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A Glimpse of Envy and its Intentional Structure

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Unique among the seven deadly sins, only envy gives the “sinner” no pleasure. Given envy’s comparative character the envier distresses both over his lack of that which another enjoys and the other who enjoys that desirable something. One of its particular intrigues rests in its silence. We rarely speak of our envy to another. We rarely acknowledge our envy to ourselves. We do, however, repackage envy into approximate, more socially tolerable reactive emotions (e.g., covetousness, jealousy, indignation, resentment, etc.). Such translation suggests, perhaps, why colloquial discourse regularly conflates envy with these like-hearted emotions from which we must distinguish it. I first suggest a way to distinguish envy from such like-hearted emotions. Second, I propose a schema for understanding the intentional structure of envy and what I call the “glimpse of envy”—that moment when one recognizes his emotional response to his lack of that which another enjoys as a distress over oneself and the other.

Regarding the first aim, I follow a Husserlian theory of the intermixed cognitive and affective dimensions of this emotion.¹ In the first two sections I argue that we begin to differentiate similar emotions by examining the object or intentional “focus” of the emotion. This move aligns a Husserlian approach to the emotions with recent cognitivist approaches. Nevertheless, phenomenology does not reduce the expression ‘phenomenal contents’ to something introspectively discovered. As such, I shall argue that a consideration of the dually directed negative affects of

1. Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Teil: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, ed. Ursula Panzer, Husserliana XIX (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1984); English translation: *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1970). Further references will be to the section numbers in the Fifth Investigation and cited parenthetically as *LI*. That the position is Husserlian means it attempts to follow John Drummond’s development of Husserl’s rather schematic account of the emotions. See, e.g., John J. Drummond, “‘Cognitive Impenetrability’ and the Complex Intentionality of the Emotions,” in Dan Zahavi (ed.), *Hidden Resources: Classical Perspectives on Subjectivity* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 109–26.

this emotion reveal that envy is an essentially comparative emotion. I intend to defend the view that envy involves dually directed negative affects intending the comparatively appraised disparity between the envier and the envied with respect to some desirable thing. Envy entails negative affects in a self-assessing and other-assessing “focus” rather than just negative affects directed toward the other.² In section three, I develop this claim and argue that the envier intends himself negatively (insofar as he sees himself as the inferior at a comparative disadvantage) and the envied negatively (insofar as he at least begrudges the envied for his possession). I shall suggest that this individuating feature of envy is confirmed by the glimpse of envy—the recognition of the negative affects dually directed toward oneself and the other, envier and envied, that frequently motivates a translation of this emotion into a socially more tolerable approximate emotion. The intentional structure of envy thus *presents* differently than other similar emotions, e.g., covetousness, insofar as the affects characteristic of envy reveal, to put it provocatively, that envy entails two objects, i.e., the envier and the envied, rather than just one (or a complex relational object involving two persons and a thing). The envying subject evaluates himself as the inferior one not possessing the desired something that the superior other possesses. In short, the envier evaluates himself as envier more forcefully than one aware of oneself as perceiver when perceiving or as coveter when coveting.

§ 1. Locating Envy

Envy can be difficult to locate. Modern and contemporary cultures place a conventional gag-order on envy. Though we do not talk of envy, we nevertheless admit its prevalence in society. We all have reckoned at some point and to some degree with these distressing feelings directed toward oneself and another when we perceive or imagine that another possesses that which we value and desire but lack. A sense of self-distress in the envier accompanies his distress directed toward the envied. This distress in its dually directed negative affects discloses to the envier his own appraisal of the disparity between himself and the envied, the inferior and the superior, at least with respect to the desired and valued something.

But envy remains silent, and this silence runs in two mutually enhancing directions. Regarding others, one does not confess one’s envy, neither to a confidant nor to the envied. To admit envy of another to another is to appear hostile toward the other, the envied, and present oneself (to the other) as unworthy of

2. Here, I will appeal to Husserl’s account of non-objectifying self-awareness from his *Lectures on the Consciousness of Internal Time*, primarily Appendix IX. Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1883–1917)*, ed. Rudolf Boehm, *Husserliana X* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966); *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1883–1917)*, trans. John Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991); henceforth cited as *Hua X*, with the German and English pagination, respectively.

esteem. Likewise, regarding oneself, one does not admit being envious as one lives-through such an experience. To admit to oneself one's envy of another is to acknowledge one's shortcomings and inferiority vis-à-vis the other (at least) with respect to that desired something that the envier values but lacks, thereby presenting oneself as unworthy of esteem.

With public and private esteem at stake, everyone consents to the gag-order on envy. We guard against injury to public and private esteem, I suspect, by converting our belief about those negative feelings directed to another into a more appropriate or acceptable emotion. My speculation here is that one first must have processed the emotion as envy—the emotion one will not admit to oneself or another—if one is motivated to reconstruct or rationalize that experience as a more tolerable emotional reaction (e.g., covetousness or jealousy or indignation). To treat envy as “taboo,” however, is to compound our inability to diminish its presence in human interactions by our unwillingness to discuss it. Our unwillingness to discuss it, in turn, increases our inability to identify envy as opposed to these other, more acceptable emotions. It is no surprise, then, that in colloquial discourse we often conflate envy with covetousness, jealousy, etc. While no account of envy (or any emotion for that matter) will provide strict lines of demarcation, an account of envy must first provide a rubric for a basic distinction of envy from other, similar emotions so that we can identify those differing instances.

My interest is in capturing the full intentional structure of envy at its most basic level and in the glimpse of envy from which we often retreat. This structure must include—as thinkers as diverse as Aristotle and Kant tell us and as we already likely presume—the dually directed negative affects characteristic of envy insofar as envy entails one's distress over, and negative appraisal of, both another's good fortune or possession or trait and the envier's lack of it.³ As Aristotle recognized, we “envy those whose possession of or success in a thing is a reproach to us . . . for it is clear that it is our own fault we have missed the good thing in question.”⁴ The western philosophical tradition has advanced many permutations of Aristotle's claim that the other's success (in a comparative measure of interest and importance to the envier) is a reproach to the envier; since the other's success begets a sense of self-reprove in the envier, the other is regarded begrudgingly. While the envied as regarded begrudgingly typically has been the focus of accounts of envy, Aristotle's remark also implies that the envier sees himself as at fault to some extent for the disparity. Philosophers in the western tradition have not done as well as some literary types in recognizing the self-assessing dimension of envy, which Chaucer grasped

3. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1386a ff., and Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. M. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University, 1999), 576/458.

4. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1388a17.

when he commented on envy as the emotion that flogs itself. In an episode of envy—the complex relational object involving two persons and a thing—the envier negatively evaluates both himself and the other in this comparative appraisal.

Envy is thus bi-focal, as it were. It entails a “self-assessing” feeling of inferiority (with respect to intellectual or material possessions, etc.) vis-à-vis an “other-assessing” feeling of (at least) begrudging another who possesses some good that the envier values and desires but lacks. Envy is not an act of straightforward or simple perception but one wherein, as Husserl puts it in a different context, “the sphere of ‘sensibility’ has been left and that of ‘understanding’ entered”—however perverted the envier’s one may take the envier’s understanding to be (*LI 6*, § 48). An account of an episode of envy, phenomenological or otherwise, must take it as a synoptic, comparative intentionality with dually directed negative affects. This emotional response presupposes that the envier 1) has evaluated and desires something as advantageous, 2) perceived the other as possessing that thing of advantage, 3) recognized oneself as lacking that thing and thus 4) experiences some kind of bi-directional begrudging feelings. Envy is the (at least) begrudging and self-reproaching response to perceiving, or believing there exists, a disparity between me and another on the grounds that the other possesses some thing, trait or capacity that I value and wish to possess but lack. In envy, the affect in (4) is directed at (2) only insofar as it entails self-rebuke in (3), “for it is clear that it is our own fault we have missed the good thing in question.”

However we qualify a definition of envy, it remains the case that envy resembles many other emotions, e.g., covetousness, resentment, indignation, jealousy, etc., in (4), or its affective component, to the extent that each of these emotions is characterized by a painful or distressing response. Since any number of affective qualities characterizing the feelings present in a particular emotion can apply to any number of different emotions, however, an analysis of envy that begins from the affective dimension will encounter too many initial obstacles and digress into vagueness. For example, a self-directed emotion like humiliation, which takes the self as the object of rebuke, and an other-directed emotion like indignation, which takes another as the object of rebuke, present the same negative affects of pain, dislike, and so on, as envy does, despite their being different emotions.

Some moral psychologists interested in examining this particular emotion thus have held (following Farrell’s essay, “Jealousy”) that a “phenomenological” approach that focuses on the affective dimension of that experience—what it “feels like” to envy another—stalls from the outset.⁵ Ensnared by the dilemma of how to differentiate similar emotions with identical affects (e.g., envy and covetousness), the possibility of a “phenomenology” of a particular emotion cannot begin from

5. Daniel M. Farrell, “Jealousy,” *Philosophical Review* 89 (1980), 527–59; henceforth cited as ‘Farrell’.

what it “feels” like to be, or experience an episode of, ‘*E*. The “phenomenological feel” or affective dimension of each of these like-hearted emotions, Farrell critically remarks, tells us nothing beyond the fact that “they feel different, as anyone who has ever experienced them would say” (Farrell, 540). That these experiences feel different, however, does not explain how they differ. Given that identical affects are present in different yet similar emotions, and given that we cannot distinguish similar emotions by “talking about what each of them was ‘feeling,’ and how these ‘feelings’ differ,” the essential criterion Farrell presents for differentiating members of a family of like-hearted emotions is not “some . . . special affective state that is ‘what it is to be [*x*]’” but “the respective objects of their emotions” (541, 543). Farrell thus concludes that while “an affective state . . . might very well be characterized by any one of a cluster of different feelings that vary from person to person”—and thus appears unreliable as a marker for understanding the emotions—“what remains constant is . . . the ‘focus’ or intentionality that is characteristic of [envy]” (543).

To avoid the pitfalls of the “phenomenological” approach to a study of envy, Farrell broadly defines envy as an experience “where one person has something . . . or trait or capacity . . . that another person doesn’t have but would very much like to have” (543). Farrell’s conceptual analysis and judgment oriented approach to envy contribute the important insight that we must first get clear “about the exact thoughts by which [these emotions] are constituted.”⁶ But Farrell’s definition of envy appears quite sanitized when compared to traditional accounts such as Aristotle’s or Kant. In order to separate his approach from the phenomenological approach that purportedly takes the affects as phenomenal contents introspectively discovered, Farrell’s definition suppresses one of envy’s most intuitive features, namely the envier’s begrudging distress over another’s good fortune and his self-assessing feelings of distress.

My worry is not that Farrell loses the self entirely in his account of envy because he has dismissed the affective, “phenomenological feel.” Farrell may deny the intentionality of the affects (and the idea that we distinguish emotions based on their “phenomenological feel”) without denying self-reference in the intentional contents of an act of envy. But because he dismisses the affective component of envy, Farrell cannot offer a precise account of the way the self is included in the intentional contents of envy. That is, his description of envy—as a state of affairs where “one person has something another lacks but very much would like to have”—may distinguish envy from jealousy (which granted was his aim) but his

6. Luke Purshouse, “Jealousy in Relation to Envy,” *Erkenntnis* 60 (2004), 179–205, here 201. It is important, of course, that we make sure our analysis is not based on an inaccurate or misguided target, since this would preclude a further account of whether these thoughts and emotions are rational or irrational, warranted or illicit, appropriate or inappropriate, etc., although this is not the present focus.

definition of envy seems equally applicable to covetousness, as I shall argue below. A full account of the intentional structure of envy depends on a view of the affects as characterized by that which Farrell denies them, namely intentionality. What the affects of envy reveal are dually directed negative appraisals of the self and the other, the inferior and superior, and hence oneself as envying and the other as envied in this complex relational object.

