

IPP Phenomenology of Being Series

Lying



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Abstract

Lying is an important characteristic of human relation and modality of dialogue. It is generally condemned by most moral schemes, but at the same time there are many reasons to lie, such as survival, maintaining a good image, satisfaction of desire, accomplishment of the will, including ethical reasons, such as politeness, niceness, respect and others. As a consequence, this contradictory attitude makes of lying a sort of taboo, since the lying lies about itself as well: it denies its own nature and ignores its own necessity. In order to avoid confronting this reality of speech, redescription is commonly used, expressions that implicitly contain the idea of lying but deny its very essence. White lies, embellishment, exaggeration, good intentions, self-protection, provide such thin veils. It is very difficult not to lie, if not impossible. Either because our intentions are too powerful, or because we are rather confused and not fully conscious of our own mental processes. And it seems to us that this shadowy mental functioning is a form of lying as well, since we often make the choice of not analyzing rationally and critically the veracity of our own words and thoughts. In this workshop, we will examine both the genesis of lying, its different causes, and the manifestation of lying, its different forms.

Preamble

Lying is primarily the action of saying what is false or hiding what is true. But the added condition is that it needs to be conscious and intentional, otherwise those falsehoods can fall under the categories of ignorance, forgetfulness or insanity. The problem we then face is that the redline between conscious and unconscious is periodically quite blurry, often there can be a sort of in-betweenness or overlap where a clean cut separation is quite hard to establish, as we see for example in the case of bad faith and reassurance. We don't always deliberately choose to lie, but often this does not make it less of a lie, even if it has become a habit. As well, since the lie indulges in lying, a lie can easily lie as well about itself, about its own nature, denying it is a lie. Thus we choose to qualify as lie any situation where, if we are not totally conscious of the fact we are lying, we could rather be conscious of it if we wanted to, through critical thinking, common sense of a minimal objectivity. In other words, we take the free-will perspective of reason, typical of philosophy, rather than the unconscious irresponsible perspective which is quite common in the field of psychology. As well, we rather avoid the ethical dimension of lying, rather neglecting its possible utility or necessity, in order to focus primarily on the cognitive aspect of the phenomenon. Although here and there

something is mentioned about moral issues, about the legitimacy or not of the lie, to evaluate if the lie is acceptable, or if it becomes existentially and psychologically problematic. The reader might find in some cases our position quite radical, when we take as a lie some characteristic that might be considered a personality trait, such as naivety or sincerity for example. But our point is not to claim that in essence naivety or sincerity is lying, but simply that naivety or sincerity can be some of the forms that lying takes. It is not an essentialist approach, but a functional approach, which is why we call our work “phenomenology of lying”. Of course, it implies to present rather positively the value of parrhesia, the capacity and courage to tell the truth, but we will as well periodically justify the recourse to lying. Lastly, we have tried to divide our phenomenology of lying into two categories: the genesis of lying, its causes, and the manifestations of lying, the diverse forms it takes. But these two categories may easily overlap, since the form lying takes can as well be its motivation, for example in reassuring or narcissism.

A - Genesis of Lying

1 - Self-Defense

The most elementary reason for lying, that starts at a very early age, is motivated by fear, by a primitive desire to defend oneself. Fear of not being loved, of looking bad, of being scolded or punished, incites the child and later on the adult to deny reality, by falsifying facts, by omitting important things, in order to protect his image and his self. This can be done consciously, as a result of some tactical calculation, but often it is produced without any particular reflection, it happens in a very immediate way, as a modality of what can be called “instinctive thinking” or “street smartness”. Our desire for survival activates mental processes, words come by themselves; the subject can even be surprised to hear himself say what he says. He is driven by some emotional reaction, a process which can occur quite speedily, just as a physical reflex. And some adults, for lack or weakness of more reflective and rational types of thinking have developed a strong tendency for those defensive mechanisms, often incoherent since unchecked by reason. Words spout out of their mouth without any consideration for the issue of truth, a mechanism which can easily result in absurd or gross declarations.

2 - Desire

Two primary drives animate and motivate human beings. On one side rejection of what we don't want, through fear, discomfort or disgust. On the other side attraction, yearning for possession, comfort or control, what engenders desire. Desire makes us lie, since we often compete for what we want, because others are in the way, either because they want the same thing as us, because they already possess what we want, or because

they represent some kind of obstacle in the process of obtaining what we covet. Thus, if we cannot reach our goal through force, the most simple and immediate way, we will try to manipulate them through words. We will speak to them, but since they a priori oppose our goal, we will have to transform their perception of reality. In order to do this, lying is very handy, simpler than producing rational arguments, especially if our desire has nothing to do with reason. Thus we will invent new facts, produce some fictitious argumentation, modify circumstances fitting better our scheme, we will lie in order to make the other person comply to our request and satisfy our longing. In this context, if greed can be criticized as a motivation for lying, the case is more problematic when it comes to commercial practices, since business implies by principle to hide certain information and to modify the perception of reality of client or partners in order to make profit and be successful. Different doctrines or perspectives, philosophical or religious, will contradict each other on this matter. One issue is to determine if the same criteria for judging a lie can be applied for business and for personal issues, or not.

3 - Complacency

The appetite for comfort is an important component of desire, both physical comfort and psychological. But since the human mind is haunted by some absolute schemes, like perfection, totality, certitude, we often experience a feeling of dissatisfaction about ourselves. As well, we experience envy, through a recurrent drive to compare ourself to others, another agent for our dissatisfaction. Thus, this unhappiness with oneself has to be compensated, otherwise life is too unbearable and cruel, depression threatens us. The easiest way to deal with this feeling of imperfection, what can be called fear of finitude, dreading one's own limitations, is to modify reality and lie to ourself, even before we lie to others, although it is part of the same process. This can explain a common tendency of self-delusion, the aptitude to kid oneself, to invent lies about our own being and to believe them. This makes our daily cohabitation with our own self more palatable, easier to cope with, more pleasant. To confront our own limits is painful; it is hard to deal with them, to modify them, and often impossible to change them. But complacency is a feeling of satisfaction with oneself or a situation, so we do not think any more that change is necessary, than an effort is needed. But since we are by nature imperfect, we have to modify our perception of reality in order to induce this feeling of satisfaction, as fictitious as it may be. This "mental comfort" could be as well realized through the acquisition of some wisdom, but is much easier through lying, telling ourselves how fine or great we are, since we can then ignore reality. And if any problem shows up, to accuse others, luck, circumstances or the environment as the real cause of the problem.

