Self-Deceptive Emotions

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SELF-DECEPTIVE EMOTIONS *

T HAT emotions attend self-deception is a commonplace. Vanity, grief, resentment, apprehension, all induce us to connive in the clouding of our vision. But in recent discussions of self-deception most philosophers' attention has gone to the puzzles it generates for the notion of belief, with emotions confined to a causal or motivational role. That terrain is well trod, and I shall not go over it again.[1] I wish to focus here instead on emotions themselves, and explore ways in which they can be intrinsically self-deceptive.

Deception normally involves cognition. The task I set myself, therefore, requires that 'deception' be extended to a noncognitive domain or that we think of the emotions themselves as cognitive. My strategy will be to do both, seeking *rapprochement* from both ends.

Erving Goffman has pointed out that a rough distinction may be made among forms of deception.[2] One kind consists in the deliberate distortion of information that one (explicitly and intentionally) "gives": this is lying or "deceit." The other deals with information that one "gives off":

> . . . a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of
> the actor, the expectation being that the action was performed for
> reasons other than the information conveyed in this way (2).

Deliberate misinformation by means of this type of communication is pretending, or "feigning." Expressions of emotion are typically treated as "given off." So it may be fruitful to look for a kind of self-deception that bears the same relation to *feigning* as self-deceived belief bears to *deceit:* a kind where the self-deceiver is taken in not by his own lie, but by his own pretense. This will be one approach I shall take. It would lead to nothing very novel, however, if pretending to oneself resulted merely in having false

[1] The best treatment to date remains that of Herbert Fingarette in *Self-Deception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969); it takes a more inclusive view than most. I have discussed it in a review discussion of that book in *Inquiry*, XIII, 3 (Autumn 1970): 308–321.

[2] *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 2.

beliefs. We need to move also from the other side: to show that emotions can admit of an interesting range of error without reducing to mistaken beliefs. The delimitation of such a range requires that we make sense of the idea that emotions have a semantics of their own. This, then, is my first task.

SEMANTICS FOR EMOTIONS

In an excellent and little known paper, C. D. Broad suggested that emotions might be construed as cognitions.[3] He distinguished a "cognitive" from an "affective" aspect of emotion. The latter he called "emotional tone":

> To be fearing a snake, e.g., is to be cognising something—correctly or incorrectly—as a snake, and for that cognition to be toned with fearfulness. In general, to be fearing X is to be cognising X fearingly; to be admiring X is to be cognising X admiringly, and so on (286).

This scheme gives rise to one range of possible errors which Broad calls "misplaced emotions." These are "felt towards an object which is believed to exist but does not really do so, or . . . in respect of attributes which do not really belong to it" (291). Broad also distinguishes a category of error that concerns one's attribution of motives for an emotion (he thinks he's angry because _____ but the *real* reason is . . .) (289). Errors in both these classes are straightforwardly cognitive and can directly affect beliefs whether involved in emotion or not. There can be failure of reference to the putative topic of belief and illusions about the grounding of beliefs. To what differentiates emotions from other "cognitions," however, Broad does not grant cognitive status. He points out that the affective aspect of emotions can be assessed for appropriateness or "fittingness" (in degree or in kind):

> It is appropriate to cognise what one takes to be a *threatening* object with some degree of *fear*. It is inappropriate to cognise what one takes to be a fellow man *in undeserved pain or distress* with *satisfaction* or with *amusement* (293).

But although he finds this notion "plainly of the utmost impor-

3 "Emotion and Sentiment", in *Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), reprinted from the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XIII, 2 (December 1954): 203–214. (Page references are to the former.)

Attempts to view emotions as cognitive are not new. The most recent is R. C. Solomon, *The Passions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), in which the cognitive view is intriguingly conjoined with the claim that emotions are subjective. The affinities of my own account are with Plato. Cf. my "False Pleasures in the Philebus," forthcoming.

tance to ethics and to aesthetics," he thinks it "still awaits an ade-
quate analysis" (293).

