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## THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY

*In a social system animated by competition for property, the human personality was metamorphosed into a form of capital. Here it was rational to invest oneself only in properties that would produce the highest return. Personal feeling was a handicap since it distracted the individual from calculating his best interest and might pull him along economically counterproductive paths.*

—Rousseau (Berman's paraphrase)

When Jean-Jacques Rousseau observed that personality was becoming a form of capital he was writing about eighteenth-century Paris, long before there were stewardess training schools and long before the arts of bill collecting were standardized and mass produced.<sup>1</sup> If Rousseau could sign on as a flight attendant for Delta Airlines in the second half of the twentieth century, he would doubtless be interested in learning just *whose* capital a worker's feelings are and just *who* is putting this capital to work. He would certainly see that although the individual personality remains a "medium of competition," the competition is no longer confined to individuals. Institutional purposes are now tied to the workers' psychological arts. It is not simply individuals who manage their feelings in order to do a job; whole organizations have entered the game. The emotion management that sustains the smile on Delta Airlines competes with the emotion man-

agement that upholds the smile on United and TWA.

What was once a private act of emotion management is sold now as labor in public-contact jobs. What was once a privately negotiated rule of feeling or display is now set by the company's Standard Practices Division. Emotional exchanges that were once idiosyncratic and escapable are now standardized and unavoidable. Exchanges that were rare in private life become common in commercial life. Thus a customer assumes a right to vent unmanaged hostility against a flight attendant who has no corresponding right—because she is paid, in part, to relinquish it. All in all, a private emotional system has been subordinated to commercial logic, and it has been changed by it.<sup>2</sup>

It does not take capitalism to turn feeling into a commodity or to turn our capacity for managing feeling into an instrument. But capitalism has found a use for emotion management, and so it has organized it more efficiently and pushed it further. And perhaps it does take a capitalist sort of incentive system to connect emotional labor to competition and to go so far as to actually advertise a “sincere” smile, train workers to produce such a smile, supervise their production of it, and then forge a link between this activity and corporate profit. As the sticker on a TWA computer (facing the ticket agent) in the San Francisco Airport read: “When people like you, they like TWA too.” It takes considerable sophistication for a company to make this into an ordinary, trivial thought for a worker to be urged to bear in mind.

#### THE HUMAN COSTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

Massive people-processing—and the advanced engineering of emotional labor that makes it possible—is a remarkable achievement. It is also an important one, for a good part of modern life involves exchange between total strangers, who, in the absence of countermeasures and in the pursuit of short-term self-interest, might much of the time act out suspicion

and anger rather than trust and good will. The occasional lapses from the standard of civility that we take for granted remind us of the crucial steadying effect of emotional labor. But like most great achievements, the advanced engineering of emotional labor leaves new dilemmas in its wake, new human costs, and I shall focus now on these. For without a clear understanding of these psychological costs, we can hardly begin to find ways of mitigating or removing them.

These are three stances that workers seem to take toward work, each with its own sort of risk. In the first, the worker identifies too wholeheartedly with the job, and therefore risks burnout. In the second, the worker clearly distinguishes herself from the job and is less likely to suffer burnout; but she may blame herself for making this very distinction and denigrate herself as “just an actor, not sincere.” In the third, the worker distinguishes herself from her act, does not blame herself for this, and sees the job as positively requiring the capacity to act; for this worker there is some risk of estrangement from acting altogether, and some cynicism about it—“We’re just illusion makers.” The first stance is potentially more harmful than the other two, but the harm in all three could be reduced, I believe, if workers could feel a greater sense of control over the conditions of their work lives.