4 - Education

Basic education, as an initiation to social life, comprises the art of lying. What is generally called “good manners” implies to be polite and nice, to avoid hurting others, which implies to hide what we think and even to say the opposite of what we think. To outwardly express whatever comes to our mind can indeed be considered primitive and unwelcome, if only because our immediate thoughts are not necessarily pertinent and appropriate. Many of our opinions are shallow, false or gross, and we should learn to control them or reflect on them before we articulate them. As well, even if to be truthful is a quality, there are always moments and ways that determine if pronouncing our ideas is an adequate decision, a judgment which is not always easy to assess. In a way, we can here establish that the principle of lying, by commission or by omission, is in fact justified. We are not supposed to speak only in order to speak, or as Plato says we just might sound like those drunken people that spurt out whatever crosses their mind. Integrating established social codes and conventions is an important part of the educational process, and of course any society, community or group will install behavior protocols or rituals as a way to harmonize and unite its members. Those rules, explicit or implicit, with the values they represent, participate in the foundation of any collectivity or the establishment of long term relation. But the problem starts, a common one, when we have so well internalized those “good manners” or “obligatory behavior” that we become incapable of saying the truth even when it is appropriate. Fear of losing consideration from others, fear of conflict, fear of hurting others, fear of losing some advantage, mistrust, are a number of reasons why life in society and our education forbid honesty. Of course a certain dose of lying is necessary in order to maintain decent human relations, especially with our close ones who might be more sensitive to our words, but lying becomes a problem when it becomes compulsive, as a manifestation of our own impotence, of our intellectual and moral corruption.

5 - Diplomacy

Diplomacy is defined as the behavioral skill necessary in order to deal with people without upsetting or offending them. It is a useful art, as we know from the usual way of using the term to describe the activity of managing relations between different countries or communities, each party of the discussion having their own interest and image to protect, which implies a good dose of “respect”, meaning taking into account the status and importance of the other one, and the susceptibility that accompanies the standing thus granted. In daily life, it implies as well to take into account the situation of the person we speak to, and we should not be as direct and open to our boss, a professor or a political leader as we would be to a friend or a relative. We have to be respectful, which in this case implies to say things we don’t believe or behave in an artificial way in order to manifest this respect. Some professions, like the educational or judiciary world, are quite keen on this issue. As well, diplomacy is required when we think the people

we address are susceptible or fragile, when they are in a difficult situation, so they could break down or get angry, or when they are powerful and could easily retaliate and hurt us. In all those cases lying by diplomacy might be useful or necessary, just as it could be superfluous, uncalled for, excessive or inappropriate.

6 - Niceness

Numerous people elect niceness as a primary value above truth, justice, reason, or others. Thus children are taught from an early age the obligation to be “nice” in order to be “good”. A vague morality, which usually implies being obedient, being polite, being not bothersome, pleasing others and not hurting their feelings. A minimal value that allows one to function in society by not being focused exclusively on oneself and one’s desires. And if we are nice, others will be grateful, they will be nice to us as well and it will be beneficial to us. It would hardly be a problem if this formal and distant moral minimalism did not stand in the way of telling the truth, since truth often involves disturbing the established order and challenging oneself. A significant obligation of niceness which ends up inhibiting any real dialogue, which prohibits all authenticity. At the origin of such an “ideal”, we can identify fear of loneliness, desire for manipulation, complacency, self-denial, inertia, social pressure, etc. One supposedly important reason for being nice is kindness, a desire to do good, to be good toward others, to be driven by a certain sympathy towards our fellow human beings, which can also be called altruism, humanity, benevolence or goodwill. But this goodness can however be contrasted with niceness, since the former can involve being harsh, severe or punitive towards someone when it seems right or appropriate; it requires some courage since reality and truth are an important component of it. For these reasons, the reception of goodness is much more uncertain than the reaction to kindness, which is less demanding to exercise. Niceness can be called behavior ethics and goodness character ethics. The former is concerned with developing pleasant social skills, while the latter requires to live according to fundamentally generous principles and moral rigor. Therefore to be nice commonly implies to lie in order to please others and tell them what they prefer to hear.

7 - Fear of Reality

Reality is often unpleasant and harsh, in particular when compared with our wishes. Therefore there is a strong tendency in our mind and speech to elude or modify our understanding and perceptions in order for our internal gestalt to be more agreeable and harmonious and for our thoughts to fit better our expectations. This phenomenon can be observed both in terms of our relation to others, since they as well have a problem with reality, and in relation to ourselves, as a form of self-delusion. In the latter, we will close our eyes to obvious perceptions and rational evidence, to elements of information and their consequences, that would disturb our internal balance and feed

our anxiety. Although strangely enough this lying to our own self never really works and it ends up feeding even more our anxiety, since we can never be fully unconscious of our own mental processes. In a way, the mind can never really lie to itself, it can only attempt to do so, in a momentary and partial way. In the former, we will carefully or unconsciously choose the elements of information that we will convey to our interlocutors. And since they probably do the same, we can periodically observe phenomena of collective deception, where members of a group reinforce each other in the production and maintenance of a given illusion. A sort of pact of lying is therefore established, which can be quite powerful, as we often observe in historical and sociological events. We prefer not to know, since it would force us to modify our behavior; therefore, as the expression goes, we prefer to keep dancing while the Titanic is sinking.

8 - Fear of Reason

Reason is a powerful tool human beings are endowed with. It allows us to understand ourselves and our surroundings, to produce judgments guiding our thoughts, speech and actions, to determine what is possible, practical or right, to think in a logical way in order to better access the nature of reality. It is therefore a crucial guiding principle to preserve and improve our own existence. But the problem with reason is that it periodically comes in conflict with other dimensions of our being, for example desire, fear, instinct or imagination. Therefore we are very tempted to transgress the truthfulness and universality of reason by short circuiting rational mental processes and inventing another "reality". Speech is very useful for this, since we can do whatever we want with words, as we know for example in poetry or literature in general. We have the power to invent and make believe, convincing ourself and others, since words have a strong capacity to influence and determine our thoughts and existence. Language emanates from reason, which is why in Ancient Greek the term is the same for both items: *logos*. But speech easily abandons reason, becoming irrational and unreasonable, in order to fit our more immediate and emotional impulses. Reason implies work, both in terms of thought process and confrontation to our usual way of being, thus the temptation is strong, through impatience and inertia, to make believe with words, to lie and invent thoughts and speeches that transgress the principle of reason.

