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On Lying / La bugia

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Introduction: On Lying

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> Dixit autem Daniel: "Recte mentitus es in caput tuum / ecce enim angelus Dei accepta sententia ab eo scindet te medium."
> [But Daniel said: "You have lied straight against your head! For, look, the angel of God, who has received the sentence from him, shall split you in two!"]
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> (Vulg. Dan. 13.55)

What happens when we lie? What do we lie for? Are we always aware of it? Can we define its nature once and for all? Since the beginning of history, human beings have tried to define and interpret lying according to criteria provided to them by changing cultural environments and worldviews, so to give this phenomenon a definite place in their existence. All domains of human knowledge – from mythmaking to philosophy, from theology to neuroscience, from art to linguistics – have been involved. This special issue of *Linguæ &* aims to contribute to this multi- and interdisciplinary discourse by proposing a common core of insights on lying through contributions from the humanities and psychology [1].

1. AN ANCIENT TALE ON LYING AND HUMAN NATURE: THE STORY OF SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

As a foreword to the contents in this issue, let us briefly recollect the story of "Susanna and the Elders" in chapter 13 of the Bible Book of Daniel. A man, Joakim, lives in Babylon. He marries Susanna, Hilkiah's daughter. Susanna

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is an 'outstandingly beautiful, God-fearing' woman [2]. Joakim is very rich; he owns a garden near his house. The Jews often gather in his garden, because he is the most respected of them all. The well-known episode takes place during the prophet Daniel's youth. In that time, two elders of the people were appointed judges; they used to visit Joakim in his garden. As they noticed that Susanna entered her husband's garden every day at noon after the people had left it and she could be alone, "they started burning with their lust [after her], and turned their discernment [or: 'mind'; 'sense'] upside down, and turned their eyes away in order that they would not look to heaven, neither would they recollect [in their hearts] the just judgments; therefore, they were being both wounded [or: 'made vulnerable'] by their longing [or: 'desire'] for her […]" [3]. Thus, one day they decided to hide themselves inside the garden at noon. As usual, Susanna came in with two maids: she wanted to take a bath, thus she sent them to take some oil and soap in the house, instructing them to close the garden doors in the meantime. As the maids were gone, the elders came out to her and threatened her: "Here, the doors of the garden are shut, and nobody can see us. We are longing for you to assent to us and lie with us: in fact, if you don't not, we will provide testimony against you that a young man was with you and that you sent the maids away because of him" [4]. Susanna was anguished, she knew she was trapped; but she refused to give in: "However, it is better for me to fall into your hands without any deed than to sin before God" [5]. So, she started crying aloud, and they shouted back against her. The servants opened the doors, rushed in, and heard the elders' accusations. The day after, the two elders came back to Joakim's home with all the people; they claimed that Susanna should be put to death and called her to come in before them. She came in, accompanied by all her relatives:

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[2] "pulchram nimis et timentem Dominum", Vulg. Dan. 13.2. All quotations from the Book of Daniel are taken from Jerome's Vulgata version of the Bible, ed. Gryson 1994. All quotations from the Vulgata Book of Daniel are mentioned in the text with chapter and verse numbers.

[3] "[…] et exarserunt in concupiscentia eius / et everterunt sensum suum / et declina-verunt oculos suos / ut non viderent caelum / neque recordarentur iudiciorum iustorum / erant ergo ambo vulnerati amore eius […]" (13, 9-10).

[4] "ecce ostia pomerii clausa sunt / et nemo nos videt et in concupiscentia tui sumus / quam ob rem adsentire nobis et commiscere nobiscum / quod si nolueris dicemus testi-monium contra te quod fuerit tecum iuvenis / et ob hanc causam emiseris puellas a te" (13.20-21).

[5] "sed melius mihi est absque opera incidere in manus vestras / quam peccare in conspectu Domini" (13.23).

