

CONFER

# The psychotherapeutic challenge

of working with

# Envy

new theory  
and clinical work  
explored

Monday evening seminars  
13 October - 8 December  
2008

8.0pm - 9.30pm

London



# Introduction

While envy at a conscious level can lead to aspiration and achievement, it is widely agreed that unconscious envy is expressed in destructive impulses towards the other. Perhaps because of this intersubjective tension it can be one of the most intractable and elusive processes to work with psychotherapeutically and, if unidentified envy may impair therapeutic progress.

Freud offered us the concept of penis envy as part of his theory of gender-identity and ego construction; Melanie Klein, in her re-working of Freud's death instinct, proposed that envy is an innate defensive structure that protects the infant against psychic annihilation in the face of unbearable reality. These theories will be examined. We shall also be considering how envy is conceptualised by contemporary theorists of psychotherapy and how current applications of the concept are influencing clinical technique.

# Envy

Our speakers will also explore the extent to which the apparent exploitation of envy in western societies is intensifying, and if psychotherapeutic work with envy is thus an increasingly complex challenge. We will consider how to work effectively with the patient who relishes the suffering of others; the client whose glass is always half-empty; the person who evokes envy in others. We shall ask: How does the therapist manage her own envy in relation to the patient? What kind of person defuses the envy of others? Do some people need to be envied in order to feel self-worth? To what extent is envy intersubjective? Is envy the result of damaged attachment bonds? Is envy the antithesis to gratitude or, as proposed, perhaps hope, creativity or satisfaction?

Do join us for this fascinating clinical discussion.



# Programme

**Monday October 13 2008**

**Julia Segal**

## **Why did Klein's theory of envy spark such controversy?**

At this distance, it is hard to understand exactly what was so shocking when Melanie Klein introduced her concept of envy in July 1955. Discussion centred around the question of whether envy was 'innate', whether it was simply a reaction to bad experiences or whether it could arise even in good circumstances. However, the differences between Klein and her audience went deeper. Her ideas were a direct challenge to those who observed the same behaviour and thoughts but interpreted them differently. Some of these disagreements are still alive today. This paper explores penis envy, womb envy and Klein's ideas about a more general envy directed against all creativity, which can have far-reaching effects, not only in the consulting room but also in everyday life.

**Monday October 27 2008**

**Dr Joseph Schwartz**

## **Envy and gratitude reviewed in the light of attachment theory**

I will briefly review the historical relationship between John Bowlby and Melanie Klein, his supervisor, and how Klein's work with children led Bowlby to explore attachment and loss. I will present a relational/attachment way of re-framing Klein's innate theory. I will then present clinical material illustrating how envy appears in the consulting room with particular emphasis on two kinds of envy – British and American.

**Monday November 3 2008**

**Dr Maggie Turp**

## **Catch 22 revisited: envy as an impediment to therapeutic change**

There is a close relationship between envy, resentment and a sense of grievance. The state of mind engendered by this unholy trinity of emotions necessarily undermines the establishment of a good therapeutic alliance. In some instances, a therapeutic impasse may be brought about by the powerful operation of envy and/or defences against envy. This state of affairs will be illustrated through extracts from Maggie's clinical work with two patients, 'Ellen May' and 'Belinda'. Options available to the therapist in this situation and their potential benefits and limitations will be identified and discussed. Practitioners attending this session are invited to bring along illustrative material from their own clinical work.

**Monday November 10 2008**

**Jenny Riddell**

### **From envy to gratitude in couple psychotherapy**

This presentation will be an exploration on how envy presents in the couple and how this manifests in the therapy room in psychoanalytic psychotherapy with couples. Is it possible, and how would it be managed, for a couple to move from envious attack to guilt and, finally, reparation? Drawing on examples from literature and clinical vignettes, we will think about how envy attacks the health of an intimate relationship, how this can be worked with and reparation achieved.

**Monday November 17 2008**

**Sue Cowan Jenssen**

### **Envy and its cultural vicissitudes**

In psychoanalysis the concept of envy describes a specific defence within an object relational structure that denies the subjectivity, need and entitlement of the other and is the antithesis of gratitude and satisfaction. Yet how far is envy both a representation of a psychological structure which is pathological and a culturally generated phenomenon? Should we not take into account the cultural forces that amplify envy when considering the pathology of our 'envious' clients? With reference to social and political dynamics and case material, we will consider whether envy is as much a social disease as a psychopathology that requires psychotherapeutic treatment.