9 - Mythomania

Mythomania is considered a disease: it is a pathological tendency to fabulation, the action of systematically presenting as truthful what is purely imaginary. It can be described as well as a type of recurrent lying, or pathological lying. This term applies to someone that invents things in an automatic and unconscious way, compulsively and gratuitously, since there even might be nothing to gain in the production of the specific

lie. This person cannot stop lying, like if his imagination or reactive mechanisms had totally taken over his rational capacity. This phenomenon can take on quite an extravagant form, to the extent that the stunned interlocutor might even believe the lie, incapable of envisaging that someone could invent such a huge or incredible story. This phenomenon explains the success and credibility of some pathological liars. Such behavior can be explained as a result of an emotional or psychological trauma, but it seems as well that some persons just have a powerful or overbearing imagination as part of their personality, as can be observed early in some persons. Although it is as well a step in child development, the imaginary stage, before the social and rational ones. The mythomaniac usually believes what he says, and the story he invents. So the lying is usually unconscious, and it remains to be determined to what extent the person is capable of realizing his lies are lies. But the more one lies and remains unchecked, the more he will fall into the habit and practice of self-delusion.

10 - Pain

Pain is the feeling that we experience, light or intense, when our body has been hurt through accident, repetitive action or disease, or when our mind as well has been hurt through accident, repetitive action or disease, producing mental or emotional suffering. The main specificity of mental suffering compared to physical is that we have more internal control over it, since we can compensate for the pain through other types of mental activity, such as the talking cure or some practice of wisdom, excluding here the recourse to medications. And since words compose an important part of our psychological reality, we use words in order to heal, forget or avoid any pain we might be incurring. Lying therefore reveals itself as a very handy tool, since it is rather easy to use and commonly utilized, as the young child swiftly experiences. It is a very intuitive modality, almost instinctive. For example, we can deny pain and end up believing we are relieved, an efficient operation, at least in an immediate way, especially if we manage to share this lie with other persons. Thus, when we feel emotionally threatened or affected, we will fabricate some mental construction, and through the repetition of this lie, we will somewhat convince ourselves and compensate or forget the pain. Or through anger and resentment, we will focus on an external cause, some person or circumstance that will be erected as a scapegoat or expiatory victim of our suffering, toward which we will focus our pain. We will therefore produce in a heated manner a hateful or vengeful speech, pronounce accusations that in a deeper way we don't believe, in order to attempt sublimating this pain. It occurs in the same way we scratch ourselves when there is an irritation, even if it might subsequently make the situation even worse. So periodically, later on, when the pain has somewhat died down, we might admit to ourselves or to the other person that we did not really mean what we said. Even though at the time we did believe our own words, it still can be considered a lie because we would have been capable to examine rationally our speech and conclude to its inanity.

11 - Self-Justification

We often notice in usual dialogues the manifestation of a recurrent tendency to justify oneself. Either because we feel guilty, we entertain a bad image of our self, or because we are worried

about the perception of our person by others, we feel accused and have to defend ourselves. Of course, both of these explanations tend to overlap, and we fall in the trap of overinterpreting what we hear by imagining negative perceptions, criticisms and accusation, since we easily feel judged in a harsh way. A consequence of this excessive worry is that we cheat in many dialogues, for instead of being rational and realistic with our words, we sort of deny or deviate the objective reality of the exchange, in order to justify ourself. A common strategy is to shift from the “what” to the “why”, replacing factual information, the description of a phenomenon, with reasons and argumentation, with excuses. For example, when we ask someone if he took a given object that does not belong to him, failed an examination or fought with his wife, which each imply a factual yes or no answer, he will start his answer with “it’s because...” and attempt to explain rather than answer. This type of lying makes many dialogues difficult, through this avoidance procedure, that can be quite systematic with certain persons. And what those people call “explanation”, on which they insist, will often be the fabrication of a narration whose finality is only to produce a good or better image of the speaker, at the expense of the concrete and factual reality of the issue discussed.

12 - Benevolence

The term officious lying is traditionally used to qualify a lie whose purpose is to accomplish some good deed, to help or protect another person, so it can be called a benevolent lie. It is sometimes as well called “white lie”, or “pious lie”, when it is told in order to avoid problems, in order not to hurt or offend someone, when truth or sincerity would provoke unpleasant results, thus for the good of others but as well for our own good. In all cases, there should be no negative consequence of such a lie, or at least no malicious intention. Although the problem raised by some philosophers is that it is rather difficult to ensure that no negative consequences would derive from such a lie, since we cannot predict everything with certitude. This type of lie is mentioned in the Koran, called *taqiyya*, whose purpose is to smooth over differences in a dispute, to protect oneself from non-believers, or to gain the upper-hand over an enemy, which all together is supposed to be for the good since it advances the cause of Islam. To prevent someone from learning bad news when we consider this person is vulnerable, to please someone in order to make him happy, to give positive feedback in order to encourage efforts, pity or compassion, are different motivations for benevolent lies. To avoid getting into problems, to maintain peaceful relations with others, diverse pragmatic considerations, constitute reasons to lie for one’s self-interest, a sort of self-benevolence, “ethically admissible” if they do not harm others. Although we have to determine if this self-interest is rightly motivated or if those lies simply disguise our cowardice or our intention to manipulate others against their true interest.

13 - Reassuring

When one is worried and looks for reassurance, there is no care about truth. One is eager for immediate satisfaction, comforting or confirmation, in order to find some inner

peace, even if this means holding on to a lie, whether it is lying to someone, or being lied to. When we want to reassure someone, we tend to transpose the truth, to modify it a bit, to warp it, to exaggerate it, or to downright invent it. This allows oneself and the other to be more at ease, through nice words that make everyone feel better, even if this truth is temporary and superficial. Of course, reassuring others can be necessary and helpful, for instance to encourage someone to accomplish something, or in relationships, in order to avoid conflicts or emotional tension. We no longer need to be truthful but to be helpful and nice in order to deal with a difficult situation. A person looking for reassurance doesn't look for someone telling him the truth, but rather for someone that will please him or help him to be more confident. A common example is the child asking his mother if she thinks his drawing is beautiful, and he knows in advance that his mother will tell him some obvious "Of course!". For this reason, strangely enough, the reassured will trust his own judgment, including his own doubts, more than the words of the person that reassures him, he remains somewhat conscious of the lying dimension of the exercise. Nevertheless, his psychological state can change and he can become more confident just because he received something that was pleasant to hear, although he will often not really believe what he heard. The "massage" of the speech here becomes more important than its reality. The reassuring speech can take different forms: to pretend, to wish, to transpose, to amplify... But in all of these cases there is a twisting of the truth, an "improvement" of reality, the precise utility of this lie, in order to elicit a "positive" reaction from others or oneself. Of course, it is not mandatory to lie in order to reassure someone, but, in general, in order to create such an effect, one needs to be ready to betray the requirement of truth. Consolation is a particular form of reassurance. The principle is to give comfort or sympathy to somebody who is unhappy or disappointed about something, an action which will be produced by transforming the bothersome reality or by making the other person forget it. Prediction of the future, "everything will be fine", is typical of the rational absurdity of consolation. But the point is only to hear soothing words, a pact of nice lying and comforting feelings, in order to feel good.

