
**Greed, Envy,
Spite, & Revenge**

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e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *Sleights of Mind: One and Multiples of One* by Harold N. Boris

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Greed, Envy, Spite, and Revenge

The original title of this essay was “The ‘Other’ Breast”; “Greed, etc.” comprised the subtitle. It was meant to signify that there is a fantasy that goes along with these emotions, producing, in concert with them, something like a state of mind. I should add, perhaps, that so far as I can tell, from the children and the grownups they become, babies are born imagists and analogizers, so that whether or not they have come in contact with an actual breast, or have instead lived in the world of rubber, plastic, and Similac, there is a category for “Breast” as a something there to suckle, which when it is good is very, very good and which when it is bad is horrid—a “no-thing.” This paper looks into how the baby tells the difference. “Tolerating Nothing”¹ goes on to consider the breast when it is or has become a no-thing. And “Identification with a vengeance” deals with the use of identifications (driven by envy) as a way around the dilemmas of choice. In that latter paper I recount what a certain Mr. R. had to say about his surprise that breasts, as those his mother had, actually gave milk; he had had a different idea entirely.

A critical factor is not just that—who knows?—the other breast is the chocolate one, but that any choice forces the relinquishment of another choice—and thus of one of the hopes, possibilities, and items on the now shorter list of choices. Thus any choice requires an act of mourning and grief, but is such a requirement required? “Do I ha-a-ve to choose?” “Do we [in the words of a Darrow drawing] have to do what we want to do again today?”

Of course life is lived and choice made within time, and in evaluating choosing it might help to know something about time: about the return, renewal, or death of opportunity and possibility. But when even soon takes a long time, and babies are tempted to ease their pain and anguish by drifting into obliviousness, they become hard put to learn enough about time to factor it in. Time begins to look remarkably like a persecuting object who, because not invited to the christening, has now come to stay for all time. (At carnival and at New Year’s Day the new baby gets even with the old man with the scythe for having hurried and frightened him so.) “About Time” picks up on the temporal aspect of these matters.

I can imagine an infant,” I sometimes feel it necessary to say, “held to two ample milky breasts—yet starving out of the pain of losing either, by choosing the one.”

That this remark does not go down well (at least at first) can easily be imagined. The individuals to whom I make it feel deprived, empty. The idea of abundance is decidedly my own. Indeed my remark seems to them only to validate their experience: Is a comment like that supposed to help?

And yet, I feel persuaded that it does—that a long time ago, as now in the transference, there was a greed so great as to fail securely to metamorphose into appetite. Had it done so, such satisfactions as are available to the appetites might have consoled even compensated for the loss of the “other” breast. But in failing to give over into appetite, the greed, in its very nature insatiable and unsatisfiable, left a sequence of consequences that the analysis

has somehow to put right.

In what follows I shall attempt to describe these consequences and the matter of helping put them right. But in doing so I shall be venturing onto the treacherous shoals of originology on which psychoanalysis so often founders.

In the consulting room a remark such as mine about the infant and the breasts can be taken either (or both) as metaphor or construction of historical experience. Its validity is moot; only its usefulness matters. If I say it, for example, to someone who is obsessing whether this or whether that is the case, I am doing so to reframe the disappointment the patient would feel were either the case and the fear he would feel if neither were the case—as if an infant held to two adequate breasts. Such an interpretation may or may not help the patient get closer to what he experiences. But the same remark offered to the reader as my imaginative construction of the experience of infants more generally, taken from the transference activities of a handful of patients, is plainly tautological. I say: I believe this once to have been the case for it is now again the case and I believe it now to be the case because it once was the case and never got done with. What is the benign circularity of the consulting room becomes the teleology of theory.

And yet such is precisely what I am setting forth to do. I shall be inventing an infant, much as I do in the consulting room. But there I can display what I mean while here I can only say it—a wide difference. Still, in its way, this very problem in methodology is an illustration of my thesis. The “other” breast is an other paper, and we, the reader and I, have, for the moment, only this one.

GREED AND APPETITE

Appetite, as I have already implied, is inherently satisfiable. It goes after what it wants and yet is receptive to what it gets. It makes do, not letting (in Freud’s phrase) better stand in the way of good.

