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LITOTES, IRONY AND OTHER INNOCENT LIES: TRUSTING TRUTH STRONGER THAN NOT TRUSTING LIES

Ignace Haaz

5.0 Introduction: Why Could Litotes and Irony Be Considered as Innocent Lies?

There are many ways in which words can transmit an exaggeration of the intended idea or message, as when someone would write a generic and impersonal recommendation letter, which could mean the person hasn't succeeded to be amongst the top students or employees, or short letter of appreciation for service that seems exaggeratedly short, and would be perceived as humiliating, if a few career achievements would be mentioned, without though applauding your performances and commitment to excellence[111]. As for the interpretation of litotes, the negative connotation depends on the meticulous appreciation of the context, including cultural context, and in speech, on the intonation and emphasis, or the (lack of) musicality of the speech[112]. The ironic and

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[112] On mutual recognition see: Ignace Haaz, *The Value of Critical Knowledge, Ethics and Education*, Globethics.net Philosophy Series No. 1, expect. 2019.

albeit subversive power of exaggerations or understatements, when words are used to bring the interlocutor or the public to unveil a hidden truth, comes close to certain forms of lies, that are often expressed out of sympathy for the auditor, but not for any egoistical interest as of profiting from cheating, or abusing the credibility of a institutional function (as corruption) or reckless abuse of individuals' trust.

There seem to be a world in which innocent half-truth can be expressed in such a way that they lie in a greatest history or narrative, where direct and harsh truth are unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence, because truth is not set as the historical value per se. Let's remind us what S. Kierkegaard showed in his master work on irony in a detailed way: 'according to the Greek view philosophy relates to history in its untruth, as eternal life to the temporal according to the Greek and the antique view in general. [...] eternal life began when one drank to the river Lethe in order to forget the past.[113],

In the following text we would like to present the philosophical discussion on untrusting lies, which introduces a space for an innocent lie understood as figurative manipulation of the speech: a poetic trope that we would argue could not only be generously used to help us tolerating our sometime deceiving human condition—which is global and universally ours, that of the finitude of human capacity of knowledge and ethical action—but also to maximise our capacity for knowledge formation and adaptation to values.

Concepts formation and communication relates to a collective interplay of different interiorized images, before it comes to the exterior in some well-chosen expressions, in self-mastered way; their origin remain in a mentally latent process of selection of content and ideas, as possible solutions, in a games of compatible propositions. This

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[113] Kierkegaard, Søren (1989): *The Concept of Irony/Schelling Lecture Notes*, Part I, The Position of Socrates Viewed as Irony, p. 10, New Jersey, Princeton Uni. Press, transl. Howard Hong, 1989.

unconscious material of our life relies on our capacity to identify and quickly switch between different spans, that enable us to focus on complex sets data, all depending very much on figurative manipulations, that should not be confounded with blameworthy and misleading representations.

5.1 Trusting Truth Stronger than Not Trusting Lies: Is There Such Thing That of a Total Loss of Credibility: *Falsum in Omnium*?

If to some extend lying is part of human nature, trusting truth should always be considered stronger, all things considered, than refusing to give credit to misleading information:

> 'There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true[114].'

But part of a story may be related to questionable episodes of self-evident statements. We find by the Greek fabulist and storyteller Aesop, that liars when they speak the truth are not believed in the famous parable of *The Boy who Cried 'Wolf'*. The story is about:

> a boy tending the sheep 'who would continually go up to the embankment and shout, "Help, there's a wolf!" The farmers would all come running only to find out that what the boy said was not true. Then one day there really was a wolf, but when the boy shouted they didn't believe him and no one came to his aid[115].'

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[114] Kierkegaard, Sören (1995): *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard's Writings, vol. 16, New Jersey, Princeton Uni. Press, transl. and ed. by Howard Hong and Edna Hong.

[115] *Aesop's Fables*, The Boy who Cried 'Wolf', Fable 151, translation by Laura Gibbs, Oxford UP, Oxford : 2002/2008, p.78, [Chambry 318, Perry 210].

