

Envy, Jealousy, Greed: A Kleinian/Transpersonal approach

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"Certainly then, envy is the worst sin there is. For truly, all other sins are sometime against only one special virtue; but truly, envy is against all virtues and against all goodnesses."

Geoffrey Chaucer - *The Parson's Tale*

A case example adapted from a published source

Patient: Male, 72 yrs., highly creative in his public life. He is tired looking, frail, lacking spontaneity, his speech is slow and halting, monotonous in tone. He is a sensitive man, a perfectionist, easily hurt and moved to anger and tears. He can be unforgiving, pessimistic and demanding. His physical health is good; he sleeps poorly without medication; his appetite is poor. He is preoccupied with the past, constantly thinking of his past life with his parents and with his own children.

Presenting problem: He has a long-standing history of recurrent mood swings, from age 34 when first hospitalized and treated for manic-depressive illness, with numerous relapses since. When depressed he becomes socially withdrawn, uncreative, expresses marked feelings of futility, worthlessness, and at times is suicidal. He has difficulty concentrating and relaxing, is hypersensitive to noise, and has profound feelings of guilt about his being a burden to his family, and doubts that he will ever recover.

Personal history: His early family life can be described as unsettled, and stressed. Father: often "absent", temperamental, dramatic, prone to rages. Mother: domineering, possessive, protective. One younger brother. Shortly after he was born, his mother became ill/depressed, hospitalized for 2-3 months, he was looked after by an aunt. Bedwetting until age 10. Left school at 15, wounded in action during the war, which deeply affected him. At age 34, he married his first wife, and with a new-born daughter, career pressures, a year later he suffered his first breakdown when he was seriously manic. The marriage broke up 7 yrs later, and he took an overdose. He has married twice since, and has five children in total. Describing how he feels when he is depressed, he says,

"There is this terrible emptiness. I just want to go away, disappear, cover myself up until it goes away [. .] It is like every fibre in your body is screaming for relief yet there is no relief. [. .] It is like a light switch. I feel suddenly turned off. There is a tiredness, a feeling of complete lethargy."

Something unexpected may simply unsettle him, e.g. a family matter:

"It doesn't so much develop. It just goes bang like that, and I find I am in the grip of it again and I can't shrug it off."

He describes himself as tempestuous, possessive, often intolerant of others, and in his early years, he was an exceedingly jealous and insecure man. "I am a jealous person, certainly, insanely jealous - when it comes to females. I had my first sweetheart and she was given a lift in a car full of people, sitting on a chap's lap. And I saw her and I stopped the car and I dragged her out and I beat this bloke up - just for the fact that she sat on his lap. I was 17 at the time. Raging jealousy. I have remained very possessive. I was then. Less so now." And, when he was age 6, at a picnic, he remembers his mother: "She was so beautiful and I remember one of the chaps was pulling her hair right

back and it upset me so much I ran inside the house and cried. I don't know why. Did I love her? Was she my girlfriend deep down? I was jealous."

Treatment: The history of his treatment has progressed through hospitalization, drugs and bed-rest; then hypnotherapy for insomnia; and more recently antidepressants, ECT, lithium. Psychotherapy does not seem to have been considered.

1. Introduction

In this paper I want to argue that Geoffrey Chaucer's claim that *envy* is the worst sin of all is certainly worth taking seriously. Envy is one of the ugliest of experiences, and yet I will argue that it is fundamental to our human nature. At its extreme, envy is the destructive attack on the source of life, on goodness itself. In everyday life, envy is a common enough experience, but when experienced unconsciously, or early in life, or when left unresolved, it can be overwhelming, and moreover it can be "soul destroying" (see the case example above). Jealousy and greed are closely related to envy, but much less destructive.

Together with Chaucer, there are many insightful portrayals and representations of envy in literature and popular culture. For example, in the small book, *Envy*, by Joseph Epstein (2003), the characters of Iago in *Othello*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, and Uriah Heep in David Copperfield are seen as insightful literary studies in envy. In the film *Seven* (1995, Dir. David Fincher), the serial killer chooses each of the seven deadly sins on which to base his crimes, but he leaves to the last, the worst sin of all, *envy*. Curiously, another fairly recent film, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001, Dir. Steven Spielberg) involves a story that examines the nature of "human" love. However, although the nature of jealousy is explored, it is the omission of any serious treatment of *envy* that undermines the film's potential impact. The point which is missed is that *love* and *hate* are so closely interlinked in the human psyche, and envy and hate are almost synonymous.

In the film, *Amadeus* (1984, Dir. Milos Forman), based on the original stage play by Peter Shaffer, the rivalry between Mozart and Salieri is explored. The story highlights Salieri's jealousy of Mozart's musical genius, but it must be appreciated that Salieri's conflict is really with God. Salieri is tormented by the question: *Why has God granted Mozart such ability, and not him?* In fact, it needs to be understood that Salieri is *jealous* of Mozart, but he is *envious* of God. At first, such a claim might seem rather odd, but this is precisely what lies behind the issue that we will be focussing on in this paper (n.b. for another, somewhat confused, and alternative interpretation, see Barrows, 2005).