Greed is, I think, prior to appetite and may or may not evolve into appetite. Greed in its nature, is inherently insatiable, and so cannot be satisfied. It wants everything; nothing less will do. In colloquial language, “greedy” as an adjective has a pejorative cast; it is often said angrily about someone who cannot be pleased. I don’t regard greed as bad, but as a condition anyone would gladly part with if they could withstand the pain.

The pain is that of loss, the loss of the “other” breast. The pain should not be underestimated, for as we shall

see greed invites a whole set of torments the painfulness of which provides some measure of the pain that would, so the infant imagines, come to it were it to relinquish the “other” breast.

What, then, does the “other” breast contain that is of such inestimable value? The simplest answer is: Everything the first breast does not. Phenomenologically speaking, I think that may be answer enough. All the same, I would like to put forward a further surmise.

In an earlier paper, to which this one is by way of being the second half, I dealt with the nature of hope (Boris 1976). There I noted that when Pandora (in the Hesiod myth) slips off the cover of the jar, “Forthwith there escaped a multitude of plagues for hapless man—such as gout and rheumatism and colic for his body and envy, spite, and revenge for his mind.” Only hope remained in this collection of “noxious articles.”

Hope, as I showed in that paper, involves at the core of it a disposition toward choosiness, which is the necessary counterpart to the availability of choices. I related this to selectivity, as that concept is used in evolutionary biology: Creatures, mating, choose and are chosen, not at random or by propinquity, but in such a way as selectively to perpetuate the “best” (fittest) among the gene pool down the generations.

In this process there is at work a preconception concerning what “better” consists in (the plumage of the tail, the size of the territory, the rank in the social hierarchy) that interlocks with the predilection to choose the “better.” The procreative drive, for example, is not triggered until preconception and predilection are satisfied. As I observed, “the inhibition of the procreative drive pending the approximation of the object to the ‘preconception’ paradoxically facilitates the release of the drive.” That is, the readier and more assured the capacity not to choose A, the easier and quicker the capacity to choose B. Matters remain, then, in a state of potential—awaiting the right conditions. That there are or will be the “right” conditions is the source of hope. That there aren’t nor will be is the source of hopelessness and despair. Yet, as Bion (1961, pp. 151-152) notes, “only by remaining a hope does hope persist.” Thus hope, like the greed of which it forms a part, is perforce oriented to the potential. While (as Francis Bacon noted) it makes a good breakfast, it makes a poor supper.

For the fussy (read, choosy) baby the devolution of all of the foregoing is this: It wants a breast to feed from, but it also needs the “right” breast. The first breast may not be the right breast, so it mustn’t accept that. But if the “other” breast is also not the “right” breast, it will have spent its matrimony. The way out of such a plight is to avoid potentiating choice, by accepting nothing, using up nothing, while awaiting everything.

The reader may object (and, in my opinion quite properly so) that I am imputing to the infant a sophistication it could not possibly have. In fact, I should like to regard the infant as decidedly unsophisticated—but, all the same, heir to programmatic imperatives, dark urges, it can neither fathom nor yet ignore, imperatives that push into its mind as teeth will its gums, creating a Kafkaesque nightmare of being controlled by unclear forces and unnamable agencies. That is to say, I think “instincts” are more forceful upon the infant than later when it can escape their insistent importunings, and that these include mandates to die, if necessary, so that the species can survive; to make the right choice, so that the species can flourish; to live life fully, ruthlessly, and devil take the hindmost, and to care for one’s own dear love—and more. I suppose these to be both inchoate and incoherent and, as such, persecutory in the extreme. I expect this experience to reoccur in the transference at the juncture between greed and appetite. I like to imagine that if I can identify the nameless, faceless players for the people in whom the reoccurrence is taking place they can replace choosiness with choice, where they couldn’t before without feeling hopeless villains, doomed always to be in the wrong.