In Broad's terms, my proposal can be simply stated: it is to bring
the "affective aspect" into the ambit of cognitive appraisal. I shall
define the unique cognitive role of emotions in terms of appro-
priateness. My starting point will be the suggestion that *appropri-
ateness is the truth of emotions*.[4]

This idea will be met with an immediate objection: Appropri-
ateness is not an *objective* matter in the way truth must be. Its
ascription depends on the subject's temperament, situation ("how
much they've had to go through"), as evaluated according to the
ascriber's sympathy, experience, and prejudice. So there can be no
such *fact* as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of an emo-
tion.[5]

I shall charge forth without meeting this objection directly,
though I aim to be undercutting it in the rest of this paper. It is
enough for the moment to point out that a working semantics
can proceed on the basis of a provisional, "as if" ontology. Dis-
putes about appropriateness are *treated* as if they were genuine
disagreements, however hard they may be to settle. This pre-
supposes that there are criteria of appropriateness; we can take
this presupposition at face value without requiring these criteria
to be grounded in nonrelative facts or even always to be clearly
decidable. What we do need is a sketch of the "meaning" or "con-
tent" of emotions:: that which in a given situation determines
their appropriateness, as sense determines reference or truth. One
way to tackle this is to ask: How are emotions learned, and how
do they acquire a content?

In answering this question, I shall take for granted some funda-
mental claims of psychoanalysis and developmental psychology.
Obviously I cannot defend them here. I assume that even skeptics

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[4] In the course of writing I found that this idea is discussed with consider-
able subtlety in Patricia Greenspan, "A Case of Mixed Feelings: Ambivalence
and the 'Logic' of Emotions," forthcoming in A. O. Rorty, ed., *Explaining
Emotions*. Greenspan's is the best discussion I know of the applicability of
the notion of *consistency* to emotions.

[5] In the search for objective correlates of emotions, language helps us more
with some than with others. Some gerundive constructions formed from the
names of emotions appear to connote passivity in the subject (depressing,
boring); others, cognates of a different sort, apparently imply a passive target
(lovable, fearsome, hateful); some objects are referred to by the same word as
the subject (indifferent, hopeful); some have clear correlates but no cognate
words (unjust [indignant], unfaithful [jealous]). Yet others are referred to by
terms awkwardly made up (anxiety-provoking, resentment-inspiring). The list
is not exhaustive. There are lessons in it that would be worth pursuing.

might agree that these claims are widely enough accepted to make an exploration of some philosophical implications worth while.

This, then, is the story. Our emotional repertoire is learned in the context of what I shall call *paradigm scenarios,* many of which are played out in infancy. In the context of such a scenario, a child's instinctive responses to certain stimuli become a part— indeed sometimes acquire the name—of an emotion. In simple cases the instinctive response (smiling, crying) becomes an *expression of emotion* (joy, sadness, or rage), but it does so only in the context of the scenario. Otherwise, it lacks the property of being embedded in the complex structure characteristic of emotions. This structure is variable for different emotions, but typically it involves a *target* (such as the person I am angry at), a (more or less propositional) *object* or ostensible factual focus (such as what I am angry at the target for doing), a characteristic *expression* (an angry tone of voice, etc.), and a *formal object* (the property that the situation must have in common with the paradigm scenario, if the emotion is to be appropriate). All these structural features are learned at the same school, in the complex paradigm scenario.[6]

The semantics this story suggests are relatively simple: we learn our repertoire of emotions much as we learn at least some of our verbal repertoire—our vocabulary of concrete predicates—by ostensive definition. In the paradigm situation, an emotion is appropriate "by definition." Once learned, it is correctly "applied," like a learned predicate, to situations that are relevantly similar to the paradigm scenario in which it originates.

This preliminary sketch of the semantics of emotion can do much to explain the difficulties involved in trying to articulate criteria of appropriateness. In the rest of this paper, I shall explore three sources of emotional fallibility offering possibilities of self-deception. The first is "self-feigning," a consequence of our capacity for expression. The second is a special case of the first, and springs from some complications in the relation between the learning scenario and later "applications" of the emotion. And the third arises from the influence on the content of particular emotions of what I shall call the *ideology* of emotions: what we learn, in the process of being socialized, *about* (an) emotion: its moral and social significance, its place in the hierarchy of human states and capacities.