§ 2. Husserl on the Affections and Emotive Intentionality

Farrell's opposition to the "phenomenological" view of emotions interprets phenomenologists to have rendered the affects purely subjective, "private inner events" that obscure the intentional directedness and thus focus of emotions (540). Such an interpretation misrepresents both phenomenology and the intentionality characteristic of the affects, emotions and envy in particular. Interestingly, § 15 of chapter two of Husserl's Fifth Investigation presents a similar argument against the affects as a starting point for a philosophical examination of a particular emotion, but Husserlian phenomenology does not deny intentionality to the affective moment of emotional experience. Husserl insists that feelings have cognitive content. Viewed as "*genuine acts*," feelings "owe" their intentional relation to certain underlying presentations. But it is part of what we mean by such 'owing' that they themselves really now *have* what they owe to something else" (LI 5, §15a). That feelings "owe" their intentional directedness to "something else" means that they are founded on cognitive acts; the founding intention of perceiving or believing *x* to be the case gives us the presented object or state of affairs, while the founded feeling gives us the felt object, the object disclosed with an emotional and/or affective tonality. This founding-founded relation between cognitive and emotive acts remains constant throughout Husserl's work. He writes, "acts of emotion seem to be founded acts, and indeed founded on intellectual acts. Every act of emotion grounds itself, and necessarily so, on any represented object or any object posited as existing, on any state of affairs, on assumptions or certainties, presumptions and the like."⁷ Contra Farrell's account of phenomenology, Husserl holds both that the emotions are intentional and that a type of feelings understood as affects are as well.

Similar to Ludwig Wittgenstein and Anthony Kenny, Husserl holds that emotions have a share in reason, that is, are reactions to what one takes to be the case. If I am afraid, then I am afraid of something, a thief entering with a bump in

7. Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre, 1908–1914*, ed. Ullrich Melle, *Husserliana XXVIII* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988): "Gemutsakte scheinen ihrem Wesen nach fundierte Akte zu sein, und zwar fundiert in intellektiven Akten. Auf irgendwelche vorgestellten oder als existierend gesetzten Objekte, auf irgendwelche Sachverhalte, Assumptionen oder Gewissheiten, Vermutungen und dergl. gründet sich jeder Gemutsakt, und notwendig." English translation by Chris Arroyo.

the night or a monster in the closet that the child imagines. But Husserl also suggests that the affects (or a certain type of affect) intend the object that elicits the affective reaction insofar as evaluations are a function of affects and emotions. By developing Husserl's conceptual framework, we can i) distinguish different types of feelings at work in this founding-founded relation, ii) clarify different kinds of feelings, iii) qualify Farrell's claim that the affects are necessary to specify the intentionality of a particular emotion (Farrell, 541, 543) and thus iv) clarify how the envying subject regards himself (and the other) in the intentional contents of envy. I shall treat each point in turn.

When examining the concrete complex of an emotional intentionality, Husserl distinguishes two senses of feelings: sensings (*Empfindnisse*) and sensation-contents (*Empfindungsinhalten*). The latter denote the presenting contents in an objectifying, founding act of perceiving, or believing, etc., and are peripheral to the present discussion. The former kind of feeling, "sensing," is essential to our discussion and itself breaks into two classes: non-intentional feeling-sensations (*Gefühlsempfindungen*) and intentional feeling-acts (*Gefühlsakten*). Feeling-sensations denote the "sensing" that I passively undergo, e.g., a pain, itch, tickle or agitation; they belong to our pre-reflective bodily self-awareness and are not intentional in relation to the presentation of the body (unless we reflectively regard the source of the pain or itch). Feeling-sensations denote the non-intentional, visceral or physiological changes one undergoes when affected by a particular object or situation. As such, feeling-sensations are not themselves presentations of an object or situation. If I see my neighbor in possession of a good that I value and desire but lack, I may feel my face flush, my heart race and my temples pulsate. I do not objectify or "perceive" these feeling-sensations as I do the situation. Rather, I "experience" them and live-through them without objectifying them in apprehending the situation as thus and so.

On the other hand, feeling-acts are of pleasure and pain⁸ and thus intentional, i.e., aimed toward the object or situation whose affection of the self causes the feeling-sensation.⁹ Feeling-sensations are moments, i.e., inseparable but distinguishable elements, of feeling-acts; being founded on the cognitive act of "seeing" my neighbor in possession of something I value and desire but lack, however, the feeling-act registers an intentional albeit non-objectified sensing of displeasure (in the case of envy). The feeling-act apprehends this situation as displeasing. I do not "perceive" the feeling-act but live-through it such that the feeling-act discloses ad-

8. As Husserl writes, "Brentano has already pointed to the ambiguity here dealt with, in discussing the intentionality of feelings. He draws a distinction . . . between *sensations* of pain and pleasure (feeling-sensations) and pain and pleasure in the sense of feeling . . . feeling-acts" (*LI 5*, § 15a).

9. See Drummond, "Cognitive Impenetrability," 114–15.

ditional determinate features of the object-complex *as* unlikeable beyond simply undergoing an agitating feeling-sensation.¹⁰ These distinguishable but inseparable moments of such ‘sensing’ betray a “essentially equivocal” character, as Husserl admits, for a “sensation of [pain] attaches to the idea, a sensation at once seen and located as an emotional excitement in the psycho-physical feeling-subject *and* also as *an objective property*—the event seems as if bathed in a red [*rosigen*] gleam” (§15b, *my italics*).¹¹

What most intrigues in Husserl’s account is his immediately successive claim: “the event thus . . . painted in this way is now only the *first foundation*” (§15b).¹² On this point, Husserl presages Farrell, but he does not render the affective feeling-act hopelessly unhelpful or intentionally mute. Unlike feeling-sensations, the feeling-act, which is founded on or laminated to the cognitive-act, does the evaluative work of disclosing the situation as pleasant or unpleasant, likeable or unlikeable.¹³ Since the affective response in the feeling-act discloses the situation as unpleasant and disagreeable only as a “first foundation,” we still do not have in our phenomenological description the emotion of envy or covetousness or jealousy or indignation.¹⁴