I want now to distinguish between greed as potential and potentiated greed. The former is free of frustration. It contains the fantasy of all-is-one and at-one-ment. It is a dream beyond the dreams of avarice. It generates excitement and bliss. It is a state in which the infant (later child or adult) has temporarily undiscovered the other and hasn’t to contend with the possibility of a juxtaposition between appetite and breast. This state lasts as long as the infant wants nothing from the breast, whereupon it becomes potentiated and serenity is replaced by a frustration as large as all the world.

FRUSTRATION AND ANXIETY

Greed, I have been saying, is an unevolved state of mind in which one wishes and hopes to have everything all of the time. The fantasy that this might be possible produces a state of feeling involving high excitement and pure bliss.

However, the moment greed is potentiated, one comes hard upon the realization that choices are required. This realization stimulates either a refusal to endure the choice—the decay of appetite back into greed—or an experience of vast frustration. Or it stimulates the making of the choice, whereupon one feels at one and the same time a feeling of profound loss and the satisfactions of appetite.

Though I have so far been writing of this as a one-time phenomenon, in fact it happens again and again. Greed evolves into appetite; appetite decays into greed. Much of the determination of the choice is, I think, intrapsychic. That is, the one possibility and the other are imagined to contain what they do and convey what one preconceives them to convey. Greed, in other words, has no contact with ordinary actuality; the first breast is not, for example, the left breast of the mother, nor is the “other” breast her right breast. The process I have been describing goes on in infants whose experience is entirely of rubber, plastic, and Similac.

Appetite, in contrast, makes manifest the infant’s first encounter with actuality and, as such, makes actual experience for the first time a player in the process. The quality of the appetitive experience will now play a role in whether the feeling of loss is modulated by compensatory and consoling experience—or is not.

The paradox in all of this is that both outcomes are—as it were—equally problematic, given the nature of the conflict. Either way there is gain; either way loss. Since this is serial, even cyclic, anticipation and memory come to be established, and with them the experience of anxiety.

With anxiety, matters become more complex. Before we were dealing with premonitions of loss or gain, of pain or gratification. The loss of the “other” breast was a nameless foreboding, a feeling that one would be violating some genetic imperative the nature of which one couldn’t know. One was dealing with pre-conceptions that evoked choosiness and predilections to make the right choice—but what were these? I don’t want here to move from phenomenological description to metapsychology and risk confounding things, but I do think for what it’s worth, that what I have been calling genetic imperatives are the forerunners of the superego—its anlage, and that these imperatives with their preconceptions and predilections and premonitions are what will be filled out by parental and cultural strictures: Aha! so that is what I am supposed² to think, feel and do! The anxiety which comes into being is thus a “signal” anxiety, as Freud called it (1925). What it signals is not that loss or frustration is in store, but that one will be under terrible attack. The direction of the attack I have dealt with so far is from the nameless imperatives (later to be superego anxiety). Now I add the attack of anticipation and memory itself, of the discovery of the repetitive, serial, or cyclic nature of experience. (I will presently add to my list of anxieties the fear of “counterattacks” by the breast [or other object] to the “attacks” one launches out of envy.)

Anticipation and memory are ego functions and one (the infant or self) can experience (accept) the ego as syntonic or alien, as helpful friend or malefactor. It is important to recognize that so far as the self is concerned the

ego is an object much as an other thing or person is an object and can be loved and hated, nourished or attacked in much the same way. In psychosis, for example, the ego is under continual attack and its usual functions of thought, anticipation, memory, and the selective attention that make unconsciousness of perceptions, thoughts, or memories possible are eviscerated. So with the infant: memory and anticipation—learning—become messengers and “enjoy” the time-honored welcome given messengers.

With anxiety in the picture, greed potentiated leads not simply to premonition but to the mental pain anxiety imposes. I believe there to be a distinction here, between emotional pain—such as that of loss or despair or frustration, and mental pain—such as worry, terror, and dread. I point to this distinction because, human nature being what it is, whenever there are two of something each can be employed to defend against the other. And, indeed, one of the defensive functions of this anxiety is to get confused with painful affects so that one can think it is the anxiety that is the insuperable pain and not the feelings. The “signal” is enough to keep one from knowing what the signal is signaling. One knows only that ameliorative or evasive action is required. Since ameliorative action can only succeed (save by luck) if one knows what the signal is signaling, this pretty well works in favor of one “choosing” evasive action.