The approach that we be taking is that envy is closely linked in the human unconscious with the experience of love, and in examining this relationship we will then, in turn, be able to make some important distinctions between envy, jealousy and greed. To do this we

will need to draw on some psychoanalytical concepts taken from object-relations theory, in particular from the work of Melanie Klein. Eventually, my goal is to place this entire discussion within the context of a transpersonal approach to counselling and psychotherapy. To do this, I intend to relate these ideas to both Klein's concepts of gratitude and reparation, to a discussion of the dynamics of love and hate, which was first given serious attention in the pioneering (but somewhat overlooked) work of the Scottish psychiatrist, Ian Suttie (1935).

My overall aim is to argue that *unconscious envy* plays a pivotal role in the human psyche. In contrast to Epstein's (2003) rather poorly developed little book, where he rather sits on the fence, I will not sit on the fence. I will most emphatically insist that *envy* plays an unavoidable role in the developmental unfolding of the psyche, crucial to our human nature.

2. Psychoanalytic theory and transpersonal practice

As unlikely as it might seem, to many counsellors and psychotherapists, there are important links to be made between psychoanalytic and transpersonal thinking. There have been important attempts previously to make such links in the work of Carl Jung and Roberto Assagioli, and more recently by Michael Washburn (1994) and A.H. Almaas (1988). The challenge I take up in this paper involves perhaps an even more unlikely attempt to build a bridge between some of the theoretical ideas of the radical post-Freudian psychoanalyst, Melanie Klein, and the transpersonal perspective, specifically in respect of her concept of *unconscious envy*.

One of the obstacles to such a project can be dealt with by simply considering an alternative to the deterministic, mechanistic model that Freudian psychoanalytic theory is often taken for. Instead, I see that one of the major achievements of Freud was his discovery of psychic reality (Carper, 1988), such that I prefer to view psychoanalysis as offering plausible *narrative* accounts of behaviour and experience. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, I view narrative as a *primary* mode of human thinking, i.e. the human *ego* is essentially a *narrativizing device* (for example, see Stern, 2004). And secondly, psychoanalytic theory is largely formulated in the form of a narrative, providing a *hermeneutic* (interpretative) model for both normal and pathological development. In particular, it has identified the crucial early experiences that have lasting and profound meaning in people's lives.

Furthermore, the emphasis in psychoanalytic technique is to focus on the *unspoken* core parts of the psyche (nb. *infant* [Latin] = *without speech*). These "unspoken" parts can manifest as *unconscious conflicts* in client case material, and it was Freud's great insight

that these are revealed in two distinct ways, as (i) *retrospective subjectivity* (ie. phantasy, dreams, symptoms, observations, etc.), and (ii) *present-centred inter-subjectivity* (i.e. transference, therapeutic alliance, etc.). Thus, classical psychoanalysis offers a model of the psyche in terms of a *conflict* narrative (i.e. a conflict metaphor), e.g. the conflicts between ego–id, good–bad, love–hate. Of course other narratives are possible, but the conflict narrative is a useful model for primitive, early processes. We need to begin by making a short detour into object-relations theory, and the work of Melanie Klein.

3. Melanie Klein and object-relations theory

Melanie Klein (1882 - 1960) has had a major impact on the development of psychoanalytic thought since Freud. She made highly original contributions to the development of *object-relations theory*, but many of her theories remain controversial. Indeed, it has been proposed that all psychoanalysts that have come after Klein must consider whether they align with her or against her. It has also been said that Melanie Klein was “*more freudian than the Freudians.*” Amongst her original contributions to psychoanalysis were her theories of unconscious phantasy, introjection, splitting, the “paranoid-schizoid” and “depressive” positions, gratitude, reparation, the “play technique”, and *unconscious or primary envy*.

Object-relations is one of the most important developments in recent psychoanalytic theory. It offers a dynamic model of psychic reality, involving a system of psychological explanation based on the premise that the mind is comprised of elements taken in from outside. These elements for the most part consist of aspects of the functioning of other persons (i.e. *objects*), and occurs by means of the process of *internalization*, such that this model of the mind explains mental functions in terms of relations between the various elements that have become internalized as *objects*. The British Object Relations School was pioneered in the work of Ian Suttie, Melanie Klein, Ronald Fairbairn, Harry Guntrip, Wilfred Bion, Donald Winnicott, and Michael Balint. The notion of *object* was first developed by Freud, himself, in relation to his instinct theory. The *object* designates the thing (e.g. a person or *part-person*) through which an instinctual drive is able to achieve its aim. Although Freud used the term imprecisely, it has come to occupy the cornerstone of modern psychoanalytic theory. Good accounts of object-relations theory can be found in Greenberg & Mitchell (1983), Bacal & Newman (1990), St. Clair (1986) and Gomez (1997).