The first kind of worker does not see her job as one of acting. She has little or no awareness of a “false self.” She is likely to offer warm, personal service, but she is also warm *on behalf of* the company—“when people like you, they like TWA too.” She offers *personalized* service, but she herself becomes identified with the *-ized* part of it. She is not so good at depersonalizing inappropriately personal behavior toward her. For these reasons, she is more likely to suffer stress and be susceptible to burnout. Instead of removing the idea of a “self” from the job either by will or by art, such a person often reacts passively: she stops caring and becomes remote and detached from the people she serves. Some flight attendants who describe themselves as poor at depersonalizing reported periods of emotional deadness: “I wasn’t feel-

ing anything. It was like I wasn't really there. The guy was talking. I could hear him. But all I heard was dead words."

This sense of emotional numbness reduces stress by reducing access to the feelings through which stress introduces itself. It provides an exit from overwhelming distress that allows a person to remain physically present on the job. Burnout spares the person in the short term, but it may have a serious long-term cost. The human faculty of feeling still "belongs" to the worker who suffers burnout, but the worker may grow accustomed to a dimming or numbing of inner signals.<sup>3</sup> And when we lose access to feeling, we lose a central means of interpreting the world around us.

As a precaution against burnout many experienced workers develop a "healthy" estrangement, a clear separation of self from role. They clearly define for themselves when they are acting and when they are not; they know when their deep or surface acting is "their own" and when it is part of the commercial show. They may sometimes feel "phony"—because at a given moment they feel that they shouldn't be acting at all or that they are not acting well enough. But by differentiating between an acting and a nonacting side of themselves, they make themselves less vulnerable to burnout.

Now when the company institutes a speed-up—when it maintains its call for emotional labor but sets up conditions that make it impossible to deliver—the worker may become estranged from the acting itself. She may refuse to act at all, thus withdrawing her emotional labor altogether. Since the job itself calls for good acting, she will be seen as doing the job poorly. She may respond to the constantly negative consequences of this by trying not to take any consequences at all, by trying not to *be* there. If in the first stance the worker is too much present in the role, in the third stance, she is not present enough. In all three, the essential problem is how to adjust one's self to the role in a way that allows some flow of self into the role but minimizes the stress the role puts on the self.

In all three cases, the problem of adjusting self to role is

aggravated by the worker's lack of control over the conditions of work. The more often "tips" about how to see, feel, and seem are issued from above and the more effectively the conditions of the "stage" are kept out of the hands of the actor, the less she can influence her entrances and exits and the nature of her acting in between. The less influence she has, the more likely it is that one of two things will occur. Either she will overextend herself into the job and burn out, or she will remove herself from the job and feel bad about it.

Worker control over the conditions of good acting boils down, in the end, to practical politics. The San Francisco base manager for United Airlines gave an example: "The company wanted to take two flight attendants off each San Francisco-Honolulu crew, but the union was adamantly opposed, and they won. Now that's a multimillion dollar decision. But maybe it was a good thing they won. They felt they could have some control over that decision. It wasn't just money they wanted. They wanted some say over their work lives so they could do the job like they wanted."

But even such actions by organized workers cannot solve the whole problem. For whenever people do acting for a living, even if they have some control over the stage, they inhabit their own stage faces with caution: behind the mask, they listen to their own feelings at low volume. Cheerfulness in the line of duty becomes something different from ordinary good cheer. This applies much more to the flight attendant, who must try to be genuinely friendly to a line of strangers, than to the commissary worker, who can feel free to hate packing the three-hundredth jello cup onto a lunch tray.

#### THE CULTURE'S RESPONSE

Estrangement from display, from feeling, and from what feelings can tell us is not simply the occupational hazard of a few. It has firmly established itself in the culture as permanently imaginable. All of us who know the commercialization of human feeling at one remove — as witness, consumer, or critic —

have become adept at recognizing and discounting commercialized feeling: “Oh, they have to be friendly, that’s their job.” This enables us to ferret out the remaining gestures of a private gift exchange: “Now *that* smile she really meant just for me.” We subtract the commercial motive and collect the personal remainders matter-of-factly, almost automatically, so ordinary has the commercialization of human feeling become.

