

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The myth of true lies

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Email: jesper.kallestrup@abdn.ac.uk**Abstract**

Suppose you assert a proposition p that you falsely believe to be false with the intention to deceive your audience. The standard view has it that you lied. This paper argues against orthodoxy: deceptive lying requires that p be in actual fact false, in addition to your intention to deceive by means of untruthfully asserting that p . We proceed as follows. First, an argument is developed for such falsity condition as the non-psychological component of lying. The problem with the standard view, we profess, is exactly that lying is a purely psychological relation between disbelief, assertion, and intention. Then, by scrutinising familiar cases, we revisit the alleged intuitive support for the existence of true lies. It turns out these intuitions can be explained away once we reflect on the characteristic deceptive hallmarks that are associated with the distinction between lying and botched attempts at lying. Finally, we examine the morality of lying in the light of said falsity condition. The resultant view emphasises our moral sensitivity to the practical consequences of acts of lying, while still accommodating those moral considerations that pertain exclusively to the psychological components of lying.

KEYWORDS

deception, factivity, intuition, lying, morality

1 | INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Suppose you promised a university friend to return a book she borrowed last month in the library. You did actually return the book by today's deadline, but you falsely believe you forgot, thinking you inadvertently mistook her copy for your own. When prompted, you assure her that you have already handed it in, thereby intending to mislead her into believing that you did not break your promise. You hope to speak with the library tomorrow to pay the fine for the late return yourself. Did you lie? Most theories of lying predict an affirmative answer: your

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intent to deceive by means of asserting something you believe to be false is all it takes for you to lie. This paper argues against orthodoxy for a negative answer: your assertion must also in actual fact be false. To be clear, our aim is not to define any notion of lying but merely to show that true lies are a myth, which we shall attempt to debunk as follows. Section 2 makes the case for said *falsity condition* as the non-psychological component of lying. The key is to reflect on what constitutes the social function of deceptive lies. By scrutinising familiar cases, section 3 shows that intuitions in support of the existence of true lies can be explained away by appreciating the fact that lying and trying to lie are subjectively indistinguishable. Finally, section 4 critiques the moral case for such lies, which seeks to show that moral considerations pertain exclusively to the psychological elements of lying.

2 | DECEPTIVE LIES

The standard or traditional view of lying is that to lie is to make an untruthful assertion that p , used with the intention to deceive the person(s) to whom the assertion was made into believing p , where an untruthful assertion is an assertion in a disbelieved proposition, that is, a proposition that is believed false.¹ This view has a lot going for it. It captures prototypical instances of lying, and it respects the apparent plausibility that some false or untruthful assertions fall short of lying, as when making an honest mistake or stating a polite untruth (different from a white lie); for example, you tell friends of your flatmate at the door that she is away so as to make them believe that their visit is inconvenient even though she can be heard from the lounge.² The view also heeds the fact that mere intent to deceive is insufficient for lying, as in the case of *paltering*, that is, actively using a truthful and true statement to convey a misleading impression, or a false implicature, for example, a spin doctor presents a heavily biased selection of data in order to portray a troubled politician in a more favourable light. Importantly for our purposes, the view has it that by means of asserting a disbelieved p , speaker S intends to deceive addressee A into believing p rather than merely intending to deceive A into falsely believing that S believes p . Only the first intention is a necessary condition on lying:

(STANDARD VIEW) S is lying if and only if S asserts a disbelieved proposition p with the intention to deceive A into believing p .

Of course, there is no guarantee that S 's intention to deceive A will succeed, as there may be reasons why A failed to believe p on the basis of S asserting as much. Whether S is persuasive enough, or A is credulous enough, for A to form such belief is irrelevant vis-à-vis the status of S 's act as a lie.³ Relatedly, “lie” is not a factive verb, or better, a success verb, in the sense of requiring some mental effect on A . Nor is “lie” a contra-factive, that is, a propositional attitude verb that stands to the falsity of its sentential complement as factive verbs stand to the truth of

¹Williams (2002), Van Cleve (2006), and Mahon (2008). Mahon's (2016) offers a summary of the literature on this view, tracing it back to Augustine (1952). Sometimes lying is couched in terms of making a statement, or one might even claim that remaining silent about relevant information with deceptive intent is lying by omission. While our arguments are compatible with understanding lying in such terms, we will continue to use assertion, assuming henceforth that S is conceptually competent, while pretending to be sincere in making that speech act. Others maintain that outright dis/belief is too strong as it rules out graded-belief lies, in which case one could either adopt Carson's (2006); Carson, (2010) condition of not believing p , or Marsili's (2018); Marsili, (2019); Marsili, (2021b) condition of being more confident in the falsity of p than in its truth, but for ease of exposition we shall stick with full dis/belief. Everything we say is compatible mutatis mutandis with such more fine-grained accounts. And we shall use “being deceptive” in the restricted sense of being deceitful by aiming to bring about a false belief, unlike Lackey (2013: 237), who takes concealing information, including evidence, and being deceitful as two distinct ways of being deceptive. On her view, lying involves an intention to be deceptive in this broader sense.

²See also Shiffrin (2014: 19) and Coleman and Kay (1981: 29). I say “apparent plausibility” as some maintain that lying is just untruthful assertion. Proponents of this view include Carson (2006, 2010), Sorensen (2007), Fallis (2009), and Stokke (2018). For critical discussion see Marsili (2021a), Viebahn (2020), and Krstic (forthcoming). Thus, Marsili argues that assertion-based accounts of lying cannot distinguish between speech acts that are apt to be lies and those that are not; instead, he proposes a definition based on assertoric commitment: to lie is to insincerely assert, where assertion involves commitment to its content being true.

³Shiffrin (2014: 13).

theirs; for example, “know” embeds only true complements. Crucially, the reason is not that “lie” does not require falsity but rather takes no sentential complement at all, even if its contrary does.⁴ In contrast, “deceive” is a success verb in that such act demands that a certain state be produced in *A*. Nobody should dispute any of this.

Most recent literature on defining “lying” revolves around the condition of deceptive intent as integral to (STANDARD VIEW). While so-called deceptionists, for example, Mahon (2016) and Lackey (2013), hold that all lying requires that condition to be met, non-deceptionists maintain that there are cases of lying where *S* does not intend to deceive *A*. The following abridged cases, due to Carson (2006: 289–90), Carson, (2010: 20–1), aim at divorcing lying from such intent⁵:

(JURY) A witness in court knows the accused committed the crime but falsely testifies that he did not see the defendant commit the crime. The witness speaks for fear of being harmed by him or his henchmen, and not with the intention to deceive the jury as he is hoping for the defendant to be convicted.

