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## The Lure of Hypocrisy

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Why are we susceptible to hypocrisy? Four preconditions for falling prey to hypocrisy are delineated. The reasons for our complex attitude to hypocrisy, both condoning and condemning it, are also explored. Hypocrisy is the false claim to virtue. It always refers to consciously intended deception by a person in a position of trust. Making use of literary examples, the investigation starts with the delineation of three readily apparent preconditions for falling prey to hypocrisy. Idealization of the hypocrite is seen as a defense against a dread of uncertainty on the part of the person who succumbs to hypocrisy. The addition of a third precondition, the force of powerful desire, completes the introduction. A selective review of historical and philosophical studies of hypocrisy over the past twenty-five hundred years situates the problem of the susceptibility to hypocrisy. Application of psychoanalytic formulations and clinical data, principally from the study of patients whose psychoanalysts committed ethical violations, produces a fourth precondition for succumbing to hypocrisy: transference, with a regression from mature trust to a condition of unmodified basic trust.

Casablanca, December 1941, Rick's Café. German soldiers led by Gestapo Major Strasser have taken over Sam's piano and are singing the Nazi song "Die Wacht am Rhein." Victor Laszlo, the Czechoslovakian Resistance leader, defies the Germans by ordering the band to play "La Marseillaise." Responding to a nod of approval from Rick, the uncertain conductor leads them in a rousing, triumphant rendition, and the Germans are drowned out by the Free French audience. Major Strasser, before storming out, instructs Captain Renault, the Vichy puppet Prefect of Police, to punish the café's patrons by closing down Rick's place, for the convenient reason that people are having "much too good a time." Reluctantly, Renault closes the café.

"How can you close me up? On what grounds?" demands Rick.

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"I'm shocked, shocked, to find that gambling is going on in here," replies Renault. As he finishes this pronouncement, the croupier comes up and hands Renault his winnings. "Oh. Thank you very much. Everybody out at once."<sup>1</sup>

Major Strasser's subterfuge hides his real, vengeful motive, but his wickedness is not hypocrisy because he does not wrap himself in goodness. The false claim to virtue distinguishes the deceit of hypocrisy from other forms of evil. Renault portrays hypocrisy exactly, pretending to hold a high morality, to be shocked by the illicit activities in which, an instant later, he is shown to have engaged. Hypocrisy is always consciously intended deception by a person in a position of trust. When Freud (1900, p. 145 n) spoke of hypocrisy in dreams, he used the term metaphorically, to highlight unconscious mental conflict that parallels conscious mental life.

We are amused not only that Renault has been unmasked, but also because we recognize in this jewel, one of so many in that favorite film, a caricature of the political hypocrisy that we take for granted in government officials. It is our reactions that interest me here.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are all hypocritical about hypocrisy. We condemn hypocrisy, and we condone it. We hold hypocrisy in contempt, yet we expect our political leaders to employ it; we discuss without hesitation the "deniability" of potential accusations against those leaders, and we applaud hypocritical accusations of hypocrisy by their opponents, if they share our views. Experts in political science tell us that hypocrisy is not only inevitable but necessary. How are we to understand these complex attitudes?

A second matter of interest, to which I will devote most of my attention here, the one that started off my inquiry, is why people are taken in by hypocrites. Over twenty years ago, an interest in understanding narcissistic reactions and in either/or thinking (Kris 1983) led me to focus on intolerance of uncertainty. At that time, when our attention had been drawn to idealization, particularly by Heinz Kohut through the study of narcissistic transferences (1971), it seemed to me that idealization as a defense against dread of uncertainty accounted for the

susceptibility to hypocrisy. That is, the desire for certainty leads to idealization of the hypocrite in exchange for the individual's credulity.

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1 Adapted from Dirks (1996-2002).

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Certainty provides a powerful antidote to the inevitable, often intolerable uncertainty of the human condition. The welcome illusion that someone else (and, derivatively, some institution) is sufficiently powerful to dispel uncertainty plays a significant role in ordinary development, in education, in medicine, and, of course, in psychoanalysis, just as it does in those great bastions of hypocrisy, religion and government. In all these arenas, idealization may be exploited by hypocrites. My aim here is to illuminate the psychology of those who succumb to hypocrisy.