[6] The role of paradigm scenarios is explored further in my "The Rationality of Emotions," forthcoming in *Dialogue.*

SELF-FEIGNING

An essential outcome of emotional learning is the potential for nonverbal communication.[7] Our expressive repertoire, like any other device of communication, can be used deceptively.[8] There is but a short step from here to the possibility of self-deception, as being fooled by one's own pretense, or "self-feigning." A reconstruction of the James-Lange theory of emotions will enable us to take that step.

That theory, which identified emotion with the perception of a bodily state caused by an evoking situation, is almost universally held to have been refuted.[9] The central argument against it is that identical physicochemical stimuli produce divergent emotions depending on the situational and epistemic context. But, if we reinterpret the bodily changes involved to include those which amount to, or normally determine, the *expressive* motor events associated with the emotion, we can say that *what we feel* in an emotion state *is the expressive set of our body*. This is not say that what we feel is all there is to an emotion; for that would leave out the semantic aspect I have been explicating: an emotion means a formal object, i.e., a property characteristic of a paradigm scenario, and ascribes it to an object. It does imply, with common sense and against prevalent philosophical doctrine, that we can commonly *identify* our emotions *by* what we feel. Against this version of James-Lange the standard objections have no force. Now in cases where the expressive set is deceptive, and where the deception is not consciously acted out, it is not hard to see how one could take one's own expressive state for the corresponding emotion.[10] (This is what is being imputed when someone is accused of

[7] Indeed, we are free to speculate that this may be one important biological *function* of emotion. We unreflectively assume that our capacity to feel emotions precedes both our need and our capacity to express them. But the naturalness of some expressive behavior suggests that, on the contrary, emotions might have evolved for their communication value. On the cross-cultural constancy of some emotion expressions, see Carroll E. Izard, *Human Emotions* (New York: Plenum Press, 1977), p. 7.

[8] This might be little more than the "injury feigning" of birds that "pretend" to be wounded, dragging a wing along the ground, to distract an enemy from their brood. Cf. E. O. Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1975), p. 122.

[9] Especially by W. B. Cannon, "The James-Lange Theory of Emotions: a Critical Examination and an Alternative Theory," *American Journal of Psychology*, xxxix (1927): 106–124; and by S. Schachter and J. E. Singer, "Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional States," *Psychological Review*, LXIX, 5 (1962): 379–399. For the recent discussion tracing a "facial feedback" version of James's theory to Darwin, cf. Izard, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[10] A related view is defended by Kendall L. Walton in "Fearing Fiction,"

histrionics.) On this account, we can see how self-feigning is not merely a matter of acquiring false beliefs about one's own emotions. Rather it *induces* an emotion, which is itself erroneous in its ascription of a characteristic property to an object. We have then a possible mechanism for emotional self-deception of the type advertised above. But what are the occasions of its manifestation? A partial answer to this question will lead to a second form of fallibility.

TRANSFERENCE AND DETACHABILITY

Sometimes a situation or target evokes an expressive response that is not appropriate to it as a whole, but merely triggered by some partial aspect. The response has been associated with a paradigm scenario, definining an emotion which is then *read into* the present situation. This is what psychoanalysts call *transference*. The classic case of transference, of course, takes places in the analytic situation, where the patient characteristically "falls in love" with the doctor regardless of the latter's lovableness. According to Freud, "the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out . . . and in the end we understand that this is his way of remembering".[11] In other words, transference is not merely mechanical repetition triggered by a stimulus, but has a semantic structure of its own, akin to that of memory. Its defining feature is that it lacks *detachability*—in a sense now to be explained—from the paradigm scenario.

The use of a predicate can be said to be *detachable* from its learning context in this sense: Suppose I learn a color word from a chart. Once learned, the word no longer refers to the color chart, but to the color. The learning situation does not remain encrusted in the meaning of 'red', though for some time it may be more or less vividly remembered and affect the *connotation*—as opposed to the Fregean *sense*—of the word. This contrasts with the semantic structure characteristic of *symbols,* typified by religious rites and the objects used in them. The worship evoked in the faithful *by* the bread and wine is directed *at* the body and blood of Christ. The sense of the ritual depends on an essential reference to the

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this JOURNAL, LXXV, 1 (January 1978): 5–27. Walton is discussing cases where suspension of disbelief is not real belief, but involves real emotion. But it is not exactly the same emotion as would be generated in the presence of belief. See below on the "ideology of emotion."

