'I'm not envious, I'm just jealous!': On the Difference Between Envy and Jealousy

ABSTRACT: *I argue for the view that envy and jealousy are distinct emotions, and the crucial difference between them is that envy involves a perception of lack while jealousy involves a perception of loss. I start by noting the common practice of using 'envy' and 'jealousy' almost interchangeably, and I contrast it with the empirical evidence that shows that envy and jealousy are distinct, albeit similar and often co-occurring, emotions. I then argue in favor of a specific way of understanding their distinction: the view that envy is a response to a perceived lack of a valuable object, while jealousy is a response to a perceived loss of a valuable object. I compare such a view with the most compelling alternative theories and show that it accounts better for paradigmatic cases. I conclude by showing how the lack versus loss model can handle complications: ambiguous cases, that is, when it is epistemically unclear whether one experiences lack or loss; hybrid cases, that is, when one seems to experience both lack and loss; and borderline cases, that is, when it is metaphysically unclear whether one experiences lack or loss.*

KEYWORDS: envy, jealousy, emotions, philosophical psychology

Introduction: Two Different Green-Eyed Monsters

Here is an exceedingly simplified version of *Othello* (spoilers ahead): Iago perceives himself as being worse off than Othello, and he is pained by this perception. He thus plots to take away Othello's happiness and success. Iago makes him believe that his wife Desdemona is having an affair with his friend Cassio. His plot succeeds and ruin ensues for Othello, Desdemona, and many others close to them.

Iago and Othello feel emotions that most readers have no trouble recognizing: Iago is *envious*, and Othello is *jealous*. (More precisely, I should say: Iago is *often interpreted as being* envious, and Othello is *often interpreted as being* jealous. But here I am interested in the layperson's response, setting aside hermeneutical scholarly debates.) Even though readers may use the word 'jealous' in both cases, they will talk about the corresponding emotions in different ways. They might say that Iago lacks Othello's status or fortune and wants to pull him down to his own level by spoiling his fortune. Othello, on the other hand, is trying to protect his

loving relationship with Desdemona. I take Othello's and Iago's emotions to be paradigmatic cases of jealousy and envy, respectively.

Envy and jealousy are thus symmetrical, in the sense that they motivate the agents in two opposite directions: Othello is protecting from an external threat a good he perceives himself as *having*, while Iago is coveting a good he perceives himself as *lacking*. The play's tragic events stem from Iago's ability to pursue his malicious aims and from Othello's incapacity to protect his valuable relationship with Desdemona in the right way from the real threat (that is, Iago, not Cassio). Neither envy nor jealousy need always be so nefarious or unwarranted although it is their destructive and irrational features that tend to motivate our scholarly or literary interest in them.

Even though envy and jealousy can be recognized as different and symmetrical in paradigmatic cases, they share many similar features. Both are emotions with a triadic structure: they involve an agent or subject, a good or object, and a target or the person the emotion is felt toward (this point is controversial, and I am going to defend it later). Both are *rivalrous* in that the target is conceived of as a rival or competitor, and in particular the rivalry is conceived of in *comparative* and, often but not always, *positional* terms: the competition is such that one's loss is the other's gain, and one's worth is seen as at least partially determined by the other's. Both are affectively *aversive*, in the sense that they are painful to experience because they affect the agent's self-esteem negatively. Finally, they sometimes co-occur in the same agent: the same person can feel both envy and jealousy directed at the same person. It is in virtue of these similarities that envy and jealousy are often confused with one another in our everyday discourse and even in introspection.

In this paper, I argue that the difference between envy and jealousy is best understood according to a specific model of the appraisal dimensions of these two emotions, which I will refer to as 'lack versus loss model'. The first section examines a peculiar linguistic phenomenon that occurs in English and other languages: the conflation between 'jealousy' and 'envy'. Such a linguistic conflation—in particular the fact that jealousy has a wider semantic scope than envy—might lead us to think of envy as just a particular form of jealousy. However, this popular impression is wrongheaded: the scholarly consensus is that envy and jealousy are distinct emotions. The first section reconstructs how this consensus has come about in social psychology while also detailing the empirical evidence concerning the ways in which envy and jealousy differ. The second section then argues that such evidence is best accounted for by the lack versus loss model: envy is a response to a perceived potential or actual *lack* of a valuable object, while jealousy is a response to a perceived potential or actual *loss* of a valuable object. The third section analyzes competing models (the most persuasive of which is the view that jealousy essentially involves the need for attention while envy does not) and shows that the lack versus loss model better accounts for paradigmatic cases, on the one hand, and empirical evidence, on the other. The fourth and final section demonstrates how my view can handle complications: *ambiguous* cases, that is, when it is epistemically unclear whether one experiences lack or loss; *hybrid* cases, that is, when one seems to experience both lack and loss; and *borderline* cases, that is, when it is metaphysically unclear whether one experiences lack or loss.

1. When 'Jealous' Means Envious: Linguistic Conflation and Empirical Distinctness

In several languages, including English, it is common to use 'jealousy' and 'jealous' in lieu of 'envy' and 'envious'. This practice is reflected in dictionary definitions. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the following as the second nonobsolete meaning of 'jealousy':

> The state of mind arising from the suspicion, apprehension, or knowledge of rivalry; in respect of success or advantage: fear of losing some good through the rivalry of another; resentment or ill-will towards another on account of advantage or superiority, possible or actual, on his part; envy, grudge.