But we have responded in another way, which is perhaps more significant: as a culture, we have begun to place an unprecedented value on spontaneous, “natural” feeling.\* We are intrigued by the unmanaged heart and what it can tell us. The more our activities as individual emotion managers are managed by organizations, the more we tend to celebrate the life of unmanaged feeling. This cultural response found its prophets in late eighteenth-century philosophers like Rousseau and its disciples in the Romantic movement of the nineteenth-century; but widespread acceptance of the view that spontaneous feeling is both precious and endangered has occurred only recently, in the mid-twentieth century.

According to Lionel Trilling, in his classic work *Sincerity and Authenticity*, there have been two major turning points in the public evaluation of expressed feeling. The first was the rise (and subsequent fall) of the value that people put on sincerity. The second was a rise in the value placed on authenticity.<sup>4</sup> In the first case, the value attached to sincerity rose as its corresponding flaw, insincerity or guile, became more common. In the second case, I think the same principle has been at work: the value placed on authentic or “natural” feeling has increased dramatically with the full emergence of its opposite—the managed heart.

\* People want to be their “authentic” selves. As Marshall Berman has put it: “To pursue authenticity as an ideal, as something that must be achieved, is to be self-consciously paradoxical. But those who seek authenticity insist that this paradox is built into the structure of the world they live in. This world, they say, represses, alienates, divides, denies, destroys the self. To be oneself in such a world is not a tautology but a *problem*” (1970, p. xvi).

Before the sixteenth century, Trilling says, insincerity was neither a fault nor a virtue. "The sincerity of Achilles or Beowulf cannot be discussed; they neither have nor lack sincerity."<sup>5</sup> It simply had no relevance. Yet during the sixteenth century, sincerity came to be admired. Why? The answer is socioeconomic. At this period in history, there was an increasing rate of social mobility in England and France; more and more people found it possible, or conceivable, to leave the class into which they had been born. Guile became an important tool for class advancement. The art of acting, of making avowals not in accord with feeling, became a useful tool for taking advantage of new opportunities. As mobility became a fact of urban life, so did guile and people's understanding that guile was a tool.<sup>6</sup>

Sincerity for its part came to be seen as an inhibition of the capacity to act before a multiplicity of audiences or as an absence of the psychic detachment necessary to acting. The sincere, "honest soul" came to denote a "simple person, unsophisticated, a bit on the dumb side."<sup>7</sup> It was considered "dumb" because the art of surface acting was increasingly understood as a useful tool. When mobility became a fact of urban life, so did the art of guile, and the very interest in sincerity as a virtue declined.\* Modern audiences, in contrast to nineteenth-century ones, became bored with duplicity as a literary theme. It had become too ordinary, too unsurprising: "The hypocrite-villain, the conscious dissembler, has become marginal, even alien, to the modern imagination of the moral life. The situation in which a person systematically misrepresents himself in order to practice upon the good faith of another does not readily command our interest, scarcely our credence. The deception we best understand and most willingly give our attention to is that which a person works upon

\* "If sincerity has lost its former status, if the word itself has for us a hollow sound and seems almost to negate its meaning, that is because it does not propose being true to one's self as an end but only as a means" (Trilling 1972, p. 9).

himself.<sup>8</sup> The point of interest has moved inward. What fascinates us now is how we fool ourselves.

What seems to have replaced our interest in sincerity is an interest in authenticity.<sup>9</sup> In both the rise and the fall of sincerity as a virtue, the feeling of sincerity “underneath” was assumed to be something solid and permanent, whether one was true to it or betrayed it. Placing a value on guile amounted to placing a value on detachment *from* that solid something underneath.<sup>10</sup> The present-day value on “authentic” or “natural” feeling may also be a cultural response to a social occurrence, but the occurrence is different. It is not the rise of individual mobility and the *individual* use of guile in pleasing a greater variety of people. It is the rise of the *corporate* use of guile and the organized training of feeling to sustain it. The more the heart is managed, the more we value the unmanaged heart.

