Subsequently, we argue for the need to rethink and revise the most accepted accounts (§5) and come to some concluding remarks (§6).

1. Defining lying

Let us consider, to begin with, two cases of lying:

The Cake. After getting back home, Mary asks her husband John for a piece of cake that was in the fridge which was supposed to be reserved for their twelve-year-old son Pete. John seems to remember, and believes, that it was him who ate the last piece of the cake, but he wants to avoid being blamed by Mary and tells her that he did not.

Comrades. Pablo Ibbieta is a republican soldier in the Spanish Civil war who has been captured by Franco's army and is about to be executed. His captors are looking for his comrade Ramon Gris and ask Ibbieta for his whereabouts. Ibbieta knows that if the fascists catch Gris, they will torture and likely execute him. Therefore, as he is convinced that Gris is hidden in his cousins' house, he tells them that Gris is hidden in the cemetery.¹

Both cases appear to satisfy the conditions suggested by most commonly accepted definitions of lying. Particularly, both cases allegedly satisfy the conditions of the following quite canonical definition of lying due to Bernard Williams:

I take a lie to be an assertion, the content of which the speaker believes to be false, which is made with intention to deceive the hearer with respect to that content.
(Williams 2002, 96)

In our two examples, the speaker makes an assertion – that it was not himself who ate the piece of cake or that Ramon Gris is hidden in the cemetery – the content of which he believes to be false, with the intention to deceive the hearer about that content.

In order to properly understand this definition, we need to assume that deceiving the hearer, A, by asserting that *p* involves to make A believe that *p*, and this involves that A acquires the false believe that *p*. However, we can see that this definition only requires that the liar believes *p* to be false, but not that what she states is actually false. This contrast involves a crucial point for our purposes that we will develop later on (in §2).

Let us have first a quick look at the conditions traditionally proposed as necessary conditions for lying, which will allow us to specify (mainly in §3 and §4) some differences between our two cases, as well as between deceptive and non-deceptive lies (in §2). In the long tradition of attempting to define lying, the following conditions have been proposed as necessary conditions for lying:

- *Statement Condition* (SC): that the speaker makes a statement.²

¹ This story is narrated by Sartre 1939. See also Siegler 1966.

² Statement, assertion and saying will be used interchangeably here.

- *Believe-to-be-false Condition* (BFC): that the speaker believes that what she states is false.
- *Intention-to-deceive Condition* (IDC): that the statement is made with the intention to deceive the addressee.
- *Falsity Condition* (FC) that what is stated is false.

It should be noted that William's definition includes all these conditions but FC – which is just the condition traditionally more called into question. And there is good reason for this, since it seems *prima facie* plausible to think that someone can lie by saying something she believes to be false with the intention to deceive her hearers, even though it turns out that what is said is not false. In *The Cake*, it seems that John is lying and he would equally be lying if it turned out, contrary to what he believed, that he did not actually eat the piece of cake set aside for Pete, but a different one.

A powerful reason for this view could be that only the intention to say something false is under the speaker's control but not what actually happens. It would be unfair, the argument runs, to make depend the attribution of lying on a fact that is beyond the speaker's power – and remember the relevance for morality of lies. Hence, lying attributions should just depend on the speaker's intention. Be this the reason or not, the fact is that the majority of authors, from Augustine and Aquinas to most of contemporary philosophers, have held that what is a necessary condition for lying concerning falsity is only that the speaker believes what she states to be false and not that this is actually false. (Among contemporary philosophers, FC is rejected by Chisholm & Feeham 1977, Kupfer 1982, Williams 2002, Mahon 2008, and Fallis 2009; Carson 2006 and 2010 endorses it but accepts this might well be an 'open question'; Saul 2012 remains uncommitted.)

Therefore, according to the most accepted view, in order to lie it is not necessary that what is said is false but only (satisfied SC and IDC) that it is believed to be false by the speaker, i.e. that BFC obtains. And this seems plausible.

On the other hand, Williams's definition includes a requirement that is not present in the aforementioned conditions. It is indeed a requirement that involves a qualification of IDC. For Williams, in order to lie (being SC and BFC satisfied) it is not enough that the statement is made simply with intention to deceive the hearer, but specifically with intention to deceive the hearer *about the very stated content*. So the *Intention-to-deceive Condition* (IDC) needs to be modified as follows:

- *Intention-to-deceive Condition à la Williams* (IDCW): that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to deceive the addressee about the stated content.