To attempt a phenomenology of the intentional structure of a particular emotion by starting from the broad notion of “feeling” cannot help us distinguish like-hearted emotions from each other. Indeed, this approach even threatens to conflate fundamentally non-emotive experiences with emotive experiences, non-intentional feeling-sensations with intentional feeling-acts. Consider the following: the pit in my stomach may denote the agitation of hunger and as such differs from the pit in my stomach that I feel when I fear going into the bosses’ office—both, I assume, are unpleasant; the pit in my stomach may denote the exhilaration of riding a roller-coaster and as such differs from the pit in my stomach that I feel when I see the woman I am courting—both, I assume, are pleasant. The first half of each set of examples construes affections as agitations (feeling-sensations). Their different

10. Drummond, “Cognitive Impenetrability,” 115.

11. By Husserl’s own admission, his text contains an essential and expressed “equivocation” in its treatment of feelings; for this reason, it perhaps has remained overlooked in favor of other phenomenological approaches to the emotions (*LI* 5, §15b). But Husserl’s honest assessment reveals a resolute surrender to the *Sache* that provides a set of conceptual distinctions that begins to clarify the different sense of the word, ‘feelings.’

12. The whole passage, which speaks of joyful emotions, reads: “Das in dieser Weise lustgefärbte Ereignis als solches ist nun erst das Fundament für die freudige Zuwendung, für das Gefallen, Angemutetwerden, und wie man es sonst nennen mag.”

13. John J. Drummond, “Moral Phenomenology and Moral Intentionality,” *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 7 (2008), 35–49, here 38.

14. Drummond rightly alerts the reader of this text to the fact that Husserl himself seems to leave open the question of whether or not the affective response to the perceived experience is already the emotion.

physiological causes enable us to distinguish between these agitations and distinguish them from the second half of each example set, which construes affections as feeling-acts.¹⁵

The phenomenologist, of course, does not care to pursue the physiological cause of feelings and emotions but rather to investigate the intentional structure of that experience. Walking into the boss's office and seeing the approach of the woman I am courting may motivate the feeling of a "pit" in my stomach but with a very different "gleam," as Husserl put it, since one is the pits and the other is not, as the feeling-act founded upon the evaluative moment of this perception "tells" us. That is, one finds the context imbued with one's affective response such that the phenomenologist can distinguish but will not separate the affectively-neutral cognitive contents and the experience of those contents. The general problem regarding the inability to distinguish emotions starting from similar affects seems to dissolve in more obvious circumstances (love or hate, hope or worry, pride or embarrassment); because we perceive these experiences differently and think differently about them, we readily and accurately can distinguish them. Still, the problem of appealing to the affects to distinguish jealousy from envy, or envy from covetousness, etc., remains acute. In such cases the affections are insufficient means for individuating particular emotions because i) different emotions can on occasion share the same bodily affections (e.g., jealousy and envy, envy and covetousness) and ii) the same emotions in different people or in the same person at different times in her life can involve different affections (e.g., of two young lovers one may be nervous, the other excited, and the nervous one may mature or settle into a steady and calming love).¹⁶

For such reasons, the affective feeling-act alone cannot get us the emotion but remains distinguishable though inseparable from the feeling-sensation. The feeling-act, which is founded on a perceptual evaluation of the situation, discloses additional determinate features of the object as pleasant or painful, likeable or unlikeable. It is not yet a particular emotion, however. According to Drummond, an emotion "intends in a more determinate way the affective aspect of an object or situation."¹⁷ Drummond's Husserlian approach holds that emotions constitute a more

15. For a fine discussion of the differences between agitations, emotions and moods that bears interesting similarities to Husserl's phenomenological account (and important differences) see Max R. Bennett and Peter M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

16. Drummond has made this point clearly in "Cognitive Impenetrability' of the Complexity of the Emotions," as well as in "The Good and Negative Obligation, the Tolerable and the Intolerable," in Rosemary Rizo-Patrón de Lerner (ed.), *Tolerancia / Toleración / Tolerância: Interpretando la experiencia de la tolerancia / Interpreting the Experience of Tolerance* (Lima: Fondo Editorial, 2006), 27–40.

17. Drummond, "Moral Phenomenology and Moral Intentionality," 38. As Drummond makes clear, perception, *Wahrnehmung*, denotes the taking of something to be true

nuanced mode of perception wherein the cognitive content no longer remains affectively neutral but now is nuanced by this valence.¹⁸ In the case of envy, for example, this emotion discloses the situation—of perceiving or believing that another possesses some thing, trait or capacity that the envier desires but lacks—not only as distressing and unlikeable, but also as unfortunate or unfair or unacceptable, etc. The emotions differ from feeling-acts insofar as the feeling-act or affections disclose certain underlying “predicative judgments” about the situation in which the envier envies (*LI* 6, § 48). The affects disclose the “surplus sense” the envier brings to his particular apprehension of the situation.¹⁹ In the case of envy, for example, 1) I consider X valuable and desirable, 2) perceive or believe some other possesses X, which 3) I am aware of precisely vis-à-vis my lack and over which 4) I experience begrudging and negative feelings. Valuing, wishing, possessing, and frustrating all belong to the experienced situation beyond the affectively-neutral cognitive act of perception. To apply an observation from Sokolowski made in a slightly different context, “we have a thing and its feature presented to us,” as well as “the perceiving of the thing in its feature presented to us . . . in what we experience . . . when we state about something that it is such and such.”²⁰

The feeling-act (as a distinguishable but inseparable moment of the emotional-act and the feeling-sensation) is founded on, and forms a unity with, the cognitive-act, which constitutes the aforementioned first-foundation of emotive intentionality. The feeling-act or affection discloses my evaluative assessment of my perception of my neighbor possessing some good that I desire but lack. How the inferior party thinks about this comparative disparity—regardless at this point of whether he is correct or incorrect in his assessment—will condition whether the experience is disclosed to him *as* enviable or covetable or unjust and himself *as*

without critical assessment. Likewise, Husserl terms the evaluative experience rooted in perception and revealed by feeling-acts, *Wertnehmung*, value-apprehension, to demonstrate the founded-founding relation between perceptual and evaluative experience.