(DEAN) A student falsely affirms before the dean that he did not cheat on an exam, knowing that the dean always believes students are guilty whenever charged with misconduct, but also that the dean has an unofficial policy of never upholding a charge unless students confess to having cheated. The student is merely trying to avoid punishment.

Despite the existence of plausible accounts of the moral wrongness of non-deceptive lying, one might try to argue that (JURY) and (DEAN) fail to exemplify lying since nothing could explain why what the witness and the student did is morally wrong.⁶ Or one may insist that the witness in (JURY) and the student in (DEAN) aim instead to mislead the jury and the dean, respectively, into falsely believing that they believe what they say is true, or perhaps they intend to deceive their parents or the henchmen. Be that as it may.⁷ We shall not settle the question of whether *all* lies necessarily involve deceptive intent, and so we shall not adjudicate the dispute between deceptionists and their opponents. Some arguably do not,⁸ but the fact that an important, if not paradigmatic, kind of lie clearly does suffices for our purposes, as our arguments shall only be concerned with such lies.

So, let us restrict attention to *deceptive lies*, that is, those lies where deceptive intent is necessary, as per (STANDARD VIEW). To be clear, our claim is not that (STANDARD VIEW) offers a correct definition of deceptive lying, let alone of lying simpliciter, but merely that deceptive intent is required for deceptive lying.⁹ Henceforth, we shall only consider such lies, unless otherwise stipulated. Moreover, just as truthful assertions may be false, untruthful assertions may be true. On (STANDARD VIEW), either could be misleading, but neither is inevitably a lie.¹⁰ *S* must also assert *p* with the intention of misleading *A* into believing *p*. That can happen only if the assertion is untruthful, but our question is whether deceptive lying requires

⁴As Holton (2017: 246) noted, one reveals that *p*, but one does not lie that *p*.

⁵See Fallis (2009) and Sorensen (2007, 2010) for further examples of bald-faced lies, that is, cases where lying is common knowledge and thus undisguised, as in (DEAN), coercion-lies as in (JURY), and knowledge-lies, where asserting *p* is intended to prevent *A* from knowing that *p* is false, rather than to generate in *A* the belief that *p*. Lackey (2013) argues that none of these succeed in severing the connection between lying and deception.

⁶For such accounts, see, for example, Carson (2010) and Stokke (2018).

⁷For further details, see Mahon (2011), Faulkner (2013), Lackey (2013), and Stokke (2019). Meibauer (2016) and Rutschmann and Wiegmann (2017), found evidence that the participants in their experiments to probe lay intuitions about bald-faced lies ascribe deceptive intent while regarding such cases as instances of lying.

⁸Rutschmann and Wiegmann (2017) also found evidence that so-called “indifferent lies”, where *S* is indifferent as to what belief *A* forms, illustrate that lying and deceptive intent may come apart.

⁹Fallis (2018) argues that (STANDARD VIEW) offers an incorrect definition of deceptive lying, but on his own account deceptive intent is still necessary for such lying. See also fn. 13.

¹⁰On the one hand, a false and untruthful assertion need not be (intended to be) misleading, as when making a joke, or being ironic or sarcastic. On the other hand, even an assertion that is true and truthful may be misleading. We mentioned political spin. Take Bill Clinton’s denial that he lied to the grand jury, and so did not perjure himself, when he denied having a “sexual relationship” with Monica Lewinsky. Clinton insisted he spoke truly given a certain definition of that term. US jury laws presuppose that no lie is true, because perjury is lying under oath in court, and testimony is perjurious only if false.

the assertion to also be objectively false as a matter of entailment rather than cancellable implicature. What is striking is that (STANDARD VIEW) imposes no such *falsity condition* on lying:

(FALSITY) S deceptively lies to A about p only if p is false.

The problem with (STANDARD VIEW), we profess, is that lying is an all but psychological relation between (dis)belief, assertion, and intention: S lies as long as S disbelieves the asserted p with the intention to induce in A the belief that p .¹¹ True, the assertion component of lying has a social dimension, which is understood variously by Fallis (2013) as S intending to represent herself to A as believing that p is true, by Stokke (2018) as S proposing that p become part of the official common ground, and by Carson (2010) as S intending to guarantee or promise A that p is true. We shall not adjudicate between these but merely note that such intending and proposing are still mental acts. Our claim is rather that lying has a squarely non-psychological component: unless p is in actual fact false, there is no robust sense in which S lies about p in the relevant deceptive way.¹² Consider the following argument for (FALSITY):

(P1) S deceptively lying about proposition p requires that S intends to deceive A about p by means of making A believe that p is true on the basis of S 's untruthful assertion that p .

(P2) If p is true, then A cannot possibly form a false belief that p on the basis of S 's untruthful assertion that p .

(C1) So, if p is true, then S 's intention to deceive A about p by making A believe that p is guaranteed to fail. A can at most form a false belief about what S believes about p on the basis of S 's untruthful assertion, and so S 's act may at best be deceptive in that way.

(P3) But S deceptively lying about p must at least afford the possibility that A be deceived about p , and not merely about what S believes about p , by way of forming a false belief that p on the basis of S 's untruthful assertion that p .

(C2) So, S is deceptively lying about p only if p , as disbelieved and asserted by S , is false.

Let us review each premise. (P1) follows from (STANDARD VIEW) insofar as this view concerns lies about the asserted proposition that S intends to deceive A about, and so for that reason (P1) does not beg the question against it. (STANDARD VIEW) omits specification of what S is lying about, but since S cannot lie without lying about something, we assume that S is lying about p given that p is what S disbelievingly asserts in order to saddle A with a belief that p . If some lies are deceptive about propositions *other* than the asserted proposition, then ignore those as well. In standard textbook cases, there's identity between the proposition lied about,

¹¹Turri (2016), Benton (2018), and Holguín (2021) defend a falsity condition by arguing for a knowledge view of lying according to which in asserting that p , S is lying if and only if S knows that p is false. Notably, an intention to deceive is not a defining feature of lying on this view, though, as Holguín notes, such intent could fairly easily be tacked onto it. Much of its alleged support stems from a commitment to a knowledge norm of assertion together with an assumption that lying involves assertion; however, as Marsili (2021b) argues, the knowledge view is not entailed by the conjunction of that commitment and assumption. Moreover, if one finds the case for knowledge-first epistemology empirically and theoretically compelling, one is likely to embrace a knowledge view of lying as well. In section 3, we assume merely that the norm of assertion is no weaker than belief. Friends and foes of the knowledge norm, indeed of the knowledge-first paradigm, can avail themselves of our arguments. Take Holguín's view according to which lying is an anti-assertion, that is, an assertion of the negation of what one could and should assert, were one to abide by the norm of assertion. To anti-assert is thus to mislead doubly: one asserts a falsehood when one could and should have asserted a truth. True lying would then be a botched anti-assertion, that is, the failure, through an uncooperative environment, to produce such assertion. A true lie is merely an attempt at lying. Since our case for (FALSITY) does not presuppose a knowledge view of lying, nothing prevents us from classifying what Holguín calls Gettier and lottery lies as genuine lies. Relatedly, Betz-Richman (2022) argues that some lies are expressed by untruthful hedged declaratives, which present a problem for an analysis of lying in terms of the knowledge norm of assertion, because in making such declaratives one represents oneself as having an epistemic attitude weaker than knowledge. Again, provided the relevant attitude is at least as strong as belief, Betz-Richman's argument is unproblematic for our view.

