

Contents



Acknowledgments ix

INTRODUCTION: Is It Ever Acceptable to Lie? 1

PART ONE: Theologians Ask the Question

CHAPTER ONE. The Devil 21

Six Days and Two Sentences Later 21

The Devil and the Lie 22

Making Sense of Genesis 1, 2, and 3 28

The Devil's Lie from Late Antiquity to the
Middle Ages 35

The Devil's Lie from the Middle Ages to
the Reformation 47

The Prince of This World 52

From Satan's Stratagems to Human Nature 55

CHAPTER TWO. God 62

Can God Lie? 62

On Lions, Fishhooks, and Mousetraps 67

Divine Deception and the Sacrament of Truth 77

Luther, Calvin, and the Hidden God 88

René Descartes, Pierre Bayle, and the End of
Divine Deception 94

CHAPTER THREE. Human Beings 105

Every Lie Is a Sin 105

Every Sin Is a Lie 110

Biblical Liars	116
Augustine among the Scholastics	119
Institutional Transformations	131
Equivocation, Mental Reservation, and Amphibology	135
From Pascal to Augustine and Beyond	145

Part Two: Courtiers and Women Ask the Question

CHAPTER FOUR. Courtiers 153

Flatterers, Wheedlers, and Gossipmongers	153
Early Modern Uncertainty and Deception	158
Uncertainty and Skepticism in the Medieval Court	163
Entangled in Leviathan's Loins	169
Christine de Pizan and Just Hypocrisy	175
From Lies to Civility	181
Bernard Mandeville and the World Lies Built	190

CHAPTER FIVE. Women 199

Lessons about Lies	199
All about Eve, All about Women	205
The Biology of Feminine Deceit	211
Christine de Pizan, Misogyny, and Self-Knowledge	216
All Men Are Liars	226
Madeleine de Scudéry, the Salon, and the Pleasant Lie	237

CONCLUSION: The Lie Becomes Modern 247

Notes 257

Bibliography 303

Index 327