This story made the meaning so clear that 'to cry wolf', is defined as 'to give a false alarm', and no doubt about is allowed about more circumstantial appreciation of the story. Let's imagine as thought experiment, that various consequences could follow in similar situations. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus* i.e. that 'he who lies once is not to be believed twice', follows the first configuration. This obviously self-evident statement is valid but we could define a second configuration where, under some conditions 'to cry wolf' would not mean that for others all my words have lost practical significance and value, because of a single lie. There are reasons to believe this second path more pragmatic and more ethical (charitable), as we can show below.

Anyone who believes in the proverbial warning, and who nevertheless lies, will conclude that the predicted state does not happen, that lying ultimately has no such drastic consequences for two reasons, as S. Dietz shows in her important essay on the value of lies[116]. First, it is not the case that because of a first lie, a second lie should produce a state of being banned of any future communication process, because this could happen only under condition that the second lie is eventually detected, and doesn't remain unrecognized, as many lies are likely to stay. Even a discovered lie usually does not lead to the fact that in fact none of my propositions would be believed; for the audience can generally well differentiate between statements which may be related to the particular interest to which my lie should serve, and other expressions which remain unaffected.

Although it is an essential property of the lie to be audience dependant, we could first imagine that as for shame, lie supposes only an ideal audience: developing a disposition to consider lying a social misbehaviour, and although a concrete audience could always be determinant to assess lie as a token, lie as a type of ethically blameworthy behaviour would depend on other ethical social types of

[116] Dietz, Simone (2002): *Der Wert der Lüge*, Paderborn: mentis Verl.

disposition: a network of friendly, love oriented, social behaviours. Lies should not be straightforwardly blamed in such a way that trustworthiness would appear as an absolute state that everybody understands and incorporates in the same way, on the contrary, although nobody is pleased to be fooled and cheated, social life is a subjective construction and it could take a system of trials and errors before one masters a truthful behaviour – opposed to lying, in his domain of family, social, professional, cultural, religious practices. As another fable of Aesop the *Monkeys and the Two Men* shows, strong motives for not telling the truth might as well exist in a given social circle, and it is important to diversify social circles of competencies in order to be immune of social pressure against a set of values that praises truthfulness as central ethical value. As Dietz correctly writes:

> 'the mistrust of a discovered lie is not total in the real world. A discovered lie first leads to the observation that the liar is following certain aims, and second that the liar doesn't expect his project to be discovered therefore he is ready to mask it under a lie. But no hyperbolic doubt, no desperate doubt about the whole world as experience of losing the common ground is likely to happen[117]'.

5.2 Brief Philosophical History of the Argument of the Misuse of the Language and the Lie in the Classical Religious Context

5.2.1 The Misuse of Language in Relation to the Unity and Purity of the Soul vs. the Modern View

In the classical religious philosophical deontological (duty based

[117] Dietz, Simone, *Der Wert der Lüge*, Paderborn: mentis Verl., p. 11. Cf. Amadou Sadjo *L'interdiction du mensonge chez Kant*; Université de Montréal, Mémoire de Master, 2010; http://www.globethics.net/gel/4369959

ethical) integration of Christian morality, lying entails not only that a moral duty is violated under condition of the lack of respect of others freedom, with I. Kant[118], not to be exposed to the possible set-back of interest consequent to a lie; this understanding is complex, as it relates first to the religious/metaphysical belief that there is a unity and purity of the soul, and second to the notion of the integration of the lie to morality as part of social ethics[119]. Lie finally can be analysed as part of a doctrine of law with Kant. Kant morally condemns the lie because in itself, lies constitute the most serious violation of the duty of man to himself: sincerity.

The man who is not sincere, that is to say who deliberately says the opposite of what he thinks not only goes against the finality inherent in the communication, but also, by lying man renounces his personality. By renouncing his personality, man ceases to be a true man, that is to say, in whom thinking and saying overlap, he becomes a semblance of man, he who deliberately says the opposite of what he thinks[120]. This line of argument goes back to St. Augustin (421): *Enchiridion ad Laurentium sive de fide, spe et saritate liber unus* ; (420): *Contra mendacium*.