18. There is, I think, an Aristotelian dimension to this reading of Husserl’s account of emotive intentionality, for it suggests that the valence an emotion brings to a perception makes it such that things now ‘seem’ or are experienced quite differently. As Aristotle writes in the context of envy, “We can also see what things and what persons give pleasure to envious people, and in what states of mind they feel it: the states of mind in which they feel pain are those under which they feel pleasure in contrary things. If therefore we ourselves with whom the decision rests are put into an envious state of mind, and those for whom our pity, or the aware of something desirable, is claimed are such as have been described, it is obvious that they will win no pity from us” (*Rhetoric* 1388a26-29). See Stephen R. Leighton, “Aristotle and the Emotions,” *Phronesis* 27 (1982), 144–73.

19. Richard Cobb-Stevens, “Being and Categorical Intuition,” *Review of Metaphysics* 44 (1990), 43–66, here 53.

20. Robert Sokolowski, “Husserl’s Concept of Categorical Intuition,” *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences* 12 (1981), 127–41, here 129.

envious or covetous or indignant, the second or fuller foundation of the emotive experience, to play on Husserl's metaphor. One arrives at this emotive intuition when one lives with the sense that so-and-so is enviable because she possesses X or Y, which one values and desires but lacks. Since enviers rarely thematize their emotion for themselves, and since we often conflate this emotion with other emotions in colloquial, mundane discourse, a phenomenology of this emotion must begin its analysis with an object-directed approach. By briefly considering the difference between two often conflated emotions, envy and covetousness, however, we shall see that we can begin like Farrell but should not dismiss the affects as uniquely informative about envy.

Both the envious and covetous person desires but lacks some particular object that another possesses and accordingly feels distress over this lack. Even if one claimed that the painful affects in envy and covetousness differ in degree, this difference in affective degree seemingly makes no difference in an attempt to distinguish these emotions for the aforementioned reasons. The intentional focus of envy that differentiates it from coveting, however, reveals that what "bothers" the envier, or what the envier focuses on or judges about, is not simply the lack of the thing but lack of something vis-à-vis the one who possesses that something that the envier desires but lacks. The envious person generally is distressed about both the other possessing the desired something for possessing that desired something and his (the envier's) self-standing insofar as he lacks that something. The covetous person, on the other hand, desires the object but is not necessarily distressed by its possessor, e.g., does not (at least) begrudge the possessor for possessing the desired thing. The intentional focus of the envier is another person who possesses the desired something, whereas the intentional focus of the coveter is on the thing itself, full-stop, and the affects characterizing these different emotions substantiate this clarification.²¹ While this seems merely a difference in cognitive content insofar as the states of affairs are differentiated, we should add that the coveter, unlike the envier, need not regard himself negatively, need not hold a distressing self-regard for his shortcoming. The affects in envy suggest that envy takes two objects, two persons, and not just one regarded negatively. As such, the affects aid our attempt to distinguish these sibling emotions by providing insight into the different inten-

21. We should except and accept in this case the claim that a coveter can covet another person. In this case, though one should not covet one's neighbor's spouse, the coveted object is another subject. But the difference between coveting and envying still stands, for the coveter takes the person as, or reduces the person to, an object and yet still does not loath the possessor. If painful feelings are direct toward the possessor, then coveting appears closer to jealousy than it does envy. See Justin D'Arms, "Envy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/envy>. In the example given here, *coveting* is a *two-party relation* concerning only the coveter and the thing coveted; *envy* is a *two-person relation* concerning the envier and the envied; and *jealousy* is a *three-person relation*.

tional contents and the different appraisals tied to the intentional contents of envy and covetousness. And perhaps this is why the affects characteristic of coveting share with envy only the desire for some *thing* that is an *object* not inherent to its possessor, while envy extends beyond a desire for *something* and sometimes desires a trait or capacity of the other (as when Saliere envies Mozart's genius). Indeed, we have no wisdom saying that warns against coveting thy neighbor's good looks (trait) or quick wit (capacity). In short, the envier is a coveter but the coveter is not an envier.

If this brief example suffices to demonstrate the force of the claim that a phenomenology of a particular emotion must begin by distinguishing similar emotions according to the intentional focus of those emotions, a defining difference between Farrell's and a phenomenological account remains. The phenomenologist thus would insist that the affective response discloses additional determinate features of the object-complex or state of affairs no longer according to merely affectively neutral cognitive contents.²² To capture the uniqueness of the intentional act of envying, which is bi-directional and thus always also about oneself, what one wishes for, how one feels when that wish remains unfulfilled, we cannot dismiss the affective dimension. By dismissing (4)—the distressing affections intrinsic to an episode of envy—Farrell loses (3)—the affects disclosing the envying person's regard for himself. But (3) marks an essential feature of envy such that if (3) and (2) do not combine in the intentional "focus," then we do not get envy in (4) but some other emotional attitude such as covetousness. As we have seen, in coveting I feel pain over the lack of a thing but neither begrudge its possessor nor cast myself as inferior to her.²³ The comparative measure in which the envier, as we have seen Aristotle suggest, perceives or believes himself inferior in relation to the envied as the one who possesses the advantageous some-thing goes missing in Farrell's account. Unlike object-directed conceptual analysis that jettisons the affects, phenomenology's eidetic analysis should not restrict envy's focus to the object. It is the affective dimension of envy that reminds us of the importance of realizing the self-regarding element in the object-complex of envy. In short, Farrell's account does not capture the full intentional "focus" of envy.

22. Again, Drummond has made this point clearly in "Cognitive Impenetrability' of the Complexity of the Emotions."

23. The focus of the affects likewise offers a distinguishing mark of envy from jealousy; in jealousy, I feel distress over the unrequited affection but this distress not necessarily reflect my sense of a self-reproach concerning my inferiority vis-à-vis my beloved's lover. And to take yet another brief example, in resentment the negative affects are directed only to the other and not to myself insofar as I believe that other responsible for my disadvantage and inferiority (likewise believing myself morally superior to this 'callous' other).