"Moreover, Susanna was of very delicate and beautiful shape; thus, the unjust ones ordered that she be uncovered – in fact, she was coverer [with a veil] – so they might get satisfied with her appearance. Now, they were all crying: all her people, and all who knew her" [6]. The two elders stood up and put their hands on Susanna's head, "who, while crying, looked up to heaven: her heart trusted in the Lord" [7]. The two repeated their accusations before the people, who believed the testimony because it came from two elders and judges, and they condemned her to death. But Susanna cried out in a loud voice: "Eternal God, you who are advocate [or: 'judge'; 'defender'; 'witness'] of hidden [or: 'secret'; 'invisible'] things, you who have known all things since before they were, you know that they have pronounced a false testimony against me; and here I die for having done none of those things which these ones wickedly arranged against me" [8]. The "Lord heard her voice clearly" [9]: while she was being led to death, "God incited [or: 'stirred up'; 'awakened'; 'set in motion'] the holy spirit of a young boy whose name was Daniel; and he cried out in a loud voice: I am clean of her blood!" [10]. The young boy blamed the people for not being able to judge: "[…] you are so foolish, children of Israel, that you have condemned a daughter of Israel without exerting your judgement [or: 'examining judicially'], nor acquiring any knowledge about what is true. Turn back to judgement [or: to 'court'; 'judicial investigation'; 'discernment'], because they have spoken false evidence [or: false 'testimony'; 'attestation'] against her" [11]. The people rushed back to court and asked Daniel to guide them, since they noticed that God had given to him "the honorary gift of old age" [12]. Daniel ordered the two elders to be separated from each other.

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[6] "[…] porro Susanna erat delicata nimis et pulchra specie / at iniqui illi iusserunt ut discoperiretur / erat enim cooperta / ut vel sic satiarentur decore eius / flebant igitur sui et omnes qui noverant eam" (13.31-32).

[7] "quae flens suspexit ad caelum / erat enim cor eius fiduciam habens in Domino" (13.35).

[8] "Deus aeterne qui absconditorum es cognitor qui nosti omnia antequam fiant / tu scis quoniam falsum contra me tulerunt testimonium / et ecce morior cum nihil horum fecerim / quae isti malitiose composuerunt adversum me" (13.42-43).

[9] "exaudit… vocem eius" (13.44).

[10] "[…] suscitavit Deus spiritum sanctum pueri iunioris cuius nomen Danihel et exclamavit voce magna mundus ego sum a sanguine huius" (13.46).

[11] "[…] sic fatui filii Israhel non iudicantes / neque quod verum est cognoscentes / condemnastis filiam Israhel / revertimini ad iudicium quia falsum testimonium locuti sunt adversum eam" (13.48-49).

[12] "honorem senectutis" (13.50).

Then, he put the first judge to trial. He recalled to that elder all the unjust sentences the latter had spoken in his life against the innocent to the benefit of the criminals. Then he claimed that, if the elder really saw Susanna meeting a young man, then he should say under which tree he saw "them talking to each other" [13]. That elder answered he saw them under a mastic-tree. To which Daniel replied: "You have lied straight against your head! For, look, the angel of God, who has received the sentence from him, shall split you in two!" [14]. After sending him away, Daniel let the other elder come in. To him he spoke: "Appearance [also: 'beauty'; 'sight'] has entrapped you, and concupiscence has turned your heart upside down! This is how you used to act with the daughters of Israel, and in their dread they gave in to talking to you. But a daughter of Judah could not bear your iniquity!" [15]. Then he instructed this elder to tell him under which tree he had caught Susanna and her supposed young lover while talking to each other; the elder answered: "Under a holm-oak". To which Daniel replied: "You, too, have lied straight against your head! But the angel of God is awaiting you with the sword to cut you in two and slay both of you!" [16]. Thereupon, the whole assembly cried aloud; and they "blessed God, who saves those who hope in him" [17]. They turned against those elders whom Daniel led to confess with their own mouth that they had spoken a false testimony, and they ordered them to the same sort of death that the elders had planned to inflict on Susanna. Thus, "innocent blood was spared on that day" [18]; and Susanna's whole family praised God, "because nothing shameful was found in her" [19]. From that day on, Daniel became 'great' ("magnus", 13.64) before the people.

The story of Susanna and the Elders provides all issues involved since lying has been addressed and acknowledged from what angle whatsoever – here, religion – as belonging to human nature. Reflecting on lying implies

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[13] "eos loquentes sibi" (13.54).

[14] "Recte mentitus es in caput tuum / ecce enim angelus Dei accepta sententia ab eo scindet te medium […]" (13.55).

[15] "[…] species decepit te et concupiscentia subvertit cor tuum / sic faciebatis filiabus Israhel / et illae timentes loquebantur vobis / sed non filia Iuda sustinuit iniquitatem vestram" (13.57).