¹²It follows that if some propositions are neither true nor false, they cannot be deceptively lied about. As is familiar, such truth-value gaps have been taken to explain utterance infelicity of sentences containing, say, indicative conditionals, empty terms, or vague expressions. But while assertions of such sentences may be misleading in various ways, they obviously cannot be deceptive by way of forming a false belief in the asserted proposition. Relatedly, Egré and Icard (2018) discuss cases in which S exploits the semantic indeterminacy of vague predicates to produce utterances that are true in one sense but false in another. Whether such half-truths should be considered lies depends, they argue, on the context in question.

that is, the asserted proposition, and the proposition about which deceit is intended.¹³ Keep also in mind that we are setting putative non-deceptive lies aside, and so no assumptions about deceptionism are made. (P1) only pertains to deceptive lies for which deceptive intent is required. Thus, (P1) does not rule out the existence of non-deceptive lies. Importantly, nothing about (P1) assumes the truth of (C2). An untruthful assertion is a believed-false assertion but not necessarily a false assertion. And no intention to deceive is guaranteed to succeed, and so it may be that the proposition in question is in actual fact true. On its own, (P1) does therefore neither rule out the existence of true lies.

(P2) is close to trivial on the intended reading where the modal operator takes wide scope: it's impossible that *A*'s belief that *p* is false and *p* is true; assuming truth-values of beliefs are fully determined by the truth-values of their propositional contents. Contrast with the narrow-scope reading: *p* is true and it's impossible that *A*'s belief that *p* is false, which is false but also not how (P2) is meant to be understood.

To appreciate the plausibility of (P3) takes a little reflection. On the assumption that *S* is deceptively lying about *p*, the *social function* of such lies is, as a matter of constitutive fact, to deceive *A* about *p*. The reason is that all deceptive lies involve deceptive intentions to generate false beliefs, which manifest in a more or less widespread practice of actual deception. Such deceit is what deceptive lies are intentionally selected for, it's why we find them, occasionally in abundance, in society, and it's what they frequently bring about, contingent on the right mix of persuasiveness and credulity. This function serves the immediate purpose of inducing false beliefs in *A*, although typically their ultimate purpose pertains to some wider aims or further objectives regarding *A*'s action on those beliefs. Deceptive lies acquire this function by *design* in that *S* intends that her act be deceptive in this way, but only against the background of a social pattern of actual deception. Deceptive lies could not have such function unless they often enough resulted in the formation of false beliefs. What matters is thus not only that the act is deceptive but that it came to be deceptive via (successful) manifestation of such intention amongst speakers. That means the *aetiology* is constitutive of its functionality: whether an act has that function, and hence whether it constitutes a deceptive lie, is not a perceptible or introspectable feature of it; nor is it an accidental feature in the way that an honest mistake can be misleading. Obviously, *A* may not *actually be deceived* about *p* on any given occasion. So, while there is no guarantee of deceit, seeing that "lie" is not a success verb, a deceptive lie is such that *A* is *possibly deceived* by *S*'s act. We must distinguish between fulfilling a function and functioning properly: an item may function properly by reliably enough generating function fulfilment in normal conditions and yet not fulfil its function by not producing the functional effect, say, due to abnormal conditions. In our case, a deceptive lie may fail to fulfil its function of deceit on a given occasion, for example, if *S* is not persuasive enough, but no deceptive lie can cease to function properly, because its function of deceit is constitutive of it; that is, all deceptive lies are such that in normal conditions they will reliably enough generate fulfilment of that function, and so they must at least afford the possibility of deceit.¹⁴ Note also that the modality in (P3) is the same objective one as in (P2). If *A* knows that *S* is deceptively lying about *p*, the sense in which *S*'s assertion could not deceive *A* is not what we have in mind. Ours abstracts away from any subjective features of *S* and *A* vis-à-vis the conversational exchange.

¹³Following Fallis (2018), some deceptive lies involve so-called doxastic misdirection, where *S* disbelievingly asserts *p* simply to get *A* to believe that she believes *p*. In such cases, *A* knows that *p* is false, and *S* knows that *A* knows that *p* is false. Even though *S* is lying by asserting *p*, *S* is intending to deceive *A* about what *S* believes about *p* rather than *p* itself. See also Meibauer (2019) who argues that it's possible to lie by using deceptive conversational implicatures.

¹⁴Relatedly, Fallis (2015) argues that disinformation is misleading information that has the function of misleading someone, and so is non-accidentally misleading, although not necessarily intentionally misleading. Conspiracy theories are prototypical disinformation, but those who propagate them believe their content, and seek to convince others. Such theories acquire their function because their sources systematically benefit from their being misleading. Moreover, unlike lies, which are linguistic acts, disinformation can also be visual, as in the case of doctored photographs or fake maps.

Now, (C1) follows from the conjunction of (P1) and (P2). For if p is true, it's impossible for A to form a false belief that p , and so A could not be deceived about p in the way intended by S , namely by making A believe p on the basis of S 's untruthful assertion.¹⁵ That holds no matter how effective S is, or how gullible A is. S 's untruthful assertion may of course lead A astray in some *non-intended* way, say, if it results in A falsely believing not- p , because A takes S to be a pathological liar yet a reliable believer. And (C1) and (P3) together entail (C2). For if a deceptive lie must allow that A could be deceived about p , by way of being prompted by S 's assertion to falsely believe p , but the truth of p excludes such possibility of deceit in the intended sense, S cannot deceptively lie about p unless p is objectively false. Pace (STANDARD VIEW), (FALSITY) is thus needed. In its absence, the truth-conditions for claims about deceptive lying pertain exclusively to the psychology of S . Neither the facts about p , nor therefore the possibility of inducing false beliefs in A , play any role. But since p is typically about the external world, as what deceptive lies concern, if the truth-conditions of such claims are to capture their distinctive function, they ought to include a condition that the external world must meet.¹⁶