Similar definitions can be found in Merriam-Webster. Both 'envy' and 'jealousy' derive from French words ('envie' and 'jalousie', respectively), and the same phenomenon of using 'jealousy' as a synonym for 'envy' can be found in French. Even though this linguistic phenomenon is not exclusive to English, it is particularly relevant to discussing the English case, given that much of the empirical literature on the topic is authored by native English speakers, whose studies and experiments mostly target other native English speakers, and given that our linguistic practices are known to influence the way we think about our emotional experience.

Sociologist Helmut Schoeck (Schoeck 1969: 71–72) and anthropologist George Foster (Foster 1972: 167–68), authors of pivotal works in the contemporary research on envy, lament this linguistic phenomenon as an unfortunate source of confusion for scholarly investigation. Both claim that the terms are used *synonymously*, but social psychologists have subsequently cast doubt on the claim that the two terms are perfect synonyms. Maury Silver and John Sabini (Silver and Sabini 1978) are the first to speculate on an asymmetry: 'jealousy' encompasses a range of meanings that include those of 'envy', but not vice versa.

Ten years later, Gerrod Parrott, Sung Hee Kim, and Richard Smith (Smith et al. 1988) provide evidence confirming this linguistic asymmetry, and, more interestingly, they show that the two emotions are phenomenologically experienced as distinct *even by English speakers*: envy is more likely to be characterized by feelings of inferiority and self-criticism, wishfulness and longing, and a motivation to improve one's self; jealousy is more likely to be characterized by feelings of suspicion and distrust, rejection and hurt, hostility and anger at others, and fear of loss.

In later studies (Parrott and Smith 1993) Parrott and Smith made two further discoveries. First, they found that the *co-occurrence* of envy and jealousy is also asymmetrical: jealousy is almost always accompanied by some envy for the rival, but the opposite does not hold. Second, they found that envy is characteristically associated with concern for public disapproval, while jealousy is associated with self-righteousness. This second result is relevant to understanding the linguistic asymmetry: jealous people do not worry about hiding their jealousy, because jealousy, albeit condemned when excessive, is less stigmatized than envy

and considered more legitimate. Consequently, it makes sense for 'jealousy' to incorporate some of envy's meaning, but not the opposite.[1]

In the next section I will propose that such an asymmetry in social response is best accounted for by the lack versus loss model, but for now I merely note that we can easily see our different attitudes toward jealousy and envy in fictional representations. The envious are usually depicted as unappealing characters, most often villains toward whom we feel no sympathy whatsoever. The jealous can be heroes, even when they commit hideous crimes, and they are depicted as struggling with all too human internal demons. We hate and fear the Iagos, while we pity and empathize with the Othellos.

2. To Lose Or To Lack, That Is The Question

Even though most scholars agree that envy and jealousy are distinct emotions, they disagree on what this difference consists in. But, before presenting the alternative views, a general clarification is needed (thank you to an anonymous reviewer for prompting me to make it): the great majority of discussion of envy and jealousy takes place, often implicitly, in the context of appraisal theories. In this family of emotion theories, emotions are differentiated by their patterns of appraisal or evaluation. I share this common assumption and I will defend a view that focuses on a specific appraisal dimension. While appraisal theories tend to be seen as necessarily conceiving of emotions as natural kinds, Andrew Ortony and Gerald Clore (2015) have recently argued that this need not be the case and that the account of emotions they developed with Allan Collins (the so-called 'OCC model', from the authors' names) is an appraisal theory that is compatible with a psychological constructionist account, that is, one that takes emotions to be 'perceiver-dependent products of the human mind' (Barrett and Russell 2015: 13). I will remain uncommitted as to whether envy and jealousy are natural kinds.

A recurring suggestion across disciplines is that envy is, in some sense to be further specified, about lack, while jealousy is about loss. Anthropologist George Foster, mentioned above, may be the first to have articulated this view in the contemporary debate. He describes the two emotions as typical affective reactions to different situational antecedents:

> Envy stems from the desire to acquire something possessed by another person, while jealousy is rooted in the fear of losing something already possessed. In schematic form both emotions involve a dyad, a pair of individuals whose relationships is mediated, or structured, by an intervening property or object. The intervening object may take

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1 Further confirmation of both the linguistic conflation and differentiation of the two emotions can be found in a taxometric analysis performed by Nick Haslam and Brian Bornstein (Haslam and Bornstein 1996). This study goes beyond Parrott and Smith's findings, in that it not only confirms the qualitative differences between envy and jealousy, but also shows that envy and jealousy are discrete complex affective kinds rather than different regions of the same continuous affective domain.

innumerable forms, such as wealth, a material good, the love and affection of a human being, or it may be intangible, such as fame or good reputation. The mediating property is possessed by one member of the dyad; the other member does not possess it, but wishes to. . . . Jealousy is thus seen to be the normal *counterpart* of envy. (Foster 1972: 168, my emphasis)

Foster suggests a case of romantic rivalry as an example: a man may be envious of another for his attractive partner, and, if the other man is made aware of being the target of envy, he will become jealous of him.