Must idealization lead to credulity? I do not think so. Belief, even strong belief, need not be credulous, and idealization, though it always involves some substitution of wish for judgment, is not always used as a defense. But when idealization and belief are fueled by anxiety, independent judgment, fragile under the best of circumstances, may fail. So idealization as defense against the dread of uncertainty may be expected to create the credulity that is one precondition for successful hypocrisy. But unrelenting credulity may come about also from great desire, especially in those inclined to magical thinking and other immaturities and weaknesses of personality.

Let us examine a familiar example, Collodi's little liar, the puppet Pinocchio (1881-1883). We sympathize, of course, with Pinocchio's internal debate between pleasure principle and reality principle, but we agree with the verdict that he cannot be a real little boy until he masters his impulses and stops telling lies. When Mr. Fox and Mr. Cat, though they make no claim to high virtue, maliciously pretend to be his good friends, they qualify as hypocrites, not only as liars and scoundrels. Pinocchio all too willingly falls in with their promises of untrammelled pleasure, as they inveigle him not once but twice into dangerous misadventure. Not much evidence here of defense or of the dread of uncertainty—only immaturity and strong desire. This observation, however, requires us to modify the idea that idealization alone, as a response to the dread of uncertainty, can account for the credulity of those gulled by hypocrites. Strong desires must be counted as coconspirators at least. To consider another example,

terminally ill patients and their families may yield to wishful fantasy in their search for miracle cures. Under those circumstances, they become vulnerable to hypocritical snake-oil hucksters. The truly significant instances, for which the pleasant example of Pinocchio may serve as a paradigm, however, include the vast numbers of children seduced into disastrous

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adventures. In those cases, I believe, the hypocrite trades both on desire and on defense against the dread of uncertainty.

Although hypocrisy depends only on the intentions of the hypocrite, to understand the significance of hypocrisy requires attention to both participants in the hypocritical event. As the hypocrite has received centuries of consideration by playwrights and philosophers, and even by psychoanalysts (e.g., Bergler 1943; Rangell 2000), there will be relatively little need to elaborate here on the psychology of the hypocrite. I want to emphasize, however, that as analysts we take it for granted that a variety of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious influences lead to the intentions and actions of the hypocrite. We also take it for granted that responses such as idealization serve to create mutuality between the two participants in hypocrisy.

My attention here is to the recipient of hypocrisy. Linguistic usage provides no assistance in this endeavor. We have no word to correspond to hypocrite on the receptive side.<sup>2</sup> Words such as gull, dupe, or victim give the impression that there is a passive partner. No doubt this is due in the first instance to the origins of the term in an image from classical antiquity of a convincing theatrical performance, to which the meaning of dissimulation was added only later. That it also suits the cultural purpose of obscuring the universal potential for credulity may create a second influence, analogous to the belief in the innocence of children. The psychoanalytic data I will consider here come mainly from patients whose psychoanalysts have committed ethical violations. I will argue that ethical violation by psychoanalysts constitutes hypocrisy and that the study of these analysands provides a further psychoanalytic perspective on the susceptibility to hypocrisy.

Permit me first, however, to turn to a selective historical and philosophical perspective on hypocrisy and, particularly, on explanations of the susceptibility to hypocrisy, before pursuing our psychoanalytic understanding. Because I came to this endeavor relatively ignorant of historical, philosophical, and literary traditions, I am indebted to many friends, members of my family, and, in particular, to three authors: Judith Shklar, Ruth Grant, and Bernard Williams. I

offer here the necessarily incomplete efforts of an interested amateur, and, owing to considerations of time I must in any case limit myself narrowly to instances that

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<sup>2</sup> I am loath to coin the word hypocritee, for in its plural it would sound like the very founder of ethical standards in the practice of medicine. So I have settled for using various words and circumlocutions.

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will serve our current purpose, to illuminate the susceptibility to hypocrisy.

The earliest description to which I was referred<sup>3</sup> (though even older ones exist) comes from the Hindu tradition, second century B.C., the Panchatantra, a work offering young princes instruction in the practical art of politics. It supports the case for the universality of hypocrisy (at least beyond the confines of the Western tradition)<sup>4</sup> and illustrates the insincerity of the hypocrite that destroys trust and truth (Williams 2002), as well as the desire for certainty on the part of those who fall prey to it.