Rousseau’s Noble Savage was not guided by any feeling rules. He simply felt what he felt, spontaneously. One clue to the modern-day celebration of spontaneous feeling is the growing popularization of psychological therapies, especially those that stress “getting in touch with” spontaneous feeling.<sup>11</sup> Consider them: Gestalt, bioenergetics, biofeedback, encounter, assertiveness training, transactional analysis, transcendental meditation, rational-emotive therapy, LSD therapy, feeling therapy, implosive therapy, EST, primal therapy, conventional psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. Therapy books, as the linguist Robin Lakoff has said, are to the twentieth century what etiquette books were to the nineteenth. This is because etiquette has itself gone deeper into emotional life.

The introduction of new therapies and the extension of older ones have given a new introspective twist to the self-help movement that began in the last century.\* To that twist is

\* The significance of the growth of new therapies cannot be dismissed by the argument that they are simply a way of extending jobs in the service sector by creating new needs. The question remains, why *these* needs? Why the new need to *do* something about how you feel? The new therapies have also been criticized, as the old self-help movement was, for focusing on individual solutions to the exclusion of

now added the value on unmanaged feelings. As practitioners of Gestalt therapy put it: "The childish feelings are important not as a past that must be undone but as some of the most beautiful powers of adult life that must be recovered: spontaneity, imagination."<sup>12</sup> Again, in *Born to Win*, two popularizers of transactional analysis collapse a more general viewpoint into a simple homily: "Winners are not stopped by their contradictions and ambivalences. Being authentic, they know when they are angry and can listen when others are angry with them."<sup>13</sup> Winners, the suggestion is, do not *try to know* what they feel or *try to let themselves* feel. They just know and they just feel, in a natural, unprocessed way.

Ironically, people read a book like *Born to Win* in order to *learn* how to *try* to be a natural, authentic winner. Spontaneity is now cast as something to be *recovered*; the individual learns how to treat feeling as a recoverable object, with ego as the instrument of recovery. In the course of "getting in touch with our feelings," we make feelings more subject to command and manipulation, more amenable to various forms of management.<sup>14</sup>

While the qualities of Rousseau's Noble Savage are celebrated in modern pop therapy, he did not act in the way his modern admirers do. The Noble Savage did not "let" himself feel good about his garden. He did not "get in touch with" or "into" his resentment. He had no therapist working on his throat to open up a "voice block." He did not go back and forth between hot and cold tubs while hyperventilating to get in touch with his feelings. No therapist said to him, "Okay, Noble Savage, let's try to really get into your sadness." He did not imagine that he owed others any feeling or that they owed

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social ones and for legitimating the message "Look out for Number One" (Lasch, 1976b). This critique is not wrong in itself, but it is partial and misleading. It is my own view that the capacity to feel is fully analogous to the capacity to see or hear; and if that capacity is lost or injured, it is wise to restore it in whatever way one can. But to attach the cure to a solipsistic or individualistic philosophy of life or to assume that one's injury can only be self-imposed is to contribute to what I have called (with optimism) a "prepolitical" stance.

him any. In fact, the utter absence of calculation and will as they have become associated with feeling is what nowadays makes the Noble Savage seem so savage. But it is also—and this is my point—what makes him seem so noble.

Why do we place more value now on artless, unmanaged feeling? Why, hopelessly and romantically, do we imagine a natural preserve of feeling, a place to be kept “forever wild”? The answer must be that it is becoming scarce. In everyday life, we are all to some degree students of Stanislavski; we are only poorer or better at deep acting, closer or more remote from incentives to do it well. We have carried our ancient capacity for gift exchange over a great commercial divide where the gifts are becoming commodities and the exchange rates are set by corporations. Jean-Jacques Rousseau as a flight attendant for Delta Airlines might add to his eighteenth-century concern for the faceless soul beneath the mask a new concern for the market intrusion into the ways we define ourselves and for how, since his day, that intrusion has expanded and organized itself.