The idea is elegant and simple and can be captured in the motto: envy covets what jealousy guards. It accounts easily for cases of envy and jealousy that are pretheoretically taken to be paradigmatic. Consider again *Othello*: Othello is jealous of Cassio because he thinks he is threatening his relationship to Desdemona, a relationship he sees as exclusive. Iago is envious of Othello because he thinks he lacks the latter's reputation and honorable qualities.

Romantic rivalry is the paradigmatic context in which we normally think about jealousy, and in that context it is common for envy to co-occur in the same agent toward the same target, that is, for a lover to be both jealous *and* envious of his or her rival (cf. discussion above of Parrott and Smith [1993]; Haslam and Bornstein [1996] remark that if envy and jealousy were not distinct, we could not properly speak of co-occurrence). The lack versus loss model explains this co-occurrence easily: the lover perceives the other person not only as threatening a possession (the loving relationship), but also as having something the lover does not have (a particular quality or the capacity to attract the beloved in a way that is disruptive of the relationship, etc.). Of course, envy and jealousy can also co-occur in the same agent but be directed at different targets.

This model also easily explains the asymmetries introduced in the previous section. The linguistic asymmetry (the fact that we often say 'jealous' when we mean 'envious') is due to the desire to avoid social stigma: we trade on the similarities between the two emotions to admit only the one that is less shameful even if we are sometimes actually feeling the other. But what explains the different social response? The fact that we do *not* have a right to what others have, but we *do* have a right to defend what is ours. (While we *do* have a right to what others have if the distribution of goods has been unfair, the emotion warranted in that case is *resentment*, not envy, a difference discussed at length in the literature.)

Furthermore, according to the studies comparing the phenomenology of the two emotions, envy is more strongly associated with feelings of comparative inferiority and shame than envy (Parrott and Smith 1993). Once again, this is not surprising if we think that envy involves or stems from seeing oneself as lacking what another person has, and jealousy involves or stems from seeing oneself as having something the other person does not. Of course, this is not a stable difference: intense jealousy may be a consequence of lack of self-esteem or insecurity about one's situation and thus might involve envying the rival (I will discuss these cases in the last section).

Admitting envy thus implies admitting one's perceived inferiority. Furthermore, in most people's conception, envy also involves a desire to deprive another person of something valuable that this other person rightfully owns:[2] it is no surprise that people fear envy from others and deny it when they feel it! Jealousy, in contrast, seems more excusable; it is an emotion we would rather not feel or be the target of, but it is understandable as a response to a perceived threat.

The normative aspects that are at stake here become even more salient in the philosophical renditions of the lack versus loss model. Several philosophers present a version of the distinction, but I find Gabriele Taylor's account the most insightful one (Taylor [1988, 2006]; other philosophers endorsing this model are Neu [1980], Ben-Ze'ev [1990], Purshouse [2004], and Konyndyk DeYoung [2009]).

She starts by highlighting the dimensions along which the two emotions are similar and focuses on similarities that account for the reason why they are often confused with each other: both are hostile toward the person the emotion is directed at, and they are both unpleasant for the agent to experience. Furthermore 'in both cases the person experiencing the emotion sees herself as standing in some relation to the valued good, where this good may be some material possession, a social position or position of relative power, a personal quality, or some kind of personal relationship'" (Taylor 1988: 233).

I take it that by 'valued' Taylor means subjectively valued by the agent, as opposed to objectively *valuable*. Both envy and jealousy are painful for the agent because they involve something the agent cares about from a subjective perspective even when that something is not an objective good.

One might object to this characterization that we often desire, or even ache for, things even if we do not subjectively value them (I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this objection). It seems to me that there are three kinds of such cases. First, there are addictions, such as when we crave a cigarette or a drink, even though we might think they are bad for us (so we do not just value them: we positively disvalue them). But it seems to me that addictions are a complicated case, deserving a separate treatment. The second kind of case is when we desire things that we do not value because they are *instrumental* in conducing to something else that we value. For instance, I might not value certain marks of professional prestige, perhaps because I think they are not based on merit alone, and nonetheless value the benefits that stem from them, such as doing one's job better. As a consequence, I may find myself being envious of someone who enjoys that kind of prestige. In that case, it seems to me that is still a case of valuing something as good even though one might be less aware or conscious that one holds such a value. Finally, there are cases in which entrenched rivalries cause one to be disposed to be jealous or envious of another person, quite independently of specific valued goods. Even then, though, there must be some object that has to be at least fleetingly and superficially perceived as good, what I would call 'triggering good'.

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2 While envy is often perceived as malicious and implying this aggressive desire, it can actually be benign (see van de Ven et al. 2009, 2011, 2014, and Protasi 2016). But malicious envy is a lot more salient in the comparison to jealousy, and this salience determines the asymmetries discussed here.