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[118] Kant, I., & Wood, A. (1797/1996). On a supposed right to lie from philanthropy. In: Mary Gregor (Ed.), *Practical Philosophy* (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, pp. 605-616). Cambridge: UP. The central text being: Metaphysics of Morals (1797), divided in the Doctrine of Rights and the Doctrine of Virtues. See also: Paton, An Alleged Right to Lie, *Kant-Studien* 45 (l953-54).

[119] See the very detailed presentation of these aspects by Carson: Thomas L. Carson, Thomas L. (2010): *Kant and the Absolute Prohibition against Lying*, Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press.

[120] Augustinus, Aurelius (421): *Enchiridion ad Laurentium sive de fide, spe et saritate liber unus.* https://www.augustinus.it/latino/enchiridion/enchiridion.htm, Augustinus, Aurelius (420): *Contra mendacium*, all Latin and English texts can be found on https://www.augustinus.it

When we sketch the philosophical historical discussion on truthfulness, one need to introduce Benjamin Constant's controversy compared to Kantian's rigorist view on an unconditional duty of truthfulness. Constant shows that duty to not lie should not be under any condition true, as for example if one would help a refugee to find a shelter, in the context of a totalitarian regime against a duty of solidarity to signal fugitives[121]. One could fail to realize the duty toward one self to live in dignity, but accept it to avoid 'larger evils'. In some cases a principle cannot be applied without in the first place clarifying intermediary principles as the no harm principle that should be considered prior to a right to truth.

In late modernity, there is a second step back from the background of the *(ideal) audience* dependant characterisation of truthfulness or the value of truth in the discourse. We find the argument of the *misuse of the language* as a view that draws the lie out of the moral framework (as morally neutral) on our cognitive capacity of dreaming, of a rhetorical embellishing of words and of an interesting *poetic illusion*, that is a poetic capacity, different from the general and main aim of language. The original idea is that we could imagine some liars as being involved in an activity that certainly uses the language in non-common way, in a ludic and perhaps private way, that could be seen as creative and imaginative, but not focusing on wrongful intentions aimed at fooling others in order to extract some benefit or inflict some prejudice

[121] « Le principe moral que dire la vérité est un devoir, s'il était pris de manière absolue et isolée, rendrait toute société impossible [...]. Dire la vérité est un devoir. Qu'est-ce qu'un devoir ? L'idée de devoir est inséparable de celle de droits : un devoir est ce qui, dans un être, correspond aux droits d'un autre. Là où il n'y a pas de droits, il n'y a pas de devoirs. Dire la vérité n'est donc un devoir qu'envers ceux qui ont droit à la vérité. Or nul homme n'a droit à la vérité qui nuit à autrui. » Contant, B. (1797): *Des réactions politiques*, quoted from: Lequan, Mai (2002): « Existe-t-il un droit de mentir ? Actualité de la controverse Kant/Constant », *Études* 2004/2 (Tome 400), p. 140.

or harm. In the next section we will present this view of the misuse of the language in an extra-moral sense more in details, as a linguistic hermeneutic view and question ourselves whether it still makes sense to speak about misuse of language and how far the term lie is appropriate if nobody *else* is being fooled.

We find in Bok (1978/1980) and Dietz (2002) that it might not be so easy to just say that we could put under brackets the ideal audience in a communication process because of 'the domino theory of the lie' that states, on the contrary that lie cannot be morally neutral. The direct consequence of a lie is the destruction of the public trust. But this view doesn't suppose, as Dietz observes it correctly, that there should be a strict interdiction of lie. There could be 'a standard of acceptability of the lie, in at least one single occasion and as case of urgency[122]' (Bok 1978, 1980; Dietz, 2002). Depending on what we understand by public sphere, trust in the public sphere takes different connotations, depending on whether we define the public common ground on a liberal background of benefit related collaboration (as with Locke), on mutual recognition and a community based understanding of human activities (with Hegel), on a common good or virtue based framework (Aristotle, Macintyre), a utility based understanding of public interest (Bentham, Mill), or on an unconscious Will-to-Live (Schopenhauer) etc.