§ 3. A Glimpse of Envy and its Intentional Structure

A full description of the intentional focus of envy and when one glimpses it in oneself, I believe, reveals that its phenomenal (or intentional) contents include both the self and the other, the envier and the envied. That envy's intentional focus is bidirectional does not repeat (yet can accommodate) the claim that I believe analytic, moral psychologists have established convincingly, namely that envy is a two-party relation of envier to envied. Nor do I intend to claim that envy involves two objects in an apparently trivially true sense, namely that there are obviously two objects involved insofar as there is the envied and that something that the envied possesses. In fact, this way of interpreting the claim that envy takes two objects does not grasp an essential feature of the intentionality of envy; indeed, in instances when we envy another's trait or capacity—as Salieri did Mozart's genius—envy does not take two objects but one (the other as possessing the desired something as a particular target within the other's person). I want to make a stronger claim.

As a complex, comparative intentionality involving a comparison of oneself to another who possesses something valued and desired, envy involves dual phenomenal contents in the form of negative affects directed toward self and other. The glimpse of envy reveals or confirms that envy involves negative affects dually directed to oneself and another following a comparative assessment of oneself to another with respect to some desirable thing. The glimpse of envy that takes two objects reveals that envy entails i) the envier as he intends himself negatively in his inferiority (at least) with respect to ii) some desirable thing possessed by the begrudged envied. In an occurrent episode of envy, the negative affects in (4) are directed at (2) and (3), and the importance of this experience is confirmed in the structure of envy glimpsed. As the brief distinction between envy and covetousness suggested, essential to envy is the comparative appraisal disclosed affectively in the dually directed negative affects. In the glimpse of envy, one sees that one has cast oneself in this comparative relation (seeing oneself as inferior and the other as superior at least with respect to this desired something). Reflecting on (the intentional contents in) the glimpse of envy and the affects it makes explicit—whether or not this glimpse amounts to a full-blown admission of envy on behalf of the envier—supports the view of envy as a comparative relation with dually directed negative affects and phenomenal contents.

Farrell's account cannot accommodate this subjective dimension of envy's dual phenomenal contents because he introduced a false dichotomy between the object or "focus" of the intentionality and its affective correlate. His dubious belief that the "phenomenological . . . way of thinking of the emotions . . . presupposes . . . the view that emotions are 'private inner events' . . . 'directly observable' only by the person who is experiencing them" produces this oversight (Farrell, 540–41). Husserl, how-

ever, claims just the opposite, maintaining that the emotions are “referred . . . to the thing itself,” i.e., intentional and founded on a cognitive act (*LI 5*, §15a). Since this emotive state is founded upon the cognitive activity of perception, fantasy or belief, it is communicable and not merely private (even if particular).²⁴ When I envy someone it is because I i) perceive or believe or imagine that someone possesses some desirable thing, trait or capacity that I lack, ii) consider this comparative difference important and iii) negatively assess myself for my inferiority (at least) with respect to (i) and thus (at least) begrudge the other now perceived or believed superior (at least) with respect to (i). As such, the dually directed negative affects of envy disclose the possessor *as* envied and myself *as* envier (whether I recognize, acknowledge or accept this emotional episode as one of envy or not). Phenomenology agrees with Farrell that the emotions take an object and that this experience is communicable and not merely private. But phenomenology goes beyond the kind of strictly dyadic, object-directed view of intentional awareness that we find in Farrell and includes the affects in its view of intentional experience.

Husserl's broader view of intentionality holds that the self always already goes out to the world in such a way that its awareness of objects entails an awareness of itself. The details of such an account are best found in Husserl's theory of consciousness' double-intentionality as put forth in his *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal-Time*. For the present purposes, the relevant detail of that work is Husserl's discovery of the two modes of awareness characteristic of intentional consciousness, namely the objectifying and non-objectifying, or object-awareness and self-awareness (*Hua X*, 291/301). It is enough to note for the present task that Husserl's claim indicates that these modes of object-awareness and self-awareness differ in important ways. For example, as I write this paper, my self-awareness in my primary task (of writing) non-objectively accompanies my objective awareness of both my focal, primary object (the tool on which I write) and the marginal, secondary objects of this experience (the hum of the steam-heat radiator).²⁵ If I find my writing going poorly because of my vague grasp of the material, I might slip into an episode of self-critique and objectify myself. In this case, my self-awareness in my primary task of criticizing myself non-objectively accompanies both my self-conscious and objective awareness of my shortcomings, and my

24. See Robert Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (New York: Cambridge University, 2007), 22–23.

25. Though this point goes beyond the scope of this essay, the reader should note that non-objective self-awareness differs from awareness of marginal objects. Construing the subject as capable of gaining awareness of itself only as it is aware of an object (focal or marginal) begins the argument in favor of this distinction, for a view of the self as a marginal object would generate an infinite regress of selves. Dan Zahavi has established these points quite definitively in his *Self-awareness and Alterity* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1999).

awareness of the marginal objects now including the tool on which I write and the hum of the radiator.

As these oversimplified examples illustrate, my intentional directedness—whether perceptual, judging or emotional—runs in several, synchronized directions. On the object-directed side, we can distinguish two broad camps, namely self-directed and other-directed intentionalities. To take an example of intentional emotions at the episodic level, guilt is a self-directed emotion. When I feel guilty, I pre-reflectively assess myself or some particular past act as unacceptable. In the emotion of guilt, I objectify myself—I am self-directed—because my focus remains on myself, or some particular past act, as an object that I assess negatively. Fear, on the other hand, is an other-directed emotion. When I fear the bear, I implicitly and without introspection assess the bear and situation as threatening and myself as fearful.²⁶ In the emotion of fear, my intentional focus remains on the object that I fear and the situation as threatening—regardless of the feeling-sensations I experience in perceiving myself in relation to the beast.²⁷