Let us pause to ponder an objection that may spring to mind at this juncture. Our appeal to the social function of deceptive lies involves building their teleology into the truth-conditions of claims about them. But any such reference to what deceptive lies are *supposed to do* must accommodate the possibility of *malfunction*; that is, any teleological function must allow for a normative distinction between proper and abnormal functioning, that is, of what something is supposed to do but cannot do. That holds even in such cases as deceptive lying where pervasive societal manifestation of intentional selection establishes certain effects as the relevant function, without reference to an evolutionary history of selection and reproduction for those effects. The question is then whether true deceptive lies aren't simply dysfunctional lies but deceptive lies nonetheless, not because of some intrinsic defect but because the external world fails to corroborate, which would explain why they lack the propensity to deceive. The answer is that such abnormal function is supposed to manifest in *particular tokens* of a (trait or functional) type. Hearts have the function of pumping blood, but hearts cannot be selected for pumping blood by natural selection unless some hearts pump blood. A specific heart with an atrial septal defect retains that function despite being unable to perform it but only because hearts normally pump blood.¹⁷ In the alleged case of true deceptive lies, however, no such token lies of any type have the propensity to deceive. To repeat, A cannot possibly be deceived into forming a false belief on the basis of S 's true assertion. That means such lies do not have the function of deceit; they are no more deceptive lies than lame ducks are ducks. Still, our account can honour the distinction between proper and abnormal functioning in that token *genuine* deceptive lies may fail to deceive due to S being insufficiently convincing or A being insufficiently credulous.

In light of the foregoing, consider therefore the following amended definition:

(REVISED VIEW) S is deceptively lying about p if and only if S untruthfully asserts the false proposition p with the intention to deceive A into believing p .¹⁸

To be clear, the previous argument, and the further considerations we bring to bear in sections 3 and 4, only seek to provide support for (FALSITY). Our aim is not to defend

¹⁵The claim is that S 's intention to deceive is destined to fail, not that S cannot form an intention which is impossible to fulfil. More generally, Audi (1973) and Davidson (1978) argued that belief constrains intention such that one cannot rationally intend to do the impossible, but they had in mind believed-impossible action; roughly, S must believe she can Φ if S intends to Φ . For opposition, see Anscombe (1957). Nothing we say hangs on this dispute as S clearly does not believe that her intention to deceive A is impossible.

¹⁶Carson (2006: 284) observed that showing p to be true is always sufficient to counter an accusation of lying. If A has good evidence that S in asserting p is intending to deceive A about p , then A may have a sufficient prima facie reason to accuse S of lying to A . But if unbeknownst to them, p is true, then that reason would be defeated. Relatedly, Holguin (2021) argues that sentences of the form "I know S spoke truly, but I do not know whether S lied" seem only to have false readings. Or consider "I know S lied but I do not know whether S spoke truly," which sounds equally improper. Against the background of such linguistic data, Holguin takes "true lie" to sound like an oxymoron.

¹⁷Davies (2000) argues that historically based malfunctions are impossible, but see Sullivan-Bissett (2017) for a compelling reply.

¹⁸<https://www.oed.com> defines "lie" as a false statement made with intent to deceive. Coleman and Kay (1981: 28) define a "prototypical lie" as a deliberate falsehood intended to deceive. Carson (2006, 2010) embraces a falsity condition albeit with some reservations.

(REVISED VIEW) in its entirety; the modest claim is merely that friends of (STANDARD VIEW) should incorporate (FALSITY) by adopting (REVISED VIEW), and foes should endorse similarly revised versions of their preferred view insofar as they pertain to deceptive lies. One may wonder whether (FALSITY) also applies to non-deceptive lies, assuming their existence, and hence to all lies *simpliciter*; after all, (JURY) and (DEAN) both involve a false proposition. Since, to repeat, we remain agnostic in the debate over whether all lies involve deceptive intent, we confine our argument strictly to deceptive lies.

3 | WAVERING INTUITIONS

Most of the debate over (FALSITY) has revolved around intuitions elicited by possible cases of supposedly true deceptive lies. Some philosophers rely evidentially on their own intuitive judgements,¹⁹ while others conduct empirical studies to determine how lay people classify such cases. In section 2, we offered a novel philosophical argument in favour of (FALSITY), and in section 4 we shall support (FALSITY) by other philosophical considerations, but this section is devoted to the intuitional evidence over which the latter experimental philosophers disagree.²⁰ We'll survey the literature on whether intuitions lend support to the existence of true deceptive lies, and then adapt two cases in order to scrutinise the significance of such findings; the first is due to Sartre (1939: 297–8)²¹ and the second to Carson (2006: 285); Carson, (2010: 16):

(PRISONER) Pablo Ibbieta, a prisoner sentenced to be executed by the Falangists, is interrogated by his guards as to the whereabouts of his comrade Ramon Gris. Mistakenly believing Gris to be hiding with his cousins, Ibbieta untruthfully asserts to the guards that Gris is hiding in the cemetery, with the intention that they believe this assertion to be true in order to protect his political ally. As it happens, Gris is hiding in the cemetery, and so the assertion is actually true. Consequently, Gris is arrested at the cemetery, and Ibbieta is allowed to join the prisoners in the yard who aren't awaiting execution.

(FISHING) Jim goes fishing on a boat with his friend John. Both catch a fish at the same time. Although they do not realise it, their lines are crossed. Jim has caught a very big fish and John has caught a little one, but they wrongly believe that Jim caught the small fish and John caught the big one. They throw the two fish back into the water. Jim goes home thinking that he caught a small fish. When Jim returns, his father, an avid fisherman, asks him how he did. Jim says that he caught a very large fish and threw it back into the water, thereby intending to deceive him about the size of the fish that he caught.

Both involve, as it were, dishonest mistakes. When someone makes an honest mistake, they accidentally say something false when they intend to speak truly, but in these cases the protagonists inadvertently say something true when they intend to speak falsely.

Most experimental work, such as the studies in Coleman and Kay (1981) and in Strichartz and Burton (1990), on (adult) laypeople's intuitions about such cases as (PRISONER) and (FISHING) supports the falsity of (FALSITY).²² But Turri and Turri's (2015) seems to swim against the tide. When presenting their lay participants with vignettes similar to (PRISONER) and (FISHING), they found strong evidence that only false assertions are lies: only 10% classified a dishonest but true assertion as a lie, whereas 90% classified a dishonest and false assertion as a lie. The key was to allow participants to acknowledge *intent to lie* while separating that

¹⁹Foes of (FALSITY) include Siegler (1966: 131), Mahon (2008: 218), Fallis (2009: 39; 2015: 408), Stokke (2018: 32–35), Lackey (2013: fn. 9), and Lackey (2020: 169, fn. 11), whereas Carson (2006, 2010) is, at least tentatively, a friend.