[16] "[…] recte mentitus es et tu in caput tuum / manet enim angelus Dei gladium habens ut secet te medium et interficiat vos" (13.59).

[17] "[…] et benedixerunt Deo qui salvat sperantes in se" (13.60).

[18] "[…] et salvatus est sanguinis innoxius in die illa" (13.62).

[19] "[…] quia non esset inventia in ea res turpis" (13.63).

reflecting on what it means to be human. First of all, lying involves the *individual* dimension of a human being. As the Latin word *individuus* suggests, a long-standing, culture-crossing philosophical, theological, anthropological, and psychological tradition has proposed the idea of 'un-divided-ness', of 'intrisic wholeness', as an essential of being human. Intrinsic coherence of internal and external senses, of will, desire, intellect, and of sight, smell, taste, etc., cooperating with each other along what Carl Gustav Jung called the "individuation process", are supposed to allow for self-realization in a person's existence. Two characters impersonate the *individuus* in this story: Susanna and Daniel. Despite them being socially marginal – a young woman's and a young boy's voice were weaker than two elder judges' voices in the ancient world – they let their senses be inspired and guided by the "holy spirit" ("spiritum sanctum", 13.46), i.e., by the innermost, truth-bearing part of them. In fact, they will be able to speak out "loudly" ("voce magna", 13.42; 13.46) and effectively the truth against all evidence. The notion of the 'spirit' has itself a long-standing tradition in philosophy and theology; here, it also seems to play the role of Jung's *principium individuationis*: "awakened" by God (s. 13.42), Susanna's and Daniel's holy spirit steers their intellect, heart, will, their external senses such as their sight, and their voice, in the same truthful direction. This shall lead to Susanna's and Daniel's eventual victory over their opposed characters, the two elder judges. As remarked in Vulg. Dan. 13.9-10, in their desire after Susanna, the two elders turn their eyes away so to avoid looking up to heaven and remembering the just judgments. They *intentionally* avoid looking up so to prevent God from awakening their holy spirit that might infuse their senses to the truth. As a consequence, Susanna's beauty affects the elders' senses in a way that they are *vulnerati* (wounded) by their passion after her ("vulnerati amore eius", 13.10). This *vulnus* ('hurt'; 'wound') insinuates itself into each elder's innermost core as the earliest evidence of their eventual annihilation as *individuals*: each of them shall be split 'in two' or 'in the middle' ("medium", 13.55; 13.59), as the angel shall announce.

The story of Susanna is also an example of how reflection on lying and on human nature always takes place within a certain worldview. In the worldview proposed in the Bible, God, through his laws revealed to Moses, and through the 'just judgments' inspired by him into a human being's holy spirit, acts in the human world as the instance of transcendence, i.e., as the intersubjective *tertium comparationis* connecting and comparing the individuals' behaviours within a community.

The story of Susanna and the Elders has been widely represented in the visual arts since the late Middle Ages to the present days. Its complex agglomeration of issues on human nature and destiny has been percolated down to three main motives: the eyes, the hands, and the sheltering veil. In most paintings, Susanna's eyes look up, while the elders' eyes stare at her. Susanna's hands tend to the veil or to heaven, while the elders' hands tend towards her. The sheltering veil is either on Susanna's body, or close to her so that she can reach it with her hands. The eyes recall the discourse on the senses, on their adherence to reality and truth or their deceiving potential; the hands recall the discourse on intentionality, on acting, and on the moral and ethical implications of lying; finally, the veil, a most powerful and complex symbol, may suggest the relational nature of the concept of lying, which is per se related and opposed to the concept of truth, or it may stand for the ultimate inaccessibility to truth, which never fully unveils itself to human beings, least of all to liars.

2. Approaches to lying in literature, in the visual arts, and in mass media arts

In this issue, several contributions show how deeply and lively literature and the other arts have engaged themselves with lying and deceiving. The substantive *fiction* itself is diagnostic of the topical role of reflecting on this issue within art theory and practice. The basic meanings of Lat. *fictio* '[the act or effect of] shaping / coining'; '[the act or effect of] pretending' introduce to some foundational questions around art, such as: is something that is not true, for having been invented or shaped out of imagination, necessarily false? Does 'untrue' always involve 'deceitful'? What kind of knowledge do we achieve through art? Does art have a moral or ethical task? The contributions from literature and the other arts in this issue face these foundational questions indirectly, by focusing on single aspects of lying. In Emilio Gianotti's "Dirk Ex Machina: Douglas Adams' Saga and Holistic Detection as Religious Satire", the "holistic detective" Dirk Gently in Adam's novels is a perfect counterpart to Daniel. In the story of Susanna and the Elders, Daniel is somehow portrayed as an *ante litteram* detective: guided by logics and by his intellect, he searches for evidence by questioning the elders' accusations until he points at their contradictions and 'solves the crime'. He succeeds because he appeals to