B - Manifestations of Lying

1 - Naivety

Naivety is officially a lack of experience of life or general knowledge, an absence of good judgment and a willingness to believe that people always tell you the truth. From there, it is as well the quality of being innocent and simple in character or behavior. If naivety is the natural tendency in certain persons, we periodically observe that this attitude can as well constitute somewhat of a choice for those who prefer to indulge in some illusory perception and understanding, rather than examining what they hear and what they think with a certain dose of critical thinking. Either because of inertia:

analyzing and evaluating information is too much work for them. Or out of fear or lack of self-confidence: to use one's autonomous judgment can set us in conflict with others or can force us to take some responsibility. Thus a preference to pander to some unrealistic representation, an easier existential and intellectual posture. It is as well less threatening to the other, since one does not fear the ingenuous person. We should mention that naivety can be an attitude towards life in general, but it can as well be reserved to a specific domain, for example love relation or business matters. On one side there is the standard vision of naivety, where everything is nice and rosy, where everyone is justified a priori, where no one is animated with bad intentions, where the others know better than us and we trust them, a sort of comfortable childish posture. But there again is as well its dark equivalent, where all events can be transformed into drama, where the slightest problem is transformed into a catastrophe. The Disney version and the soap opera version. Of course there is a psychological or emotional dimension to such a tragic scheme, but there is as well a cognitive one. We again have a childish behavior, a simplistic view where the slightest trouble or vexation is perceived as terrible, when it is obvious with a minimum of thinking to realize that it is not a big deal. But some people indulge in dramatization, they prefer to lie to themselves and others about the reality of things, since through drama they can produce excitement in their life, give themselves value and attract attention.

2 - Ignorance

A priori, ignorance prevents us from lying, since we don't know what constitutes truth. Evidently one cannot know everything, which makes ignorance banal, common to all human beings and real. But ignorance can sometimes contain a lying dimension. A good example is the common statement "I prefer not to know", meaning that one prefers to remain in ignorance rather than accessing truth, a form of lying to oneself. But when we have the choice to understand or know the truth, when the latter is accessible, when we could know if we made the effort of knowing and one chooses to remain in the dark, in the unknown, one prefers lying over truth. There are different reasons for this self-delusion. It is usually in order to avoid responsibility, anxiety, uneasiness, confrontation, pain, generally in order to avoid being in a bothering position since ignorance prevents from carrying a burden. It is often to remain in a neutral or distant position, because commitment is frightening and uncomfortable. "I don't know" as well can be a fictitious statement, where one indulges in pretending to some position of ignoramus, either to act smart, to provoke the other person, or to avoid getting involved in a dialogue or situation. Although as usual, through insistence and repetition, one can manage to end up believing his own ignorance. As well, sometimes, one can pretend to be ignorant, not to know, by using the formulation of insecurity, an "I am not sure" which implies "I don't know". This presupposes that knowledge is certitude, therefore insecurity means ignorance, which of course is a form of lie since hypothesis is as well

a form of knowledge, since the latter is often merely probable. This system is another way to avoid commitment or involvement in a dialogue.

3 - Chaos

Chaos, lack of order, is one characteristic of reality, what can be called the accidental dimension of things, even though when we look closer, we can often find some reason or cause for this state of events. In the human mind, it can be called confusion, which manifests itself through the lack or absence of causal principle, of categorization, of reasoning, the difficulty to pursue an established axis of reflection and therefore by the impossibility of engaging in a meaningful or sensible dialogue. Of course, one can claim that someone with a chaotic mind is not lying simply because he is confused. But this would imply that he cannot or could not realize the inanity of his utterances, he could not understand that his lie is a lie, and therefore his "lies" would simply constitute unconscious mistakes. But we can often notice that this type of chaos is in fact an avoidance strategy, since the chaotic person resists any attempt to introduce some order during the course of a dialogue. Therefore, unless we conclude a form of mental alienation, probably true in certain cases, this chaos can be taken as a form of deliberate lying, since the person could in fact face the reality of his words. A classical manifestation of this strategy is to indulge in associative thinking, picking on side or irrelevant issues, jumping from one idea to the next, in order to avoid a rational process and face reality. This permanent shifting prohibits any reasoning or dialogue, even the most obvious evidence or proof can therefore be denied, allowing the person to protect himself from any intrusion of reality. The difficulty in those cases is to determine if this chaos is the origin of the lying, because of a lack of education or a hyper emotional state, or if it represents an expression and strategy of lying. In a way, chaos is quite difficult to simulate: someone not chaotic naturally would have a hard time pretending to be chaotic. We could propose the idea that if chaos is regularly used, it starts taking a certain autonomy, transforms itself into a habit and becomes the acquired nature of a person. But a human being still has access to reason, unless he is declared insane, which, moreover, does not exclude occasional lucidity.

4 - Omission

Lying by omission is probably the most common form of lie, for most people pretend it is not even a lie, arguing that they pronounce nothing false, the latter form being called lying by commission. It is easy to employ, since there is just nothing to say. It implies either to deliberately dissimulate some facts or truncate a part of some truth, to totally avoid revealing some important information, or simply not to rectify one's initial misconception or false statement. It has a tricky form, since one that lies by omission just uses the fact that he "formally" didn't lie, but simply omitted to tell the truth. This type of lie can as well avail itself of a moral justification through the idea that not every

truth is always good to tell, since it might produce discomfort or pain, an easy way out of honesty which could be for example a mere lack of courage. Contrary to some other kinds of lies, lying by omission can also be considered reasonable and sagacious. For example in statecraft or institution management, it can protect and maintain the structure by avoiding conflict, chaos or destabilization. In personal relations, it smoothes interactions through avoiding sources of tension. “See nothing, hear nothing, say nothing” can be considered a form of wisdom, as we know from the famous Chinese three monkeys. Of course, like most lies, it can be used as well out of fear or a desire to manipulate. Lying by omission is also a way to show respect and politeness, to accept a principle of political correctness, for if one started to say everything he thought, the social dynamic would experience severe dysfunctioning. In opposition to lying by omission, ancient Greek philosophers advocated the virtue of *parrhesia*: the capacity to tell the truth, independent of its consequences.