We are particularly interested in the modern philosophical ethical (but not necessarily religious) view of social life elaborated on the notion of mutual recognition, for the obvious reason that it could help us to define the idea reconciliation of the self. Mutual recognition is founding reconciliation, based on an ethical understanding of the personal identity ('of duties toward one self', 'Pflichten gegen sich selbst'). It opens the perspective to draw a relation between the topic of the lie, self-abusing the self and helps to realise that reconciliation is not

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[122] Bok, Sissela (1978), *Lügen: Vom täglichen Zwang zur Unaufrichtigkeit*, Reinbeck, 1980.

possible without presupposing a clarification of the difference between both the lie and self-abusing.

This optic shows that personal identity and integrity requires for preservation some rational capacities, and relies on the crucial importance of social recognition for the development. Lying, we now understand, could be considered as rational only under certain strict conditions, the limits in which the liar doesn't run the risk of being deceived by his lie, which brings back the key notion of an ideal audience, that is the standard to evaluate the level of acceptability, in relation to the social construction of the framework of mutual recognition and esteem. Kant refers to the weakness of the capacity of understanding and grounds the modern perspective on the lie, in slightly different ways, in the *Doctrine of rights* and the *Doctrine of virtues*, where harmless consequences also qualify for being called lies, giving a rather harsh connotation to the word[123].

Hegel produces a social ethical structure of life, built on the circle of the proto-ethical understanding of life in the family, and explains the basic structure of rights, that are individually interdepending in nature and how rights are related to self-development of our capacities and ethical values in time. Let us come back to why the development of talents is important in the context of the lie.

There are two perspectives in Kant's *Groundwork* toward the ethical obligation not to lie and toward the limit up to which omitting to develop all our rational capacities, including the maxim of not to lie, could be understandable, because although I cannot will a talentless world rationally, there are no rational situation where all human beings should be expected to develop all possible talents at the same time. Let's briefly clarify Kant's view on why lie should be forbidden on the ground of the *categorical imperative* and the moral law, and then see the *aporia* of limitations in 'time, interest, energy' to develop my talents as Johnson

[123] Kant, I. (1797), ibid.

and Cureton (2017) pointed out in their important analysis of Kant's moral views on the lie[124].

Although the lie could be understood either as duties toward one self (as we will see extensively below), it can be also seen as duty toward others, and as a *perfect duty* which corresponds to the rule: 'not to act in ways resulting in logical or practical contradictions when universalised'. For example, we have a perfect duty not to steal, since the maxim 'It is permissible to steal' is contradictory as universal law[125]. In the same way, if we understand the lie on the model of failing to keep a promise, then it becomes obvious for Kant that lies can be defined as his rule-based consequentialist ethics requires, - as any maxim or rule, by the condition that it meets the capacity of being universalised in the form of a *universal law*, as the essential condition of what Kant calls the *categorical imperative* (G 4:421[126]). As Johnson *et alii* point out:

> 'The maxim of lying whenever it gets you what you want generates a contradiction once you try to combine it with the universalized version that all rational agents must, by a law of nature, lie when doing so gets them what they want.' (Johnson, ibid.)

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[124] Johnson, Robert and Cureton, Adam, 'Kant's Moral Philosophy', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/kant-moral/>.

[125] 'Everyone must admit that a law, if it is to hold morally, i.e. as the ground of an obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity; that the command: thou shalt not lie, does not just hold for human beings only, as if other rational beings did not have to heed it; and so with all remaining actual moral laws; hence that the ground of the obligation here must not be sought in the nature of the human being, or in the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori solely in concepts of pure reason'. Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (2012), Preface, 4:389, Cambridge University Press, p.5.

[126] Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:421, ibid.

On the contrary, if we introduce, instead of the paradigm of the promise keeping the framework of the human being as rational agent that is developing his rational capacities, that are not all given a priori and put into practice in an ideal context, but pointing out a situation where some of these capacities lack either time, energy or interest:

> 'we can easily conceive of adopting a maxim of refusing to develop any of our talents in a world in which that maxim is a universal law of nature. It would undoubtedly be a world more primitive than our own, but pursuing such a policy is still conceivable in it. However, it is not, Kant argues, possible to rationally will this maxim in such a world.' [127]

This Kantian interpretation is slightly different from self-development seen as based on some talents that grow under circumstances of a divine grace, and that are correlated to the creation of some new responsibilities. We find in the Gospel of Matthew 14-30 the idea of a process of development of responsibilities and capacities:

> 'You knew that I reap harvest where I did not sow and gather crops where I did now scatter seeds? Well, you should have deposited my money in the bank and I would have received it with interest when I returned'.