Object-relations theory offers a more complete realization of Freud’s attempt to move “beyond the pleasure principle.” Freud revised his theory such that the human psyche could be seen as not just governed by a need that can satisfy basic drives. Instead, *objects* that come to signify a specific drive reduction, become sought after merely for themselves.

The consequence of this move, towards a focus on object-relations theory, is that the psyche is seen to be *object-seeking* rather than merely pleasure seeking.

For the infant, the first object is a *part object*, e.g. the mother's breast (seen as something that is both physical and psychological). The infant does not respond to the mother as a whole person, but simply as a "breast," as a supplier of its needs. In turn, the breast becomes a "*good object*," an "object" of desire in its own right. The *ego* is strengthened by the finding of such *good objects*, and these *good objects* become sought after in their own right. The internalization (i.e. *introjection* and *identification*) of such *objects* becomes important for the development of psychic structure and mental functioning. The infant's developing mind results from the formation of an "internal world" dynamically populated by these objects.

Central to the theory is the distinction between *part/whole objects*, *good/bad objects*, *idealized objects*, *object constancy*, *transitional objects*, etc., etc. Through "negative" experiences the psyche attributes, or *projects*, unacceptable feelings, onto *objects*. A mechanism, called *splitting*, which is a primitive mental defence, is able to accommodate both pleasurable and non-pleasurable aspects of the same *object*. Such processes serve both an adaptive and defensive function.

In order to begin to understand and appreciate Melanie Klein's theory of *primary envy*, it is necessary to consider the fundamental importance that she attributed to the infant's first *object-relation*, which is the *part-object* relationship to the *mother's breast*, that the infant experiences as the archetypal *good object*, instinctively felt to be the source of nourishment, indeed of life itself. In normal infant development, the "breast" is *introjected* and securely rooted in the *ego*. This leads to the core of the ego being formed, and the basis for satisfactory growth and development is laid down.

However, the infant clearly invests the mother's "breast" with qualities that go far beyond the actual nourishment it affords. What is more, inevitably the breast will fail to live up to these expectations - *it is not perfect* or *inexhaustable*. The infant's early emotional life is characterized by a sense of losing and regaining the *good object*. This activates the innate conflict between love and hate, leading to the internalization of *good objects* and *bad objects*. Such conflict is essential for normal enrichment and growth of the personality and strengthening of the ego. Thus, *conflict*, and the need to overcome it, is seen as fundamental to human creativeness.

Crucially the mother's "breast" is experienced by the infant as both *good* and *bad* at the same time. In order to cope with this conflict, the ego splits the internal (mother) object into two objects, one "good" and one "bad." This *splitting* results from the ego's immature lack of cohesion. The *splitting* acts as a defence against primordial anxiety, achieving a dispersal of the destructive and persecutory anxieties, and offering a mechanism for the

ego to be preserved. An important distinction needs to be made between the *good* and *idealized object*. An extremely deep split usually occurs between an *idealized object* and an extremely *bad object*.

Klein uses Freud's notion of the *death instinct (thanatos)* to explain the infant's instinctive response to anxiety. For Klein, complications of ego growth stem from idealization, persecutory anxiety, frustration caused by absences and loss, and fear of annihilation. Indeed, it is *fear of annihilation* which is seen as primary – i.e. a fear of something that can destroy from within, even though it is experienced as being outside (i.e. as material).

The manic defences that can be mobilized to relieve the guilt aroused by the destructive fantasies of the depressed psyche are described in her classical paper:- "*A contribution to the psychogenesis of manic-depressive states*" (Klein, 1935). For good accounts of Klein's work see: Grosskurth (1986), Hinshelwood (1991), Lickierman (2001), Mitchell (1986), Sayers (1991, 2000), Segal (1964; 1979), Spillius et al (2011).