God, who inspires truth into his spirit (and consequently into all his internal and external senses). Several centuries later, Sherlock Holmes shall succeed in his cases by appealing to science, i.e., the truth-bearing instance that replaces God in the positivistic worldview within which the story of Sherlock Holmes was shaped. As Gianotti points out in his contribution, this classical detective type reflects "the bourgeois faith in man as the maker of its own destiny – the so-called liberal humanism on which the episteme of modernity rests". Both Daniel and Sherlock Holmes have agency of their own: they are able and willing to choose how to act because they move within an existential framework where 'true' and 'false' can be clearly distinguished by appealing to a higher instance – God for Daniel, human reason for Holmes. Unlike them, in Adam's narrative, Dirk Gently, a self-declared "holistic detective", does not intentionally succeed in his cases: he "effortlessly solves crimes because the universe provides the solutions for him" (Gianotti). Dirk Gently's comics and irony take their moves from a fictional setting which Gianotti epistemologically defines as 'holistic'. He explains holism in Douglas Adam's narrative by recurring to Timothy Morton's model, which leads Gianotti to carry on his analysis along two categories: diachronic causality (everything is the cause of everything) and synchronic ontology (everything exists as connected to everything else). In Dirk Gently's world, this reaches to its extreme consequences: nothing seems to be 'true' as opposed to 'false'; everything is both true and false. There is no God, no logics, no *tertium comparationis*, no touchstone against which to test one's own statements, and therefore, in the end, *no lying*: both the individual Dirk Gently and his universe obey the same code, like a computer inside another computer, a machine inside another machine. According to Gianotti, the comics and irony in Gently's 'holistic' adventures are grounded in Douglas Adam's poetic intention to provide a satire against religion. He shifts the discourse on lying from the individual and places it on the higher level of religion, seen as a system of false beliefs. One might reply: is the novelist's mind a novel *tertium comparationis* justifying the attribution of 'falseness' to that system (which would reintegrate an ontological dimension into Adam's narrative)? And furthermore: what is the place of art within a worldview where "science perfectly bridges the space between man and the ultimate truths of the world" (Gianotti)? In this concern, Gianotti alludes to the theme of love in some part of Adam's work, which seems to leave these questions open.

Alessandra Calanchi's "Lies from the Outer Space: The Martians' Famous Invasion of New Jersey" investigates two conditions concerning

lying, namely untruthfulness and the intention to deceive, on the basis of a transmedia story-telling case on the evening of October 30, 1938, which came out as a mass deception episode with far-reaching effects on the collective imagination about the 'alien invaders'. In that year, Orson Welles, then a young actor, decided to play a Halloween trick to his radio audience: during a program, he dramatized, reading them out like a broadcast in the form of 'news flashes', some extracts from Herbert George Wells's science fiction novel *The War of the Worlds* as if they were 'breaking news' from an actual Martian invasion taking place in those hours in Manhattan. The 'news' spread public panic among the listeners, who could not recognize the invasion as fictional, even though four times during the program, and again at its end, they were informed and reminded that the news were not true. As a premise, Calanchi places the event within its *Zeitgeist*: before that event, the Martians had been depicted in US collective imagination in the utopian terms of an egalitarian, peaceful population. From that 1938 Halloween evening on, this would turn into a dark threatening image of the almost beast-like 'alien invaders', a change well in tune with the news about Hitler's and his allies' war plans being carried on in the 'other world', Europe, during those very years. Calanchi investigates the causes for this mass panic. First, she refers it to the phenomenon of the 'suspension of disbelief' induced into the listeners by reference to authorities – from the military, scientists', academic world – in the 'news flashes' as well as by the authority of the radio medium itself. She also mentions other co-factors, such as the tuning schedule of the program, or the listeners' pre-knowledge of Wells's novel. Since Orson Welles intended to play a simple trick, in a word: to joke, but surely did *not* aim at such deep-reaching and long-term effects on people's perception of reality, can we conclude that he deceived and that, on the level of verbal language, he lied? Calanchi makes us aware of the range of factors that must be taken into account when communication – whether lying or not – occurs from an individual sender to a collective addressee through a complex, multifaceted, and powerful medium such as the radio: in such a context, the relationship between an individual's intentionality and lying has to be questioned and relativized.