This situation entails the new challenge of keeping one's promise, and not to lie or hid one's responsibility, knowing that the situation has changed; development is organically given, one doesn't need to make a choice about what type of development one would prefer; this situation is well described by the father James Alberione (1884-1971), founder of the Society of St Paul:

> 'Where there is talent, there is responsibility as well. As the talents grow day by day, that is, as graces increase, so does our

[127] Johnson, ibid.

> responsibility. It does become imperative to progress and no stagnate.'

For Kant's explanation, the reason why it is not rational to think a world where rational beings voluntarily fail to develop some of their capacities is that it is not rational not to develop all possible capacities and to aim at a less perfect existence, if we would have the choice to get a fully perfect existence. Either we need judicious picking of the talents that best suit our situation given the limits of our concrete living conditions, or suppose that we are rationally required to develop all our talents, which would join the former view that development is organically given (by God's grace):

> 'Then, there seems to be no need to go further [..] to show that refusing to develop talents is immoral. Given that, insofar as we are rational, we must will to develop capacities, it is by this very fact irrational not to do so.' [128]

We see that Kant's explanation of the immorality of the lie, that is heavily based on our duty to develop our rational capacity needs some additional conceptual clarifications on the unconscious subjective historical drive, that makes the whole process a process of development in tension, and also a process that can be transcended and overcome under some precise conditions. We need to introduce here the poetic dimension of this unconscious process of subjective (individual and collective) drives.

5.2.2 Earth Ethics as New Way to Reconcile the Self with a New Kairos in an Non-Christian Way with Nietzsche

One of the original propositions developed by Nietzsche, apart from his sophisticated philosophy of rhetoric and poetry, is to transpose a

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[128] Johnson, ibid. Reference to J. Alberione: http://loveofstpaul.blogspot.ch/2009/03/saturday-march-21-2009.html

global ethics, that is an ethics of the world related to theological and political affiliations, into a *geo-philosophy* or an *earth ethics* (Schapiro, 2016)[129]. Reconciliation of ourselves should first be understood as philosophy of the future, or positioning ourselves toward 'great events', transformative ways of transcending ourselves, our networks of conventional and statist ideals, into new 'great events', in inhabiting the earth in dynamical ways (one requires mobility in any possible forms) (ibid). Earth is the centre, of an ethics of the future, cultivating an openness, and displacing the way thinking in petty environments serves conservative power balances, hostile to radical transformations of our earthly habitation. The garden is a space that promotes a hedonistic happiness where, as Schapiro shows: 'the dominant themes are the shaping and tending of the natural, with a view to produce a rewarding result as well as the enjoyment of an earthly site[130]'. The garden is related to the innocence of the being, as all human beings have been given a natural place for living in the Garden of Eden, but Nietzsche 'rewrites this narrative and its topos without God or sin' (ibid, p.136). 'Garden happiness' is not an apology of a sensualist ethics, but a place to think the futurity of the human ethos, as becoming without debt ('Unschuld des Werdens'). Nietzsche overcomes the sensual understanding of the garden in *Zarathustra*: ''The Three Evils': 'Sensuality: for free hearts innocent and free, the garden-happiness of the earth, all futures' exuberance of thanks to the now', as retroactive effect of the future on the present, as if the future was in preparation and that some sight of the prospective time were given in the present (ibid. p.135).

The historical role of the garden to form modern aesthetics, not only as living poetry and place of natural harmony, but as ethical laboratory

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[129] Schapiro, Gary (2016): *Nietzsche's Earth: Great Events, Great Politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[130] Schapiro, ibid., pp. 150-1.

for an ethics of taste, an ethics of early education, an ethics of good life as healthy embodiment of earthly energies through physical activities, and psycho-therapy through all sorts of repetitive tasks related to gardening, philosophy of climate and humoral medicine, philosophy of the seasons, world transformation as earthly self-transmutation of the garden, economic ethics as place where we learn how to serve the place where we live in simplicity and authenticity, etc.