What I find interesting about the intentional “focus” of envy is that envy has a share in both the “self” and “other” moments of object-directedness, and this is what I mean when I want to claim that envy takes two objects characterized by dually directed negative affects in a comparative assessment. On the one hand, the envying self simply carries himself along in his distress over another possessing some good that I value and desire but lack; on the other hand, this distress arises from the two objects intended in envy—or the two persons involved in the complex, comparative relation—the awareness that I lack something valuable and desirable and am inferior to the superior other who possesses it. In my distress over my comparative disadvantage or inferiority (at least with respect to the disparity concerning some desirable thing), my distress runs in two directions—targets both the other and the self—as Aristotle implied insofar as the other’s “possession of or success in a thing is a reproach to [me].” As noted earlier, in covetousness, jealousy and resentment, for example, the subject need not necessarily reproach himself, need not regard himself as inferior. In the glimpse of envy, the envier recognizes that he has cast himself in this comparative appraisal as the inferior and so takes as objects (to which the negative affects are dually directed) both himself as envier and the other as envied. That is, the envier *recognizes* his subjective condition as one of envying another insofar as he comparatively assesses the state of affairs, which necessarily includes himself, negatively. Again, this glimpse may not produce a full-blown admission of envy. Nevertheless, the envied person and her possession, trait or capacity reveals to me my lack of that which I value and desire

26. Drummond, “Cognitive Impenetrability,” 117–18.

27. *Ibid.*

and this disparity sparks the dually directed negative affects. The envied person serves as a *reminder* of this disparity and my lack. A moment, a glimpse of self-objectification occurs in envy, even if the envier rapidly folds this awareness back into a non-objectifying condition that silences envy, repackages it as a different, approximate emotion. When one “sees” oneself as envier in the glimpse of envy—whether the envier considers himself equal or superior to the envied—one sees that one has cast oneself as inferior to the envied (at least) with respect to this particular desired thing, trait or capacity. The envier thus directs negative (distressing) feelings toward both himself and the envied. An emotion is the emotion of envy only when its intentional focus as revealed by the dually directed negative affects includes the self and the other—the self as desiring, lacking and inferior and the other as enjoying and superior (at least) with respect to possessing this desired some-thing—in a comparative, disparate relation.²⁸

That envy is characterized by its dually directed negative focus, its self- and other-regarding sense, can be illustrated by an example of an experience that takes two objects. I am thinking of the experience of being a new teacher or teaching new course material with which one is not yet comfortable. A teacher who cares about himself and his career presumably wishes to be esteemed by his students insofar as he is seen as competent if not proficient. Many objects are at play under these conditions: the students are focal objects along with marginal objects such as the podium, the desks, etc. If the teacher struggles, she or he can become for her or himself a marginal object. She or he can be agent and spectator alike, wondering, while teaching, whether or not she or he is being clear, projecting adequately, missed the raised hand of a student, misunderstood a student remark, or responded to a question with an uncertainty she or he hopes went undetected, etc. Like the teacher who brings a desire for estimable self-worth to the circumstance, the envier too brings his desire for estimable self-worth to the world and thus a tendency to self-objectify. One who does not link his self-image, self-worth, or self-esteem to some particular thing, trait or capacity will not feel envy. When an envier perceives another who has some-thing that the envier values and desires but lacks, this *reminder* generates a glimpse of one's envy—as reminder implies—wherein one takes oneself as an object. The envier in the glimpse of envy sees that he has cast himself in a comparative relation vis-à-vis the envied and thus objectifies himself, however marginally, however fleetingly, as lesser than the other whom he (at least) begrudges (at least) with respect to the desirable something that the envier values but lacks.

28. The emotion of envy founded on a comparison differs from a distinguishing mark such as occurs when a female distinguishes herself from a male or vice versa. My apprehension of myself as a male accompanies my distinction between myself and a female but without the type of self-assessing moment found in the glimpse of envy. See Bernhard Waldenfels, *The Question of the Other* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 2007), 7.

Insofar as envy involves a comparative emotional reaction, and insofar as comparison necessarily involves two objects measured in an informational remark or a contribution the subject adds to the bare perceptual circumstance,²⁹ the glimpse of envy's structure reveals that it takes two objects—the envied and the envier—as the correlates of the non-objectifying (envying) self that accompanies this complex and layered intentional experience. In the glimpse of envy, one steps outside oneself, however momentarily, and sees his inferiority *reflected* off the other, the envied, with whom the envier compares himself and whose presence or possessions reminds the envier of his inferiority (at least on this score or in this “battle”). In glimpsing my envy, I am directed toward myself and the other, i.e., I objectify myself and the other insofar as the other reminds me of my inferiority as the one who lacks some desired thing, trait or capacity that my superior rival (on this score at least) possesses. When I find myself envying another his good looks, quick wit or nice vehicle, I am reminded unhappily of my standing as lesser than the other (either justly or unjustly) *and* the other as superior to me (either justly or unjustly) insofar as he possesses that which I desire but lack.³⁰

The self- and other-regarding structure of envy as a comparative assessment marked by the envier's perceived or believed inferiority to the envied thus marks its essential feature. The envier becomes the self that he does not want the other to know (to employ a play on Sartre's phenomenology of shame), that he does not want to admit to himself. As such, the self-regarding moment of envy vis-à-vis the other-regarding moment of envy as each negatively assessed and disclosed by the affects in (4) seems essential to the intentional structure of envy.

Returning to Aristotle's point concerning envy as a reproach of self, it seems, while important and essential, a bit vague. We nevertheless can claim, concerned as we are with the intentional structure of envy, that any envier who perceives, believes or imagines himself as inferior to his neighbor considers this inferiority as a “fact” insofar as the neighbor has some thing, trait or capacity that the envier values and desires but lacks, which experience “causes” the dually directed negative affects already highlighted. A basic degree of self-reproach emerges. An envier may, of course, feel that he does or does not deserve this disadvantage, that he is or is not

29. For a discussion of the difference between an informational or declarative remark, see Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 22–23.