5 - Vagueness

Truth implies clarity, a true statement has to be determined, it is a form of commitment to a given proposition: it should clearly mean something specific and not something else, in spite of the ambiguities of language. As the third principle of logic declares, a statement is true when its opposite is false and vice versa. Therefore a common way to hide truth is to pronounce vague or equivocal sentences. Of course, once more, there can be reasons for producing some “false” statements, and remain elusive, enigmatic or evasive, for example when using a poetic style, to provoke the other’s thinking, or to make non-commitment a deliberate posture. Through imprecision, not only do we hide our thoughts while attempting to deceive the other person, but we also prohibit any further discussion by stonewalling any questions and paralyzing the dialogue. In order to this, one can express generalities, abstract or impersonal, or pronounce cryptic statements, sounding deep and intellectual. As well, when facing a choice, one can pretend to some undetermined in-betweenness, claim both at the same time, or display a neutral position. Indecision and confusion often disguise themselves behind some sophisticated dialectical and subtle rhetorical form, for example the rejection of a primitive and binary “yes or no”, as a strategy to say nothing.

6 - Diversion

Numerous aspects of reality, in particular about ourselves, are difficult to face and to admit, thus we hide them by providing a different reality. This “other” reality could make sense and may even be true, but it is used as a diversion, in order to hide the unbearable facts. For example, instead of admitting that we don’t know or don’t understand some idea, we will say “I need time to think”. Instead of acknowledging that we can’t answer a question or we can’t explain an idea, we claim that “we cannot find the right words”. Instead of saying we can’t accomplish a task, we will claim we can’t do

it “right now”, as if it was a time issue and not an incompetence issue. These hiding comments are not totally irrelevant, they are even probably true, but the way they are used, their specific function, is to obfuscate and disguise a more substantial and important reality, and in this sense they are used as a diversion technique and constitute a lie. They function rather well, precisely because they are true or can be true, and many of them are socially codified; they are commonly used, which makes them rather invisible as a lie, and therefore quite acceptable. One can use them without thinking too much about them and feel totally sincere when they are pronounced, a sincerity which adds to their credibility. But in a simpler way, we can also change the subject of the discussion by suddenly talking about something else, shifting subjects, hoping that our interlocutor will not notice our strategy.

7 - Redescription

Redescription is a very common way to hide reality, to deny it by transforming it, particularly in dialogues where one wants to convince or manipulate the other person. It implies to change the words used to describe a situation or a proposal, in order to make things more acceptable or fitting better the point we are trying to make. Evidently, the new terms have to make sense as well and relatively fit as much as the previous ones, the denotation or objective dimension should be more or less equivalent or replaceable. But the connotation will have shifted, the subjective dimension taking a distinct or opposite turn. This often takes the form of transvaluation, the switching from positive to negative connotation and vice-versa, or the replacement between a neutral word and one which is emotionally loaded. For example, according to needs and circumstances, “quarrel” will be replaced by “difference of perspectives”, and “comment” will be replaced by “criticism” or “attack”. This is common for example in the corporate world, in the education world, and as a crucial element of political correctness. Words trends must be appropriate to “the party line”, to the agenda being pushed. It is obvious in totalitarian societies, but it is as well operational in more democratic societies, but with a certain naivety as to the importance and nature of these trends and their devious intention.

8 - Explanation

Often, those who do not want to answer a question or are caught in a flagrant contradiction want to appeal to what they call “explanation”, in fact a way of escaping. Of course this explanation can try to give some honest rendering of the problem, but often it indicates a rather rickety construction concocted in order to muddy the waters. “Let me explain” is therefore the revelator of some confused rhetorical attempt at justifying, covering up or escaping a problematic situation in a dialogue, through diversion of facts with a side issue or through some confused speech. It will tend to be rather long, since the prolixity of a speech has a better chance to fool the interlocutor

than a brief statement. One such strategy can be called as well a posteriori rationalization, in the sense that one constructs a formally reasonable argument, rather abundant, apparently well supported, but which nimbly deviates the issue. This desire to explain is often reduced to expressing one's good intentions, describing attenuating or sidetracking circumstances, rather than getting to the heart of the matter and reporting the facts. Classically, it uses some vague generalization to avoid a specific problem, it refers to exceptions rather than to common sense and logic, it proposes some absurd alternative in order to make the present situation comparatively acceptable, or it indicates some extreme opposite in order to accomplish the same thing. Of course, convincing the other one, perplexing him or obtaining his formal acquiescence helps us to believe our own lie.

9 - Sincerity

Contrary to its common usage and attributed meaning, sincerity can be used as a form of lying, which of course implies a good dose of self-lying since it is based on conviction. Formally, sincerity is the quality of being free from pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy, therefore the opposite of lying. But when we look closer, it can be defined as well as the quality of showing or saying what you really think or feel, a formulation which can imply some ambiguity, for two reasons. The first one is that what we "show" and what we "say" might be discordant, as we often see when people formally agree with us, but their voice, body or facial expression, or their actions, disagree with their statements, showing a clear opposition between rationality or objectivity, and subjectivity. The second one is that our feelings, when they are examined by our thinking, might be judged unreasonable or unfounded. And that is precisely the problem with sincerity, which claims to state what one really believes or feels, even though it might make no sense or be deprived of any rational ground, a contradiction that makes it a lie since there is a refusal to examine critically those convictions. Sincerity is a form of complacency: one is ready to believe and pronounce as truth whatever one feels as true, even though we all know that our impressions can be illusory and distort reality, for example because we periodically project our subjectivity on reality. Because sincerity has no access to negativity and criticism, it is rather repetitive and lacks a creative and a progressing dimension. It is impossible to dialogue with the sincere person: he knows the truth, he coincides with himself, he is convinced, and therefore is deaf to any argumentation or objections, indifferent to reason. The combination of emotional and cognitive attachment to an opinion makes the mind rigid and dogmatic: one is stuck with oneself, with the added feature of having a "good conscience": one is therefore stubborn and self-absorbed. The sincere person always feels like he is on the "right side" of the fence: he is well-meaning and honest, he has direct access to truth, his whole being is truthful, and he therefore has no wish to take distance from himself and examine critically any problem in his speech or behavior. We would oppose the fictitious

dimension of sincerity to the concept of authenticity, the quality of being genuine or true, more endowed with integrity. Authenticity denotes an emotionally appropriate behavior, more distant and reflective, a significant and responsible mode of existence, since it is defined through a clear and conscious purpose. Authenticity implies a critical dimension because it maintains a broader scope, toward the person itself, including its inner conflicts; it maintains a relation to reason and reality. When sincerity is totally enclosed and defined by the irrationality of the immediate moment, an immediacy that captures the dynamic and nature of its self-delusion.