4. A Transpersonal version of the infant's (e)merging psyche

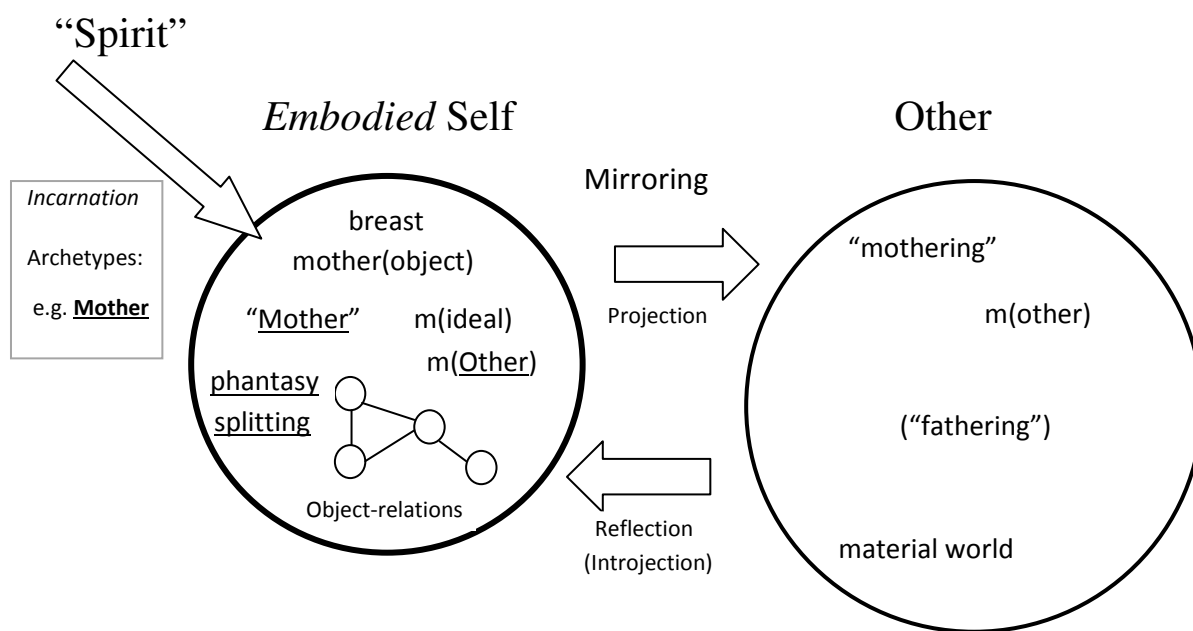


Figure 1: Adding a transpersonal vision to object-relations theory

Psychoanalytic theory and its development into object-relations theory can be seen as an attempt to *dramatise* the working of the psyche and its development as a dynamic interplay of internal, hypothetical *object* inter-relationships. A consequence of this dramatisation is that that the psyche seems to function like a "story". While I do like this

idea, and find it useful to think in this way, there are some problems that do come with it. The first of these is that the psychoanalytic approach has a tendency to overplay this dramatisation. Too often, they can be indulgent, bizarre and even crude. The second problem, relates to wherefrom these object-relations originate, i.e. how do they precisely come about. While object-relations are realised individually, they also must have a universal basis as well, since the stages that the psyche unfolds through are supposed to follow a certain uniform progression in everyone.

There is a simple solution that I have proposed, which is illustrated in Figure 1. The basic idea is that object-relations originate from the underlying archetypal structure of our psyche. What I am suggesting is that we need to call upon Jungian theory to underpin object-relations theory, and while I am sure this will irritate and possibly annoy many psychoanalysts, it turns out to be a very simple and elegant way forward.

I can only briefly sketch an outline of this idea here. When we come into life, “thrown into life” as the Existentialists put it, each of us is incarnated with the same basic set of archetypes (i.e. Jung’s *collective unconscious*), and it is these that will initiate and structure our experience of being in the world. In a previous paper (Hiles, 2001), I define an archetype as “*a predisposition to relate to . . . (something)*”, and the idea of how we are all born with a wide range of (innate) dispositions to make sense of, and deal with, the world in which we find ourselves, begins to take on something of a tangible claim that makes enormous sense. It is these dispositions that define what it is for us to be *human*, as they become activated as situations present themselves and various events befall us. One further proposal is that once an archetype has become activated, then it will more easily be activated at some time later.

From this perspective a number of things start to fall into place. Firstly, archetypes are primarily concerned with meaning-making, and the nature of human culture is that it is a meaning-making resource rooted in humanity’s long history of projecting archetypal interpretations onto the world. The unfolding psyche (*.)merges* with the prevailing culture as it acquires language and various cultural practices. Secondly, we can begin to understand the process of individuation as a process of (*e)merging* from its incarnated collective foundations. Each individual psyche has its own historical development of archetypal activation, such that earlier experience will potentially affect the individual’s response to subsequent situations and events (i.e. object-relations is one way this can be theorized). In this way, our transpersonal nature becomes made patently clear. We all share a common set of predispositions, and is one way at least of conjecturing the nature of the process by which “Spirit” becomes incarnated.

Figure 1 is an attempt to explore the relation between “*Spirit*”, “*Embodied Self*” and “*Otherness*” using the example of *breast/mother/mothering*. Archetypes are underlined,

and are projected onto significant events/objects that we are predisposed to take notice of, e.g. “Mother”; or archetypes may be psychic processes, e.g. “*phantasy*”, “*splitting*”; object-relations that are concerned with *part-objects*, where the mother is seen as “object” rather than a person are exemplified by: *breast, or mother(object)*; and, where mother represents “otherness” by: *m(Other)*; and, where mother becomes “idealised” by: *m(ideal)*; and mother is recognised in the world in the expression of her “role” by: *mothering*; have all been distinguished. The final necessary feature in this scheme is the idea of *mirroring*, in the sense that the “self” of the infant is being helped in its construction through the way it is being “reflected” back by the world (things don’t only just happen in the world, things happen in response to “me” doing something – beginning the realisation that – therefore, I am here now! cf. Ram Dass, 1971).