In this fable, which comes from the section "War and Peace" of the Panchatantra, a partridge and a hare are engaged in a homeowner's real-estate dispute. They agree to seek a resolution to their quarrel in accordance with the "lawbooks." Before they had gone very far, the partridge said to the hare,

"But who will look into our law-suit? The hare said: "Why, here is this aged cat named Curd-ears, who lives on the bank of the river, devoted to penance, and who shows compassion to all living creatures; he knows the law: he will make a lawful decision for us."... [But] the partridge said: "Leave that mean creature alone!"

Hearing this the cat Curd-ears, who had assumed a false aspect in order to make his living by easy means, that he might win their confidence, stood up on two legs and gazed steadfastly towards the sun, and with outstretched arms, closing one eye (only), engaged in prayer. And as he prayed their hearts trusted in him, and they crept up towards him and made known their dispute about the

dwelling.... So, to make a long story short, by his hypocrisy he won their confidence to such an extent that they came up to his lap: and then with one stroke they were both caught and killed by that mean creature [Edgerton 1924, pp. 116-117].

In the Western tradition, by far the most influential use of the term hypocrite appears in the New Testament—for example, in Matthew 7:5: “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

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3 I am indebted to my friend, Professor Richard Gombrich, for his help with the Oriental tradition.

4 There is a Pali word, *makkha*, which the dictionary translates “hypocrisy.” The adjectival form is *makkhin*, “hypocritical.” The etymological meaning is “smearing over,” so it is like our “covering up.” Usually it is clear that it refers to covering up one’s evil intentions by a show of good behavior (Richard Gombrich, personal communication).

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Hypocrisy became the first and most important of what Judith Shklar (1984) called the “ordinary vices,” though surely it is a derivative combination of the deadly sins, pride, anger, and greed. Hypocrisy grew into a central concern of the Church and therefore of the Western world. So T. S. Eliot’s Thomas Becket, the medieval archbishop in *Murder in the Cathedral*, approached by tempters to compromise first with the king and then with the barons, and finally to seek martyrdom, tells us: “The last temptation is the greatest treason: / To do the right deed for the wrong reason” (Eliot 1935, p. 196). Hypocrisy on that view is not merely lying to other human beings; it is unforgivably lying about one’s relationship to God—a view that carried into the Puritan tradition (Harris 1988, p. 4).<sup>5</sup>

The great truth-teller of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli, unlike the author of the *Panchatantra*, advised his prince to employ hypocrisy as a necessary tool of

statecraft. His realist enterprise rejected the metaphysical and theological perspectives of the previous epoch. It earned him public condemnation but private appreciation.<sup>6</sup> Machiavelli recommended to his prince “not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest” (1513, p. 64).<sup>7</sup> Dishonesty of the governed was to justify the hypocrisy of the ruler, but it is not clear whether dishonesty was also to be understood to contribute to the susceptibility to hypocrisy. In any case, Machiavelli concludes that a prince “should seem to be all mercy, faith, integrity, humanity, and religion, for men in general judge more by the eyes than by the hands, for everyone can see, but very few have to feel.... the vulgar is always taken by appearances” (pp. 65-66). I understand this to mean that most people are ready to idealize on the basis of image.

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5 Shklar notes that “the striving for religious perfection is interminable, and the demand for greater fidelity is ever more exigent.... Exigency creates hypocrisy as one of its inevitable by-products and Puritanism is invariably accompanied by hypocrisy and duly ridiculed for it” (p. 49). Exigent striving for religious perfection has the force of strong desire in creating the preconditions for hypocrisy to work.

6 Shakespeare called him “the murderous Machiavel” in *Henry the Sixth, Part III* (act 3, scene 2) and excoriated Lord Angelo's sexual hypocrisy in *Measure for Measure*. But he also gave us a sympathetic Henry IV, in a private moment with Prince Hal, contrasting himself to his predecessor, Richard II, and to his wayward son, as he describes his preparation for the insurrection in which he took the throne: “And then I stole all courtesy from heaven, / And dress'd myself in such humility / That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts” (*Henry IV, Part I*, act 3, scene 2).

7 This position found seventeenth-century echoes in Francis Bacon (1625), experienced in statecraft, still wiser in scientific method: “The best composition and temperance is to have openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign, if there be no remedy” (p. 15).

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Ruth Grant's understanding of Machiavelli, in her elegant, scholarly *Hypocrisy and Integrity* (1997), emphasizes that “rulers depend on the support of the people and must cultivate that support.... Political relations are relations of

dependence as much as they are power relations. And it is dependency that breeds manipulation and hypocrisy” (p. 21).