This revision is due to the fact that it is possible to state what one believes to be false with the purpose of deceiving the hearer not about the stated content but about something else. In that case it seems that the speaker would not be lying properly – but *misleading*. We will suggest now a further case to illustrate this point.

Professor. Imagine a professor who knows that one of her students has cheated in an exam, and tells that student “Congrats! This time you’ve done a pretty good exam with no need to cheat”.

Obviously, the professor does not intend to deceive the student about the stated content, since she knows that the student will not believe that he has not cheated – the student is perfectly aware of having done this. The professor’s intention is not to make the student believe what she states, but to make him believe that she, the professor, *believes* what she has stated (that she *believes that* the student has not cheated).

So, when the speaker’s intention in stating that *p* (believing it to be false) is not to make the hearer *believe that p*, but to make the hearer believe that the speaker *believes that p*, or anything else different from *p*, this will not count as lying.

In any way, and even though this qualification sounds quite plausible, our argument does not hinge on this point at all. Beyond the fact that both *The Cake* and *Comrades* appear to satisfy the conditions of these definitions, we will try to show that there are some significant differences between both cases, which have been overlooked in the literature, that call for the distinction between two kinds of lying which raises serious worries about the prospects of a unitary definition of lying. But we need to introduce first the contemporary challenge to the very condition of intending to deceive as necessary for lying.

2. Bald-faced lies and the intention to deceive

In recent years, however, IDC-W (for either IDC or IDCW) has been challenged. Some authors (see Carson 2006, 286; Sorensen 2007; Fallis 2009, 41-43; and Saul 2012) have argued that there are circumstances in which one can lie without having the intention to deceive. That is, one can lie by making a false statement, knowing (or merely believing)

that what is stated is false, but without the intention to deceive in scenarios in which the statement is warranted. Think of a witness giving false testimony in court for fear of being seriously harmed or even killed by a gang of organised criminals, with no hope of being believed (Carson 2006, 289-90).³ These have been called ‘bald-faced’, or barefaced, lies. On our part, we are not completely sure that in this example the speaker is really lying but just committing perjury, which is a legal category, given the special context in which speaker and audience are, although we concede that other cases are more difficult to deal with. For instance, when people living in authoritarian regimes repeat, or *parrot*, official truths, everybody knows they do not believe those “truths”, yet it seems that they are lying (see Sorensen 2007, 251-52). Note that the point of these cases is not that the *liar* is intending to deceive or to be believed by the audience even though there is very little hope of fulfilling this intention, but that he *does not intend* it at all – since she cannot (consciously) intend what she believes she cannot do.

There is no doubt that if we grant that IDC-W is not a necessary condition for all kinds of lies, a distinction between two kinds of lies in virtue of the speaker’s intentions will need to be made:

Bald-faces lies: lies in which the speaker’s intention is merely to say something (believed by her to be) false in a context of justification – i.e. lies which satisfy SC and BFC and are said in a context in which the obligation to truth-telling is not cancelled.⁴

Deceptive lies:⁵ lies for which the traditional view is still in place – i.e. the speaker states something believed by him to be false (SC and BFC) with the intention to deceive the hearer (about the stated content) (IDC-W).

It is worth noting that ‘deceptive lies’ are conceived here as those lies in which, in addition to SC and BFC, IDC-W is also satisfied. That is, it counts as a ‘deceptive lie’

³ It can be imagined that, before the witness gives testimony, a recording from a traffic cam has been projected in the room – in the witness’s presence – on which this person could be seen witnessing the crime.

⁴ See Carson 2006, 294. The rationale for this last clause is, no doubt, to exclude from the category of lies such things as fiction stories, theatre performances, jokes, metaphors and ironies.

⁵ The name is due to Fallis 2009, 54-56. He argues for the need of this distinction.

any lie which is told with the intention to deceive the hearer (about the stated content), independently of whether this intention is fulfilled or not. In other words, ‘deceptive lies’ are not only those that actually achieve the goal of deceiving the hearer, but also those in which the speaker intends it but does not achieve it. Deceptive lies are then those lies which, in contrast to bald-faced lie, satisfy IDC-W.⁶

Most authors have understood IDC-W as equivalent to the intention to *make the hearer believe the stated content which the speaker believes to be false*. In this line, for one case, Jennifer Saul asks how should we include in the definition of lying this intention to deceive about the stated content, and she reaches the conclusion that “[t]he obvious way to incorporate this is to require an intention that the audience believe what is said (which the speaker knows/believes to be false). Many theorists require precisely this.” (Saul 2012, 8; see also Stokke 2013, 348).