To complete our picture of the psyche, I need to briefly clarify the important ideas of *projection* and *phantasy*, that are key concepts used in the object-relations approach. Projection is part of the psyche’s interface with the material world. We do not “see” the world directly, but *project* onto the world the archetypal and object-related structures that can give it meaning (i.e. meaning is not *in* the world, but arises between psyche and world, and project plays a crucial role in this). Phantasy is the psyche’s making sense process, a narrativising mechanism that helps explain and make sense of our experiences (i.e. narrative thinking is the foundation of both our unconscious and conscious mind – both pre-linguistically and post language acquisition).

Now we have set the stage for our close examination of jealousy, greed and unconscious envy. We will discuss these in that order, because it makes a more sense to start with the simplest leading to the most complex of these psychic structures. Additionally, it is important to realize that this discussion is relevant to both understanding early psychic development, as well in appreciating clinical symptoms and psychopathology in older clients.

5. Jealousy

Of the three psychic structures we will be focussing on, jealousy is the more conscious and easiest to conceptualize. Melanie Klein acknowledges that jealousy can possibly arise from envy, but will always involve a three-person relationship (i.e. involving at least *two* other people), whereas unconscious envy arises exclusively within a two-person relationship. Jealousy therefore pertains to a triadic (oedipal) relationship, i.e. it is whole-object oriented, and therefore is post-infancy. While it might be focussed on any prized material object or situation, it is commonly experienced in its most intense form with respect to love that a person feels is their due, but has been taken away, or is in danger of being taken away, by a rival. Jealousy aims at the possession of the loved object and

Table 1: Qualities to be observed

Jealousy:

oedipal issues, rivalry, rejection, suspicion, exclusivity, possessiveness, intense relationships, thwarted love, immaturity, grievance, hostility, etc.

Greed:

craving, selfishness, ambition, insensitivity, poor discrimination, self-denial, aggressive, dissatisfaction, demanding, insistent, vicious circles, (or, as a defence: emptiness, low self-confidence, over-adaptation, etc.)

Envy:

persecution, frustration, guilt, self pity, idealization, acting out, aimless ambition, inability to enjoy, disapproving, aggression, manic defences, intolerance, hatred, destructiveness, self-destructiveness, attacking, sabotaging, discounting, suicidal ideation, etc.

Gratitude:

acceptance of limitation, generosity, sharing, healthy relationships, grace, tolerance, creativeness, repressed guilt, capacity for reparation, etc.

removal of a rival. It is usually the rival that is the target for aggression, which might suppress a more deeply felt envy towards the loved *object*. Also, in jealousy there may be a fear of losing what is already possessed. Jealousy implies envy of the actual or presumed advantage of a rival, especially in regard to the love of an *object*. Jealousy will often be accompanied by suspicion that the loved person favours the other. Deriving from the oedipal conflict, jealousy is based on the wish for an exclusive relationship with the *primary object*. Unresolved jealousy can lead to the impossibility of forming meaningful relationships and lack of maturity of ego and *Self*. In addition, jealousy fuelled by unconscious envy can be utterly overwhelming. Jealousy raises issues of sharing, ownership, possessiveness. In order to help recognizing this in counselling practice, the qualities of the jealous client are included in Table 1.

6. Greed

Greed is an impetuous and insatiable craving, exceeding the person's underlying neediness, in addition to what the *object* is able and willing to give. Extreme greediness aims at possession of all of the goodness that can be extracted from the object, regardless of consequences, perhaps leading to destruction or spoiling of that goodness itself – but this is more often than not incidental, or innocent. Greediness initiates the discovery of the

realization of life's *limitations*. The infant at first, is not able to comprehend any limitations of the world in which it finds itself, although through good-enough mothering, these limitations will eventually become mastered and accepted. Greed is mainly bound up with *introjection*, while envy is bound up with *projection*. Indiscriminate idealization can be fuelled by greed, since the need to get the best from everywhere interferes with the capacity for selection and discrimination.

It is my view that greediness is a primary state, a basic expression of *Self* and of desire. But, an intensity of greed can create the conditions for unconscious envy. Uncontrolled greediness can exhaust the *good object*, such that it seems to be withholding, setting up precisely the conditions for envy. It is because the infant has no inkling of the limits of the world, and limits of the mother, or the "breast," that there is no idea that of how demands that are made cannot always be met instantly, and in full. A primary task in human development is to temper such demands, through *a capacity for concern* (Winnicott, 1963).