Anna Cerboni Baiardi's "Tra virtuosismo e truffa: l'arte del falsario / Between Virtuosity and Fraud: The Forger's Art" sheds further light on the question about intentionality and deception. In the context of forgery, we may take intention to deceive (and, when speaking, to lie) for granted. When art forgery is at stake, deception takes on a somehow 'admirable' touch: to produce an art fake, you must have acquired a remarkably deep and nuanced

familiarity with your model. As a forger, you have to dive yourself into your artist's living environment, cultural background, and crafting technique; you have to step into his or her shoes and look at the art object from his or her standpoint. In a word, if you intend to imitate an artist's work, you have to empathize with your artist. Empathy was known under its German definition *Einfühlung* as a main access to knowledge within nineteenth-century aesthetics and philosophy. Coherently, Anna Cerboni Baiardi displays a sequence of forgers living from the sixteenth century through the present days, with a main focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In discussing her cases, she points out the heterogeneous factors that concurred to make forgery so popular – for example, meeting the growing requests by international art collectors. The ethical implications of deception and lying are discussed, as well as the circumstances under which forgery, at least to some extent, may leave the ethical constraints on lying to enter the reign of artistic masterworks.

Aoife Beville's "'An Infinite and Endless Liar': Paroles, a Case Study of the Pragmatics of Lying in Shakespeare" places the intrinsically linguistic nature of lying in the forefront of the analysis. To investigate lying as well as the related phenomena of deliberate obfuscation and deceptive implicatures, Beville raises the question how the linguistic phenomenon of lying, as understood from a pragmatic, neo-Gricean perspective, contributes to the creation of characters. She focuses on the form and function of the mendacious language of the character known as Paroles in Shakespeare's play *All's Well That Ends Well*. To place it within the canon, Beville adopts Melchiori's recategorization of this play as a "dialogical drama", where the truth, to be true, can neither be definite nor univocally determined: on the stage, "the figurative and fictional language of the play-world (re)present[ed] these same gaps between, in Gricean terms, 'what is said' and 'what is meant'"; therefore, the dialogical feature of this play may well represent a touchstone on which to test how robust is an understanding of lying that admits "the choice between brazen lying and subtle strategies of verbal deception […] as a pragmatic move within conversation" (Beville). As Beville shows, Parole is very skilled in using his mendacious verbal language within this polarity to effectively adapt himself to the changing circumstances in his life.

Arianna Punzi's "Attraverso la frode: la *Commedia* come conquista della verità della parola / Dante's *Comedy* as the Apotheosis of the Truth of the Word" identifies the relationship between falsehood and truth as the structural axis through the central cantos of the three *cantiche*, thus making up the very poetic rationale of Dante's poem as a whole. As Punzi points out, the

character and voice of Dante shall gradually take on the truth-speaking role. In the Inferno, Virgil warns him against fraud as being particularly loathed by God, because it is "evil proper to man" ("de l'uom proprio male", *Inferno* XI, 27), a sin committed *ex electione*. Fraud, deception, verbal lying, are particularly evil also because they split human relationships based on love and trust (*Inferno* XI, 52-66). Punzi underpins her arguments by recurring to Dante's other writings, such as his "Epistle to Cangrande", where he explains his view of truth as the instance leading to a "state of happiness" ("ad statum felicitatis"). Lying and deception make such happiness impossible. By recurring to these and other sources, such as St. Paul's epistles, as well as by pointing at intra-textual connections along the three *cantiche*, Punzi leads her reader along the character Dante's process of growing awareness of truth as a still unquestioned ontological and theological fundamental, and of his appointed task as a truth-speaking voice.