10 - Pretension

Lying by pretending is a way to exist in an artificial way; constructed and fictitious, it is about self-image. This lie can take two different forms: bragging or denial. Denial is to pretend that something does not exist in order to protect oneself, to defend and build up our own representation, or to boost our self-confidence. It can be to hide an unpleasant feature of our character, some shameful actions we committed, some obligation we did not fulfill, some moral transgression we perpetrated. It can relate as well to some features of the outside that have consequences on our own identity. To deal with those issues would suscite too much trouble or pain, it would need too much effort, it would engender a sense of powerlessness; thus we prefer to forget about it or outrightly negate it. The added problem is that we can easily convince ourselves of this lie and end up believing it. But it can still be considered a lie because initially we are responsible for the production of this falsehood, and we could still realize this falsehood, unless the illusion has become pathological. Many indicators constantly remind us of those flaws in our personality that we try to repudiate, what can be called the reality principle. The primary source of this prompting being the periodical feedback from other persons who might be bothered by those shortcomings and by our refutation of those criticisms, an exchange easily accompanied by irritation and anger on both parts. Of course, this denial can represent a useful strategy to live in peace with ourselves, but it is not without consequences. The other form of pretension is the reverse dynamic, which can be called bragging. For example to pretend we are endowed with some qualities or competencies we have not, or to pretend having accomplished some great action we did not do. It basically functions the same way as denial: we try to convince ourself of this invention and more or less believe it in spite of contrary evidence, and it has the same purpose, to fabricate a better image of ourselves and be more satisfied with our own existence. One can pretend to be rich, famous, powerful or smart, rather positive features, but we should mention as well the special paradoxical bragging of being weak or being a victim. For when “terrible things” happened to us, in our childhood for example, when we undergo some mistreatment from our surroundings, family, work or society, when there is a “conspiracy” against us, this can justify problems we have, it can give us some moral value, attract attention, love or compassion from

others, and exempt us from obligations and responsibility. A feature of ourselves we often try to hide is the absence of knowledge or understanding. Rather than admitting our intellectual limits, a common way to hide is to say “I am not sure”, “I cannot find the words” or “I need time to think”. It is tempting to pretend to know, to pretend understanding when it is not the case, in order not to look stupid. Lastly, we can pretend as well about our emotions and feelings: by hiding our pain, shame, anxiety and even our pleasure, because it is too painful or shameful, because we don’t want to look vulnerable, mean or else. Or brag about our indifference, our equanimity, our satisfaction when we are actually negatively affected by a given situation.

11 - Embellishment

Reality often seems painful, boring and ugly: it is disappointing. Therefore we sometimes encounter a tendency to embellish it, to make it more acceptable, interesting or pleasant, for ourselves or for others. This phenomenon is quite common in particular in the presentation of oneself, be it our thoughts, our personality, our physical appearance. The very concept of facial make-up is of this order, where we want to seduce rather than being seen as we are. Of course, there again we can legitimize such a desire, since seduction is an important part of human relation, rather pleasant, but we should nevertheless be conscious that this implies a type of hiding, a certain reluctance to show our real self, our imperfections and defects. The principle of embellishment is to produce an artificial image with the purpose of arousing admiration and interest. Some persons will modify their behavior, for example playing cute, playing dumb or smart, or plain bragging, numerous strategies lacking authenticity, in order to obtain recognition and approval, in order to please or seduce. This process of beautification or enrichment can occur as well when we want others to accept a given situation, to support or pursue a specific goal, as a tool to convince and manipulate.

12 - Myth

Throughout history, narration, telling stories, has been a major constituent of establishing identity for cultures, for families, but as well for individuals. We all know those stories that structure and define some collective or personal identity. They are recognizable through some specific characteristics. They are periodically repeated, since they are supposed to “pose” and “sell” an identity, to reinforce it through a reiteration. They emanate from an individual, a group or an institution. They are attractive, glorious, funny or captivating, since their form has been polished and refined throughout the repetitions in order to look as esthetical as possible. Mythology and history resort very much to this expedient, but so do individuals. Those myths are generally based on some factual elements, transformed in order to induce the desired effect. Thus we can sometimes encounter a story that seems objective or truthful, but the difference of style or the modification of details can render a totally different effect or

message. In this sense, reality is fabricated even though it seems to relate some factual data, since the image produced is artificial. We should bear in mind in this issue that a story always carries an implicit moral or message, which can function as a justification, as a consolation, or as a diversion. In this context we can see the importance of the “myth of self”, since through speech and narration we constitute our own existence, giving it significance and meaning. We actually create a character that we desire very much to be and we start believing we really are that person, a belief that makes us feel special, worthy and good. And the more we tell, refine and build up the story, the more we believe it.

13 - Smartness

Some people use intelligence, culture and knowledge as a strategy for avoiding truth, muddling it, transforming it, denying its evidence, as a way of lying. One classical strategy is the recourse to semantic “games” and debates, through questioning the meaning of words, by vouching for the limitation of language, regretting the lack of precision of terms, playing on ambiguities, to the extent that reality can be denied and any discussion gets bogged down in a quagmire. Some people deviate from the given issue by requiring definitions, even when a term is obvious to common sense: “But what does this word mean?”. Or they will obscure the discussion with complicated quibbles and the excessive addition of erudite elements. Another common strategy is the claim that “things are not so simple” or “reality is more complicated than that”, which can be used to deny facts or again to fabricate some complicated scheme or explanation that baffles the interlocutor, although often the author gets lost as well. And of course, the more agile and erudite is the speaker, the better he is at mystifying the content of the examined issue. The usage of paradoxical sentences, sounding deep and oracular, is as well an efficient technique, which impresses the listener, leaving him speechless. Then comes the argument of doubt, quite handy to use. “I am not sure this is the case”, “I have some doubts about what you say”, “We can never be sure of anything”, “I am not fully convinced”, different sentences expressing some dose of gratuitous skepticism. Those statements can be used even when faced with glaring evidence: they are quite difficult to answer or deal with, since they imply the need for absolute certitude, a rather impossible challenge for anyone. Although we should mention the fact that a philosophical investigation or dialogue uses those very strategies; But what makes here the difference is the intention: is the purpose of questioning evidence to make the other person think further, or is it just a strategy to confuse him? The difference is not always easy to detect, as we know from the case of Socrates, who wanted to make people think but was accused of merely trying to disconcert his interlocutors.