Part of this reconciliation programme with the earth and the multidisciplinary value related cultivation of our garden relates to an inner garden, an interior development of the self. Sovereignty of the human will over nature should be viewed not only as a pluralistic method for civilizing natural forces, but also as work of the reason on the behalf of reason (Schapiro, p. 162), to shape new metanarratives, to find new *kairos*, new peaceful realisations of the self that builds concepts expected to last for centuries. Nietzsche is critical of the early apocalyptic Christian invention of St. Paul, of the faith being disappointed and turned rigorously to embrace a religion started out of an unworldly foundation, and that Christian faith should ultimately be found in the strong motive of a redemption ethics starting a new world history. But it is far from clear why we could not find a common ground, between both the Christian and Nietzsche's way of realising reconciliation, since after all, this is all about reconciliation. Let's go back to the notion of self-development and see how it could be related to a poetic earth related narrative that would as well secure some important aspects of the heritage of a Christian ethics.

5.2.3 Self-Development in a Hermeneutically Given Unconscious Poetical Heritage and our Given Pragmatic Transcendence

The framework of a normative oriented transcendental hermeneutic is based on the romantic understanding of poetry (as for example in a garden poetry, or an earth poetry, etc.), where the poetic dimension of language is not produced by learned elites but by a largely unconscious

cultural, socio-psychological background of life on earth. This poetic concept of language was first described by Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). In order to overcome some shortfalls of this framework, and end up opposing Christian reconciliation, as redemption related and Nietzsche's redemption as forming a prehistory of reconciliation, which integrates a deep cultural ethical dimension, one could find in the transcendence and in a pragmatic turn of the language, a common point of relation and mutual accommodation, as Karl-Otto Apel has interestingly suggested.

The first men were poets by necessity, says Vico, who thinks the images of a given language are not essentially spiritual inventions of writers and philosophers but results of concrete needs of the people (Apel, Vico, p. 345)[131]. This non humanistic conception of the language, which gives a deep psycho-sociological axiology to our values, doesn't depend only on formal universal rules, but as well on concrete means to appropriate ethical standards by cultural communities, as Nietzsche also sees by the medium of his earth ethics. But this experimental position should be enlarged by a pragmatic ethical layer, that opens a dimension of transcendence and ethical values on the ground of this popular knowledge that we all share, and this is given in mostly one culture, related to one language at a time but is open to as many languages and cultures as possible, by the simple fact that the spiritual images of a

[131] „in der Topik, Metaphorik, Allegorik der humanistischen Bildungspoesie und -Rhetorik die humane und schon auf den aufgeklärten Verstand bezogenen Endphase eines ungeheuren und wilden, aber schöpferischen Phantaisezeitalters [...], einer Zeit, in der all Verhaltensweisen des Menschen: Recht, Gesittung, Kriegsführung, Wirtschaft, Religion durchaus dichterisch waren". Quoted from Woidich, Stefanie (2007): *Vico und die Hermeneutik: Eine rezeptionsgeschichtliche Annäherung*, K&N, note 1062, p. 305. See also: Pender, E. E. 'Plato on Metaphors and Models' in: *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions*, G. R. Boys-Stones (ed.), OUP, 2003.

language are also excellent candidates for cultural intermediation, as bridges across cultures.

5.2.4 Philosophical Correction of Civil Use of Language and the Poetic Language of Concepts 'Begriffsdichtung'

There is a first distinction, found in early Modern philosophy, between conceptual language and rhetorical or poetic language, as we find in Locke's philosophical opposition between the two meanings of words for human being: 'a civil use' and a 'philosophical use': the first being related to the communication of ideas by the means of words, 'in the context of ordinary civil life' in different societies where human being are related one to the other; the second use of words is a true philosophical use of words, as one should do if one would want 'to give precise notions of things'. Human spirit should certainly use this second type of language 'to express in general propositions truth that are beyond doubt and on which the mind could rely and get satisfied with in his quest for truth[132]'.