Another way of framing the relation between the object of envy and jealousy and the self is to think of it as connected to the agent's identity. (Taylor mentions the role of self-image and sense of identity in various parts of the essay; see also Ben-Ze'ev [1990], Smith and Kim [2007] for the extensive empirical literature on the connection between self-identity and envy.) We do not feel envy with regard to things that we do not personally care about or within domains that are not relevant to our sense of self. For instance, one can acknowledge the value of certain sports achievements without feeling envy toward someone performing better than oneself in it (Cialdini et al. 1976). Nor do we commonly feel jealousy in the context of relationships that may be valuable and relevant to our well-being but do not affect the sense of who we are, such as many working relationships.

According to Taylor, the relation between the agent and the good is perceived as unfavorable because:

> the good in question is thought of as either about to be lost or as not being in one's possession and probably unavailable. The person experiencing jealousy believes or imagines there to be a threat to a valued possession of hers or to something she expects or hopes to possess. The loss would, in her view, leave her worse off than she was before or hoped that she would be. Her first concern is, therefore, the protection of this possession or hoped-for possession. The person feeling envy, on the other hand, thinks of herself as being deprived in comparison with another who is, in the relevant respect, better off than she is. Unlike the jealous person, the envious one cannot be concerned with trying to maintain the *status quo*. On the contrary, she will want to eliminate the discrepancy between herself and the other, she will want in some way to better her position. The initial difference, then, lies in the agent's respective relation to the valued good. (Taylor 1988: 233, emphasis in the original)

In addition to the different appraisal elements already seen in Foster, Taylor articulates the crucial *motivational* difference between envy and jealousy, which stems from an opposite evaluation of the status quo, that is, the perception of an *unequal* relation to a valued good: in the case of envy, the agent perceives herself or himself as worse off and thus yearns for the change and is motivated to bring it about; in the case of jealousy, the agent perceives herself or himself as better off and thus loathes the change and is motivated to prevent it.

Thus, both emotions can be conceptualized as rivalrous emotions, where the person targeted by the emotion is seen as a rival or competitor. Often, this competition is seen as a zero-sum game, where only one person can win the good. This is particularly common in cases of romantic jealousy felt in the context of monogamous relationships and is also typical of envy felt in the context of sports competitions or other cases where the good is exclusive, such as a coveted job. Both emotions, then, essentially involve a comparison between the agent and the target.

To sum up, envy and jealousy are both unpleasant emotions targeted at another person who is conceived of as a rival or competitor and stands in a relation to a

valued good in a way that is different from the agent's: in the case of envy, the target is perceived as better off, possessing what the agent lacks; in the case of jealousy, the target is perceived as worse off, lacking what the agent possesses (at least in her perception). Consequently, the envier is motivated to overcome her comparative disadvantage, possibly by depriving the envied of the good, while the jealous one is motivated to protect her comparative advantage, possibly by fending off attacks from the rival and/or locking away the good.

Taylor, like virtually any other participant in this debate, highlights how the typical good at stake in jealousy is a personal relationship, often, but not necessarily, a romantic one. This is another important difference between envy and jealousy: while one may be envious of someone's partner, envy is by no means typically about another person's relationships. Rather, almost anything perceived as valuable can be an object of envy. Jealousy is, instead, almost always concerned with personal relationships. In my view, it is this very fact about jealousy that ultimately motivates the majority of competing views on the distinction between envy and jealousy, which I am going to discuss in the next section.

3. Alternative Accounts

The lack versus loss model enjoys a wide, interdisciplinary support, and yet it is not the only model available in the literature. In this section I explore some alternative accounts, and I show why the lack versus loss model is superior to them.

3.1 Dyad vs. Triad Model

I start with the most popular, but also less persuasive alternative account, which focuses on a formal feature: the *number of parties* involved in the two emotions.[3] The difference between envy and jealousy is supposed to be that jealousy is a three-party relation, while envy involves only two parties. In both cases, there is an agent, the subject of the emotion—that is one party. Then, in the case of jealousy, there are *two* other parties: the rival and the partner. Those who favor this view think of jealousy *exclusively* as a matter of triads of people involved in personal, generally romantic, relationships and not as an emotion that can be directed toward an inanimate object (as in 'He jealously guarded his possessions'). Envy involves only *one* other party, other than the subject: the coveted good.[4]

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3 Cf. for instance Farrell (1980), whose account also shares some elements of both the lack versus loss account and attention-based accounts. In fact, precisely because this model does not focus on appraisal, it is compatible with the lack vs. loss model, and many authors endorse both, e.g., Konstan 2006, Ben-Ze'ev 2000, and Parrott and Smith 1993. For reasons that will be clear soon, however, I find holding both views to be explanatorily redundant.

4 Justin D'Arms argues that envy and jealousy are both three-*place* relations, but only jealousy involves three *parties* (D'Arms 2009: 3). I find this distinction unpersuasive because one may well be envious of the romantic relationship X has with Y (so envy also can involve three parties), as observed in Purshouse (2004: 185), and vice versa one may be jealous of inanimate objects (therefore jealousy need not involve three parties).

The problem is that such an account fails to differentiate envy from mere coveting or the wish to have an object one lacks. Envy is experienced and conceptualized as *comparative*: the object is possessed by someone else, and it is that comparative disadvantage that is characteristic of the emotional experience of envy, not the mere lack of a desired object, as unpleasant or intense as that may be. *I* envy *you* because you are smarter, or you have more money than I do, or you have been invited to that cool party and I have not. It seems, then, that envy is *also* always a three-party relation.

