



## INTRODUCTION

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This dossier includes a selection of papers based on some of the presentations delivered at the second edition of the *Braga Colloquium in the History of Moral and Political Philosophy*, which is an international conference organized every year by the Centre for Ethics, Politics and Society at the University of Minho. The purpose of the Colloquium is to promote the study of the tradition of political and moral philosophy, with a special interest in understanding how its legacy has contributed to shape our institutions, culture and beliefs and thus how it can contribute to tackle the challenges our societies are facing today. To this end, every year a specific theme is chosen for the conference by taking in consideration the current political, economic and social situation in Europe (and beyond).

Taking into account the great attention that has been recently given, in the media and public sphere, to the so called issue of “Post-Truth”, the second edition of the Colloquium (which took place on the 12th and 13th of January 2016) was dedicated to the theme of “Lying and Hypocrisy in Politics and Morality.” It is a topic that, touching upon such philosophically significant concepts as truth, verisimilitude, authenticity, intention, etc., has been extensively discussed in the

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history of Western thought, from a variety of ethical and political perspectives. Furthermore, it is a topic specially relevant today as it points to the core of some key issues and problems in contemporary political science and philosophy, as they are faced by the challenge of dealing with the deep transformations our democratic regimes are undergoing, such as their transmutations into ‘audience democracies’, the crisis of representativity, or the advent of populism. Among them we can mention: the ethical value of citizenship, the meaning of integrity in the public sphere, the uses and abuses of hypocrisy in political life, the role and nuances of political deceit and the need for compromises, or the role and scope of political representation.

Having chosen the question lying and hypocrisy in morality and politics as the main theme of the conference, we decided to invite as keynote speaker Professor Ruth Grant, who published in 1987 a path-breaking work on this topic titled *Hypocrisy and Integrity: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Ethics of Politics* (University of Chicago Press). Besides presenting innovative insights into the moral and political thought of Machiavelli and Rousseau, this book provided a significant contribution in placing the role of hypocrisy in politics under a new perspective: namely, it shows how political hypocrisy, under certain circumstances, does not necessarily compromise the value of integrity and can even lead to better outcomes. On the other hand, blind allegiance to an ideal of absolute moral purity and integrity can lead to disastrous political consequences (as the radicalism of the French revolutionaries like Robespierre, just to mention an obvious case, shows). In this respect, as the lucid analysis of Prof. Grant reveals, not even Rousseau completely ruled out the use of hypocrisy, despite the fact that he has been traditionally considered the prototype of the purist, the rigorous defender of the ideal of integrity and authenticity.

For this and other reasons, Prof. Grant’s seminal work has inspired and influenced many scholars in political theory and several related fields, some of whom have participated in this conference.

In her keynote address, which we publish here as the first contribution to our edited section of the journal, Prof. Grant has retaken the topic of lying and hypocrisy in politics and morality and revisited it in the light of the current political and cultural context. If in the above mentioned book she defended the

idea that a certain kind of hypocrisy can have positive effects in politics, now her attention moves on the “dangers that arise from cynicism and indifference to the truth”, on what she sees as an “attack on the value of truthfulness itself” (p. 99 of this issue). Today in effect we witness the consolidation of a new and dangerous attitude towards lying—what she calls a ‘new lying’ (p. 105 of this issue)—which seems to make the same distinction between truth and lies, fact and fiction, useless, or better irrelevant. All that matters today, in the context of an increasing polarization, is to hold a position, accepting all that comes from one’s own part and disregarding all that comes from the opposite part. But, as she points out, lying, even if under certain circumstances can be necessary in politics, always comes at a high cost, since it undermines three basic conditions that make democracy possible: trust, accountability, and a shared sense of reality.

The remaining papers of this special section of the journal deal with the question of lying and hypocrisy from a variety of angles and theoretical approaches. They can be divided into two groups: those more historically oriented, which provide new readings of canonical theorists, mostly but not only from the western tradition (Kautyla, Niccolò Machiavelli, David Hume and Jeremy Bentham) and those with a more contemporary perspective, which focus on the question of publicity and hypocrisy in public deliberation. The last paper of the first group (by Kathrin Bouvot) provides a comprehensive overview on the positions of a large number of Western thinkers (both from the past and the present), who have provided key insights on lying and hypocrisy in politics and morality. Because of that it works as a link between the two groups of papers.