²⁰Wiegmann and Viebahn (2021) offer an argument against (FALSITY) that is not based on (empirical studies on) intuitions about possible cases but rather on intuitions about a class of pairs of (Moorean) assertions.

²¹See also Siegler (1966) and Fallis (2009).

²²See Wiegmann and Meibauer (2019) for an overview. Carson (op. cit.) himself takes (FISHING) to support (FALSITY), whereas Lackey (2013, fn. 9) reports the opposite intuition.

judgement from an attribution of actual lying. For when the male protagonist in the vignettes made a dishonest, yet as it happened, true assertion, the participants reported that he tried to lie, and thought he was lying, but in actual fact failed to do so. What then explains the minority intuition of lying? Turri and Turri suggest two possible confounds: (a) empathy primes perspective-taking, so maybe the participants have answered in accordance with how things seem to the protagonist, who, after all, is psychologically as if he was lying; (b) participants might have used the test question as an opportunity to register their disapproval of the protagonist's conduct, and in the absence of a distinction between actually lying and appearing to lie, the best available option is to say that he lied.

However, Wiegmann et al. (2016) offered an alternative explanation of these findings based on conversational pragmatics, namely that splitting up the two-part response options into a trying- and result-part ("S tried to lie but didn't" and "S tried to lie and did lie") is illicit, as such prior stimuli pressure lay participants into treating truth-value as relevant when they ordinarily would not consult such information in answering the test questions. The participants in Turri and Turri's studies did embrace true lies but were led by the response options to interpret the test question as being mainly about whether the protagonist's assertion was false rather than whether the protagonist lied. Moreover, they also ran further studies to support the falsity of (FALSITY). By adding the fact that the assertion turned out to be true to the response options in Turri and Turri's setup, Wiegmann et al. found that a clear majority of participants chose the option that the protagonist did lie.

The results from Turri and Turri's recent experiments (2021) provide evidence that truth-value *is conceptually related* to whether an assertion counts as a lie. In particular, this holds even when the participants were asked to spontaneously (and so without bringing up "lying" or "true"/"false") describe deceptively motivated assertions; the only manipulation concerned their truth-value. In some of their experiments, participants explicitly and unprompted distinguished between trying to lie and actually lying, or based their lie attribution on perspective-taking, which suggests that such responses are not unnatural. Against this background, Turri and Turri (2021) conclude that experimental evidence suggests a *conceptual link* between lying and truth-value, and that at present, the best supported interpretation of the link is that, as in Coleman and Kay (1981) and Hardin (2010), (i) our ordinary lying concept is a prototype concept, summarising falsity as one of its central tendencies. On this view, falsity is essential to the ordinary concept, because the prototypical lie is false, but being false is not strictly necessary for a lie. Everybody agrees that if true lies exist, they are rare and atypical occurrences; indeed, Turri and Turri (2021) found evidence that true lies are not prototypical. However, (FALSITY) requires that, as a matter of necessity, lies are false, and so far, given the methodological problems identified by Wiegmann et al. (2016) with Turri and Turri's study, no clear-cut experimental evidence in its support has emerged so far. Still, Turri and Turri (2021) insist the following, somewhat bolder, interpretations of the evidence to date should not be ruled out as a possibility: (ii) the ordinary concept requires falsity, but lay performance on lie attributions is obscured by confounds interfering with people's responses; (iii) falsity is inessential to this concept, but this is also obscured albeit by other such interfering factors; or (iv) multiple ordinary concepts must be posited, one of which requires falsity. More experimental work is needed to fully understand how (a) perspective-taking, (b) blame validation, and other mechanisms, may interfere with lie attributions. Moreover, Turri (2021) argues that, on balance, (FALSITY) is favoured by a *broader range of evidence* than mere appeal to lay intuitions about possible cases. He cites evidence from history, logic, social observation, popular culture, lexicography, developmental psychology, and behavioural experimentation. For example, the so-called truth-teller and liar problems, as popularised by Smullyan, for example, in his (Smullyan, 2011), all assume that these two fictional characters are mutually exclusive. And the liar paradox assumes that "all lies are untrue", as in Beall et al. (2020), for an utterance of "I'm lying now" would not be paradoxical if it were a true lie.

Despite current counterevidence from experimental philosophy, we shall thus assume that (FALSITY) is very much a viable view.²³ Let us proceed to delve deeper into the philosophical underpinnings of these empirical findings. To recap, if p is true, S cannot possibly deceive A into falsely believing p ; and so, we claim, S cannot deceptively lie about p , but S is still seeking to deceptively lie and believes that S is lying. For S to try in vain to deceptively lie is for S to satisfy the psychological condition of untruthfulness and deceptive intent but not the non-psychological condition (FALSITY). From S 's perspective, lying and trying to lie, in the deceptive sense, are subjectively indistinguishable. So, to say that some philosophers are mistaking the former for the latter is to say they are mixing up deceptive lying with its *psychological counterpart*.²⁴ Not only are these, as per (a) above, indiscernible from S 's point of view but both are also *deceptive* albeit in different ways.²⁵ A deceptive lie has the potential to deceive A about p , but S 's failed attempt at deceptively lying retains the potential to deceive A about what S believes about p , and these are easily muddled up. How so? In the latter case, S asserts p while falsely disbelieving p . It may be that S has an intention to deceive A about what S believes about p , but such *additional* intent neither turns S 's act into a deceptive lie about what S believes about p , nor is it necessary for the act to be deceptive vis-à-vis what S believes about p .²⁶ For when S untruthfully asserts p , S contravenes an *epistemic norm* of propriety by which assertion is governed. Pretty much everyone agrees that the standard of that norm is no weaker than belief.²⁷ That means asserting p is proper (or appropriate) only if S believes p . By asserting p , S represents herself as conforming to that norm and the practice it governs such that when S asserts p untruthfully S gives the misleading impression of complying with it. Put differently, the norm gives the condition on which S has the *epistemic authority* to make an assertion.²⁸ When S then asserts p without satisfying it, S is acting without having the authority, and such dishonesty has the potential to lead A astray in forming a false belief about what S believes about p . If A is misled in that way by S 's assertion, then A 's deception may thus stem from S 's violation of a norm of assertion.²⁹ So, what *explains away* the intuition of lying when p is true is that any botched attempt at lying is deceptive about what S believes about p by way of violating such norm, and so any such attempt has the deceptive hallmarks associated with the psychological condition on deceptive lying, thus making the former easily confused with the latter.

Let us illustrate the foregoing, beginning with (PRISONER). Ibbieta asserts that Gris is hiding in the cemetery, while convinced he is hiding with family, with the intention to deceive his guards so as to save his comrade's life. As Ibbieta's assertion is unwittingly true, his act

²³It's not uncommon that a plausible, and indeed widely accepted, philosophical view or claim is not supported by intuitional evidence. For instance, most epistemologists take fake-barn thought experiments to show that justified true belief falls short of knowledge, because, say, the belief is modally unsafe or insensitive, but Colaço et al. (2014) reported a study showing that lay people do attribute knowledge in such cases.

