

Section 1 - Unconscious Envy: Everything I Would Have Wanted to Learn if I Had Not Already Known It

EVERYDAY EXAMPLES OF UCS ENVY IN ACTION:

1 – Aphorisms and quotes:

- Success: The one unpardonable sin against one’s fellows. (Andrew Bierce 1842 – 1904)
- Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies. (Gore Vidal – 1925 – 2012)
- One likes people much better when they’re battered down by a prodigious siege of misfortune than when they triumph. (Virginia Woolf – (1882 -1941)
- If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man. (Mark Twain (1835 – 1910)
- There are many things that we would throw away, if we were not afraid that others might pick them up. (Oscar Wilde 1854 – 1900)
- A fool always finds a greater fool to admire him. (Nicholas Boileau-Despreaux 1636 – 1711)
- Moral indignation is in most cases 2 % moral, 48 % indignation, and 50 % envy. (Vittorio de Sica 10901 – 1974)
- With someone who holds nothing but trumps, it is impossible to play cards. (Christian Friedrich Hebbel 1813 – 1863)
- Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first it is ridiculed, in the second it is opposed, in the third it is regarded as self-evident. (Arthur Schopenhauer 1788 – 1860)

2 – The Story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

- A beautiful, wicked, jealous (sic) Queen fears her stepdaughter will grow up to be more beautiful than she and has her working as a scullery maid.
- Each day the Queen checks with her magic mirror to see who is the fairest of them all. One day, when the girl is an adolescent, the mirror says Snow White is now the fairest.
- In a rage the Queen tells her huntsman to take the girl out into the woods, kill her, and bring back her heart as proof that she is dead. He takes pity on the girl and lets her go off alone into the scary, dark forest.
- She happens onto the house of seven dwarfs, Bashful, Dopey, Doc, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, And Sneezy,
- The Queen, upon discovering that she has been tricked by the huntsman returning with a pig’s heart, flies into a rage and plots the death of Snow White by giving her a poison apple that will put her into a permanent “sleep of death” from which she can only be revived by “love’s first kiss”. The wicked Queen assumes the dwarfs will mistakenly bury Snow White alive. The Queen, disguised as a poor, elderly beggar woman, seduces her into biting into the apple by saying it is a magic wishing apple and one bite makes your wish come true.

- After Snow White is poisoned, the dwarfs chase the Queen to the top of a mountain where she falls to her death after being struck by a bolt of lightning. The dwarfs find Snow White so beautiful that they do not have the heart to bury her so they fashion a glass and gold coffin within which they keep her.
- Prince Charming, who had searched far and wide, comes to the dwarf’s place, kisses her, and they ride off into the sunset, living happily ever after.

How Might One Interpret Snow White?

1 – The story lays out much of the anatomy of the unconscious inner world:

- an idealized part of self in innocent purity = Snow White
- various good baby parts of self: Bashful = shy baby part of self
Dopey = the silly baby part of self
Happy = the happy baby part of self
Sleepy = the unborn, inside baby part of self
Sneezy = the psychosomatic aspect of the good baby parts of self
- the adult part of self (i.e. the most mature part of self and the one that identifies with the good parents) is represented by Doc
- Grumpy would represent a watered down version of the bad part of self
- the missing biological mother has been replaced by a very bad version of a mother in the form of the envious Queen
- the good, but ineffectual dad/penis is seen as a possession of the bad mother/queen

2 – The story is open to interpretation from a number of different angles but I wish to approach it from the point of view of unconscious envy. The key point is that envy as a raw emotion, when intense, is so unbearable that maneuvers must be used to protect against it. While there are many options, most involve some form of reduction of the “enviableness” of the object, hence usually some form of destructive attack. One can see that the queen’s envy must feel to her like it tears at the very core of her being, since tearing out Snow White’s heart is felt to be the appropriate attack back for being so beautiful.

I think the part of this story that is so difficult to comprehend is that it began with the infant Snow White’s rage and envy of her own missing mother, and that envious hatred had to be “split-off” and evacuated into the outside world, hence a stepmother as an inevitably available container.