There is, however, a difference between envy and jealousy regarding the nature of the parties involved due to the fact that the most intense jealousy we feel, the one that we talk the most about and that affects our lives the most, is relational jealousy. Thus, it is a contingent feature of jealousy that the third party involved, the object that we fear losing, is almost always a *person*, rather than an inanimate object, abstract, or material. As a consequence, while envy is targeted only at one person (the envied), jealousy is often targeted at two: the beloved and the person who is perceived as threatening the relationship with the beloved.

However, another way of expressing this difference is to say that the typical object of jealousy is a *relationship* with a person. The symmetry with envy is thus preserved: in both cases there is a subject who feels the emotion, a valued object that the subjects desires to gain or at least not to lose, and a *rival* who either threatens to take away the object or who already possesses it. The lack versus loss model is thus capable of explaining away the apparent asymmetry between envy and jealousy that is highlighted in the two-party/three-party account while preserving other more robust, empirically supported asymmetries.

3.2 Object-Based Model

Another alternative account to the lack versus loss model was offered by a group of psychologists based at Yale University in the 1980s who wrote a series of influential articles on envy and jealousy: Judith Rodin, Peter Salovey, and Susan Bers (cf. Bers and Rodin [1984], Salovey and Rodin [1984, 1986, 1988]). Their account is interesting because they downplay the difference between the two emotions: they claim that laypeople use the terms interchangeably (as opposed to using jealousy as a synonym for envy but not vice versa) and that there is no phenomenological difference. Thus, they adopt the terminology of 'social-comparison jealousy' (for envy) and 'social-relations jealousy' or 'romantic jealousy' (for jealousy proper).

The phenomenology claim has been disproved by the more recent research reviewed in section 1. As with regard to the claim that people use terms interchangeably, I could not find any actual evidence presented in their articles. Bers and Rodin (1984) just talk about 'examining the literature' (Bers and Rodin 1984: 766); Salovey and Rodin first cite Bers and Rodin (1984) as the only evidence (Salovey and Rodin 1984: 780) and then in their 1986 article claim that 'although these distinctions between jealousy and envy are frequently made in the psychological literature, we found that laypersons rarely made them when we conducted extensive pilot testing for two empirical studies of envy (Bers and Rodin

1984; Salovey and Rodin 1984). Rather, they used the words jealousy and envy interchangeably and appeared to be referring to the same feelings' (Salovey and Rodin 1986: 1100). But they do not provide the results of these pilot studies. For these reasons, I discuss their view only as an interesting conceptual proposal rather than as an empirical one.

Bers and Rodin (1984) do acknowledge some differences between the two emotions with regard to personality and situational antecedents (that is, circumstances that elicit the emotions) and cognitive and affective consequences (in other words, appraisal and affective response to that appraisal): envy arises when one's superiority or equality is perceived as challenged, and jealousy arises when one's exclusivity in a relationship is perceived as threatened.

Salovey and Rodin (1984, 1986, 1988) adopt the same approach of focusing on antecedents as Bers and Rodin and differentiate between envy and jealousy based on the *nature of the desired object* or goal: in jealousy, the desired object is a person, in envy it is not. In both cases, attainment of the desired object is threatened by another person, real or imaginary.

This account, like the lack versus loss model, enjoys simplicity and symmetry. However, it does not account for the many and central cases of jealousy in which the agent *has already attained* the desired object. It seems to me that Salovey and Rodin end up focusing on what I will describe, in section 4, as *hybrid* cases of envy and jealousy, where the two emotions are conjoined, and this focus may well explain Salovey and Rodin's skepticism regarding whether the two emotions are really distinct.

An account only briefly sketched by Justin D'Arms may be interpreted as another view that differentiates between envy and jealousy based on their different objects: 'The jealous person's real locus of concern is the beloved—the person whose affection he is losing or fears losing—not his rival. . . . The envious person's locus of concerns is the rival. . . . Roughly for the jealous person the rival is fungible and the beloved is not fungible. . . . Whereas in envy it is the other way around' (D'Arms 2009: 3–4; D'Arms refers here to Farrell [1980]; Purshouse [2004] correctly remarks that Farrell does not endorse the view, and it is not clear to me to what extent D'Arms himself thinks this view is correct).

This account is offered in the context of an encyclopedia entry and is thus very minimal. Furthermore, it brings together different elements of different models. I mention it nonetheless because it seems to suggest an intuitive way of spelling out the difference between the two emotions: the formal object of jealousy is a romantic relationship, whereas the formal object of envy is a competitive relationship. However, this model is also problematic because envy's locus of concern may well be the valued object (Taylor 1988, 2006; and Protasi 2016). Furthermore, we can be jealous in nonromantic and even noninterpersonal settings, even if that is rare. Finally, jealousy essentially involves a rivalrous and comparative attitude as well.

D'Arms's remark on fungibility is correct with regard to jealousy, but this fungibility can be easily accounted for by the lack versus loss model: because jealousy is a protective reaction to a threat against a valuable object, it will be triggered by any rival. However, the remark is not correct with regard to envy: envy can be very particular and can thus be triggered by a specific object that matters to

the agent, but the rival may be fungible. For instance, a beauty pageant contestant may envy the winner, regardless of who that is.