Knowledge which is a conceptual knowledge, constructed by a philosophical use of words, is opposed to the ordinary language and rhetorical or poetical language that certainly embellish, persuade but that needs philosophical corrections to be reliable[133]. If we draw an analogy between the rhetorical use of language open to conceptual and philosophical correction, such as we find in Locke's antinomy, and the fact that lies are to some extent part of human nature, then the definition of lying could be essentially found as related to the intention to deceive ('the untruthfulness' and 'addressee' conditions). Mahon expresses it

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[132] Locke, J. *Philosophical Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Ch. IX, §3. Oxford: UP, Oxford World's Classics, 1689/2008.

[133] See: my PhD thesis on the various ways poetic and metaphorical languages are understood by modern and romantic philosophers. Haaz, Ignace (2006): *Nietzsche et la métaphore cognitive*, Coll. Epistémologie et philosophie des sciences, L'Harmattan, pp. 119, 84.

below, in his definition and the four systematic characteristics of a lie:

> 'To lie = def.: to make a believed-false statement to another person with the intention that the other person believes that statement to be true.
> […] there are at least four necessary conditions for lying. First, lying requires that a person make a statement (statement condition). Second, lying requires that the person believe the statement to be false; that is, lying requires that the statement be untruthful (untruthfulness condition). Third, lying requires that the untruthful statement be made to another person (addressee condition). Fourth, lying requires that the person intend that that other person believe the untruthful statement to be true (intention to deceive the addressee condition)[134].'

On the contrary, if we follow with Blumenberg the idea that some metaphorical figures are better ways for making truth statements than the language of propositions, we need to consider poetry self-deceiving as ordinary language, but contrary to ordinary language it is not that it is loaded with ideological fallacies and misleading simplifications. Poetical figures are self-deceiving because of the incommunicability of some emotions, without the system of a standardized and well accepted language. But metaphors can also be seen as an appropriate linguistic vehicle for that what is given under metaphors and rhetorical tropes, which is the nearest to the truth (and the farthest from ideologies). We come close to a second distinction, found in Romantic philosophy, where philosophical knowledge is related to a language of concepts that belongs to the domain of the poetry. Metaphysical understanding of

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[134] Mahon, James Edwin, 'The Definition of Lying and Deception', The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/lying-definition/>.

ethical emotions belongs on one side to the domain of our emotional determinations; on the other side it is essentially 'religious edification' and metaphysic as art that opens the creative space of 'the art of a poetry of concepts', and where 'metaphysic has nothing to do either as religious or artistic with the truth in itself' following Schlimgen[135]. If as network of tropes and metaphors philosophical language should be essentially related to our emotional capacity, not to form culpable intentions to deceive others by telling untruth statements, but on the contrary, to tell the most profound truth on value of life, given the premise that the person who does such 'lies' does a statements, that are far more accurate when it comes to form metaphysical values, than non-metaphorical statements. Then, such 'lies', would in fact not qualify anymore for being ethically lies, provided that the person who 'lies' believe the statement to be truth, and there is an optimistic bet that the addressee shares this sophisticated poetic communication.

5.3 The Romantic Logic, Epistemology of the Lie and the Value of Games and Spans for Knowledge Formation and Values

Our mental life, we could say our deep neuropsychology, seeks patterns, but many are different from the evidence of causal relations. A central concept of the Romantic theory of knowledge is probably based on this simple observation[136]. The general strategy is to unveil the affective ground of an artistic and scientific creativity, as we introduced it in the previous paragraph, distinct from the cult of truth as *the*

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[135] See Hans Blumenberg (2010): *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, Transl. Robert Savage, Cornell University Press. Schlimgen, E. (2000): 'Logik' in: *Nietzsche Handbuch*, Henning Ottmann (Ed.), Stuttgart: Metzler Verl. p. 276.

[136] Main representatives of this Romantic tradition are Neokantian Schopenhauerian philosophers, but we find evidence of similar views as well by: Vico, Humboldt and Gerber. Cf. also *Nietzsche et la métaphore cognitive*, ibid.

supposed key epistemic value.