DEFINITIONS:

1- ENVY: A two party relationship, at a part object level, more linked to hate than love, in which one compares oneself to another in terms of a quality, a capacity, or a possession and feels a painful discrepancy between self and other. This pain, which we call envy, is instantly defended against by any of several unconscious defensive maneuvers. It is a more primitive emotion than jealousy that begins at an earlier time in infancy.

2- JEALOUSY: A three party relationship, between whole objects, based on love, in which one person wants the love of another and does not want that person to give their love to a third person. The further back in infancy one traces jealousy the more it shades into envy and becomes very difficult to distinguish from envy.

3- GREED: A very primitive emotion, closely linked with envy, in which one experiences an insatiable desire to take from the object more than one needs and/or more than the object has to give.

4- GRATITUDE: The feeling that one has received something good from another and can hold on to it. This leads to a feeling of appreciation for having been given this good thing, etc.

5- ADMIRATION: Essentially the result of making the same comparison as in envy but without the hateful resentment.

UNCONSCIOUS ENVY AND THE DEATH INSTINCT:

1- THE DEATH INSTINCT: Essentially the feeling that when one weighs the pain of being born and out in the world against the pleasure of relationships to mom and dad, the pain is too great to want to stay outside. This results in a wish to be “unborn” back inside mom and an attendant hatred of the pain of being out in the world. This hatred often extends to a hatred of the mental apparatus that can experience the separateness and attendant mental pain.

2- MOTHER’S BODY AS THE PROTOTYPE OF THE ENVIABLE OBJECT:

- breasts which are the source of food and comfort
- the womb which is the source of life

THE ENVIOUS, OMNIPOTENT, KNOW-IT-ALL, DESTRUCTIVE, SELF-SUFFICIENT “BAD” PART OF SELF:

1- THE LUCIFER MYTH: Lucifer (light bearer) was created one of the mightiest of angels but covets the glory and power of God and tries to usurp divine authority thus becoming Satan (adversary). He is expelled from heaven and sets out to disrupt the purposes of God on earth among God’s image bearers, humans.

– Thus Lucifer can be seen to embody the essence of envious hatred of goodness, not matter how talented one is oneself. Hence the idea “I would rather rule in hell, than serve in heaven” (and be second in command).

DEFENSES AGAINST THE EXPERIENCE OF ENVY:

1- WHAT A BABY CAN DO TO COPE WITH THE PAIN OF ENVY:

a – Get back inside mom to be unborn = raise yourself up to the object’s level

b – Turn away from mom/breast = spoil the object

c – Stop having a mind = deny the comparison

d – Evacuate its experience out into the world = either make someone else contain the envious state of mind or evacuate the part of self that feels the envy

2 – WHAT THESE LOOK LIKE IN LATER LIFE:

a – The person who unconsciously joins up to their objects by getting back in side (#1 above) invariably has fuzzy boundaries while the one who takes possession and control of object (#2 above) is more associated with the more aggressive and controlling approach to relationships as is commonly seen in highly narcissistic personality types.

b – Spoiling the object in order to no longer feel it is enviable, while simultaneously idealizing ones own body and its products, spans the spectrum of external manifestations from absent mindedness to extreme alcoholism and drug usage.

c – Denying any envy usually means denying any desire to compare which typically requires becoming bland and limiting ones ambition.

d – Two choices are available to evacuate the experience of envy. One can evacuate the “envious feeling” by becoming envious, or one can evacuate the part of self capable of the feeling of envy into someone. This is often a sibling or friend in childhood, while later in life it is usually into one’s spouse or child.

CONSEQUENCES FOR LATER DEVELOPMENT OF EXCESSIVE BABY ENVY:

1 – CONFUSIONAL STATES

– About good versus bad, i.e. what is to be valued?

– Sources of food (i.e. originally whether from mother or from one’s own bodily products)

2 – IDENTIFICATIONS

– Commonly involve identifying with an object which has been distorted &/or devalued.

– Excessively contaminated with omnipotent and omniscient certainty and grandiosity.