In this line, consider the following definition of lying, which – in his entry on lying and deception for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* – James Mahon takes as the currently most accepted definition in the literature:

To lie=_{df} to make a believed-false statement to another person with the intention that the other person believes that statement to be true. (Mahon 2016)

Our two examples also seem to satisfy this definition. The speaker – John and Ibbieta, respectively – makes the hearer (or audience) a believed-false statement – that it was not himself who ate the piece of cake or that Ramon Gris is hidden in the cemetery – with the intention that the hearers believe that statement.

Mahon’s definition does not require falsity but only that the liar believes the statement to be false. His and Williams’s definitions are quite similar if we equate *to make someone believe something false* and *to deceive* someone. However, it needs to be stressed – and this is a crucial point – that if FC is not endorsed as a condition for lying, as the most popular accounts do, then the speaker’s intention to make the hearer believe that *p* (believed to be false by the speaker) is not necessarily the same intention as the intention to deceive the hearer about *p*. If *p* is false, obviously the fulfilment of the first intention involves the fulfilment of the second. But, if as most authors claim one can lie

⁶ Not all non-deceptive lies need to be bald-faced lies. See Sorensen 2010 on what he calls ‘knowledge-lies’.

by saying something true but believed to be false, then one can be believed in saying that p (that she believes to be false) without deceiving, i.e. without making the hearer believe something false. Augustine already said in *De Mendacio* (3, 3) that there are two ways in which the intention to deceive the hearer can fail to be accomplished: 1) that the hearer does not believe the one who lies, and 2) that the hearer believes what the speaker says but, unbeknownst to the speaker, what this says is not false.

The crucial point here is particularly that if what the speaker asserts is not false, then it is not true that in lying the intention to make the hearer believe that p and the intention to deceive about p are the same intention, even if the speaker believes it. Both intentions cannot simply be equated, as it is proved by the fact that one can be fulfilled while the other is not. To say it again, if we individuate the speaker's intentions by means of their satisfaction conditions, then in lying the intention to be believed and the intention to deceive cannot be equated, since it can be the case that one is accomplished while the other is not.

However, it might be objected that this is not a big worry since what the liar genuinely intends is not exactly to deceive but to make the hearer believe what he says (and believes to be false) – as stated in Mahon's definition. The goal of the liar will be accomplished if she gets this, regardless of the truth-value of what she says. That is, the liar states that p , believing that p is false, and wants that the hearer believes that p . She will achieve her goal if the hearer believes that p , despite the fact that p is not actually false.

Yet, we will argue in the next sections that this worry is not as easy to solve for all cases. Particularly, we will try to bring to light the importance of the distinction between intending to deceive and intending to be believed by telling apart two kinds of 'deceptive lies' – even though ordinary language does not have specific names for them.

3. Doxogenic lies

Now, let us come back to the starting cases, particularly to the first one. In *The Cake* John tells Mary, believing it to be false, that he did not eat the piece of cake (p) with the intention to make Mary believe it. John's aim is to make Mary believe what he says, since it hinges on Mary's acquiring this belief that he will not be blamed. If he gets Mary to believe that p , will he have not fully satisfied his intention – the guiding intention of his assertion? It is obvious that he will. If it turned out that, although he now thinks he did, he actually did not eat the piece of cake, would he think that his intention has not been

accomplished because Mary, in believing his lie, is believing something true? He will not. Imagine that eventually Pete approaches her mother and says it was him who ate the last piece of cake. It seems instead that John would be even happier, because this would avoid him being the target of Mary's annoyance if he were caught and afterwards had to make up a story, a new lie, or to apologize. What he aims at by lying to Mary is that she believes that p (the asserted content) irrespective of the fact that this is false or true, although certainly he believes it to be false. John's intention is that Mary acquires the belief that he did not eat the piece of cake set aside for their son. To deceive Mary would just be a consequence of the satisfaction of his intention – a consequence that *John* also thinks will occur, and even considers it necessary – but which is not in fact necessary for achieving all he actually aims at. It is not necessary for his intention to be fully fulfilled.