**Monday November 24 2008**

**Kate Barrows**

### **Envy through the life cycle**

From the infant who may turn away in envy from the breast, to the older person who cannot bear to witness the happiness of youth, envy is a problem throughout the life cycle. It is something we all have to deal with, but in some cases it can be crippling. I shall explore how it is that envy can get such a relentless grip that it strangles the capacity for appreciation and enjoyment or indeed for sanity itself. This in turn affects the individual's capacity to manage the vicissitudes of life. I describe how the place of envy from infancy and childhood to adulthood and later life can manifest itself in the transference in clinical work.

# Programme

**Monday December 1**

**Dr Estela Welldon**

## **Is perversion an envious symbolic attack against mother's body and its capacity for fecundity?**

In this presentation I shall provide clinical material supporting my thesis that underlying both male and female perversions is an unconscious, symbolic envious attack against mother's body and the procreative process. I shall use observations from my clinical work at the Portman Clinic to conceptualize and recognize the existence of female perversions that occur in relation to the function of motherhood (Welldon, 1988[i]). I shall also bring to our attention the recent work by a British feminist academic on matricide with a new approach to the Oresteia myth to facilitate and support my own theoretical stance in relation to gender, sexuality and perversion.

**December 8 2008**

**Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach**

## **Re-visiting envy: How we might understand envy between women and in the clinical context?**

Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach co-founded The Women's Therapy Centre in London and New York. They have written extensively about women's psychology and clinical issues working with women. Their 1988 book, *Bittersweet*, explored the themes of envy, competition and anger between women, proposing new ways to understand these painful emotional states. Twenty years on, they will discuss their theory on envy and how it plays out in women's lives and the clinical situation.

New theories  
and techniques  
explored

# Envy

# Speakers

## Kate Barrows

Kate Barrows is a Training Analyst with the British Psychoanalytical Society and works in private practice in Bristol. She is also a Tavistock trained Child Psychotherapist and currently works as a staff member of the Child and Family Service at the Bridge Foundation for Psychotherapy and the Arts in Bristol. She writes and lectures on a variety of psychoanalytic topics and has written several papers about the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis. Her publications include *Envy*, Icon Books (2001), and she has recently edited *Autism in Childhood and Autistic Features in Adults*, Karnac (2008).

## Sue Cowan Jensen

Susan Cowan-Jensen is a London-based psychotherapist and a founder member of the London Association of Primal Psychotherapists. She works part-time for the Trauma Unit of Watford General Hospital. She has over twenty years' experience of working with individuals and groups both here in the UK and in Scandinavia and elsewhere in mainland Europe. She has written articles for journals and books and was a regular contributor to the website [allaboutpsychotherapy.com](http://allaboutpsychotherapy.com). She currently writes for the website of *Psychologies* magazine. Her writing covers a wide range of issues, from how psychotherapy works to mortality and loss, and understanding the impact of our celebrity culture. She has a specialised training in working with post-traumatic stress.

## Luise Eichenbaum

Luise Eichenbaum, LCSW, is co-founder of The Women's Therapy Centre in London (1976) and The Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York City (1981) where she is on the faculty and Board of Directors. She has written and lectured widely on feminist relational psychotherapy and co-authored with Susie Orbach *Understanding Women, What Do Women Want* and *Bittersweet*. Luise lives in New York where she is in private practice.

## Dr Susie Orbach

Susie's latest book *Bodies* will be published in the New Year (2009). She has written widely on women's experience, the politics of the body, the therapy relationship and the intersection between private and public worlds. With Luise Eichenbaum, she co-founded The Women's Therapy Centre in London and The Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York. She is convenor of [www.any-body.org](http://www.any-body.org)

## Jenny Riddell

Jenny Riddell is an attachment-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist registered with the Centre for Attachment-based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (CAPP). She is course leader for the Relate post-graduate diploma and MA in couple therapy and supervises and teaches on several psychotherapy programmes. She also has a private practice in London.

## Dr Joseph Schwartz

Joseph Schwartz Ph.D., is a supervisor and training therapist at the Centre for Attachment-based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in London. His books include *Cassandra's Daughter: A History of Psychoanalysis in Europe and America* (Penguin, 1999).