²⁴Holguín (2021) also proposes the hypothesis that the tendency to slip between talk of lying and talk of trying to lie is what explains judgements in cases of so-called true lies. While he explicitly offers no debunking explanation of the intuitions in favour of the existence of true lies, he does mention (Holguín, 2021: 17) that lying and merely attempting to lie are "internally indistinguishable". As mentioned in fn. 11, Holguín takes the former to be an anti-assertion and the latter would be a botched anti-assertion, where the only reason one fails to anti-assert is that one's environment is uncooperative.

²⁵We revisit (b) in the section 4.

²⁶ S is not asserting that S believes p , because that is not what S is saying, nor is a lie about what S believes pragmatically implicated by S 's assertion that p in conjunction with intent to deceive A about what S believes. Following Simpson (1992), Faulkner (2007: 537) claims that S possesses two distinct deceptive intentions: an intention to deceive A about p by further intending to deceive A as to S 's belief about p . In line with (STANDARD VIEW), we only insist that an untruthful assertion be made with the former intention.

²⁷Prominent candidates roughly in order of strength are: certainty (Stanley, 2008), knowledge (Williamson, 2000), justified belief (Kvanvig, 2009), rational belief (Douven, 2006), reasonable belief that one knows (Lackey, 2007), and belief (Bach, 2008). Even for norms of assertion short of belief, such as being propositionally justified, we can still connect belief to assertion. Thus Goldberg (2015: 147) defines p as "belief-worthy" relative to S when, given S 's epistemic perspective, it would be epistemically proper to believe p . In the case of the latter norms we can then say that p , as asserted by S , is belief-worthy relative to S , and so at least belief-worthiness is required for proper assertion.

²⁸Goldberg (op. cit.)

²⁹Note that while the norm is *constitutive* of the speech act of assertion, in much the same way as rules are constitutive of games, it does not prescribe a necessary condition for performing the constituted act. Flouting the norm is therefore compatible with performing that speech act. See also Simion and Kelp (2020).

constitutes no deceptive lie. By our lights, Ibbieta cannot possibly deceptively lie about something which his guards cannot possibly be deceived. What accounts for intuitions to the contrary is that Ibbieta is trying to deceptively lie, and believes he is lying, about Gris' hiding place. In so doing, Ibbieta is psychologically apt to lie, and so is deceptive about his own beliefs regarding Gris' whereabouts in that he flagrantly violates a belief norm for assertion. Such duplicity might be misinterpreted as a proper deceptive lie.

The same holds *mutatis mutandis* for (FISHING). Jim asserts what he disbelieves, namely that he caught a large fish, with the intention to deceive, so as to impress, his father. Unbeknownst to Jim, his assertion is true, since John was the unlucky one who caught the small fish. Again, Jim cannot be said to deceptively lie about the size of the fish, as there is no possible room for deception on that score. Still, by making an untruthful assertion, Jim wilfully disregards a belief norm for assertion, which could mislead his father into forming a false belief about what Jim believes. Since everything psychologically about Jim is as if he is deceptively lying about the size of that fish, being deceptive about his belief appears similar to being deceptive about its content, which makes it tempting to misconstrue his act as a genuine deceptive lie.³⁰

4 | MORAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 3 cited empirical evidence for widespread, though not universally shared, intuitions in support of imposing (FALSITY). Such conflicting responses aren't indicative of a merely *verbal dispute* over the application of "lie", or the concept it expresses, in the deceptive sense. We demonstrated that intuitions for and against (FALSITY) are explicable in terms of *substantial* philosophical considerations. The upshot is that in conjunction with the argument for (FALSITY) in section 2, those philosophers who are otherwise persuaded by (STANDARD VIEW) should instead adopt (REVISED VIEW) insofar as deceptive lies are concerned. In this last section, we shall argue that moral deliberations also speak against the existence of true lies.

In section 2, we argued that the social function of deceptive lies is to deceive *A* about *p* which *S* asserts but disbelieves. Deceptive lying is consistent with *A* not *actually* being deceived into believing *p*, but no act is a deceptive lie if it could not *possibly* induce such belief, no matter how impressive *S* is or how impressionable *A* is. For otherwise deceptive lying could not have acquired by design its constitutive function of deceit. That means *S* deceptively lies only if *p* is false, on pain of rendering such deception impossible. It also means that any deceptive lie puts *A* at risk of suffering (epistemic or other) harm as a result of being lied to. A worry one may have is that our moral judgements about deceptive lying and associated harm are indifferent to (FALSITY); what is important, the thought goes, is only that the psychological condition be met, that is, as per (STANDARD VIEW), that *S* untruthfully asserts *p* with deceptive intent.³¹ For example, Stokke (2018: 34–35) claims that if we suppose the father in (FISHING) subsequently discovers the truth about the crossed lines but also realises that neither of the fishermen is yet aware of this mishap, then the father would "feel just as indignant as he would feel had he not also found out the truth about the crossed lines". What matters to his "feeling of resentment" is that his son Jim asserted a disbelieved proposition; its actual truth-value is simply morally irrelevant, or so the claim is.

³⁰One might worry that the foregoing has the untoward consequence that lie detectors are unreliable in detecting lies, because these polygraph tests focus on physiological indicators of deception, for example, perspiration and pulse rate, and so at best provide evidence of the psychological components of lying. While (FALSITY) certainly introduces another way in which such detectors can go wrong, it remains true that most ordinary liars reliably track the truth, and so not easily would their belief that they are speaking falsely be mistaken.

³¹Augustine (Op. cit.: De mendacio 3.3) claimed that the "objectionable feature of lying is the desire to deliberately mislead in what one says."

The first observation to make is that assertion arguably involves a commitment to the truth: in asserting p , S commits herself to p being true.³² That means asserting p has normative consequences for S in that S is accountable for the truth of p , and thus reproachable, or liable to be criticised, if p turns out false and S is not excusable in some way. But if it's right that S should face sanctions if p , as asserted by S , turns out false, and S cannot appeal to any extenuating circumstances, then truth-value clearly matters morally vis-à-vis the assertion component of lying. In fact, by asserting p S also incurs a kind of discursive responsibility, such as not to make further contradictory statements, or to defend the assertion that p with adequate evidence if appropriately challenged.