Grant (1997) contrasts Rousseau with Machiavelli in order to ask whether integrity can be achieved at all.<sup>8</sup> She does so first by a reading of Molière's plays. To Molière we owe the seventeenth-century portraits of the hypocrite (Tartuffe), his gull (the tyrannical Orgon, another sort of hypocrite), and the self-righteous antihypocrite (Alceste in *Le Misanthrope*). Grant's Rousseau demonstrates that the traditional dichotomy, hypocrisy/righteousness, fails to account for the “unselfconscious” hypocrisy (p. 67) of the tyrannical Orgon, who is duped by Tartuffe: “The unselfconscious hypocrisy of those who have been duped is as great a danger as the self-conscious manipulations of the con man. The unselfconscious, righteous hypocrite is distinguished by one other characteristic: he appears as an antihypocrite. He displays his sense of moral superiority with his willingness to expose the moral failures of others” (p. 69).

For Rousseau, integrity rather than righteousness stands in opposition to hypocrisy, though Grant reminds us that Rousseau's concept of integrity refers to purity rather than to the wholeness or completeness we would associate with integrity today (p. 96).<sup>9</sup> Failure of integrity may lead both to hypocrisy and to the susceptibility to hypocrisy.

One additional historical theme is of relevance here. The *Essays* of Montaigne, written at the end of the sixteenth century, had initiated a powerful line of thought that Judith Shklar (1984) summarized as “putting cruelty first.” The Church had placed hypocrisy first and saw it everywhere, but cruelty in the service of God was sanctified. For Montaigne cruelty was the worst one person can do to another, and slowly the intentions of the whole Western world followed him in this great change of values. The demotion of hypocrisy accompanied

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<sup>8</sup> Grant (1997) offers a compelling argument that “authenticity” is a modern interpretation that has been imposed on Rousseau's concept, which she renders “integrity.” She demonstrates that “authenticity” leads to substantial misunderstanding. Williams (2002) offers a compatible discussion of sincerity, authenticity, egocentricity, hypocrisy, and narcissism that “is true to its origins in Rousseau” (pp. 185-185).



9 In the latter, “the model is of an individual who is able to integrate a variety of conflicting demands, including conflicting ethical demands. It is not accidental that a certain kind of moralism is called ‘adolescent idealism.’ Unlike the adolescent, the mature adult is able to compromise without compromising himself” (p. 96).

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the steady erosion of the power of the Church, the elevation of reason in the Enlightenment, and the development of liberal democracy.

Here is Shklar on hypocrisy in the secular world: “It is not difficult to show that politicians are often more interested in power than in any of the causes they so ardently proclaim. It is, therefore, easier to dispose of an opponent's character by exposing his hypocrisy than to show that his political convictions are wrong.... Liberals are particularly liable to be charged with it, because they are given to compromise. The paradox of liberal democracy is that it encourages hypocrisy because the politics of persuasion require, as any reader of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* knows, a certain amount of dissimulation on the part of all speakers.... It is not at all clear that zealous candor would serve liberal politics particularly well” (p. 48). This gives us a valuable perspective on our complex attitude to hypocrisy. We need hypocrisy, though we condemn it.

We do not need, however, to approve of any instance of hypocrisy or of antihypocrisy in the public sphere, even though we recognize the inevitability of the genre. Hypocrisy in the private sphere must be regarded with even less tolerance, although some instances, such as the little hypocrisies of good manners, may serve a function similar to those in the public sphere. Granted a complexity of motives, hypocrisy is inevitable, but it is still worth knowing on what it depends, why it should work, and on which human propensities it trades.

So let us now bring our psychoanalytic tools to the table. If we take a clue from the view that dependency in political relationships gives rise to hypocrisy, we may focus our attention on the long period of extreme dependency in human development. The power of transference, which derives from that period, and the inevitable tendency to idealization—and, later, de-idealization—of parents, set the basic conditions for our relationship to political leaders.

On the day of the Democratic primary in Massachusetts in 1972, a political scientist in the fifth year of her well-advanced analysis arrived at her analytic session, laughing. “I cast a neurotic vote,” she said. As she had entered the voting

booth, the image of Senator Edmund Muskie tearfully defending his wife in public brought her father so powerfully to mind that, despite her reasoned intention to vote for Senator George McGovern, she pulled the lever for Muskie.

