Brooke Harrington, ed.
Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating.
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Brooke Harrington's edited collection of essays is the product of a series of cross-disciplinary workshops held at the Santa Fe Institute in 2007, while Harrington was a Visiting Scholar. It includes essays by biologists, computer scientists, social psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, law professors, humanities professors, and poets. The mix of contributors reflects the editorial view that deception is a "complex, multifaceted, and elusive phenomenon," and that it would be a form of "reductionism" for the collection as a whole to offer a definition of deception (or of lying), or to determine that deception is to be morally condemned, or even that, on a "cost-benefit analysis," deception is advantageous (15). Instead, there are six "regularities" (15) that emerge from the different contributions.

These regularities are: (i) deception can be non-intentional as well as intentional; (ii) there is a lot of intentional deception that is not lying, and it is more difficult to isolate and regulate than lying; (iii) deception is inevitably linked to trust as well as to truth; (iv) deception normally involves interaction between two or more parties; (v) in Judeo-Christian cultures there is both endorsement and condemnation of deception; (vi) in non-Western cultures deception is seen in a positive light. Here I will address the first four regularities.

Restricting deception to intentional deception would rule out many forms of deception in the animal world. Mark Frank, a social psychologist, distinguishes between *passive* deception and *active* deception, where deception is "anything that misleads another for some gain" (58). If the tiger deceives its prey with its striped coat, then this is passive deception, since it did not choose its coat. However, when Carl Bergstrom, a biologist, says that "organisms deceive one another in every imaginable way in order to attain every conceivable advantage," and gives us, as examples, "the chemical mimicry that caterpillars use to invade the nest chambers of ants" and the contortions of "the mimic octopus that can imitate a wide range of poisonous creatures and other underwater objects" (21–22), it is not clear whether this deception is supposed to be passive, like the tiger's camouflage, or active, which has yet to be defined.

Frank distinguishes between active deception and *lying*. Along with every other contributor, Frank considers lying to be intentional. His definition is taken from social psychologist Paul Ekman, who is a source for several authors. Lying is "a deliberate attempt to mislead, without the implicit or explicit prior consent or notification of the target" (57). A person can lie by "making statements that are actually truthful but that the target of the lie will misinterpret" (57). Truthful statements, then, can be lies. Indeed, statements are not needed for lying. A person can lie by simply "concealing information" (57). Even language use is not needed for lying. Animals may be able to lie. It depends on their ability to have deceptive thoughts. Talking about the possibility that "chimpanzees lied to their troopmates about the presence or location of food," Frank says that since it is "difficult to ascertain what the chimpanzee was trying to do—that is, to have access to its thought patterns—we cannot

conclude with any confidence that the chimpanzee was lying, although it looked suspiciously close to lying" (58).

The distinction between active deception and lying relies on *consent*: "some other forms of deception are authorized," such as "the unspoken notification by actors in a play or movie… or when a poker player engages in bluffing… [or] when a polite dinner guest expresses enjoyment over a meal he or she may not have liked" (59). Thus we have "passive deception, such as the tiger, or active deception, as in a politeness situation, or a lie, which involves the active, unauthorized misleading of another" (59). Unless animals such as chimpanzees can authorize their own deceptions of each other, like we do, it turns out that animals can only engage in passive deception, or possibly in lying. It depends on their "thought patterns." A further entailment is more problematic. If the actors in a movie deceive us, then we must be consenting to this deception because *we gain* from such deception. But, on Frank's account, to deceive is always to "mislead another for some gain." So either active deception is not, in fact, deception at all (since the audience gains, rather than loses), or to "mislead another for some gain" can mean a 'win-win' for deceiver and deceived—and that is surely not a natural reading of the original definition. My recommendations are to remove "for gain" from the definition of deception (this is a *reason* for deception, not part of its meaning), and to reject the category of consensual deception. This would leave us with just passive deception and lying.