[11] Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," in the *Standard Edition of the Psychological Works, XII* (London: Hogarth Press, 1958). See also in the same volume "Transference Love" (TL hence forward) and "The Dynamics of Transference" (DT).

original ceremony. For the more thorough sects, indeed, the bond of symbolization is strengthened into identity by the power of transubstantiation: the bread *is* the body. So for the patient: (unconsciously) the doctor *is* the parent. The difference is that the average neurotic cannot endorse the identification once its role is brought to full consciousness, and seeks to be cured of rather than sustained in that identification. Detachability seems to emerge as a *norm* for the semantics of emotion, an ideal often thwarted by our tendency to symbolic interpretation.

This account treats symbol-semantics as an undesirable affection of emotions. But perhaps this is only therapeutic prejudice, which should not be taken for granted. The neurotic and the religious do not have a monopoly on transference. As Freud put it, transference

> . . . consists of new editions of old traits and . . . repeats infantile reactions. But this is the essential character of every state of being in love. There is no such state which does not reproduce infantile prototypes (TL 168).

The origin of emotions in paradigm scenarios implies the possibility of extending that observation to emotions other than love. Two questions can then be raised: first, whether transference emotions are *authentic*—whether they are the emotions they advertise themselves to be—and, second, whether their real object and target are their ostensible ones.

It is tempting, for the sake of simplicity, to take a hard line on both: emotions are always what they seem, and their objects are always the ostensible objects. And if this means that some emotions are inappropriate, then things are just as we know them.

With respect to objects, the story I have told is compatible with this line, so long as we remember that in some cases the *content* of the emotion must be interpreted in terms of a reference to an object or target other than the ostensible one. This is preferable to talking of the paradigm as the "real object"; for it allows judgments of degree in respect of the relative role of the present and the past in shaping present content. There are degrees of pathology or self-feigning, in which trouble with the semantical relation to the *target/object* is reassigned to the *content* or character of the emotion.[12]

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[12] In some therapeutic contexts, however, it may be important to insist on the emotion's *reference* to another object: an emotion might be repetitive and neurotic precisely because it has been *spuriously* detached from its target or object, and the first step might be to bring this into focus.

In respect of content, the possibility of reinterpretation is not similarly dispensable. Freud sometimes appears to think otherwise: "We have no right to dispute", he says, that transference love "has the character of 'genuine' love." But his reason is perplexing: "lacking to a high degree . . . a regard for reality, . . . (being) less sensible, less concerned about consequences and more blind in its valuations . . . constitute precisely what is essential about being in love" (TL 168/9). But "less" than what? Freud seems to change thought in the middle of the sentence: he starts out to say that one would expect normal love to be more sensible than neurotic love, but switches to thinking all love equally crazy. If this is so, then the "genuineness" even of normal emotions is bought at the price of systematic inappropriateness—an unwelcome implausibility. Besides, Freud also thinks that emotions, like actions, can be reinterpreted as something other than they seem: transference love is itself sometimes a disguise for resistance (since it can function to distract the patient from the analytic task) (DT 101 ff).[13] And common sense also avails itself of this possibility of reinterpretation.

What are the criteria that guide such reinterpretation? The origin of emotions in paradigm scenarios implies that each person's emotional "dialect" will be subtly different. For the content of emotions for which two people have the same name will depend on their individual temperaments and the specific details of their learning experience. When we interpret each other's emotions, therefore, we have a Whorfian problem of translation: our "dialects" determine different experiences. So when can we place credence in an interpretation?

The problem is solved in much the same way by psychoanalysis and by common sense. But the solution leads to further problems.

Freud's direct answer is confusing, as we have seen. But we can construct an answer on his behalf, by looking at his strategy in a related domain. He thought of the "plasticity of instinct" as an essential and pervasive characteristic of the human psyche, manifested in normal development, involving *sublimation,* and also in *perversions.* What is the difference? Ultimately these are sorted out on evaluative grounds: sublimations have redeeming social value; perversions are anti-social or by consensus found aesthetically repellent.[14]

[13] There is no implication that we have reached a rock bottom of interpretation. Resistance can itself be a form of transference.