Our strategy is less about the normative dimension of assertion and more about the practical consequences of lying. Take two cases in which S and her psychological twin S^* both untruthfully assert p with a deceptive intention to bring about in A the belief that p . The difference is that p is true in the case of S , while p is false in the case of S^* . Because of the difference in truth-value, their respective acts involve different types of deception with different practical consequences for A , which in turn imply different (strengths of) moral judgements. This moral difference (explanandum), we contend, is *best explainable* in terms of whether those acts constitute a deceptive lie (explanans), because that is the simplest and most salient non-moral difference between S and S^* , and moral supervenience demands that there be one. After all, the different moral judgements pertain to their respective *acts*, and so the best non-moral way of explicating that difference is one that renders those very acts different in kind: while both tried to deceptively lie, only S^* succeeded. Given that we hold fixed every psychological aspect of S and S^* , a difference in deceptive lying requires that (FALSITY) be adopted. To wit, deceptive lying involves deception with real-world effects to which our moral judgements are sensitive, and so the morality of such lying is not merely a question of being attuned to the psychology of the liar.

True, the fact that S said something true while S^* said something false is a more basic non-moral difference in our twin-cases, but not one that can adequately explain the relevant moral difference. For such difference in *truth-value* of their respective assementations does not *on its own* account for the different moral judgements. Clearly, the relevant non-moral difference must consist in certain non-semantic features. Thus, perhaps the moral difference is instead due to the different *practical consequences* of their respective assementations, rather than any difference in deceptive lying, which would also be in keeping with moral supervenience. In reply, reflect first that this proposal *still* conflicts with the claim that moral judgements exclusively bear on the psychology of the liar, and in particular that feelings of resentment or indignation only concern the assertion of disbelieved propositions. Secondly, while this proposal may have some merit, it overcomplicates the explanans; in fact, given that the explanandum is about a moral difference between the *acts* of S and S^* , we need an *additional* explanation of why these acts led to those different consequences. And of course, if both S and S^* are taken to deceptively lie, which would be the case if such lying were merely a question of satisfying certain psychological conditions, then their acts of lying cannot explain the difference in practical consequences. At this juncture, the proposal would have to appeal to a difference in truth-value. All of this can be cut short by simply letting the explanans be down to a difference in deceptive lying.³³

³²This paragraph owes much to Marsili's (2021a), but see also Carson (2006, 2010).

³³The difference in practical consequences is key to the moral difference between the acts of S and S^* . For example, take Marsili's (2021b) new evil liar cases, involving Pinocchio, who knowingly asserts a falsehood, and his duplicate Malocchio, who does not know that what he asserts is false, either because the assertion is true, or because he's been Gettierized, or because he inhabits an evil demon world in which he knows nothing at all. Marsili takes Pinocchio and Malocchio to be equally morally blameworthy in all three instances, because "they acted in the same way, with the same intentions and *consequences*, and for the same reasons" [emphasis added]. And that may well be problematic for a knowledge account of lying, though Holguin (2021) suggests that being internally indistinguishable, for example, they both believe they lied, suffices to explain the intuition of equal blameworthiness. Be that as it may, our cases are crucially different as they elicit the intuition that the consequences of their acts matter to our moral judgements, and our aim is not to settle the question of a knowledge account of lying.

By way of illustration, let us develop (FISHING) a bit further. In one case, Jim untruthfully, yet truly, asserts that he caught the larger fish, for the purpose of deceiving his father into believing just that. Unbeknownst to Jim, his and John's fishing lines were crossed. In another case, Jim* asserts the same disbelieved proposition, with the same deceptive intent, but falsely so, as no lines were crossed. Suppose they both know that their father has placed a huge bet on them catching a larger fish than John, and that the terms of the betting company are such that reporting any false information will result in a hefty fine. Jim's father wins the bet after discovering the truth about the catch, whereas Jim*'s father loses the bet. Moreover, Jim's father is not deceived about the size of the fish, but he is still entitled to feel wronged in that Jim was deceptive about his beliefs, and thus deceitful to his father, betraying his trust.³⁴ However, his father's feeling of resentment or indignation is certainly lessened, if not dwarfed, by the joy of learning that he won a large sum of money. In contrast, Jim* was deceptive twice over: about his belief and its content. Not only would his father resent the same breach of trust, he would also experience being misled by Jim*'s assertion into forming a false belief about its content, which makes for a stronger sense of disapproval, especially when Jim* knew his father would incur a severe penalty for submitting false information. Such morally different sentiments about Jim and Jim* must be down to a non-moral difference between them, and since they are psychologically indiscernible, the relevant difference is that only Jim* deceptively lied. To make that inference requires (FALSITY).

Consider now (PRISONER). In one case, Ibbieta asserts the disbelieved, but as it happens, true proposition that Gris is hiding in the cemetery, for the purpose of deceiving his guards into believing just that. In another case, Ibbieta* also untruthfully makes that assertion with the same deceptive intent, although falsely as Gris is actually hiding with family. In the first case, the guards arrest Gris at the cemetery while Ibbieta is merely held captive, whereas in the second case they execute Ibbieta* immediately after having searched the cemetery in vain. The guards will in both cases no doubt feel anger for being untruthfully asserted to, but since no relationship of trust exists, what would mostly infuriate them is surely Ibbieta*'s successful deceptiveness about the truth in the second case, as evidenced by their swift punishment. In the first case, the guards aren't deceived by Ibbieta about Gris' whereabouts, and their satisfaction of arresting Gris at the cemetery will likely overshadow any resentment felt towards his dishonesty; what matters to them is above all that Gris be detained. However, while we disapprove of the dishonesty in both cases, we would, in view of the guards' wicked plans, regard attempting to deceive them about the hiding place as the all-things-considered right thing to do. The difference is that our moral judgements are more favourable towards Ibbieta* in the second case, where he succeeds in deceiving the guards, thus saving Gris' life. In the first case, Ibbieta's attempt at deception fails spectacularly. Given that Ibbieta and Ibbieta* are psychological duplicates, such moral difference is down to the fact that only the latter deceptively lied. That's possible only if (FALSITY) is endorsed.

As mentioned earlier, Turri and Turri (2015: 163) suggest that (b) their participants might have registered their disapproval of the protagonist's conduct in vignettes similar to (FISHING) and (PRISONER) by saying that he lied when *not* presented with the option of him merely trying to lie. But once that distinction is available, the vast majority prefers the latter. Turri and Turri (2015: 167) conclude that while lying is not a purely psychological act, "the social function of lying attributions seems mainly tied to our disapproval of dishonesty or deceptive intent [as these] breach the trust just as much as successful lies do". True, one would resent a breach of trust irrespective of whether one is being deceptively lied to or merely the subject of deceptive intent, and while our moral judgements certainly concern, or perhaps are even "mainly tied" to, such intent, they aren't exclusively so restricted. For our sense of disapproval

³⁴See also Faulkner (2007), who argues that a reactive attitude of resentment is appropriate when being let down by a liar in whom one affectively trusts to tell the truth. Relatedly, Carson (2006: 292) views lying as breaking a promise to communicate truthfully.

also tracks the distinction between lying and trying but failing to lie, in the deceptive sense, in that they typically have distinct effects on practical interests that matter morally. The mistake that we should pass identical moral judgements regardless of whether p is true is due to the fact that the relevant cases have so far focused on dishonesty and deceptive intent without spelling out the moral import of the real consequences of the acts in question.