For the mature ego, greediness and neediness will be a continuing theme. Although, in my own experience with clients who are *not* seriously disturbed, a more common complication is a *denial of greediness*, sometimes experienced as emptiness. This stems from a conflict with the super-ego. It is not unusual in such cases to uncover damage or vulnerability in some early *good object* (n.b. Winnicott calls this the *locus of concern*). This may then be sufficient to result in the client's greediness being denied for fear of exhausting or completely destroying the *good object*, such that the ego becomes weakened, undemanding, over-adapted, "empty."

7. Primary envy

It is important to stress that we are discussing *primary*, or *unconscious envy*, and not conscious envy here. Also, we need to acknowledge the controversial nature of this concept, which many psychoanalysts have found unacceptable (e.g. Donald Winnicott). But, it is my belief much of this controversy stems from a widely held confusion concerning Klein's basic ideas.

During Melanie Klein's early professional work, there was an optimism that the psychoanalytic attitude of emotional understanding could improve our culture and human relationships. However, she gradually became acutely aware of the depth of her patient's resistances, and together with her observations of young children, she became convinced that there was a constitutional instinctive destructive factor at work, which identified as *unconscious envy*, that first manifests in early infancy as *primary envy*.

Klein is often seen as claiming that the young infant has an innate destructive drive to destroy everything that is good. Although this interpretation of Klein is widespread, I will argue that this is simply a misunderstanding of the mechanism of envy. One view that is worth taking seriously is that proposed by Likierman (2001), who argues that Klein really offers two theories of envy. The first sees envy as involving a gratuitous aggression towards anything that is good, while the second sees envy as the fragile infant ego responding to a deprivation of some kind. This deprivation may even be minimal, or momentary. While I do not go along with this distinction fully, I do think it is a useful place to begin. Indeed, it is my view that the second of these two theories is the most useful, and the first is a miss-interpretation of Klein's work, or a secondary complication of the pathology of envy. However, if this was Klein's position, it is probably wrong!

The best way to understand envy is to see it as the angry feeling that another (person) possesses, and is *withholding*, or keeping for itself, something that one desires for oneself. In addition, it needs to be the case that this other person is, at the same time, perceived as *the* normal and reliable source for what one desires. The result is that this other person is seen as both possessing and *withholding*, and keeping for themselves, the something that "I want."

Defn: *Unconscious envy is the feeling of conflict that what one desires, and that would normally be forthcoming, is being withheld.*

The envious impulse is to attack, or to spoil the very source that one originally relied upon for what was desired. This impulse, especially when what is desired/wanted is *love*, can become diabolically destructive and undermining, since it mobilizes such powerful defences – e.g. devaluation of the good object, and/or rigid idealization. In the infant, the feeling of failed gratification is experienced as the breast *withholding*, or keeping for itself, the "object" of desire.

Envy is therefore more basic than jealousy, and is one of the most primitive and fundamental of emotions. Envy stems from an immature *intolerance to frustration*. In her work, Melanie Klein found that the first object to be envied was the "breast." This is *primary envy*, and if tolerated, and worked through, will lead to normal development. But when the experience of envy is excessive (i.e. a failure in *good-enough mothering*) this can lead to a weakened ego. The mechanism of envy involves attacking the good "breast," which results with the introjection of good experiences no longer occurring. In envy, there is an aim to possess the good object, but when this is felt to be impossible, the aim becomes a need to spoil the goodness of the object, in order to remove the source of envious feelings. Consequently, envy is the diabolical impulse to destroy the very source of goodness that maturation and growth will continue to require. Moreover, this primordial

envy can be re-experienced in later childhood and adulthood as unconscious envy, and is likely to be revived in the therapeutic alliance as a negative transference.

Unconscious envy always implies the subject's relation to only one other person, and relates back to the earliest exclusive relation with the mother (as good object). The subject envies the object for some possession or quality, initially in terms of *part-objects*, but this inevitably will persist into, and undermine, whole object-relations.

Envy, as it is experienced in infancy within the context of good-enough mothering or appropriate holding, is to be seen as a necessary part of normal development. Indeed, I would argue that it needs to be regarded as a *crucial participatory* experience for healthy unfoldment, dealing with the complex interplay between Self and otherness, idealization, part/whole object integration, and the acceptance of limitations, etc, etc.

When early infant experiences are not "contained" appropriately, then this can have implications for personality development in adulthood. In extreme cases, an envious person may feel sickened at the mere sight of enjoyment, and they may feel easy only in the misery of others. Envy can serve to stir up envy and jealousy in others. One consequence of excessive envy can be the early onset of *guilt* – a guilt felt as persecution, with the *object* arousing the guilt as the persecutor. Indeed the deepest sources of guilt are nearly always linked with the envy of the primary *good object* (the *breast*), and with feelings of having spoiled its goodness by envious attacks.