[14] This is greatly oversimplified. For an account of some of the complexities of Freud's actual account, cf. my "Norms and the Normal," in R. Wollheim,

Much the same is true of common-sense judgments of authenticity and appropriateness. We are often content to infer what emotion persons *must* be having from our knowledge of the situations in which they find themselves. Far from granting any privileged access to the subject in this area, if there is discrepancy between the conclusion of such an inference and the subject's declaration, the subject is more commonly taken to be self-deceived. Allowances are made for variabilities of individual temperament, reactivity, style, upbringing, and so forth; but ultimately the barrier between the neurotic, intrinsically erroneous emotion and the normal emotion is drawn along *conventional* lines. And this is —up to a point—as it should be; for intuitively the difference between mere transference and authentic emotion is in whether the ostensible object is actually, in its present relation to the subject, fitting for the emotion that it occasions. Otherwise it is merely acting as a trigger for something to which is only accidentally connected. Nevertheless, the conventional source of assessments of emotion is also the source of an important category of self-deception in emotions. It will be my main concern in the rest of this paper.

THE IDEOLOGY OF EMOTIONS: TWO EXAMPLES FROM THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SEXISM

Among the criteria that socialized consensus lays down, are beliefs and attitudes *about* emotions, both in general [15] and regarding particular emotions. I shall argue that these attitudes at the *meta-level* have an effect on the *content* of particular emotions, thus offering more opportunities for emotional error. We can think of this phenomenon on the model of the contamination of the content of beliefs by higher-order methodological principles. But there are differences as well as analogies, which I have no space to pursue.

We have seen how different paradigm scenarios can generate subtly different repertoires of emotion. In some cases this is systematized by the process of socialization to differentiate whole

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ed., *Freud: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974). The strategy of supplementing a structural account with normative criteria is found in Aristotle's treatment of *akrasia*. He points out (*Nichomachean Ethics* VII. 5) that, if an act is noble, we don't call it *akrasia* even though it might strictly involve the same psychological mechanism. For by definition *"akrasia* . . . deserves blame."

[15] Cf. Solomon, *op. cit.*, for an argument that the general ideology of emotions as "passions" has a distorting effect on our lives. But note that he uses the expression 'ideology of emotion' in a sense unrelated to mine.

social groups. Gender socialization, the deepest level of sexism, provides an example whose importance transcends philosophical illustration. The most vivid case can be made about such general sentiments as *love*.[16] But love, whose characterization involves whole complexes of particular feelings, expectations, long-term patterns of intercourse, and social sanctions, although offering all the wider scope for the promotion of sexual inequality, is arguably too complex to be called "an emotion." For this reason, though I shall have a little to say about it in the next section, I shall consider two more specific emotions: *anger* and *jealousy*.

The paradigm scenarios for anger differ between men and women in respect both of its expression and its criteria of appropriateness. An angry man is a manly man, but an angry woman is a "fury" or a "bitch." This is necessarily reflected *in the quality of the emotion itself:* a man will experience an episode of anger characteristically as indignation, a woman as something less moralistic, more like guilt-laden frustration. Insofar as the conception of gender stereotypes that underlies these differences is purely conventional mystification, the emotions that embody these stereotypes are paradigms of self-deceptive emotion. But they illustrate the fact that in what I have been calling "self-deceived" emotions the self usually connives rather than originates. We are responsible only to the extent that we are generally motivated to conform to the social and gender role assigned to us and that we allow ourselves to be taken in by the feigning this necessarily requires.

The case of jealousy[17] exemplifies the same points. A man's jealousy is traditionally an assertion of his property rights, and something of that survives in the emotional tone of jealousy as felt by many contemporary men. A woman's, on the other hand, "is regarded as nearly equivalent to shrewishness, fishwifery" (Farber 182). It is not taken as seriously as a man's (there is no feminine of 'cuckold'). Underlying the surface ideology, according to Dinnerstein's persuasive speculations, is the fact that "the symbolic shock value of the other's physical infidelity is far less absolute

[16] For a brilliant attack on "falling in love" as an inherently self-delusive emotion, based on sexist ideology, cf. Simone de Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love," in *The Second Sex* (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 712–743.