#### THE FALSE SELF

Both psychoanalysts and actors, from different perspectives, have spoken about a “false self,” which is a disbelieved, unclaimed self, a part of “me” that is not “really me.” To the psychoanalyst, the false self embodies our acceptance of early parental requirements that we act so as to please others, at the expense of our own needs and desires. This sociocentric, other-directed self comes to live a separate existence from the self we claim. In the extreme case, the false self may set itself up as the real self, which remains completely hidden. More commonly, the false self allows the true self a life of its own, which emerges when there is little danger of its being used by others.

The actual content of feelings—or wishes, or fantasies, or actions—is not what distinguishes the false self from the

true self; the difference lies in whether we claim them as “our own.” This claiming applies to our outward behavior, our surface acting: “I wasn’t acting like myself.” It also applies to our inner experience, our deep acting: “I made myself go to that party and have a good time even though I was feeling depressed.”

Professional actors think of the false self as a marvelous resource that can be drawn upon to move audiences to laughter or tears. They find some margin of unclaimed action and feeling to be wonderfully helpful in getting into the part. The danger for the actor lies in *becoming* the part he plays, in feeling that he *is* Hamlet.\*

Among ordinary people, the false or unclaimed self is what enables one to offer the discretion, the kindness, and the generosity that Noble Savages tend to lack. It is a *healthy* false self. By giving up infantile desires for omnipotence, a person gains a “place in society which can never be attained or maintained by the True Self alone.”<sup>15</sup>

Christopher Lasch has recently speculated that our culture’s latest model of an unhealthy false self may be the narcissist.<sup>16</sup> The narcissist feeds insatiably on interactions, competing desperately for love and admiration in a Hobbesian dog-eat-dog world where both are perpetually scarce. His efforts are self-perpetuating because he must discount the results: what admiration he does receive, after all, is offered to his false self, not his real one.

But our culture has produced another form of false self: the altruist, the person who is overly concerned with the needs of *others*. In our culture, women—because they have traditionally been assigned the task of tending to the needs of others—are in greater danger of overdeveloping the false self and losing track of its boundaries. If developing a narcis-

\* Stanislavski warned: “Always act in your own person, as an artist. You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks . . . the beginning of exaggerated false acting. For losing yourself in the part, you kill the person whom you portray, for you deprive ‘him’ of the real source of life for a part” (1965, p. 167).

sistic false self is the greater danger for men, developing an altruistic false self is the greater danger for women. Whereas the narcissist is adept at turning the social uses of feeling to his own advantage, the altruist is more susceptible to being used—not because her sense of self is weaker but because her “true self” is bonded more securely to the group and its welfare.

Added to the private sexual division of emotional labor is now the trend toward organizing the ways in which public-contact workers manage emotion. Organizations do this in hopes of having the worker’s *true* self come to work. They hope to make this private resource a company asset. Yet the more the company offers the worker’s true self for sale, the more that self risks seeming false to the individual worker, and the more difficult it becomes for him or her to know which territory of self to claim.

Given this problem, it becomes all the more important to have access to feeling itself. It is from feeling that we learn the *self*-relevance of what we see, remember, or imagine. Yet it is precisely this precious resource that is put in jeopardy when a company inserts a commercial purpose between a feeling and its interpretation.

For example, flight attendants in Delta’s Recurrent Training classes were told: “When you get mad at some guy for telling you that you owe him a smile, you’re really mad only because you’re focusing on yourself, on how *you* feel. Get your mind off yourself. Think about how the situation looks to *him*. Usually he doesn’t mean a thing by it. And anyway that kind of behavior isn’t going to change for a long, long time. So don’t get mad at that.” When a flight attendant feels angry at a passenger in this situation, what does her anger signal? According to the teacher in Recurrent Training, it indicates that she is *mislocating* herself in the world, that she is seeing the man who demands a smile in the wrong sort of way—that she is oversensitive, too touchy. It does not signal a perception about how emotional display maintains unequal power between

women and men, and between employees and employers. It indicates something wrong with the worker, not something wrong with the assumptions of the customer or the company. In this way the company's purposes insinuate themselves into the way workers are asked to interpret their own feelings. It raises questions for them at every turn. "Is that how I should think about my anger? Is this how the company wants me to think about it?" Thus the worker may lose touch with her feelings, as in burnout, or she may have to struggle with the company interpretation of what they mean.