Defences against envy that are unable to contain it will quickly lead to psychopathology, because they fail to prevent the destructive operation of envy, and its consequence in the weakening of the ego. Unresolved primary envy can lead to psychotic symptoms in later life. Envy is commonly accompanied by self-pity, self-destructiveness, etc. Withdrawal of the good object, when not dealt with in rage and outward destructiveness, will turn inwards. The ego can implode and destroy itself. Suicidal feelings may be a later expression of the early need to self-destroy which the infant cannot express for itself. The qualities that might manifest in the envious client are included in Table 1.

Finally, I want to insist that the commonly held belief that unconscious envy is the destruction of *goodness* itself, *makes no real sense at all*, except in adult pathology. Envy, as early aspect of psychic development, is not an attack on *goodness* as such, but is the outcome of a profound idealization of, and frustration with, the good object.

8. Gratitude and reparation

In Klein's theory, love and gratification are not enough – *gratitude* is needed too. Indeed, *gratitude* leads to the eventual resolution of envy. Gratitude is closely linked with the *trust*

in good figures. This includes the ability to accept and assimilate the loved primal *object* without idealization, greed and envy interfering too much. The wish to preserve and spare the good object then predominates. The healthy ego integrates the early conflicts, and if envy is not overwhelming, then gratitude overcomes and modifies the envy. A full gratification at the *breast* means the infant feels (s)he has received from the loved *object* a unique gift which (s)he wants to keep. This is the basis of gratitude. Enjoyment therefore is the basis of gratitude. Such enjoyment is the basis of all later contentment and growth, and the feeling of unity with another person. Unity means being “fully” understood, which is essential for every happy loving relationship. Gratitude is closely bound up with generosity. Inner wealth derives from having assimilated the good object so that the individual becomes able to share its gifts with others. However, it must be recognized that expressions of gratitude in an individual can be prompted also by feelings of guilt, rather than the capacity for love.

Persistent gratification leads to more experiences of enjoyment and gratitude, and accordingly there is a wish to return pleasure. This recurrent experience makes possible gratitude at the deepest level and plays an important role in the capacity to make *reparation*, which is grounded in love and respect for the *other*, involving a facing up to limitation and loss, and making an effort to repair and restore positive object-relations. Furthermore, Klein emphasizes that gratitude is the goal of the psychotherapeutic process.

9. A transpersonal perspective on unconscious envy

Although Melanie Klein, and her many followers, would need considerable persuasion on the matter, I think it is not too strong a claim to make that in her concepts of gratitude and reparation, and the related potentially destructive impulses of envy and greed, etc., are the some of the major components of a *transpersonal theory* of the processes of human unfoldment.

There have certainly been attempts to forge links between the work of Klein and that of Carl Jung (e.g. Fordham, 1995). Jungians have found obvious parallels between Klein’s *paranoid-schizoid* and *depressive positions* and Jung’s notion of archetypal processes expressing themselves in human unfoldment. However, I would like to explore these parallels a little further by taking them to a transpersonal level of understanding.

Several years ago, I became interested in Jung’s treatment of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the coincidence or conjunction of opposites. In this exploration I have been particularly inspired by the work of William Blake (see Hiles, 2001).

The *coincidentia oppositorum* is an idea that occupies an important place in Jung’s psychology. It is particularly important to realize that what is at stake in this conjunction is

not the basic recognition of opposites, nor the simple interplay of opposites in our experience, nor even the union or marriage of opposites, but the shocking realization of their conjunction in the same object or situation. The reason why the *coincidentia oppositorum* is so crucial is that it does not simply represent the opposition of hate and love, but represents hating and loving the same object. This, of course, is exactly the condition which can precipitate unconscious envy, and I am convinced that it is a conflict that is necessary for us to confront very early in our development, as well as at the various stages we pass through during our lives. In this respect, it can be seen that envy is very possibly *the* central challenge to our psychic unfoldment, i.e. meeting the challenge of resolving the “paradox” of loving and hating the same *object*. We can then see jealousy as the outcome of the difficulties in sharing the loved *object* with someone else, and greed as merely asking, or demanding, too much from the loved *object* (and that such greed can often precipitate envy).

It is important to realize that hating one *object*, and loving another, is hardly a challenging experience. But hating and loving the same object, now that is a completely different matter!! And I want to argue that this is a theme, or what Jung would call a psychic truth, that must lie at the core of an existential-transpersonal model of human experience, such that envy must be seen as fundamental to human nature.

It is almost certain that the *fearful symmetry* which William Blake refers to in his poem, *The Tyger*, is precisely this conjunction of opposites:

*“Tyger, Tyger burning bright, In the forests of the night: What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?”*

William Blake (*The Tyger*)

In my own study of Jung and Blake, I have proposed that it is precisely this conjunction that constitutes the *God* archetype, which Jung equates with the archetype of the *Self* (see Hiles, 2001). Confrontation with this archetype reveals the tragic contradictoriness of the *Self*, and also of *God* (as Jung points out), and is experienced as the *dark night of the soul*.