The assumption is that there is blindness due to lack of attention, or lack of mental focus due to changes, when we analyse the psychological cognitive conditions of knowledge formation, which are proceeding in very conventional and repetitive ways. Romantic knowledge formation on the contrary reconnects with a subjective grounding of our concepts. It is subjective because logical categories: as identity and non-contradiction belong essentially to mental life, before getting a practical transcription in social interactions. Non-contradiction, that is based on a subjectively constituting experience (as opposed to a purely subjective or solipsist notion of knowledge) should also always be based on a correspondence theory of truth, that states that there is a semantic pretention of truth, and there is no denial of the value of the opposition between true and lie, truth and contradiction, as we presented it in what we called the Modern view. How far could truth be seen as redundant? If we follow the proposition of Nietzsche, in his *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, we would find ourselves totally in the other extreme, where any truth statement is virtually redundant:

> 'Every word immediately becomes a concept, inasmuch as it is not intended to serve as a reminder of the unique and wholly individualized original experience to which it owes its birth, but must at the same time fit innumerable, more or less similar cases—which means, strictly speaking, never equal—in other words, a lot of unequal cases. Every concept originates through our equating what is unequal[137]'.

We understand in comparable views, found in the Romantic logic, that concepts doesn't derive rationally, as logically founding proposition, in some cases. Let's note that the regulative notion of

[137] Nietzsche, F. (1873/1976): *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, Walter Kaufmann's transl., The Portable Nietzsche, Viking Press, 46.

logical identity or of logical non-contradiction doesn't necessarily lose all meaning, on the contrary we would be tempted to say, the main finding of Romantic epistemology is in showing us how observation is key in order to find mnemonic solutions to problems, including how we understand and transmit concepts in ways similar to Simonides of Ceos (c.556-c.468 B.C.E.)[138].

Idris Aberkane uses the concept of a 'span', of the width of human hand: the distance from the end of the thumb to that of the little finger, to represent the utility to base our method of valuation and knowledge formation, on sensual means of ordering them and representing knowledge subjectively. As for mnemonic, truth has its utility but truth needs to be placed in linguistic packaging that helps us to make the best use of it.

There is a great interest to discover an autonomous world of thought and a subjectively bound world of representations, under the conditions: 1) that a non-communicability of subjective representations, or the untruthfulness of images need to be excluded (otherwise if it is not possible anymore to figure out the utility of the representation or the 'lie' if we use it to cheat, and risk to lose the trust of others)[139]; 2) secondly there should be an epistemic value given to the interplay of research formation and results, and more generally to *the model of a game* as the modus operandi of scientific knowledge formation, by opposition to an industrialized process of knowledge and values, based

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[138] On Simonides see: Cicero, De Oratore, II, lxxxvi. The greatest opponent to this view is G. Frege, by showing a=a is different from a=b, in the same way as 3x4=12 differs from Mark Twain = Samuel Clemens. Some identity statements need further enquiries in order to confirm the identity; therefor there are different semantic relations to explain significance and logic is not purely formal as for Kant, but it relates to knowledge formation and concepts, without extending concepts to subjectively based forms.

[139] See Schlimgen, E. (2000): Logik in: *Nietzsche Handbuch*, Henning Ottmann (Ed.), Metzler Verl. p. 276.

on well-known models. 3) There are strong evidences in neuropsychology and cognitive sciences that education and research should move on the ground of a poetic interplay of concepts, what some call 'neuro-ergonomics', a way to study the brain at work, to open and liberate the human nervous system and the brain, in our understanding of emerging knowledge and values, the unveiling of blind spots and the highlighting of unexpected springs of knowledge formation and ethical values adaptation and resistance.

The poetic and mnemonic power to enhance performance and expand capacities is real. New capacities to produce and cherish knowledge in interaction are to be explored. A knowledge that includes sagacity is vital, because poetic knowledge and values show the priority to focus on the dynamic interplay, in a time when the temptation of trusting artificial intelligence, automated systems is emerging, and when moralizing educational failures is greater than ever, because the quantitative expansion of knowledge is itself becoming problematic. After hundred thousand years of evolution of the brain and our capacity to build on mental representations – our inner poetry capacity, we still have the temptation to ignore it, for the sake of being more scientific.

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