One may worry that the foregoing commits to a problematic form of consequentialism. Let us quickly survey three moral views about lying.³⁵ (i) Intuitionists think the wrongness of lying is a self-evident truth, knowable through rational intuition. On their view, lying is always pro tanto wrong but not always all-things-considered wrong, since the reason against lying is defeasible; for example, in the case of (PRISONER), telling the truth violates the overriding duty to preserve life. Intuitionism can thus appeal to the pro tanto wrongness of lying in order to explain why a liar may still feel bad (guilty or apologetic) even when lying is all-things-considered justified.³⁶ But since all the view says is that lying is wrong because it's lying, it offers no account of when lying is all-things-considered wrong, or when the duty to speak truly is outweighed by another duty. We should regard lying as being done for a reason. (ii) Consequentialists maintain that lying is wrong when the effects are harmful but permissible, if not obligatory, when leading to beneficial results. So, there are reasons why acts of lying are right or wrong to do with the benefits they produce, as in (PRISONER), or the harm they inflict, as in (FISHING). This view thus provides an answer to the question of when lying is all-things-considered justified. Take *paternalistic* lies, that is, lies for someone's own good. If I'm a better judge than you about what's good for you, then I can know when it's morally right to tell you a paternalistic lie. The downside is a lack of a *general presumption* against lying, and so the view is silent about why I may still feel uneasy about telling you such a lie. (iii) Kantians claim that all lying is wrong, because it violates the autonomy of the person to whom you lie. You must never treat someone as if she was merely a tool you can use to promote your own ends, or indeed her own good. You must respect her capacity for self-government.³⁷ Kant also held that truthfulness is a perfect duty to oneself, such that one must never lie under any circumstances, and disregarding that duty makes one morally responsible for all ensuing consequences, even if unforeseeable. In a case similar to (PRISONER), Kant famously made the startling claim that one may be justly accused of a victim's death if one correctly, but untruthfully and with deceptive intent, tells a murderer where this person is.³⁸

How do these views relate to the way we developed (FISHING) and (PRISONER)? We agreed that genuine deceptive lies involve an element of disapproval of dishonesty or deceptive intent, which they have in common with failed attempts at lying. How that materialises depends on the specific details: in (FISHING), Jim* likely feels bad about betraying his father's trust for having told a well-intended but harmful lie, but even in (PRISONER) Ibbieta* may still feel at fault for having told a beneficial lie for good purposes; perhaps Ibbieta* was brought up to regard any lying as a religious sin. Since such disapproval pertains exclusively to the psychological component of deceptive lying, we can accommodate the default presumption against such lying; in fact, while consistent with intuitionism, this moral aspect is naturally interpreted along Kantian lines in terms of disregarding a duty to speak truthfully, or preventing someone's beliefs from being controlled by their own reason. That's consistent with rejecting Kant's unduly rigoristic take on (PRISONER)-type cases. But our view also has a consequentialist element in that a liar's false assertion can lead to factual deception with practical outcomes to

³⁵The following owes much to Korsgaard (1986) and (manuscript).

³⁶Sometimes the point is expressed by saying that lying is prima facie wrong but that seems incorrect. Prima facie wrongs are eliminated if overridden, whereas pro tanto wrongs still have force or weight if overridden, which is what is needed to explain the lingering sense of wrongness when telling a lie that is justified all-things-considered.

³⁷Manipulation in the sense of being unable to believe and act as one would have, had one not been lied to, is taken by Bok (1978: 21-2) and Williams (2002: 93) to be what explains the prima facie (or pro tanto as we prefer) wrongness of deceptive lying.

³⁸(1797/1949). It should be flagged up that scholars disagree on how to interpret Kant's rigorism about lying in light of the different formulations of his categorical imperative.

which our moral sentiments are attuned; effects that are missing in otherwise identical cases where the same assertion is true. For example, in (PRISONER), lying to the guards is permissible, if not obligatory, for Ibbieta* in order to counteract the results of their sinister intentions. The benefits of saving lives are what defeat the pro tanto reason Ibbieta* has not to deceptively lie, thus making lying all-things-considered right.

5 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Frankfurt (2005: 55–6), Frankfurt, (2009: 46–8) contrasts the liar with the bullshitter and the honest person. The liar must believe he knows the truth while considering what he says to be false. Just as with the honest person who says only what she believes to be true, the eye of the liar is on the facts; the only difference is that whereas the honest person is on the side of the true, the liar is on the side of the false. But the bullshitter is neither on the side of the true, nor on the side of the false. The facts are of no concern to her; she just makes stuff up to suit her purpose regardless of whether what she says is correct or not. Of course, the bullshitter may well be telling the truth, but it would be by accident rather than intention. Both the liar and the bullshitter represent themselves falsely as endeavouring to communicate the truth, but since bullshitting needn't be false, it differs from lying in its misrepresentational intent. What lying misrepresents by virtue of being false are the facts and what the liar believes about the facts, whereas what bullshitting misrepresents are neither the facts nor what the bullshitter believes about the facts but rather what the bullshitter is up to, that is, attempting to deceive the audience about their enterprise.

We agree that the liar is both deceitful and truth-responsive, by intending her untruthful assertions to induce false beliefs, but we maintain that the liar also contrasts with the *truth-teller* who tracks the truth perfectly, and, unlike the honest person, never falsely believes that she speaks truly. For the liar to be “on the side of the false”, and to “have the eye on the facts”, as Frankfurt puts it (op. cit.), we argued, is to pretend to speak truly but never actually do so. To use the example from section 1, if you lie to your friend that you, as promised, have returned the book she borrowed to the library, then you did not hand in that book. If your belief that you forgot to return it transpires to be false, then your attempt at deceptive lying failed. We referred to intuitional evidence which, as things stand, speaks against (FALSITY), but a wider range of empirical evidence seems to lend it support. However, neither of our arguments for (FALSITY) depends directly on such evidence. The first argument is underpinned by the fact that deceptive lies have as a matter of constitutive fact the function of deceit, such that they could not function properly unless they at least afforded the possibility of function fulfilment. The second argument shows that moral considerations also favour (FALSITY) in that such lying frequently involves factual deception with morally relevant practical consequences. In sum, the idea of a true deceptive lie simply does not stack up.³⁹

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