14 - Wishful Thinking

The wishful thinker bases his beliefs, actions, and speech on what he wishes to be true, on his subjectivity, fear, desire or else, and not on reality or objectivity. Therefore his speech is illusory, more than rational or realistic. This tendency generates an inclination to amplify, to distort, to modify, if not to completely transpose the truth. Contrary to other forms of lies, the wishful thinker is not particularly preoccupied with hiding the truth and with defending his image, or accidentally so. It is rather a vision of the world, an aspiration to improve reality, to make it more positive, more pleasant, in order to avoid pain and anxiety. His hopes are transformed into some objective fact, for instead of saying "I would like things to be this way", he states that "things are this way". A speech which of course contrasts with the way things are, with perception and reason, although he generally does not want to think about this opposition. He will resist any "message" from the world or from other persons to the extent this "message" does not fit his scheme. A good example is the dynamic of love, where we want to believe the best of our loved one, we idealize this being beyond reality, we remain blind to evidence and common sense. Another aspect of this problem, apart from not telling the truth, is the fact the wishful thinker easily reaches some specious conclusion, an irrationality that can be a source of problem for himself and others. Through confusing his desire with reality, the wishful thinker concluded unconsciously that because he wants something, this something actually exists. This makes him usually convinced of his own lies. Thus the wishful thinker lies before all to himself, with a certain dose of unconsciousness, but unless he is really insane, he cannot not realize the fantasmatic dimension of his speech. He therefore lies in the sense that he chooses to protect his illusory narrative. The wishful thinker has as well a dark counterpart, the anxious thinker, who entertains the idea that his fears constitute reality, he as well prefers to live in phantasm rather in objective reality. He as well privileges some illusory thinking, entertaining a wrong or warped perception of reality, perceiving events, situations, connections and associations between things and beings that actually don't exist, or is blind to the existing ones. It is a form of wilful misinterpretation of reality. Although we should add to this description of wishful thinking a popular theory that promotes it as a path to success: it expounds the idea that our wishes can indeed modify reality, that pretending to some "reality" can actually realize it. The wishful thinker also has a dark counterpart, the dramatic thinker, who entertains the idea that his fears are a reality; he appreciates the tragedy and the bad news that confirm his predictions. He suffers from the Cassandra syndrome and likes to repeat "I told you so". He too prefers to live in fantasy rather than in objective reality. This pessimistic form of deliberately misinterpreting reality can easily become paranoid. We find this pattern, for example, in people who go to the doctor hoping that he finds them a disease and tend to invent things in order to convince him, or in people who do everything to prove that they are worthless. This lie about oneself sometimes leads to the principle of self-fulfilling prophecy, or self-destructive prophecy, in which

someone predicts or expects a negative event and modifies his behavior based on those beliefs, in order to make the prophecy come true and this fulfills his lie.

15 - Narcissism

Narcissism is a form of mental disorder, when one is obsessed with oneself and one's own image, positively or negatively. The narcissist sees himself as either great, powerful, smart, beautiful, or on the contrary, as a poor victim, as weak, stupid and ugly. He is obnubilated with himself and thinks he is the center of the universe, which when excessive can induce a pathological dimension. The narcissist doesn't care about telling the truth or lying: he will just focus on what reassures him, pleases him, obsesses him in himself. He usually manipulates others as well in order to get some attention, to feel surrounded and seen. Others are important as well as an element of comparison, being superior or inferior to himself. The narcissist doesn't particularly care about others' judgments, he mainly focuses on his own judgment. Though he greatly enjoys telling others about himself, but more for some kind of personal satisfaction and not because he cares about what others think. Although he feeds off of the attention and adoration of others. He as well practices self-deprecation in order to fish for compliments and attention from his surroundings. But the narcissist has a mythomaniac tendency, he is ready to think or to say any lie compulsively. He lies in the sense that he will refuse any information that does not fit his obsessive scheme.

16 - Affirmation Negation

The human mind is subject to perpetual tension between a desire to tell the truth as it is, parrhesia, and a desire to lie, primarily as a self-protection mechanism. Because of this, periodically, someone will say or admit something but immediately deny it in the same sentence. Some of the classical forms of this scheme is "I would not say it is...", or "It is ... , but that is not the right word", or again "I was just joking". The speaker both wants to say and not to say what he thinks, so he produces a self-contradictory statement, in a more or less conscious way. In a way, he betrays himself, or his words betray him, and afraid of the consequences of his avowal, or fearing the image it produces, he immediately tries to catch himself by downplaying or denying those words. Another typical format of this contradiction is the use of the adversative adverb "but" (or an equivalent) after an affirmation or following a consentment like "yes", in fact negating it. It is often used in an indiscriminate fashion, where the "but" can indeed introduce a slight modification, restriction or condition to the initial statement, but often what follows the "but" comes as a rather strong rejection that would imply for example that a "yes, but..." is in reality a "no". For example the following dialogue: "Have you done the job? Yes but I have not finished it": a "yes" which can in consequence be called a lie, since the job is not done.

17 - Playing

We can lie by joking, by inventing or repeating fictitious stories, a form that Thomas Aquinas called “joyous lie”, of which the purpose is to entertain, to have fun, to produce laughter. It can still be considered a lie, for however light it may be, it remains a disguise of thought, it implies a lack of truthfulness, since we are not saying things as they are. Of course, if the purpose is totally clear, like in a novel or at the theatre for example, we can claim that the “contract” is explicit: there is no pretension to any truth, therefore it is not a lie. But a radical perspective, such as the one of Plato that wanted to ban poets from the “right city”, could object that such practices induce a certain slackness toward intellectual and moral integrity, complacency, and therefore a culture of lie. And indeed we all know how the abuse of fiction, movies or literature, can induce in someone a certain attitude of indulgence toward fantasy and phantasm, incite a degree of self-delusion, and art can very well be used as a tool for mental manipulation. Literature and cinema are tempting as a consolation, offering a better world, a fantasy world, or a more fascinating world, in order to forget a sad, boring or painful reality. Joking can offer a manner to avoid drama and look at reality in a more tranquil and objective way, but it can be used as well to derealize the world and events, in order to be less troubled or hurt, and shirk responsibilities. Some people use joking as a systematic avoidance strategy. An example is the quip, the unforeseen witticism, supposedly original, often close to the untruth. Lastly, irony is an interesting modality of lying, since it is a lie and not a lie. It states the opposite of reality, but the principle, as we know from Socrates, is to make the interlocutor reflect, to provoke his thinking, in order for him to be more rational; thus it has a more truthful purpose. This brings the idea of lying in its performative dimension, to provoke the other persons, to induce laughter, thinking, emotional reaction, puzzlement or simply to add some life or joy to a discussion. Numerous cultures portray and praise in some way deceitful characters, such as the fox, in opposition to some rather stupid other personages, as a manifestation of intelligence and therefore, indirectly, incite us to truthfulness.