## Julia Segal

Julia Segal has worked as a counsellor for people with neurological illnesses and disabilities and their families since 1985. Her interest in the work of Melanie Klein began in 1968 and she has written extensively on the application of Klein's ideas to everyday experience. Her first paper, *Mother, Sex and Envy in a Children's Story*, was published in the *International Review of Psychoanalysis* (1979). She is best known for her books: *Phantasy in Everyday Life* (Pelican 1985, Karnac 1995, Aronson 1996) and *Melanie Klein: Key Figures in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (Sage Publications 1992). Her more recent writings reflect her interest in the effect of illness on relationships.

## Dr Maggie Turp

Dr. Maggie Turp is a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist and Supervisor in private practice, a Chartered Psychologist and a member of the Tavistock Society of Psychotherapists. In addition to her clinical work, she is involved in the continuing professional development of counsellors and psychotherapists, offering workshops revolving around clinical themes such as self-harm, psychosomatic illness, trauma and depression. Maggie is a member of the Editorial Boards of the journals 'Psychodynamic Practice' and 'Infant Observation'. Her publications include journal papers and two books, *Psychosomatic Health: the body and the word* (2001 Palgrave) and *Hidden Self-Harm: narratives from psychotherapy* (2003 Jessica Kingsley). Correspondence is welcome and may be addressed to [maggierturp@googlemail.com](mailto:maggierturp@googlemail.com)

## Dr Estela Welldon

Dr Estela Welldon works in private practice as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. She is an Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy at the Tavistock Portman NHS Clinic, Founder and Honorary Elected President for Life of the International Association for Forensic Psychotherapy, and a Member of the British Association for Psychotherapy. She is on the teaching staff at the IGA, AGPA, IAGP and the BCP. She is the author of many publications, including her ground breaking book *Mother Madonna Whore: The idealization and Denigration of Motherhood* (The Other Press, 2001). She speaks internationally on forensic psychotherapy and group analysis.

## Further reading

- Kirsten Dahl, E. (1996). The concept of penis envy revisited: A child analyst listens to adult women. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 51, 303-325.
- Freud, Sigmund. (1926). Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety. *SE*, 20: 75-172.
- Freud, Sigmund. (1908c). On the sexual theories of children. *SE*, 9: 205-226.
- . (1913h). Observations and analyses drawn from analytical practice.
- . (1925j). Some psychological consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes. *SE*, 19: 241-258.
- . (1932a). The acquisition and control of fire. *SE*, 22: 183-193.
- . (1933a [1932]). New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis, *SE*, 22: 1-182.
- Eichenbaum, Luise and Orbach, Susie, *Bittersweet* (1988)
- Eschbach, Womb Envy in Psychosexual Development and in the Clinical Process: An Exploratory Discussion.
- Grossman, William I., Stewart, Walter A. (1976). Penis envy: From childhood wish to developmental metaphor. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 24, 193-212.
- Horney, Karen. (1967). *Feminine psychology*. New York: W.W. Norton. (Original work published 1922)
- Janowitz, Envy of Maternal Functions in Sacrifice Rituals.
- Jarass, Hiedrun and Wurmser, Leon "The Burned Hedgehog Skin": Father's Envy and Resentment Against Women Perpetuated in the Daughter's Superego.
- (2007) *Jealousy and Envy - New Views about Two Powerful Feelings*
- Jarass, Wurmser, "Evil Eye" and "Searing Look": Shame, Envy and Resentment in the Magic Gaze.
- Joffe, Walter. (1969). A critical review of the envy concept. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 50, 533-545.
- Kilborne, The Evil Eye, Envy, and Shame: On Emotions and Explanation.
- Klein, Melanie. (1932). *The psycho-analysis of children*. London: Hogarth.
- . (1957). *Envy and gratitude: A study of unconscious forces*. London: Hogarth.
- Morrison, Andrew and Lansky, Melvin, *Shame and Envy. Balsam, Envy and Admiration Among Women*.
- Rosenfeld, Herbert. (1971). A clinical approach to the psycho-analytic theory of the life and death instincts: An investigation into the aggressive aspects of narcissism. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 52, 169-178.
- Sandler, Foreword. Wurmser, Jarass, *Pathological Jealousy: The Perversion of Love*.
- Segal, Hanna. (1993). Review of A dictionary of Kleinian thought. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 74, 417-419.
- Shabad, *Of Woman Born: Womb Envy and the Male Project of Self-creation*.