In fact, what I am proposing is that the *coincidentia oppositorum* is the crucial archetype of the human psyche. It is the ultimate challenge to human growth, it is the unconscious conflict at the core of human existence. And, with respect to what we are discussing here, it is clear that it presents itself to us at critical stages throughout life, from the earliest stages of human growth as primary envy (Klein, 1957), through the inevitable experiences of conflict, suffering and loss that stretch across the lifespan, on to later stages in the prospect of death.

Placed in this context, Klein’s theory of unconscious envy takes on a new significance. Envy is the expression of an archetype that lies at the core of our being, and it would seem, it is

an archetype that must find expression very early in our unfoldment. Indeed, it is possibly, in its different manifestations, the crucial impetus to psychic growth. Envy takes on a transpersonal significance, as an in-built mechanism for dealing with life's inherent limitations. Indeed, if we are prepared to take this claim seriously, then it does not take much effort to realize that the *God* archetype could not manifest itself in human consciousness in any other way. In summary, I am claiming that *envy is a necessary condition for human growth*, and is crucial part of our human nature.

10. The dynamics of love and hate – Ian Suttie

I think that it is worth mentioning here that this notion of envy as playing a crucial role in human growth is not really a new idea. Indeed, it is echoed in the work of a neglected pioneer of object-relations theory. I am thinking here, of Ian Dishart Suttie, a Scottish psychotherapist and member of the Tavistock Clinic, and the author of: *“The Origins of Love and Hate”* (1935). In this book, Suttie anticipates many of the ideas of object-relations theory, as well as many of the ideas of Melanie Klein, John Bowlby and even Donald Winnicott. However, Ian Suttie was a severe critic of Freud’s instinct theory, and in this respect, it was all too easy for the early developers of object-relations theory to discount and ignore his work, while they still were not afraid to use his ideas. It should be noted that Suttie generally accepted Freud’s principles of therapeutic practice, but he was an uncompromising critic of Freud’s theoretical ideas of early infant development, with its emphasis on the *father*, rather than the *mother*.

Suttie does not refer explicitly to envy in his work, but it is clearly implied in his discussion of hate. In the preface to the 1960 edition of Suttie’s book, J.A. Hadfield writes:

“ . . [Suttie . .] rejected the idea that the infant is born a bundle of instincts. He held that the infant was born with a simple attachment to the mother, who is the sole source of food and protection. [. . .] Basing the origin of love in this primal attachment of the child to the mother, he finds both fear and hatred to be due to the deprivation of that attachment. We can only hate a person whose love we desire, seems to be his theme” (Suttie, 1935/1960, p. 16).

Also, Suttie writes:

“Hatred, I consider, is just a standing reproach to the hated person, and owes all its meaning to a demand for love” (Suttie, 1935/1960, p. 37).

Suttie anticipates by more than twenty years the ideas of Melanie Klein, and he also clearly anticipates the particular distinction between two theories of envy made by Likierman

more than 60 years later. He also anticipates the primacy of the infant-maternal relationship developed in neo-Freudian theory.

The neglect of Suttie's work is a rather poor reflection on the field of psychotherapy. One exception might be a chapter written by Sheila Gordon, in Mann (2002), but even then she seems to demonstrate a tendency to marginalize, or perhaps unconsciously misunderstand, his ideas. Gordon, who is "*constantly puzzled by the general neglect of such an original thinker [such as Suttie] . . .*" (p.114), then disingenuously remarks: "*that [Suttie's] concept of an innate capacity to love was for him a psychological, indeed almost a theological, necessity*" (p.115). What she precisely means by this is far from obvious, but it does seem to indicate a certain resistance to anything transpersonal. Indeed, this entire text, edited by Mann, entitled "*Love and Hate: Psychoanalytic perspectives*" is a truly great disappointment – it only briefly mentions the work of Melanie Klein in passing, and fails to develop any proper dynamic between love, envy and hate!

My point is, as a bridge between object relations and transpersonal theory, Suttie's work must finally receive the recognition it deserves. Yet, I do wonder whether we ever will reach a consensus in the field of psychotherapy that the process of envy and jealousy and greed are all expressions of the complex dynamics of love and hate, involving the crucial archetypes that steer the ego from its omnipotent origins to its eventual position of maturity.

Lastly, I will sum up my own position as follows:-

"Envy is an essential part of our human nature – a necessary condition for human growth. We are born with the capacity to love and to hate. In life it is inevitable that we will experience both love and hate, but only by being loved can love overcome hate."

This, of course, echoes the words of the Buddha:

"In this world hate has never yet dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate."
Dhammapada.

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