Transference and idealization apply equally to relationships to other figures of authority, such as one's employer, or those in the service of religion, government, education, the arts and sciences,

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or the healing professions. So we may also say that transference and idealization apply to our relationship to hypocrites.

The crucial feature of transference in hypocrisy is the attribution of trustworthiness, a combination of sincerity and reliable accuracy—that is, certainty. Trust and truthfulness are learned first within the context of the family (Williams 2002), although there is also a good deal of pretending to shield young children from narcissistic injury. Trust develops, not only in degree but in its quality, as the child's mental organization develops, but throughout childhood the parents are the prime source of truthfulness and the great bulwark against the inevitable uncertainties of life. The most important of these uncertainties derive from internal conflict, especially unconscious conflict, although even in times of peace children are exposed to great uncertainty in the world around them. We hope that in the course of an individual's development, the capacities to tolerate and to negotiate conflict will be sufficiently established to manage uncertainty. But, although we share the view that “one must be able to bear a bit of uncertainty,” attributed to Freud by Sachs (1944, p. 145),<sup>10</sup> we know that many fail to reach such an ideal. Those whose developmental deficits interfere with their tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty remain at risk.

No sooner is basic trust established (Erikson 1956) than we must learn distrust, with warnings about avoiding strangers. As Freud once put it, ironically underlining the hypocrisies of family life with regard not only to sexuality but to the aggressiveness of the outside world, it is “as though one were to equip people starting out on a Polar expedition with summer clothing and maps of the Italian Lakes” (1930, p. 134). It remains a difficult task throughout life to maintain a balance between trust and distrust. If, despite all the usual failures and contradictions of real-life parenting, we grow up to value sincerity and accuracy in communication (Williams 2002), we must be on guard against those who misuse our values. Here, I believe, lies the source of the cultural condemnation of hypocrisy, because the hypocrite, relying on the power of transference and the tendency to idealization, challenges the individual's limited capacity.

As analysts we are used to complex and contrary motivation. So it is not difficult to see that our amusement at the unmasking of Captain

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10 "Man muss ein Stück Unsicherheit ertragen können" (English translation mine). I once asked Anna Freud about this. Although she did not recall hearing it, it sounded right to her.

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Renault's hypocrisy at Rick's Café, with which we began, derives from different childhood transferences: the pleasure in deceit and the even greater pleasure of catching adults in deceit.

So far we have applied psychoanalytic understanding to the problem posed by the lure of hypocrisy. We have reached a preliminary formulation of four constituent preconditions for hypocrisy to succeed: the dread of uncertainty; idealization; powerful desire; and transference. We should like, however, to consult psychoanalytic experience directly. That is, we want to consider psychoanalytic data on the conditions and events that lead someone to succumb to hypocrisy, and, especially, to learn more about the transference involved. Deception by persons in a position of trust is encountered all too frequently in our work. I need only remind you of the frequency of sexual seduction of children by adults they love or at least believe in, such as members of the family, close friends, clergy, teachers, and physicians. We hear and see, also, the damaging effects of unexpected revelations about loved and idealized persons whose dishonesty is exposed. Here I will grasp the nettle of ethical violations by psychoanalysts, of which, unfortunately, we have all too many instances. I hope in doing so to bring forward a useful perspective on those ethical violations as instances of hypocrisy. My main aim, however, is to achieve a fuller understanding of the lure of hypocrisy, which, it seems to me, poses a great problem in the world today.

Let us begin with a brief look at the psychoanalytic situation. Our patients rightfully expect to receive help and support, and analysts promise not only expert assistance but also sincerity of purpose. We hold with Freud (1915) that "psycho-analytic treatment is founded on truthfulness" (p. 164). Truthfulness in psychoanalysis begins with the analyst's commitment to the patient's interests,

needs, and welfare. However inevitable the countertransference, however much we may regard reconstruction as co-construction, however many times we may express our views inaccurately, we commit ourselves to the sincerity of our promise to try to help our patients through understanding. Abandonment of that promise constitutes hypocrisy, especially because it is the analyst's explicit intention to promote understanding through the development and analysis of transference. Yet antihypocrisy, as seen in the idealization of our own sincerity and integrity, must also be counted a threat to psychoanalysis. I cannot imagine a successful analytic treatment in which there is no temporary failure of the therapeutic promise (for a discussion of this point in connection with sexual boundary violations,

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see Celenza and Gabbard 2003). No entirely safe position is to be found. Psychoanalysis, like post-Enlightenment politics, thrives on its paradoxes and because of them.