3.3 Jealousy as a Need for Attention Model

Philosophers Michael Wreen and Leila Tov-Ruach (aka Amélie Rorty) present the most compelling and attractive alternative to the lack versus loss model. Wreen outright rejects the idea that fear of loss is central in jealousy. He claims that: 'Most cases of jealousy, I would venture to say, have nothing to do with loss or believed loss, whether of love or of special attention' (Wreen 1989: 640). He argues that jealousy always involves a sentient being and is essentially concerned with desiring to be accorded 'attentive consideration'. He then suggests that envy is different insofar as it involves only two parties. Thus, he endorses the three-party relation model as well. He also thinks of jealousy as a species of envy.

As we have seen in section 1, however, psychologists interpret the available empirical evidence as showing that envy and jealousy are distinct emotions; that is, envy is not a species of jealousy. Furthermore, anecdotal and scientific evidence shows that fear of loss plays a crucial role in the experience and arousal of jealousy, contra Wreen's personal impression.

Leila Tov-Ruach presents a rich etiology of jealousy that is strongly influenced by a psychoanalytic perspective on infant development. I will set that etiology aside and focus on her general conception of jealousy and her observations on the differences with envy.

Her account positions itself somewhere in between the lack versus loss model and Wreen's view. She acknowledges that the jealous person is centrally preoccupied with some sort of deprivation or loss, and she also remarks that this loss need not be of love. One can feel jealousy when her favorite chess partner has found another favored chess partner, for instance. She correctly observes that we often erroneously infer love from jealousy: we are so used to thinking of jealousy exclusively in romantic terms that we take any kind of jealousy to be a symptom of love. In this respect, her account may be interpreted as a version of the lack versus loss view.

However, like Wreen, she thinks that an essential component in jealousy is the fear of losing a person's 'formative attentive regard' (Tov-Ruach 1980: 467) due to the intervention of a person (generally a romantic or sexual rival, but also, as in the case of the chess partner, any other sort of competitor) or even a thing (such as when one is jealous of one's partner's work). It may be worth noting that Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi (who endorse the lack versus loss view) also stress the importance of keeping in mind nonrelational cases of jealousy (cf. Miceli and Castelfranchi 2007: 471–72).

While I agree with Tov-Ruach and Wreen that in typical cases of romantic jealousy, which are our paradigmatic case studies, the need for special and exclusive attention plays a central role, there are two reasons for not considering this the *differentiating* element. First, that need is not exclusive to jealousy: there are other emotions and affective responses that are characterized by the concern of not losing another's attentive consideration. A narcissistic or very self-centered person, for instance, may desire to be at the center of attention without thereby feeling jealousy

(although it might be the case that narcissists are more disposed to feel jealousy than other people, but this is just my speculation).

Second, as Aaron Ben-Ze'ev has remarked, there are cases in which the subject is jealous of a rival notwithstanding the fact that the subject is now receiving *more*, not less, attentive consideration: consider the case of a cheating partner who becomes more loving and considerate toward the partner's needs and desires, either out of guilt or happiness (Ben-Ze'ev 1990: 494). This increased attentive consideration might not prevent the cheated partner from feeling jealousy. She might want to be the cause of that renewed happiness, for instance, and might not care about the additional attention because what she is afraid of is losing that special role in her partner's life: being the person who makes him or her happy.

The desire for attentive consideration, then, is neither necessary nor sufficient for jealousy to arise. People value different features in their relationships and value respect, trust, honor, or preserving their social reputation more than attention. *Loss* of attentive consideration may indeed trigger jealousy but so may the loss of any of the above-mentioned features.

Thus, the lack versus loss model is broad enough to account for a variety of cases of jealousy, among them jealousy of one's things, jealousy of a partner's work, jealousy of friends, and jealousy of sexual and romantic partners. At the same time, the model is also sufficiently narrow to explain why attentive consideration is so salient when we think about jealousy: in the specific cases in which the good to be guarded is a romantic or sexual relationship with a person, lack of attention is often a symptom that the relationship is at risk. Of course, this is a lamentable loss in itself to which a defensive response is often appropriate.

3.4 Desire for Exclusivity vs. Desire to Avoid Inferiority Model

A final account worth considering has been defended by Luke Purshouse (Rachel Fredericks [2012] defends a version of Purshouse's account). He focuses on the difference in characteristic evaluative content of envy and jealousy. He thinks that in order for a person to count as jealous, the following conditions have to be met:

a. He desires to possess a good, possibly to a certain extent, or in a certain way: for instance, exclusively or pre-eminently.
b. He regards the actual or potential possession of this good by another person, the rival, as inconsistent with the fulfillment of this desire.
c. He has in mind some (possibly imagined) set of circumstances in which this desire would have been satisfied. (Purshouse 2004: 195)

The first two conditions collectively express an understanding of jealousy as characterized by perceiving the rival 'as possessing, or perhaps as potentially possessing, a good at the expense of his possessing it himself' (Purshouse 2004: 191). Relatedly, Purshouse remarks on the ineluctable *particularity* of jealousy: while enviers may be satisfied by the acquisition of a good that is similar in kind to the specific one possessed by the envied, jealous subjects care about a specific good (Purshouse 2004: 197).