Law professors Fredrick Schauer and Richard Zeckhauser also distinguish between deception and lying. They define lying as "(1) an intent to deceive, (2) the use of words that are literally false, and (3) the presence of a recipient who is caused by the lie to have a misimpression of reality" (41). Lying thus requires language use and falsehoods, in addition to deceptive intent. This seems like a definition of *successful* lying, however. Otherwise, it is always incorrect to call someone a liar when he/she is attempting to deceive you with falsehoods, which seems wrong. In any event, they hold that lying is not nearly so widespread as "acting insincerely or misleadingly" (29) without actually lying. They resurrect the term 'palter' for this: intentional deception (it excludes honest mistakes, as well as "negligently or recklessly" (42) misleading people) that does not involve using falsehoods. Paltering includes "fudging, twisting, shading, bending, stretching, slanting, exaggerating, distorting, whitewashing, and selective reporting" (39), at least when they succeed. An example would be referring "to a famous person by his or her first name, attempting to create the impression of a close friendship" (44) and succeeding.

Schauer and Zeckhauser think that the "harm of the palter is no less than the harm of the lie" (45), although paltering is much more difficult to prove, and there are fewer ways to legally penalize a palter, and people have fewer qualms about paltering, and, as a result, paltering is much more common than lying. Because it is more common, and harms just as much, they think it that poses a greater threat than lying. While they talk about condemning people for it ("You dirty palterer!" (51)), they also admit that "given current standards, all of us probably palter from time to time" (51). Another contributor, the (sadly, late) social psychologist Maureen O'Sullivan, says that "In an hour's conversation, two people may palter four or five times" (81).

For myself, I take 'deception' to already mean something that falls short of lying. Even if others find 'palter' to be a useful term, there still might be a cost involved, since 'deceive' has an

immediate negative connotation, whereas 'palter,' which has fallen out of use, does not have any immediate connotation. Furthermore, the scope should not be so broad as to include simply being secretive. It is possible to keep someone in ignorance of something without giving her or him a false belief about it. "Selective reporting" without deceptive intent may simply be the keeping of a secret (e.g., someone had a row with a spouse this weekend but doesn't refer to it).

Guido Möllering, a professor of management, defines deception as "the deliberate misrepresentation of an actor's identity, intentions, or behaviors as well as the distortion of any facts relevant to the relationship between actors" (141), although his main concern is with trust. Following Erving Goffman, he holds that "there is a dark side to trust" (138) because "trust and deception both enable and destroy one another" (144). Someone "who begins to trust stops worrying about deception" (144). Trust "always involves a leap of faith" (139), otherwise it is not trust. This is precisely the condition necessary for deception to occur—the 'trustor' must have a leap of faith, and stop worrying about deception by the 'trustee,' in order to be deceived by the trustee. Deception could be eliminated by never trusting anyone. Yet it is "the leap of faith in trust that enables positive social interaction with great potential benefits to take place instead of falling into a paralyzing paranoia of opportunism" (146).

Möllering is right to draw our attention to trust and its relationship to deception. Nevertheless, deception does not require trust. If I lay a trap for you in a forest, and you are deceived by it, it is not because you trusted anyone. The same is true if I plant false evidence for investigators at a crime scene. This may not fit Möllering's definition of deception, but then deception is broader than his definition. Furthermore, as William Glenney points out in his essay on military deception, enemies in war may deceive each other even though "there is no explicit expectation of trust between protagonists in war" (257). Indeed, as sociologist Harrington points out in her essay on investment clubs and the U.S. stock market, investors knew that "business people cheat all the time" (quoted, 250), and they still invested in companies like Enron, which suggests that "widely held beliefs about the need for public trust in financial markets may be unfounded" (252). Deception occurs where there is distrust, too.

Computer scientist Hany Farid is also interested in trust where there is distrust—in particular, "our trust in photographs" (107) when digital doctoring in both the tabloid and broadsheet media is common. As it turns out, with "the next generation of cameras that automatically removes wrinkles (Panasonic) or ten pounds (Hewlett-Packard) at the push of a button" (108), we can all become Dorian Grays in our photos. That said, new technology does not always lead to more deceiving and lying. As information scientist Jeffrey Hancock tells us, 'digital deception,' or deception and lying that is *technologically mediated*" (110), occurs comparatively most often on the telephone, and least often in e-mail, since e-mail is not interactive (people can refuse to respond, or respond carefully) and is recordable (there is a greater threat of being caught). Furthermore, new technology "may even encourage honesty and openness" (120) where people "are communicating with or through a computer system" (116) rather than a person.

With these and other essays the book as a whole does provide a good "status report" (2) on what various disciplines have to say about deception and lying, even if not everything is of

interest to philosophers. My only quibble with the book—echoed by my students—is that some of the essays are short and read more as summaries.

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