The hypocrisies of psychoanalysts may occur as boundary violations, where the analyst's needs, whether predatory or impulsive or overweeningly compassionate, take precedence over the commitment to the patient's rights. Or they may occur in an analyst's financial dishonesty or in any misuse of the patient's communications. These appalling events in psychoanalytic treatment offer us a further opportunity to understand the lure of hypocrisy.

Transference, idealization, and the evocation of powerful wishes lie at the heart of psychoanalysis. What of uncertainty? Most often, as I have noted, the patient's need for certainty derives from the experience of conflict. We are used to conflict, ambivalence, paradox, and contradiction in psychoanalysis, and we try to maintain Keats's famous "negative capability," the capacity to tolerate uncertainty without the "irritable reaching after fact and reason." Ordinarily, psychoanalytic treatment permits the elements of conflict to develop, fosters their expression, and provides the patient an opportunity to find a new solution. When the analyst, for whatever reason, chooses to abandon the ordinary analytic stance, the hypocritical conditions are set. Why do patients accept the change?

Although careful examination can often demonstrate a slow descent into action, a "slippery slope," patients frequently report a feeling of suddenness. A paper by Marvin Margolis (1997) offers a typical sequence:

One day, Analyst A abruptly asked her for sexual thoughts about him; she spontaneously had the thought of his touching her cheek. She was very shocked when he suddenly reached out and touched her cheek. The next day Dr. A asked her to sit on his lap and began caressing and kissing her. Thus began a sexual relationship that was to last several years until the treatment was terminated by the analyst's retirement.

At the onset she recalled feeling excited and privileged to be the object of his apparent affection. She recalled feeling that they had a shared secret. She became more hopeful for the future. She asked him if this was a part of treatment. He responded that "it was in the literature," thus implying that it was a legitimate activity. She uncritically accepted his explanation [p. 355].

Those who conclude that patients share responsibility for boundary violations often seize on such accounts. "After all," they say, "the patient was shocked initially but then, on the flimsiest of rationalizations, went

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along with the analyst."<sup>11</sup> Armed with a view of boundary violations as hypocrisy, however, we note that the author of the Panchatantra, more than two thousand years ago, described the partridge's reactions similarly: at first opposed to "that mean creature Curd-ears" and then quickly trusting. There is, of course, no doubt that the patient's desires play a role, but the attribution of responsibility, "blaming the victim," bypasses the crucial questions: why and how does the patient's judgment fail?

A woman in her fifties consulted me on account of her treatment by a predatory psychoanalyst. Although she had fended off his sexual overtures, she could not at first resist his appeals to bring him homemade food. When later he would childishly plead for her to bring some, she would call him to account, telling him to grow up. But she could not get herself to interrupt the treatment! She expressed a feeling that he needed her and that she should not abandon him.

I was unable to help her master this remarkable disorder of judgment in the relatively brief time available for consultation, so I persuaded her to enter therapy with another analyst while continuing to see the predatory one. Over a period of many months it was possible to help her leave the first treatment.

Although it often looks willful to the outsider, the failure of judgment is based on binding unconscious influences. When it occurs under pressure from the hypocritical analyst, in the context of the necessary preconditions, it can be reversed only on the strength of another relationship, and then often with great effort. For example, a woman who had for many years made her life around her former analyst, with whom she had continued a sexual relationship, freed herself mainly through falling in love and marrying another man. In her case it was not only internal obstacles that had to be overcome, however. On the day before her wedding, her married former analyst called her and once more insisted, as so often before, that he would marry her soon, and that she should wait for him. Her fiancé, a man of integrity, helped her resist the force of this appeal.

The need for another person to exert an influence in cases of hypocritical violation makes itself most starkly evident in the predicament

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11 Isaacs, Alexander, and Haggard (1963), in their study of faith, trust, and gullibility, presented an analogous view in regard to the targets of a confidence man: "all the victims mulcted were mulcted through their own cupidity. The victims denied their guilt, so that it operated unconsciously and made them victims, when their conscious wish was to victimize others" (p. 364).