18 - Bullshit

Bullshitting is a particular form of lying. Contrary to most liars, the bullshitter is not really concerned with hiding the truth, about dissimulating it: he is simply indifferent to truth. He just cares about himself, about what he wants to say, he exists through his speech: the mere act of speaking is sufficient to him, he does not care about the value of the content. Bullshitting could then be seen as an attitude, as a state of mind: it is a soliloquy rather disconnected from otherness. When someone is into bullshitting, he decides to ignore rationality, reality or objectivity, he is even oblivious to the persons in front of him . So one can say just anything, since one is not the least preoccupied with reason or objectivity. Usually the bullshitter thinks he is being sincere when pronouncing his utterances, he believes in what he says and thinks it is interesting, without the least

questioning himself. He is ready to defend his own nonsense by producing more nonsense: he is full of conviction, he has no distance with himself and his own speech, a frame of mind that makes him even less receptive to truth and reason. The practitioner of bullshit wants to speak, to declare, to state, even to prove, and he can show astonishment when others don't believe him or criticize his speech, although in general others are hardly his concern, except as a receptacle for his discourse. He just claims, no matter how senseless or absurd his idea is. He believes so much in himself that he is not ready for any criticisms, questioning or real dialogue. Here, lying is opposed to thinking, since thinking is a desire to seek and articulate the truth. The bullshitter lies because he doesn't think and does not want to think.

19 - Rhetoric

The function of language is to describe reality but as well to modify it, thus it comprises an important performative dimension, a function that can be called rhetorical. Rhetoric is a codified art, which consists in studying and practicing the art of persuasion, but is as well an intuitive and common manner to modify the content of our speech in order to influence people around us and even ourselves. This deviation from objective reality or truth can therefore be assimilated into the category of lying, for it lacks honesty, since its preoccupation is in fact to manipulate thinking in order to obtain some desired results. The codified modalities of rhetoric are often used in daily speech without realizing it, since this "art" is transmitted in a natural way. For example the euphemism, probably the most popular technique, is an innocuous word or expression used in place of one that may be found offensive or suggest something unpleasant. Willfully or not, the user wishes to downplay the content of his message, either because it contains bad news, taboo topics, avowal of bad or unpleasant actions and thoughts, etc. Or inflate the content, for instance a politician bragging about the "wonderful" consequences of a law he proposed. The goal is to modify the valence of a message, its affective quality, either to make it better or worse, lighter or more intense. A simple and classical way to do it is for example by introducing adverbs, which often are not deliberately summoned and easily go unnoticed. Such terms or any other formulation that fulfills the same function can diminish the intensity of a content, for example as "a little", "sometimes", "partially", "not always", "not necessarily", which are commonly used without even realizing it, as an attempts to sway the interlocutor. On the reverse, hyperbolic expressions will attempt to reinforce an idea, to prove the success or failure of an action, by amplifying the content in a good or bad way, with terms like "very", "wonderfully", "totally", "perfectly", "incredibly", "always", "every time", etc. Lastly, some expressions are used to create a sense of indetermination, diluting the content to the extent it says nothing, such as "it depends", "sometimes", "maybe", etc. Of course, all these terms can be used in a justified or appropriate way, but it can be considered lying when it is visibly a rhetorical trick, an avoidance strategy, even though the red line between those two modalities

might not be obvious, especially for the person that uses them, who is rather caught up in the drive of his intention. That is probably the difference between rhetoric as an art, which deliberately uses those terms, and natural rhetoric, which tends to lie to itself.

20 - Bad Faith

Bad faith is a common form of lie. It involves a lack of honesty and authenticity, a desire to negate the truth, although this desire is often not totally conscious, since one often would like to believe his own lie, or manages to somewhat believe it. It usually takes the form of denying a truth that is obvious for others, as for ourselves if we accept to refer to a minimum of common sense. It happens when someone doesn't want to recognize or to deal with something that is unpleasant to him or bothering him, out of shame, disgust, sadness, irritation, or else. Thus he chooses to obfuscate this reality, to deny it, to forget it, to disguise it and even pretend to the opposite, in spite of the absurdity of this choice and the inanity of his arguments. Distinct from psychological denial, it is a rather conscious lie, driven by a form of stubbornness in not recognizing the truth. One is usually aware of being in bad faith, either as a feeling of awkwardness, more emotional and intuitive, or in a rational mode, more conscious and deliberate, depending on the degree of self-delusion the person is capable of or used to. Bad faith is commonly used to avoid responsibility for our own actions and mistakes, and their consequences. The victim status, which is so popular since it disengages us from our own failures, is a typical manifestation of bad faith. It is one of the strongest forms of dishonesty to oneself, since the practitioner of bad faith rather knows that everyone believes it is a lie, himself included, but he still denies or pretends he does not know. His stubbornness can become limitless, displaying a gross and absurd behavior, deprived of any basic dignity, even if it means to appear as a fool. According to Sartre, bad faith occurs when we want to believe that we are who we think we are, and we lose our basic freedom by getting stuck in a fixed fabricated identity. In this sense as well, we use this "construction" to avoid taking responsibility for our own existence and real choices. Therefore we will be ready to blame others or circumstances as the real cause of our mistakes or difficulties, even when such an accusation is obviously devoid of any meaning or legitimacy. Or, when confronted with our shortcomings, we assert that it is our character or our nature.

21 - Manipulation

Manipulation is a common lie, caused by the desire to possess, to control, to influence, to take power. Here, lying usually takes a calculated and deceitful dimension. One will lie to others, but generally less to himself, since there is usually a concrete purpose and a conscious intention. It implies to tell someone what he wants to hear, to please or flatter him, to seduce him, to lure him, in order to influence his choices, actions or thinking. Manipulation has a negative connotation, since there is nothing altruistic in it

and not even the alibi of unconsciousness. Although one could claim that some persons integrate so much in their own being such an inclination that it becomes a second nature or a pathological and perverse feature of their personality. Manipulation can often be seen as a pernicious lie because it engenders harm, producing some wrong, since it takes something away from the other: his belongings, his power, his freewill, etc. The manipulator fabricates a false reality through speech, he uses rhetoric, he flatters, he uses diversion, in order to attract, to ensnare, to redirect others. He employs every trick in the book, the ends justify the means, lying is the tool used to satisfy his desire. Although we can distinguish three forms of lying through manipulation. Positive manipulation, when the manipulator has good intentions towards his "victim": his final goal is to please or satisfy the other, or make him a better person, without his willful agreement. Malicious manipulation, which displays a more sadistic type of behavior. One wants to hurt others, to make them suffer or to destroy them, he takes some kind of pleasure in doing so, out of a sense of power or esthetic glee. Self-centered manipulation, when the manipulator is just concerned about himself and his lust: his final goal is to satisfy himself. He is not concerned with pleasing or hurting the other, he is egocentric, thinking that everything is just about him and his cravings. Contrary to the first two, he is more autistic, he is blind to others, and therefore less conscious. Propaganda and advertisement are as well examples of manipulative lying, which can be called institutional manipulation.