30. The emotion of jealousy, of course, is self- and other-directed, as well as self- and other-assessing. But many differences exist between jealousy and envy on this proposed model. In the former, for example, I do not necessarily assess myself or the other negatively, whereas in the latter I may assess myself and the other in some instance negatively. Moreover, in the former, I cannot make strides to secure in the future that which I lack in the present—this ultimately remains contingent on the free will of the object of my affection, as Farrell has noted.

responsible for this disadvantage, or that the other does or does not deserve the advantage, has or has not “caused” this disadvantage. Yet every instance of envy essentially entails a moment of self-reproach along with a begrudging of the other prior to a translation of that emotion or an embracing of it in order to struggle toward ethical self-improvement, to live a better, happier life. How one evaluates these moments built upon the basic intentional structure of envy in a comparative assessment of one’s inferiority to another likely will contribute to an understanding of whether or not this envier will or will not acknowledge or permit the reminder of his disparity to linger in his self-regard, will or will not shift to the less troubling claim or admission that s/he admires or resents the other, for example. The labels one chooses to give to one’s dually directed negative feelings in an episode of envy tend to i) minimize the experience of envious feelings by registering them as covetousness, or ii) dignifying the envious feelings by registering them as jealousy, or iii) justify (or perhaps rationalize) the envious feelings by registering them as indignation, for example. Of course, these are very different emotions that a phenomenological analysis should distinguish from envy. Concerned here only with the barest intentional structure of envy, I only can speculate that the moral psychology behind translating envy into one of these approximate emotions suggests that we have glimpsed our envy but wish, perhaps, not to appear hostile toward the other and/or admit to ourselves our inferiority in relation to the other.

Whatever moment appears in the individual envier in an episode of envy glimpsed, it entails in the self-assessing dimension of envy where the envier feels distress both toward the other and himself, where the envier negatively assesses himself for his lack of the desirable thing and begrudges the other the enjoyment of that thing desired by the envier but lacked. Again, as Aristotle suggested, one recognizes one’s envy when one negatively appraises oneself for one’s inferiority and the other with respect to her possession of that desirable thing, trait or capacity that the envier values and desires but lacks.³¹ The glimpse of envy merely reveals this negative self-assessing that is coupled with an “other-assessing” sense of (at least) begrudging the other for possessing that desirable something lacked by the envier. And even if these negative affects of pain and distress that characterize envy likewise characterize other like-hearted emotions with which we often conflate envy, important differences remain in their intentional structure.³² To restrict the intentional structure of envy to the other-regarding level overlooks the correlative sense in which the envier takes himself in relation to the envied as disclosed by the dually directed, negative affective response to the experience, which reveals that the envier has cast both the self and the other negatively.

31. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1388a17.

32. See nn. 23 and 31.

§ 4. Conclusion

The layered emotive state of envying is deeply complex and the present paper traces only the skeleton of envy with respect to its barest intentional structure. This includes the moments of value, desire, lack, comparison and inferiority as containing two phenomenal contents negatively assessed and revealed by the corresponding negative affects dually directed toward oneself and another. The merit of starting from the matter of the number of objects that envy takes is that this approach provides for us a rubric by which we can evaluate envy proper in ways that allows us to i) distinguish it from other kinds of emotions, e.g., covetousness, jealousy, etc., and ii) distinguish different types of envy, e.g., benign or malicious, according to the center of gravity in the "focus" of envying and the ensuing evaluations of that focus concerning whether the envier deserves or does not deserve the disadvantage and whether the envied deserves or does not deserve the advantage (the former assessment, of course, likely conditioning the latter). Once the essential, structural features of envy appear in a way that no longer conflates them with other emotions and no longer renders envy a generic attitude without nuance, we can move to address the more complex character of envy. Does the marginal yet self-regarding sense of envy tell us something about why envy is so silent insofar as it must have been recognized before it was muted by or lost in translation? Does envy appear rational insofar as it always envies a neighbor rather than a person at an insurmountable social, political or economic distance?

However we begin to answer these questions, envy is a reactive, comparative emotion that dually directs negative feelings to the self and the other. Envy is a self-assessing and other-assessing emotion in which the envier receives no pleasure. But it is an emotion that the envier grasps when he regards himself as the other would regard him (i.e., *vis-à-vis* the other as inferior) and thus rests his self-esteem upon these conditions. I catch myself, as it were, not only (at least) begrudging the other, but also feeling inferior to the envied and bad about myself *vis-à-vis* that which the envied possesses and I value and desire but lack. Envy thus tries to dissemble, to hide itself from being the self known by another in its hostility or inferiority. Here, after a translation of envy into a more tolerable or putatively justifiable emotion, envy hides out in the margin of awareness as the envier masks himself both from himself and others; he will not let envy speak, will not admit or confess it in any genuine sense. If ashamed of his inferiority, the envier may cast the other as the cause of his inferiority and reestablishes his equality or perhaps imagined superiority to the other. If worried that the other will detect in him an unlikeable character trait, the envier may reconstruct the situation for a public narrative into one of jealousy or indignation that enables him to shroud himself in dignity, which envy belies. When one glimpses one's negative evaluation as an instance of envy, one shies away from these dually directed negative affects because they are consid-

ered publically inappropriate and perceived as privately diminishing. Something must restore one's diminished pride or self-esteem; the story of my person, one silently says to oneself in a glimpse of envy, must be told differently. The common envier need not necessarily believe something wrong or amiss with his feelings. He need only believe that society bears a certain normative opinion of the envier that he prefers to avoid.³³ When one glimpses one's envy, one looks at and judges oneself and evaluates one's esteem as the other likely might, one becomes "indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging" before any translation of this experience into an approximate negative emotion.³⁴

33. Even if one agrees that envy is always a vice (and precisely if one does not) it seems perfectly reasonable to say that we can envy the right person at the right time and for the right reasons. Such a claim does not necessarily warrant or justify envious feelings but only asserts that envy is rational at least to the extent that we have intelligible reasons for our envy, however incorrect they may be.

34. This is not to say that the reasoning that enters into the action designed to mitigate, eliminate or overcome this inequality need be necessarily be vicious or virtuous, incorrect or correct, inappropriate or appropriate. To determine whether envy is or is not vicious, would require an elaboration of the different types of rationality involved in generating and overcoming envy, as well as different moments of the experience of envy. And yet even this inquiry would not suffice for a complete account of the intentional structure of envy, for these different types of envy and the different kinds of reasoning marshaled onto the scene to eradicate the feelings of envy remain contingent on what one wishes for, how one wishes for it and how one feels when one's wish remains unfulfilled or perhaps cannot be fulfilled. Insofar as these feelings would likely beget different types of envy (e.g., benign or malicious), a phenomenology of envy thus seems to call for a companion inquiry into the phenomenology of wishing. Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 238–56.

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