[17] A good discussion of jealousy by Jerry Neu, "Jealous Thoughts," is forthcoming in Rorty, ed., *op. cit.* But Neu does not consider the issue of sexism. Illuminating treatments of that issue are to be found in Leslie Farber, "On Jealousy," in *Lying, Despair, Jealousy, Envy, Sex, Suicide, Drugs, and the Good Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), and especially in Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). My sketch draws on both of these, with references in the text.

for her than for him." In the original scenarios in which mother-raised men and mother-raised women have learned both their sense of self and the emotions provoked when it is threatened, girls are able to identify with their mothers more than boys. Consequently a woman is likely to feel "that she carries within herself a source of the magic early parental richness" (42). By contrast, the man's attitude stems "from the mother-raised boy's sense that the original, most primitive source of life will always lie outside himself, that to be sure of reliable access to it he must have exclusive access to a woman" (43). Not only is the very experience of jealousy for men and women tinged with the different consequences of this mystification; the attempt to eliminate jealousy is also fraught with divergent meanings. For a man, to overcome jealousy is to overcome possessiveness. But, for a woman, the effort described in the very same terms may simply play into the possessiveness of the male and thus reinforce the sexist mystification. This discrepancy adds yet another level of self-deception, namely that which results from the assumption, fostered by the homonymy of 'jealousy', that the task of achieving greater rationality of emotions is the same task for both. Hence the complex emotions that may be tied to an expectation of reciprocity in the elimination of jealousy may once again be self-deceived.

THE DIALECTIC OF FUNGIBILITY

Earlier I suggested that detachability from paradigm situations seems to be an ideal of rational emotions. What this amounts to is that the targets of emotions ought to become *fungible* in the manner of the referents of ordinary predicates. In law, an object is said to be fungible if it belongs to an equivalence class any member of which can substitute for any other in the fulfillment of a contract. Money is the paradigm fungible: individual dollar bills are not material to a debt. On the other hand if you lend me a vase and I return another, I have not strictly paid my debt—though I have perhaps offered an adequate *substitute*. In terms of our earlier discussion, it seems that, in the economy of emotions and their objects, a transference emotion is a mere substitute; fungibility is an achievement.

Yet at a certain stage and for certain emotions it is nonfungibility that has to be learned. This is the case for attachment emotions. The differentiations of which an infant is capable are qualitative, and it is a fact about early psychosexual development, in need of explanation, that general desires for fungible satisfactions become focused on a particular person or persons. There is then

a further developmental question about how it is possible to transfer (or replace) this affection, focused on a parent, onto a new and equally nonfungible object. That the new object—ideally the Spouse—be nonfungible is part of the ideology of love in most cultures [18]: "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds." The ideology of love is therefore directly contrary to the general desirability of emotional fungibility. For the properties on which human attachment is based are not qualitative, but *historical*. Must we conclude that attachment emotions are not emotions at all? Perhaps. But we could say instead that they are always transference emotions in a sense different from the sense Freud intended: their ideology requires that we generalize not from a fungible scenario, but from an individual *target* as the essential component of a succession of constitutive scenarios.

All this generates two sorts of self-deceptive possibilities. One is that a desire for fungible sexual satisfaction, because it advertises itself as "love," should be *experienced* as nonfungible ("I *feel* that I love you for ever"). The other is its converse: an ideology constructed out of the desire to avoid the dangers of the former ideology, which denies the need for nonfungible attachment, or even their possibility. But if psychoanalysts are right about the connections between the capacity for attachment and other aspects of human fulfillment, then the zipless fuck [19] may also be delusive as an alternative ideology of love—and delusive in the very same ideologically conditioned way.

I must now face two problems. The first is terminological. (The second is addressed in the next section.) Admitting that the phenomena I have described exist, why call them *self*-deception? Are they not rather a form of mystification in which the individual is merely the victim of a socialized ideology? No. For the ideology that infects the content of an emotion can do so only if it has been internalized. It comes from outside myself, to be sure—but

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[18] But not in all:

Dr. Aubrey Richards, an anthropologist who lived among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia in the 1930's, once related to a group of them an English folk tale about a young prince who climbed glass mountains, crossed chasms, and fought dragons, all to obtain the hand of a maiden he loved. The Bemba were plainly bewildered, but remained silent. Finally an old chief spoke up, voicing the feelings of all present in the simplest of questions:

"Why not take another girl?" he asked.