In the course of an analysis this series—premonition of x... anxiety... evasive action—functions as a powerful resistance to any effort to identify the preconceptions and premonitions themselves, indeed even that they exist. The analyst must use great restraint and wait for the anticipated event to evolve into the transference and become extant. For it is not only (now) in the realm of action—of trying or not trying the one breast or the “other” that one protects oneself from pain. It is now in the domain of knowledge: One uses anxiety as a signal that says: Now is the time for you not to know what you anticipate and what you remember.

I referred in passing to yet another source of anxiety—the fear of counterattack from objects attacked out of envy. The employment of anxiety as a signal not to know (not to proffer “diplomatic recognition” to the source of concern) is, as well as being self-protective, anxiety converted by envy to envy’s own uses. It is time, therefore, to bring envy into the story and with it spite and revenge.

ENVY, SPITE, AND REVENGE

As greed potentiates into want, the object gains in importance until it is experienced as dominating the

horizons of the mind. If one—the infant, say—could give up his greed, the immensity of the object—say, the breast—would be good. But if, as we are supposing, the infant cannot give up, and thereby, to take in, the immensity is not in the nature of good but of frustration and anxiety. This, in turn, occasions several sequels.

He feels a wish to possess the breast, to own the source of supply.

He feels a need to own the breast, for in its fascination for him he feels it is owning—controlling—him, as if he were possessed by it.

He despairs of his potency in these regards, envying it its power and dominion over him. This excites an urge to strip it of its powers and obtain these for himself.

He yearns for an alternative which will at once deprive the breast of its power to cast a spell over him and provide him a good breast of which he can make the bad breast envious.

He “rediscovers” the “other” breast in this process of trying to separate the feeling of being persecuted from the feeling of being empowered, and this puts him back, so to say, to square one but with a pernicious difference. Originally he needed the “other” breast to contain and to continue to contain everything the first breast didn’t. Now he further needs it to be a bulwark for him against the continuing bullying desirability of the first. He has robbed Peter (the first) to pay Paul (the “other”) but, perversely, now Paul is so endowed with everything of value that it can’t be used for fear of using it up.³

He is now stuck with an other breast that is a “better” breast but can be neither parted with nor used. This breast will seem to contain everything of value at the same time as it offers nothing. Such a breast can only be thought of as greedy; its intentions can only be regarded as motivated by envy. The infant can only, accordingly, feel under attack.

He will now feel not only frustrated, but (counter-) attacked by the greedy, envious, and sadistic breast. To his woes is added a malevolent breast that he can neither take nor leave alone. Somehow he needs to break that stalemated connection and appease the hatred that his greed, frustration, and envy have generated within him. To these “plagues of the mind,” as Hesiod called them, spite will offer some surcease. The idea of spite is encompassed in the familiar aphorism about cutting off one’s nose to spite one’s face. But, of course, the one who says it is the

person being spited by the other and usually says it spitefully. In fact, one cuts off one's mouth to spite the breast (as in anorexia⁴) or one's cock to spite the cunt, to use the vernacular of Laing's (as in such "disorders" as premature ejaculation, impotence, or homosexuality, or vice-versa in the female versions of these), or, indeed, one's life itself. People who cut themselves with razor blades, knives, or glass also nullify the impact of the other on the self.

For that is what spite is—the envious nullification of the other's impact, effect, and value. Having failed to gain possession or control of the breast, one can at least gain possession or control of its effects. Hence the signal anxiety which escalates to an anxiety attack, in the hysteric also manages to obfuscate the source of the danger—oblivion being the spiteful counterpart to obliteration. If the hysteric feels without knowing, the obsessive compulsive knows without feeling; and this too is envy's denouement in spite. "Perhaps," "I guess," "I don't know," "whatever," are all spiteful to the potency of the object, to the analyst or to both, though it will take some work to display this to the patient. It will take more work to display the greed underlying the disinclination to choose implicit in the attitude beyond these words, and underneath the greed the fear of the pain of the loss of either of the "breasts" these words straddle.