Therefore, *The Cake* rather shows that the speaker's intention needs not be in fact to deceive but to make believe what he says – and believes to be false. If to deceive is to make the hearer believe something false, what this shows is indeed that *the liar's intention can be accomplished simply by making the hearer believe what has been said, regardless of whether the hearer is deceived.*

This suggests that we should replace IDC-W – that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to deceive the hearer (about the stated content) – with this new condition:

- *Intention-to-make-believe Condition* (IMBC): that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to make the hearer believe the content of this statement.

From the liar's subjective perspective, the intention to be believed amounts to the intention to deceive – his intention to get the hearer, A , to believe that p coincides with his intention to deceive A about p , since he (believing that p is false) will think that if A believes that p , then A will have acquired a false belief, i.e. A will have been deceived. But, given that sometimes p may not be false, it happens that there is an objective gap between both intentions: to be believed (regarding what one believes to be false) without deceiving. And indeed definitions of lying should reflect this.

Therefore, given that IMBC is not in all cases equivalent to IDC-W, there is at least one kind of lies – within the category of 'deceptive lies' – which are defined as the joint satisfaction of SC, BFC and IMBC, but not of SC, BFC and IDC-W. We propose to

call this lies *doxogenic lies* provided that their characteristic intention is satisfied only by producing a particular belief in the hearer – the belief corresponding to the content stated by the speaker (that she believes to be false).

However, this is not all because, as we will now argue, doxogenic lies are significantly different from another kind of ‘deceptive lies’.

4. Falsifying lies

Now the liar not always will be satisfied with the mere fact of being believed. To see what we mean, compare *The Cake* – which we propose as prototypical of doxogenic lies – with *Comrades*. Recall it: Pablo Ibbieta, convinced that Gris is hidden in his cousins’ place, tells his captors that Gris is hidden in the cemetery. But regrettably he is not very lucky. Sartre’s end for this story is that, against what Ibbieta believed, it turns out that Gris is actually in the cemetery and is trapped by the fascists. Ibbieta becomes emotionally destroyed when he knows about this.

In this case, like in *The Cake*, S, the speaker, states that *p*, believing that *p* is false, with the intention to make A, the addressees, believe what S says – intention that is fulfilled. However, has S achieved his goal, what he wanted to get by telling A that *p*? As a test we can ask whether Ibbieta essentially wanted their interrogators to believe that *p*, even though that did not entail deceiving them. It seems clear that the answer is “no”. Ibbieta did not simply want them to believe that *p*. To make them believe that *p* was just his means to deceive them. If *p* turned out to be true (as it indeed turned out to be), it would be better for him that they did not acquire that belief. Again, his intention was to deceive his interrogators, and make them believe that *p* is only a means to that end – a means that will be valid only if *p* is in fact false. The speaker wants the hearers to believe that *p* only if *p* is false. In this case, unlike *The Cake*, being believed is not sufficient for the speaker to fulfil his intention, since his intention is actually to deceive the hearers. If in acquiring the belief that *p*, the hearers are not deceived – and acquire instead a true belief – the speaker would not have wanted them to believe that *p*, since this will not be a way to achieve his aim.

In short, Ibbieta aims at *falsifying reality*, i.e. it is essential to his intention that the belief acquired by his interrogators is false. We will consequently call lies of this second kind *falsifying lies*, and define them as the joint satisfaction of SC, BFC and IDC-W.⁷

Let us now compare the liars' distinctive intentions in *The Cake* and *Comrades* with the contrasting intentions that some agents, for instance a couple of mountain climbers, may have.⁸

The Climbers. A and B are two mountain climbers who plan to ascend to Mount X's peak. Climber A just wants to ascend to Mount X's peak, whereas Climber B wants to ascend to Mount X's peak because he wants to climb the highest mountain in the area.

It seems obvious that if A reaches the peak, A will have fulfilled her intention and achieved her aim. Whereas in the case of B it is not sure that B achieves her aim only by reaching the peak. If B reaches the peak but in spite of what B thought initially the highest mountain in the area is not Mount X, but Mount Y, then B will not have achieved her real aim. To ascend to Mount X was for B only a means to satisfy her real purpose, which was to surmount the highest mountain in the area. Instead, A will only fail in what she intends if she cannot reach the peak. For B, however, there are two ways to fail in her intending: either not reaching Mount X's peak or Mount X not being the highest mountain in the area – and the latter does not depend on whether she does or does not reach the peak. If B knew that Mount X is not the highest mountain in the area, she would not have been interested in ascending to its peak. And B's intention is not the addition of climbing Mount X and ascending to the highest peak in the area – B's intention is to climb the highest peak in the area, which B identifies with Mount X's peak, and only because B believes that Mount X satisfies such a description has he the intention to ascend to it.