3 – SELF ESTEEM

– Uncertainty over something’s goodness undermines feeling good about oneself and one’s ability to love or to hold onto goodness.

– Since motives are so often hostile and competitive, it is difficult to feel good about one’s achievements.

4 – PERSECUTORY ANXIETY

– Envious competitiveness engenders the expectation of hostility and retaliation.

– Never being able to hold on to the goodness of anything leads to being haunted with doubt about the ongoing goodness or value of any person or thing.

5 – PREMATURE ONSET OF GUILT AND SEXUALITY

– Guilt is result of spoiling attacks on mom and her body, one fertile source of characterological depression.

– Because oral gratification at feeding from mom is spoiled by resentment and grievance, there is a natural tendency to try to comfort oneself with sensations from one’s own body and to turn to one’s own bodily products. This results in a very early tendency toward genital and anal masturbation.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE ALERTING FOR ENVY:

1 – APPEARANCE:

– excessive blandness (e.g. fear of stimulating envy)

– excessive ostentation (e.g. urge to provoke envy)

– excessively “counter-culture” (e.g. turning away from one’s primary objects and their values)

– excessively sweet (envy “split off”) or sour (envy “spoiling” everything)

2 – INDIVIDUAL’S HISTORY;

– drug use

– childhood deprivation

- excessive ambition or failure to succeed
- confusion about goodness
- twins or siblings very close in age
- life/personality slowly or steadily deteriorating

3 – CHARACTER TYPES WHERE ENVY IS A PROMINENT FEATURE:

- narcissistic/arrogant types
- all psychotic/schizophrenic types
- potentially all neurotic types, esp. as severity of disturbance increases

SOME MANIFESTATIONS OF UNCONSCIOUS ENVY IN THERAPY SETTING:

1 – JOINING UP WITH THE OBJECT

- via omniscience (for control and to reduce envy)
- idealize therapist
- own therapy and equate self with it (subtle to overt theft)
- assume or demand equality/parity
- transform intangible qualities into tangible “things” so that it is possessable/controllable

2 – TURNING AWAY FROM THE OBJECT

- idealize ones own body and/or own bodily products
- perversely “twist around” the therapist’s productions to spoil them
- put emphasis on the wrong syllable
- drop insights between sessions
- “acting out” to turn away from or spoil/attack therapy
- confuse healthy “dependence” with addictive dependence to justify “omnipotent self-sufficiency”
- stay in bad treatment

3 – “SPLIT OFF” ENVY

- deny its existence
- provoke it in others
- focus on or fear it in others

4 – ATTACK THE OBJECT (THERAPIST)

- negative comments (subtle to vicious)

- provoke spouse, parents, friends, etc. to attack
 - hold on to grievances
 - debase the quality of something (e.g. so as to deny that it is alive, human, ineffable, etc.)
 - backhanded compliments to avoid proper acknowledgement of goodness
 - failure to recognize something good that is in evidence
- 5 – ATTENUATE THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE
- transform living into dead, inanimate, controllable, mechanical
 - stifle love and intensify hate

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING ENVY:

1 – ENVY WILL NOT COME UP UNTIL THE THERAPIST MAKES IT AN ACKNOWLEDGED AND EXPECTED EMOTION

2 – SENSITIVITY TO PAIN OF BEING AN ENVIOUS PERSON

3 – DON'T OVER-VALUE YOUR INTERPRETIVE ROLE AT THE PATIENT'S EXPENSE

4 – LOOK AT ENVY AND FEAR OF BEING ENVIED IN CONTEXT OF PATIENT'S TOTAL SITUATION

5 – EMPHASIZE INEVITABILITY OF SOME ENVY IN LIFE

6 – NON TRAUMATIZED, SEVERELY ENVIOUSLY OMNIPOTENT PATIENTS OFTEN SURVIVE INTERPRETATION OF ENVY BETTER

7 – ENVY DIMINISHES IF THE PATIENT FEELS ACCEPTED AND HELPED IN ANALYSIS AND IS GIVEN TIME AND SPACE TO THINK AND GROW