Coping with the costs of emotional labor calls for great inventiveness. Among themselves, flight attendants build up an alternative way of experiencing a smile or the word "girl"—a way that involves anger and joking and mutual support on the job. And in their private lives—driving back home on the freeway, talking quietly with a loved one, sorting it out in the occasional intimacy of a worker-to-worker talk—they separate the company's meaning of anger from their own meaning, the company rules of feeling from their own. They try to reclaim the managed heart. These struggles, like the costs that make them necessary, remain largely invisible because the kind of labor that gives rise to them—emotional labor—is seldom recognized by those who tell us what labor is.

On Broadway Avenue in San Francisco there was once an improvisational theater called The Committee. In one of its acts, a man comes to center stage yawning, arms casually outstretched as if ready to prepare himself for bed. He takes off his hat and lays it methodically on an imaginary bureau top. Then he takes off his hair, a wig apparently. He slowly pulls off his glasses and massages the bridge of his nose where his glasses had rubbed. Then he takes off his nose. Then his teeth. Finally he unhitches his smile and lies down to sleep, a man finally quite "himself."

This insinuation of the "false" into the "true," of the artificial into the natural, is a widespread trouble. One main cause of it, as it applies to feeling, is that people are made

increasingly aware of incentives to *use* feeling. Those who perform emotional labor in the course of giving service are like those who perform physical labor in the course of making things: both are subject to the rules of mass production. But when the product—the thing to be engineered, mass-produced, and subjected to speed-up and slowdown—is a smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship, it comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self. And so in the country that most publicly celebrates the individual, more people privately wonder, without tracing the question to its deepest social root: What do I really feel?

doer, another *girl* is assigned what Goffman has called (and perhaps misunderstood as) “freak-out privileges” (1967, p. 26). Consider this passage from *The Message in the Hollow Oak* (Carolyn Keene, Nancy Drew Series, 1972): “In a sudden lurch he [a large dog] leaped on Nancy. She lost her balance, stumbled backward, and fell into the quarry. Julie Anne screamed. She and the boys watched horror-stricken, as Nancy hit the water and disappeared. Ned started down the steep embankment, while Art yanked a coil of wire from a pocket. Using it as a whip, he finally drove off the attacking dog. As it ran away, whimpering, Nancy’s head appeared above the water. ‘Oh, Nancy. Thank goodness,’ cried Julie Anne. She was near tears” (p. 147). Julie Anne really does fear for Nancy and the boys. Not all women play Julie Anne, but we judge whether a woman is expressive or not according to this female standard; it is part of our cultural understanding of femininity, and therefore also of masculinity. In my view, this culturally mandated expressiveness is not so much a privilege as a job.

13. On the other hand, male flight attendants have to cope with the definition of their job as a woman’s job. Their identity as men is challenged. They have to defend themselves against the expectation—imposed daily, at least before the recession began in 1973—that surely they will move up or out of this job. They were surely “above” the women they worked with, but then it was only women that they worked with. Added to these assumptions were occasional expressions of personal anxiety from passengers about the matter of men sticking to a male world; male flight attendants were burdened with mentally preparing for kindly assaults laden with this anxiety. They also had the job, sometimes handed them by their female co-workers, of policing passengers who felt free to harass female workers.

## CHAPTER 9

*EPIGRAPH:* This, in Marshall Berman’s words, is what Rousseau concluded about the impersonality of personal relations in the eighteenth century (Berman 1970, p. 140).