Morton Hunt, *The Natural History of Love*, quoted by J. A. Lee, *The Colours of Love* (Toronto: New Press, 1973), p. 87.

[19] The term is taken from Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973). But the concept was in the air.

so does much of what I call "myself." To attack it requires "consciousness raising," in the sense in which that term is restricted to the bringing into consciousness of facts *about myself* which then come up for endorsement as avowed parts of my identity.

THE PHONY PARADOX

But this answer suggests a graver problem. I have spoken as if consciousness-raising provided an avenue of escape from emotional self-deception. Yet in my account both appropriate emotions and self-deceptive emotions have their origin in paradigm scenarios. Some forms of self-deception seem to lodge in the very semantic structure of emotion or in an ideology that has the same source whether it is constructive or distorting. How then can I leave conceptual room for the distinction between normal, authentic emotions and hypocritical, self-feigning, or ideologically self-deceived emotions? A theory of emotions that finds them to be learned as social *roles* must still find a place for those we denigrate as *mere role playing*. When, in short, is an emotion *phony?*

The full resolution of this puzzle would have to raise the whole question of the source and justification of therapeutic norms. I can only hope to point in the right direction, with three concluding remarks.

The access we have to our emotions, in the crucial aspects that have concerned us here, is more difficult than access to either will or belief. Of course, as has often been noted, a change of belief can radically alter an emotion. But this touches only Broad's "cognitive aspect," not that aspect which, I have claimed, constitutes the idiosyncratic core of emotions as cognitions. We have no more direct access to the content of our emotions than we have voluntary control over the past situations in which we have learned them. So one form of the phony is just this: the pretense of complete control, which can be made at various levels of awareness. We do have some indirect control, however: we can re-gestalt even those early paradigms. Sometimes we do it willy-nilly, forced by fresh vision to change our emotional attitudes to our past, now seeing what seemed domineering as protective, what seemed weak as gentle, what seemed principled as priggish.

In coaxing or badgering ourselves into such re-gestalting, we should note the crucial role and example of the *aesthetic* emotions. Aesthetic emotions are probably an exception to the general rule that paradigm scenarios go back to infancy. I am inclined to think that they constitute emergent emotional structures, which bear witness to our capacity for fresh emotional experience, built on,

but not out of, our pre-existing emotional repertoires. Of course, emotions more or less mechanically constructed in that way, out of ready-made atoms, are also phony. Fresh emotions are not necessarily unreflective; on the contrary, the emotions of the unreflective are threatened with cliché.

Some role there is for verbal argument in this process of examination. Consciousness-raising largely consists in propositional description and redescription. But we must carefully note its limitations. Verbal argument is not a powerful tool at the level of the immediate content of emotions. It doesn't help much to repeat, like incantations, "This isn't really frightening," "There is really no reason to be angry/jealous/depressed/envious/sad." It helps a bit more to draw out the similarities with other paradigm scenarios, redescribing not the emotion but the situation: "He's being intimidating only because he's shy." But the level at which the effort of rational redescription is most useful is where, I have argued, much of the harm is done: at the meta-level of ideology. It is in searching out assumptions *about* our emotions, about their peremptoriness, about their "naturalness", about their transparency to the subject, about their identity or "biologically determined" differences between males and females—that we are most likely to transform and reform their experienced content and emerge from self-deception. In this sort of life examination, philosophical analysis merges with psychoanalysis, and each strengthens the other's promise of therapeutic virtue. In the realm of emotions, the life examined for ideology is the more authentic. It is the simple life that is phony.

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PHONY FEELINGS *

COGNITIVE theories of emotion are hardly new; Aristotle at least anticipated them, and several Stoics already argued that emotions are judgments, but *faulty* judgments, thus introducing the problem of self-deception into the very concept of emotion. Emotional judgments are faulty, they argued, because