3. APPROACHES TO LYING FROM PSYCHOLOGY, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND PHILOSOPHY

Elena Acquarini's "Riflesso della menzogna nella transgenerazionalità / Reverberation of Lies in Transgenerationals" Deals with the transgenerational implications of lying. Traumatic events, when unhealed or unprocessed for the individuals or communities belonging to a certain generation, gradually acquire the features of 'untoldness' and 'unthinkability'. These features impair a sound self-development of individuals and communities. On the community level, they lay the ground for unauthentic narrations of, say, family histories; on the individual level, they are given over to the community members of the subsequent generations as masks to be worn to shelter against fear and pain, and as traumas to be solved. The highly actual phenomenon of trauma transmission questions the central issue of lying as an *intentional* phenomenon, since a person who has inherited the untruthful narration, the unhealed trauma, and the mask, actually does not know about it. Transgenerational lies are transmitted unconsciously. This is why they can further 'thrive'. Acquarini provides a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of trauma-related lying in individuals and communities in different development stages, of their related 'deceitful' phenomena such as projection and manipulation, and their effects on collective and individual history and story-telling. She proposes ways to

give up these masks by tackling the features of untoldness and unthinkability, i.e., the verbal linguistic dimension of lying, so to reach into emotional and relational integration.

History, with the use of verbal and language in it, is also the central concern of Stefano Pivato's "Pinocchio, metafora della politica italiana / Pinocchio as a Metaphor of Italian Politics". Pivato starts by defining Carlo Collodi's novel *Le avventure di Pinocchio* as a "fairy tale" ("fiaba"), due to the numerous fairy tale-like elements, episodes, and characters. He starts by illustrating how deeply this novel, whose earliest version appeared in the year 1881, impressed its young and adult readers, and the social, political, and ideological factors behind such a success. In the core part of his contribution, he points out the process along which the story of Pinocchio has gradually developed into a widely used metaphor for Italian politics down to the present days. In the first place, this is due to the words *favola* 'fable; fairy tale' and *fiaba* 'fairy tale' being to some extent interchangeable, and to both of them having the secondary sense of 'tall tale'; in the second place, it is due to the powerfully metaphorical potential of all its characters, its setting, and its plot; in the third place, it is due to Italian speakers' widespread perception of Italian politics and politicians as deceitful and dramatizing. Pivato carries on his arguments by highlighting the ideological re-reading of Pinocchio as a fascist hero under Mussolini's era, as a nazi-fascist hero under the Italian Social Republic (September 1943 - May 1945), as a communist hero in post-war Italy, and further heroization of Pinocchio under changing ideological and cultural circumstances. As in all previous contributions, the issues at stake here are the relationship between falseness and truth, between lying and language, the intentional or unintentional nature of deception and lying, and their ethical and moral horizon.

Finally, the present issue presents a contribution which tracks the quest for lying and truth along the very logical backbone of language. Alessandro Di Caro's "Il paradosso del mentitore / The Liar Paradox" is an overview of responses to the well-known logical antinomy from different philosophical angles and epochs: from Epimenides and Aristotle in antiquity to later authors, namely Gödel, Odifreddi, Tarsky, Wittgestein, and others. While Di Caro analyses their approaches, he highlights the core issue of the antinomy: the sentence "Questa frase è falsa" [this statement is false] affirms itself as being both true and false, a statement which logics cannot admit, unless it gives up binarity, i.e. the principle of binary truth, as its foundational assumption. Di Caro proposes ways to solve such an antinomy.

4. Susanna's veil in our post-truth age

In the last 150 years, truth has been cast out of its traditional strongholds: philosophy including logics, ethics, and epistemology, seem to have almost completely abdicated from their earlier views of truth as an overarching category unifying and founding knowledge; it has almost completely given up its ancient quest for the very foundations of truth as an ontological or even 'plainly' logical entity. However, such a quest has only seemingly vanished: it reappears 'in disguise' when we appeal to science as the 'highest judge' capable of demeaning false assumptions, false beliefs, unacceptable behaviours, and other phenomena we do not want to consent to. Human need to distinguish false from true, lying from truthful speech, shall arguably never vanish, as it lies at the very origins of verbal language, which intrinsically consists in setting boundaries, separating, categorizing, so to create a cosmos out of empirical chaos. In the present days, the humanities seem to be still engaged in arguing that to define lying we need to state truth as its opposite notion and try to define it as well. Because if truth is not, neither is lie. On the other side, in the humanities, a 'human being' is both the investigating subject and the investigated object: from this self-reference follows our awareness that we will never ever be capable of fully grasping truth. We will never ever fully 'comprehend', i.e., possess, human nature; never shall we exhaustively answer our ultimate quests. This testifies to human freedom. This is the beauty and dignity of Susanna's sheltering veil.

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