1. As Berman goes on to note, Rousseau saw the modern man of Paris both as the victim of self-loss and as the more astute judge of just what modern life had made him lose. “Modern conditions

created a moral imagination which could define inauthenticity as a problem,” for “among so many prejudices and false . . . passions, it is necessary to know how to analyze the human heart and to disentangle the true feelings of nature” (p. 158). “*La Nouvelle Heloise* had succeeded so splendidly in decadent Paris which it denounced but had been rejected so coldly in solid Switzerland whose virtues it celebrated” (p. 157). The injured attend more to the cure.

2. Geertz (1973) has noted that when believers came to uphold Islam *in order to* build nationalism, the traditional beliefs themselves changed meaning; when seen as means, they functioned less as ends. The same thing happens when feelings are made to serve external ends; and the more remote these ends, the more the managed heart becomes “not me” and “not mine.”

3. Christina Maslach interviewed burnout victims, who told her such things as, “I don’t care anymore. I don’t have any feelings left. I’ve nothing left to give, I’m drained. I’m exhausted. I’m burned out.” For further work on burnout, see Maslach (1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1979).

4. Just when this rise in the value of authenticity occurred will surely maintain itself as a point of lively historical debate. For example, Berman (1970) contends that even in the late eighteenth century, Rousseau and his Parisian readers saw authenticity as a problem born of “modern life.”

5. Trilling (1972), p. 9. Speaking of English literature before and after the sixteenth century, Trilling continues: “But if we ask whether young Werther is really as sincere as he intends to be, or which of two Dashwood sisters, Elinor or Marianne, is thought by Jane Austen to be the more truly sincere, we can confidently expect a serious response in the form of opinions on both sides of the question.” Sincerity did not become a relevant virtue until insincerity or guile became a common temptation. The very term *sincerity* changed in meaning: “As used in the early sixteenth century in respect of persons, it is largely metaphorical—a man’s life is sincere in the sense of being sound or pure, or whole; or consistent in its virtuousness. But it soon came to mean the absence of dissimulation or feigning or pretense” (p. 13).

6. The rising value placed on detaching feeling from semblance is strikingly illustrated in Trilling’s discussion of Diderot’s

“The Nephew of Rameau.” (“Nephew” was written some time between 1761 and 1774. It was translated by Goethe and touted by Hegel as a paradigm of the modern cultural and spiritual situation.) This is a dialogue between the philosopher, Diderot, who defends sincerity, and the nephew of Rameau, who celebrates liberation from sincerity. The nephew is a “presenter of self in everyday life,” a true Goffman man in his capacity to act (though not in his ability to calculate personal advantage). He not only is but sees himself as an actor on the everyday social stage. Demonstrating his capacity to fool people in an exhibition for Diderot, the nephew is, in succession: “furious, mollified, lordly, sneering. First a damsel weeps and he reproduces her kittenish ways; next he is a priest, a king, a tyrant. Now he is a slave, he obeys, calms down, is heartbroken, complains, laughs, singing, shouting, waving about like a madman, being in himself dancer and ballerina, singer and prima donna, all of them together and the whole orchestra, the whole theater; then redividing himself into twenty separate roles, running, stopping, glowing at the eyes like one possessed, frothing at the mouth. He was a woman in a spasm of grief, a wretched man sunk in despair.” Quoted in Trilling (1972), p. 45.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

9. Trilling points out several meanings of the overly inclusive term *authenticity*. One is shamelessness, inauthenticity being the conduct of life in the fear of shame or guilt—emotions through which we honor propriety. In this sense “authentic heroes and heroines” put themselves beyond the proper limits, and the obligations they do accept have a certain fascinating weightlessness. Authenticity also refers to having an extreme degree of power over something, including oneself. What most interests and appalls Trilling is authenticity as a legitimized exit from one’s moral community, and the use of the term as a glow word that lends moral credence to illusions of narcissistic grandeur and social detachment. R. D. Laing’s invitation to go mad is Trilling’s case in point: “Who that finds intelligible in the sentences which describe madness . . . in terms of transcendence and charisma will fail to penetrate to the great refusal of human connection that they express, the appalling belief that human existence is made authentic by the possession of a power, or the persuasion of its possession,

which is not to be qualified or restricted by the coordinate existence of any fellow man” (ibid., p. 171).