Thus, Purshouse sees jealousy necessarily as a zero-sum game. The relation between the rival having the good and the subject not having it can be either causal or logical (Purshouse 2004: 192): either the rival is the cause of the agent's deprivation, or the rival's ownership of the good logically implies that the subject cannot possess it as she wishes. Under this second category falls the case in which the subject *already* possesses the good. Therefore, what the lack versus loss model sees as the central, paradigmatic example of jealousy is only a subset of cases for Purshouse, which strikes me as an unpalatable consequence of the account. Many cases of jealousy are cases where the subject already possesses what she desires; the very popularity of the lack versus loss model is an indirect proof of the prevalence of these cases.

Furthermore, the elements of the model that I do find correctly individuated—the desire for exclusive possession of a good and the related fact that jealousy is ineluctably particular and cannot be satisfied by substitution—can be accounted for by the lack versus loss model: when we possess, or see ourselves as possessing, or hope we can soon possess a certain important good, *and* we feel threatened in our actual or possible possession, then we become protective about it. This is not the same as saying that when we have something, we desire to have it exclusively tout court, *in the absence of such a threat*. I may be perfectly happy that my close friend has many other friends, including other friends who are as close as or even closer to her than I am, until I notice that she starts confiding less in me and that she prefers to go out with this other person at the expense of the time she used to devote to me. I did not previously have a desire for exclusivity, and in some sense I still do not. But I fear I am losing something I previously had, and I become jealous of the person who is seemingly responsible for this change.

A final problem with Purshouse's account is that he programmatically eschews a discussion of the affective elements, the situational antecedents, and the behavioral consequences of jealousy. All of those support an emphasis on loss: people feel afraid of losing their beloved; they feel jealousy in situations that can be aptly described as threats to existing relationships and other 'possessions'; and they behave protectively toward what they have, rather than trying to obtain what they do not have.

The latter is the typical behavioral manifestations of envy. Purshouse describes envy as 'involving a negative attitude to a distribution on grounds that it comprises one's own inferiority to another' (Purshouse 2004: 195). This is a very thin definition of envy and fails to differentiate it from a general sense of inferiority. For all these reasons, I find Purshouse's account unsatisfying.

4. Complications: Ambiguous, Hybrid, and Borderline Cases

Like any theoretical model that attempts to simplify a complex and messy reality, the lack versus loss model is not going to capture every contrast between lived experiences of envy and jealousy perfectly. In this section, I consider situations with which the view seems to struggle.

First, we have seen that envy and jealousy often co-occur. In some contexts, they co-occur systemically, for example, in sibling rivalry. When a new child is born, the older sibling may fear that her special relationship with her parents will be affected. Even aside from special circumstances, children often vie for limited parental resources and find themselves behaving at the same time defensively and aggressively. If they perceive to have a special relation of some kind with a parent, they will be afraid to lose it. If they perceive the other siblings to be better off in some respect, they will want to outperform them. As we have seen, comparisons are widespread, often unconscious, and almost unavoidable in general, and siblings in particular are continuously, and sometimes unfairly or inappropriately, compared to each other along a variety of dimensions, not only by their parents, but also by relatives, family friends, teachers, and so forth. Therefore, both rivalrous emotions of envy and jealousy are likely to arise.

In similar circumstances, it may be hard, above all from a first-personal perspective, to distinguish between what is perceived as owned but in danger of being lost and what is perceived as lacking but potentially attainable. Young children, especially, may not have a sufficiently articulate conception of what is at stake, and their emotional experience may be less defined as a consequence: their beliefs will be primitive, their desires inchoate, their feelings mixed, intense, and confusing. The emotion felt toward one sibling may not be easily diagnosed as one of either envy or jealousy. This kind of *epistemic ambiguity*, however, is not unusual when it comes to emotions, and it is to be expected in the case of closely related, frequently co-occurring emotions such as envy and jealousy.

More interesting are what I call *hybrid* cases, where both a loss and a lack are at stake. Imagine the following situation:

> *Ugly Duckling never felt loved by her mother. Her sisters were always complimented, supported, looked after in material and spiritual ways, but since she was always the shiest and least 'shiny' among them, she never got her mother's affections. Ugly Duckling is intensely jealous of her sisters.*[5]

Notice how natural it is in this case to want to use 'jealous'. At the same time, the emotion seems to be a mixture of envy and jealousy according to the lack versus loss model. Ugly Duckling thinks her mother never loved her, and one cannot lose what one never had. So technically, according to our model, we would have to say that Ugly Duckling is envious. But that does not sound quite right. Wreen and Tov-Ruach would make this the prototypical case of jealousy: what Ugly Duckling desperately desires is her mother's attentive care.

I agree that this is what she desires. But notice that parents are *expected* to love their children. Maybe children do not have a right to be loved, strictly speaking (but see Liao [2015] for a defense of this thesis), but they certainly have a reasonable expectation to be loved and not just reasonable, but an emotionally warranted one.