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of children who have been sexually assaulted by a family member or other trusted adult. When parents, for their own reasons, cannot bear the truth their children try to tell, the traumatic consequences for the children may run very deep. In these cases—for example, when parents' religious beliefs lead to denial of misconduct by clergy—the force of credulity comes from them rather than from the child.

We could say with some justice that the preconditions of hypocrisy, within psychoanalytic treatment and outside it, lead to a dissociative disorder, some sort of split or barrier between one sort of awareness and another, but this designation is overinclusive. It also begs the question, for it does not sufficiently illuminate the event of credulity. Nor will we get much further by postulating some hypnotic state, though there is a long-established psychoanalytic connection between idealization, desire, falling in love, and hypnosis (Freud

1921). Some patients may be more likely than others to become dissociated, but neither dissociation nor hypnotic state as we ordinarily think of them would account for the disorder of judgment that possessed the patient who consulted me, knowing that her analyst was behaving unethically and incompetently.

To avoid a formulation that casts too wide a net, I believe we must look for some sort of regression that operates quickly and narrowly, leaving much of the patient's functioning intact. Bion's description of group behavior (1952) conveys something like that: "Participation in basic assumption mental activity requires no training, experience or mental development. It is instantaneous, inevitable and instinctive" (p. 235). The unconscious mental processes involved, so far as I can tell, reach into the realm of undifferentiated self and other. The transferences that contribute to the susceptibility to hypocrisy in psychoanalysis take on the character of developmentally early forms of trust. They can be seen as regressions in individuals who may otherwise have the more balanced view of mature trust. Here is the downside of basic transference (Greenacre 1954) or basic trust (Erikson 1956)—essential for development but insufficient for self-protection.

We can specify many of the steps along the developmental line from basic trust to mature trust, but we recognize that development occurs unevenly and varies from one person to another, producing a variety of vulnerabilities to regression as a consequence. Where early object relations have led to the idealization of unreachable, unreliable, hypocritical, or otherwise "bad" objects, the descent may be especially easy. The transferences in question, and the developmentally early

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forms of trust that they give rise to, come about in many different ways, through many different interactions between analyst and patient over time. The resulting disorders of judgment are also complex, built up of several components in interaction within the patient's mind. To pursue for a moment the example of the woman who knew that her analyst was both childish and unethical, it seems likely that unconscious conflicts over aggression and loss, linked with a transference from an early period of development, led to her inability to leave him. Reparative fantasies very often play a prominent role, with the patient as the caretaker of the analyst. For other patients, the disorder of judgment may be fueled mainly by the experience of relief from a chronic sense of badness, associated with a developmentally early transference. The transference illusion of being loved exclusively, buttressed by sexual gratification with the analyst, may restore a sense of goodness.

Another psychoanalytic observation may usefully supplement the picture. Most analysts will have had the opportunity, in the middle phase of analysis, to observe the reluctance of some patients to proceed with the analytic work, owing to their fear of losing the analyst. In some of these instances, the patients unconsciously refuse to think for themselves, lest it lead to independence, separation, and loss. This sort of “innocent” defense illustrates one component of the potential for regression from mature judgment.

To sum up, the susceptibility to hypocrisy is characterized by four not entirely independent features: (1) the wish for certainty; (2) idealization; (3) powerful desires; and (4) credulity resulting from a transference-based, developmentally early form of trust. In actual instances of succumbing to hypocrisy, these elements are integrated into unconscious fantasy that organizes the individual's mental life and actions.

Does this characterization of the susceptibility to hypocrisy permit us to understand better not only events that occur between individuals but also those that occur among groups of ordinary citizens under everyday conditions? This question requires, first of all, a reminder that one of the important contributions of psychoanalysis has been to demonstrate that psychopathology, as we find it in our patients and in ourselves, lies on a continuum with normality. Few will doubt the ubiquity of the wish for certainty, of idealization, of strong desires, or even of transference in general. What of a tendency, however, to regress from mature trust to basic trust, which we see in psychoanalytic patients? Does this occur in ordinary individuals under ordinary conditions?

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I believe so. Under the influence of group formation, especially through charismatic leadership, the force of religious and political beliefs, and the strong desires that accompany them, such circumscribed regressions in trust represent the norm rather than the exception. So we may properly assume that under some circumstances everyone is susceptible to hypocrisy. In times of increased uncertainty, that susceptibility will be particularly great.

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