The problem is that with this stroke of disapproval, Trilling dismisses the very question to which his whole analysis leads: *why has authenticity as a value supplanted sincerity?* This he never answers. Ironically, it is the sensibility and analysis of R. D. Laing, the very person who bids us all go mad, which, for reasons quite separate and detachable, help answer the question that Trilling himself poses. Authenticity can supplant sincerity because it is understood to refer to spontaneous, natural, artless feeling.

10. The very notion of *disguising* feeling in order to play a role implies, as Trilling puts it, that “somewhere under all the roles [that] have been played, [one] would like to murmur, ‘Off, off you lendings!’ and settle down with his own original actual self” (ibid., p. 10). This Trilling calls the immutable “English” self, a self about which one can fool the world, but not oneself. Trilling distinguishes between an English self and an American one. The English self is “private, solid, intractable” (p. 113). This is Trilling’s fantasy of a self in an immobile society—a fantasy he locates for some reason in England. The American self he conceives as thinly composed and correspondingly more malleable.

11. For an excellent essay on this subject, see Turner (1976).

12. Perls et al. (1951), p. 297.

13. James and Jongeward (1971).

14. The ego detachment necessary to do emotion work is fostered by many modern therapies that aim, in part, to increase control over feelings. The individual is inducted into the belief that he or she *already has control over feeling*, a control that simply has to be brought to awareness. For example, Brown (1974) reports that in bioenergetic therapy, “The subject is told that various colored lights are actually operated by his own brain waves . . . and that these are controlled by his own feelings and thoughts and moods. The subject is told that he himself can control the lights by the way he feels and thinks” (p. 50). Again, in transcendental meditation, the patient is told that by manipulating his inner thoughts or images, he can maintain “alpha wave activity” as he wishes. The individual is inducted into the belief that he *already has control* by being asked to distinguish between ego and id, framer and framed-upon, director and actor.

15. Winnicott (1965), p. 143. The early development of a false self is an asset for the actor. As Winnicott notes, "It can easily be seen that sometimes the False Self defense can form the basis for a kind of sublimating, as when a child grows up to be an actor" (p. 150).

16. Lasch (1978). We have an accumulation of literature now on the new "modern self" adapted to conditions of modern society: for example, Riesman (1953), Lasch (1978), Lifton (1970), Turner (1976), Zurcher (1972). These theorists suggest a general link between conditions of modern life (living in transient social worlds or being transient in stable ones, the decline of kinship ties, social mobility) and the development of a more outwardly attuned (Riesman), more protean (Lifton), more malleable self. In other words, their conclusion seems to be that conditions conspire to foster in us more false selves, which are more flexibly related to what we conceive as our illusive "true self."

#### AFTERWORD

1. See Ronnie Steinberg and Deborah Figart's "Emotional Labor Since *The Managed Heart*" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1999 (Jan), V 561:8–26. Also see Pam Smiths XXXX, Jennifer Pierce, 1995, *Gender Trials, Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms*, Berkeley: University of California Press. and Aviad Raz's *Emotions at Work Normative Control, Organizations and Culture in Japan and America*, (2002) Harvard East Asia Monographs, no 213, Cambridge: Harvard East Asia Center.

2. Cameron Macdonald and Carmen Siriani 1996. (eds.) *Working in the Service Society*, Phil: Temple University Press,

3. Steinberg and Figart, op cit, p 11–12.

4. Steinbert and Figart, op cit. p9.

5. Steinbert and Figart, op cit, p 19.

6. Rochelle Sharpe, "Nannies on Speed Dial" *Working Life, Business Week*, September 18, 2000, pp.108–110. The president of a Massachusetts-based agency Parents in a Pinch Inc. reported that rather than grandparents themselves helping working parents, she found that frequently grandparents bought the service for a