In *The Cake*, John's intention is akin to Climber A's, whereas Pablo Ibbieta's intention is more akin to Climber B's. In *Comrades*, Ibbieta's intention is not the addition of the intention to make believe that *p* plus the intention to make believe something false. His intention is just to make believe something false: (that he identifies with) *p*. As mentioned, to make believe that *p* only serves his purpose if it is a means to deceive, that

⁷ Neither this kind of lies nor the other one should be confused with Augustine's *real lies*. Augustine identifies real lies as "the lie which is told solely for the pleasure of lying and deceiving" (Augustine in Deferrari, p. 109) simply for its own sake, with no further aim.

⁸ We will now consider not linguistic intentions but intentions for action and will suggest a parallel between them that we take to be straightforward and illuminating.

is, to generate a false belief. Any proposition would have served his interests provided that believing it would amount to the hearer's acquiring a false belief concerning the location of Gris. What Ibbieta wants to get is to conceal the truth to the hearers, not particularly that they believe what he states since any other proposition he could have stated would have been equally fitting on the condition that it would not be true and would prevent his interrogators from believing the truth on the issue – Gris's whereabouts.

Now suppose that the world is such as Ibbieta imagined it. Ibbieta intended that his inquisitors did not know that Gris was in his cousins' house (q), not so much, or not essentially, that they believed that Gris was in the cemetery (p). It could work as well that they believed that he was hidden in the bell tower (r) as in the nearby farm (s). Therefore, in this kind of lies, unlike in doxogenic lies, the speaker has no special interest in making the hearer believe particularly the stated proposition as such, since the speaker could have chosen to state other (believed-false) propositions equally fitting to her goal. The speaker's goal is not to make the hearer believe a certain proposition, but to prevent him from knowing a particular fact. The only reason the speaker wants to make the hearer believe what she states is to conceal the hearer a truth.⁹ Ibbieta wants his captors not to know *where Gris is*. And the question "Where is Gris?" allows for multiple and incompatible answers, so that all but one are false. Ibbieta's interest is to make the hearers believe a false answer to that question – to make them not to know the right answer. Which one, among all possible false or wrong answers, is not significant, except for utility or pragmatic reasons: the best candidate will be the one appearing to be more plausible and convincing for the audience in that context. What Ibbieta is worried about the stated proposition is that it may sound plausible and convincing to his interrogators.

5. The need to amend the definition

Then we have, on the one hand, *doxogenic lies*, in which characteristically the speaker's intention is to make believe specifically the stated content (which she believes to be false), independently of its truth-value. In *The Cake*, John specifically wants to make Mary believe that he did not eat the piece of cake. On the other hand, *falsifying lies* are defined

⁹ Jennifer Lackey (2013, 241) has argued that there are two ways of deceiving: 1) by concealing information about whether p , or 2) by bringing about a false belief regarding whether p . 1) and 2) are compatible—indeed, a way of concealing information about whether p is by causing a false belief regarding whether p , and this seems the only possible way of concealing truth by lying.

by the speaker's intention to deceive, to make the hearer believe something false, in order to conceal the truth to the hearer.

As advanced, each of these kinds of lies is defined by two distinct sets of conditions. In the case of doxogenic lies, the speaker states that p (which she believes to be false) with the straightforward intention to make the hearer believe that p . So they are characterized by the satisfaction of these conditions:

- *Statement Condition* (SC): that the speaker makes a statement.
- *Believe-to-be-false Condition* (BFC): that the speaker believes that what she states is false.
- *Intention-to-make-believe Condition* (IMBC): that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to make the hearer believe *the content of this statement*.

Thus, for doxogenic definitions like Mahon's and Saul's hold. But, since IMBC is different from IDC-W, Williams's definition is not correct for them. The speaker's intention is to make the hearer acquire the (believed-false) information that p , being essential to make the hearer believe that p , which (p being false) amounts to deceiving him.

On the other hand, falsifying lies are to be defined as the joint satisfaction of:

- *Statement Condition* (SC): that the speaker makes a statement.
- *Believe-to-be-false Condition* (BFC): that the speaker believes that what she states is false.
- *Intention-to-deceive Condition à la Williams* (IDCW): that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to deceive the addressee about the stated content.