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5 This is not an unusual pattern for children, and above all daughters, of narcissistic mothers; cf. McBride (2008). Thanks to Maria Miceli for stimulating my thoughts on this kind of case.

By 'emotionally warranted' I mean that emotionally healthy children are justified in expecting their parents to love them. So while Ugly Duckling has never had her mother's love, she perceives it as being in some important sense 'due' to her, and so do we. Jealousy is often associated, if not with entitlement proper, at least with an appearance of it: when we own something, we tend to think we have a right to it and a right to protect it from threats. We interpret Ugly Duckling's emotion as jealousy because in many other counterfactually near worlds Ugly Duckling *would* have had her mother's love, and she would have every right to be protective about it.

Thus, I can grant that such an example cannot count as a standard case of jealousy according to the lack versus loss model because it is *not* a standard situation, given that most parents love all of their children, even when they have preferences among them.

Another hybrid case is the following, drawn from a popular American TV series (*The Office*):

> *Jim is in love with his coworker Pam, but Pam is already engaged to Roy. Pam does not know what she feels. She thinks of Jim as a good friend, but she is not yet ready to admit feeling more than friendly love. Roy is intensely jealous of Jim, and also envies him for being of a superior social and intellectual standing.*

Roy's emotions toward Jim are pretty easy to decipher and understand: he becomes aware that he has a romantic rival. Pam is clearly attracted to Jim, and Jim is—this is obvious from the audience's perspective—a much more desirable partner for Pam. But what does Jim feel toward Roy?

Jim is *not* in a romantic relationship with Pam but wants to be in one. He lacks what Roy has, and so we would expect him to feel envy. But this does not sound right, as it did not sound right in Ugly Duckling's case. While Jim might feel a tinge of envy for the man who has what he lacks and while he might be wounded in his self-esteem because Pam does not seem to see him as a more desirable partner than Roy, it seems that Jim mostly feels jealousy.

Jerome Neu analyzes a similar case: 'How are we to describe the emotional state of the third party in situations where there are two lovers, one of whom is jealous over the other and fears the encroachments of the third party, while the third party has not made any advances but certainly desires to supplant the jealous lover?' (Neu 1980: 434). His verdict is that the third party feels 'admiring envy'. I find this response unconvincing in a case like Jim's because he has a friendly relationship with Pam. So maybe Neu and I agree: the less Jim already perceives himself as 'possessing the good', the more what he feels counts as envy rather than jealousy. (Neu too endorses the lack versus loss view.)

Again, the proponents of an attention-based view would think of this kind of case as central, and this may indeed be the strongest case for them. However, the lack versus loss view has again the means to account for this case. Jim is in love with Pam. While he does not have a socially sanctioned romantic relationship with

her as Roy does, Jim is Pam's close friend and confidant, and he is emotionally committed to her. For a long time (until he comes to believe—erroneously—that she will never leave Roy), he does not date anyone else and he devotes a great deal of care and attention to her. Thus, he *does* have an exclusive relationship with her that nobody else, not even Roy, has. On the one hand, he is rightly concerned that Pam's marriage to Roy will extinguish his own relationship with her; on the other hand, like Ugly Duckling, Jim is emotionally warranted in expecting Pam's reciprocation, and he may think of Roy, consciously or not, as an obstacle to that reciprocation.

Finally, Jim's hybrid emotion is different from a *borderline* case such as the following:

> *George realizes that his husband Altman is cheating on him with another man, Wataru. He first becomes jealous and tries to win his love back but comes to realize that the sense of betrayal has weakened their relationship, and he is falling out of love for Altman. However, when George thinks of his former rival Wataru, he feels envious: George perceives Wataru as a 2.0 version of himself—younger, fitter, and smarter.*

Hybrid cases are different from borderline cases. In borderline cases one is in a transitional phase from one emotion to the other. At some point in the transition, it is *metaphysically vague* what George is feeling, whether jealousy or envy. Figuring that out may be important if George is trying to understand whether he still feels attached to Altman and whether he should try to preserve their relationship.

Phenomenological considerations, while not decisive, given that the two emotions share some feelings (such as negative affect and hostility toward the rival), may nonetheless provide some clue: if George wishes he were more like Wataru, would like to improve himself, feels ashamed and a failure, and is overall more focused on his personal inadequacy than on losing Altman, then he is probably feeling more envy than jealousy. If George is pained by Altman's absence and feels lonely and abandoned, but at the same time feels distrust toward Altman, then George is probably feeling more jealousy than envy. (Notice that I take feelings to be clues that inform us about the implicit, underlying appraisal, in line with an overall cognitive approach: I don't think the feelings determine the distinction itself.)

The lack versus loss model nicely makes sense of this transition: George's emotions end up being different because his situation and focus change. He moves from being concerned with guarding his particular valued relationship to Altman (a good he has, but is afraid to lose) to being concerned with his inferiority to Wataru with regard to the general valuable good of being loved by *someone like* Altman (a good George currently lacks and would like to acquire again).

Ambiguous, hybrid, and borderline cases characterize our emotional experience in general and are not unique to envy and jealousy. They do, however, complicate our discussion and assessment of different conceptual tools and ways of explaining

the difference between these similar emotions. I hope to have shown in this concluding section that the lack versus loss model can handle them well.

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