In what follows, we provide a brief overview of these papers:

In “Political Pragmatism and Ethics in Kautyla’s *Arthashastra*: Contradiction or Complementarity?”, Kankana Saikia and Shreya Bhattacharya reflect on the possibilities to justify political pragmatism on ethical grounds relying on the renowned treatise the *Arthashastra*, written by Kautilya, advisor to Emperor Chandragupta Maurya (c. 317-293 B.C.E). Although much of the Western political tradition has remained oblivious to Kautilya’s contribution to *realpolitik*, this article clarifies to what extent his treatise provides an original and fruitful perspective on the dilemmas between ethical goals and the imperatives of political pragmatism.

The next paper, “A contingência da política e a necessidade da hipocrisia em *O Príncipe* de Maquiavel” (*The contingency of politics and the necessity of hypocrisy in Machiavelli’s The Prince*) by Albano Pina, analyses Machiavelli’s use of hypocrisy in order to bring a new light on his much discussed distinction between moral and political ‘virtù’. Pina tries to demonstrate that Machiavelli’s endorsement of hypocrisy is a part of a broader strategy he devised to allow the Prince to cope with the unpredictable effects of time, symbolized by the metaphor of ‘*Fortuna*’.

Alexandra Abranches’ paper “Can Hypocrisy Be a Virtue? Hume on the Morality of Princes” deals with the question of hypocrisy in the moral and political philosophy of David Hume. Through an extensive analysis of Hume’s major works, Abranches shows that Hume is able to provide a moral justification of the use of hypocrisy in the public sphere. Because of that, she concludes, his defence of hypocrisy is superior to that provided by classical realists such as Thucydides, or Machiavelli, as it is not predicated on a neat separation between morals and politics.

Benjamin Bourcier’s “Rescuing Politics from Lying and Hypocrisy: Utility and Truth in Jeremy Bentham’s Thought” explains Bentham’s opposition to lying and hypocrisy from the perspective of its incompatibility with the utilitarian principle of utility and the value of truth, which are the two pillars on which his utilitarian philosophy rests. Bourcier’s analysis proceeds in two steps: first, he reconstructs how, according to Bentham, public officials need to internalize the utilitarian code and comply with it out of sincerity; second, he reconstructs Bentham’s argument in favour of the liberty of press (despite its possible abuses), which he understands as a basic condition for a liberal government, since it permits to scrutinize and criticize the activity of public officials.

The next paper is Kathrin Bouvot’s “The Role of Lying in Politics”, which we have already mentioned above. Based on a rich variety of authors from different epochs of the tradition of western political thought, Bouvot shows in which sense lying can be considered a virtuous skill, and why a strict prohibition of lying, notably defended by Kant, can be in many situations very dangerous.

Giovanni Damele’s “Argumentative Hypocrisy and Constituent Debates: the Italian Case” is one of the two papers dedicated to the question of lying and

hypocrisy in public deliberation. In this work, he discusses Jon Elster's case for *argumentative hypocrisy* and applies it to the debates of the *travaux préparatoires* of the Italian Constituent Assembly (1946/48). Damele shows that the analysis of such debate confirms Elster's idea that hypocrisy in deliberation can have a kind of civilizing effect and that "even if used hypocritically, impartial arguments can lead to agreements based on general interest" (p. 203 of this issue).

Finally, in his "Why the Deliberative Ideal Justifies Publicity: Even if Publicity May Undermine Deliberation", John Pitseys discusses the epistemic arguments against publicity in public deliberation and argues that, even if they reveal situations in which closed-door deliberation can be more efficient, at the end of the day they are not strong enough to counteract its fundamental value as a legitimizing principle for democracy. Pitseys bases his argument not only on a theoretical discussion but also on the analysis of the 2010-2011 Belgian Sixth State Reform.