Or taking into account our independent proposal made at the end of the last section of framing the issue in terms of the answer to a question, IDCW could still be modified in the following lines:

- *Intention-to-deceive Condition modified* (IDC_M): that the speaker makes the statement with the intention to deceive the hearer about the answer to a certain question. (That the hearer's resulting belief is a false answer to a certain question.)

In any event, in the case of falsifying lies, the speaker states that p (which she believes to be false) with the intention to make the hearer not believe that q (which is what the speaker believes to be true). The speaker's intention is here to prevent the hearer from having the information that q (which the speaker believes to be true). In the case of falsifying lies, unlike the case of doxogenic lies, the speaker intends the hearer to believe that p only if his believing this amounts to being deceived.

This takes us to our second point. If we are right and the category of 'deceptive lies' does actually include two different kinds of lies, which satisfy distinct conditions for lying, then the most accepted definitions are in need of revision – indeed, it seems dubious that a single definition valid for all 'deceptive lies' could finally be found. In particular, since falsifying lies only require IDC and doxogenic lies only require IMBC, traditionally accepted definitions of lying are not even valid for all 'deceptive lies'.¹⁰ And this is particularly so if IMBC and IDC are mutually irreducible, as it seems.

On the other hand, these conditions cannot be omitted from a definition of lying because assertions which clearly do not count as lies would then satisfy it. And it seems not possible to include both clauses in a unified definition. A possible manoeuvre regarding the former could be to replace these two conditions by a clause such as that the assertion is made in a warranting context—a strategy often followed by defenders of bald-faced lies. But again, excluding the discussed conditions would involve losing some important distinctions. Concerning the latter, it seems that the only possible move for not renouncing to a unified definition of lying for all 'deceptive lies' would be to elaborate a sort of disjunctive definition, adding the following as the third condition:

Disjunctive Clause (DC): the speaker makes the statement with the intention either to deceive or to be believed by the hearer.

However, this would certainly be a (bad) sign of the fact that different phenomena are put together under one single label.

¹⁰ It is a consequence of our argument that not all so-called 'deceptive lies' are indeed deceptive – some are just a matter of making believe. We keep this label for ease of exposition although adding inverted commas.

6. Concluding remarks

We consider our aims in this paper as having a similar significance to what the defence of bald-faced lies has meant for the traditional definition of lying. The acceptance of bald-faced lies as a distinctive kind of lies has led their advocates to tell apart, against tradition, two broad kinds of lies – deceptive and non-deceptive – as well as to restrict the traditionally accepted definitions of lying just to the former, with the result that the intent to deceive can no longer be considered as a necessary condition for lying.¹¹ However, this is not the last word about this since, even if bald-faced lies could be considered fully-fledged lies, there would be an important difference between these and the archetypical lies, the deceptive ones, which could not be dodged. It seems that, although sometimes one can lie without intending to deceive, liars usually do intend it or, as we have remarked, intend the hearer to believe a proposition that the speaker believes to be false. And this is particularly relevant. After all, the usual worries raised by lying, including its alleged moral wrongness, come from the fact that lying is par excellence a form of (attempted) deception, and then manipulative.¹² The further distinction that we have proposed has the consequence that the traditional definition is not satisfactory for ‘deceptive lies’ either.

Let us sum up. We have proposed a distinction between two kinds of lies – doxogenic and falsifying lies – within the category of ‘deceptive lies’. We regard this distinction as an analytically significant distinction which has been overlooked in the literature on lying – which deserves to be more deeply explored. In addition, we have contended that the existence of these two kinds of lies – which are defined in terms of different conditions – pose some challenges to the viability of a unified definition of deceptive lies. Finally, the only way to preserve the possibility of a unified definition would be to suggest a disjunctive one, which in anyway would not prevent us from thinking that we are dealing with different phenomena for which we insist on having just one single name and definition.¹³

¹¹ For the purposes of our argument, we do not need to commit ourselves with the reality of bald-faced lies.

¹² Importantly, bald-faced lies, insofar as they are non-deceptive, are not manipulative, nor do they involve a breach of trust. Hence, they are neither epistemically nor morally problematic, as in principle ‘deceptive lies’, and lies tout court, appear to be. See Carson (2006, 302), Sorensen (2007), Faulkner (2007), and Fallis (2010, 4).

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