Spite can do its work of rendering the object impotent, in fantasy or fact, without requiring the sheer power required for revenge. From infancy on one can "cut" another merely by looking past him; even easier is cutting what Bion (1967) called the link in knowledge—of stimulus and response. People with thought disorders "disorder" the relationship of breast to self through such attacks on linking, disorderly conduct in the realm of thought!

Revenge involves a turning of the tables and for it to come into play one has to have what the other wants. When one can believe this to be the case one can feel that—at last!—one possesses and controls the breast and has made its power and potency one's own. This is far from the metamorphosis of greed; to the contrary, what is metamorphosed is anything that can stimulate greed and envy in the other.

While anything will do (certainly for purposes of fueling the fantasy), one sees in the transference that feces and defecation have a particular value. The mother wants these (as the analyst "wants" free association, prompt attendance at sessions, or fees). Moreover, she (and the analyst) wants not what is given her, but more, better—other. That period of life, that interpersonal situation, that Erikson (1950) characterized as "autonomy versus shame and doubt" turns out, on closer inspection, to be hegemony versus shame and doubt. The illusion is that the feces are tantamount to the maternal breast and that the toddler bestows these to its poor, starved, questing mother (or

analyst); certainly it does not owe them! The control of the feces and their release has been thought of as anal object relations (cf., Meltzer 1966). That is, once the feces have been metamorphosed into the maternal breast, she-it-they are now firmly under the omnipotent control of one's self. I believe this gives "anal-ity" its particular force in intrapsychic and interpersonal terms, particularly as the elements to anal-ity are carried forward into genital and genital-oedipal interactions and beliefs.

The possessiveness that is the hallmark of greed distinguishes the rivalry of the oedipal struggles. The individual does not struggle to obtain supplies from the other, but to possess the other altogether—even if once in one's possession the other is not used. That was the objective in the first struggle, the infant's with the mother over the ownership and control of the breast; and that is the triangular paradigm for future struggles. Envy masquerades as jealousy, as greed counterfeits love.

ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS

The task of the analysis, of course, is to make it possible, this time around, for the individual to develop appetite. We gain the courage for such an undertaking by believing what the analysand for a long time cannot: that what was unbearable in infancy will have become bearable in childhood and certainly in adulthood. As analysts we know this thanks to our own analyses, in which we learned to stand the idea that time passes. Our patients do not yet know this; indeed, the greedier they are the less they know it. They will feel we are malevolently leading them closer and closer to catastrophe, while we are sitting by in serene self-containment. This will excite not only paranoid anxieties, but a ferocious and almost implacable wish to retaliate, if not through revenge, then through spite. This greedy urge will gorge on every and any indication of countertransference, even identification. Even efforts to make an "alliance" will be violently or systematically misconstrued as a reversal between the haves and the have-nots and used mercilessly against the analysis. The absence of mercy is not simply an expression of hatred. It is a consequence of the failure to develop appetite. When the pain of loss is tolerated it can be projected in the spirit of identification, which itself can evolve into a recognition of the possibility of pain in others and so into tender concern, guilt, and remorse. Although most analysands know that their analysts have been through analysis themselves, the greedy ones will feel no fellow feeling for the suffering involved.

Greed, it will be recalled, has so feared the loss of potential (the "other" breast) to kinesis (choosing and mourning) that the sense of catastrophe the analysand fears is not the repeat of a trauma (such as deprivation or loss

of the significant other). It is of an unhappened catastrophe, one which the greed has kept from happening. The analysis has therefore to be less about what did happen than about what did not.

Although the terms “construction” and “reconstruction” are used interchangeably, I have used the former to refer to events that did not form part of the actual social (however interpreted or reinterpreted) history of the person, reserving reconstruction for the process of helping the patient regain knowledge of not only what he experienced but the events conjoining his experiences. My remark concerning starvation and ample breasts is an example of such a construction: It refers to an unhappened event—to a psychic event—a state of mind—rather than to an interpersonal one—a state of affairs. The patient will come—it may be—to recognize what I mean when that same state of mind comes into being in conjunction with my “breasts”-penis, therapeutic potency and the like.

The analysand has come to analysis just as the infant has eaten, grown up, gone to school and learned, worked and taken money, and perhaps married and given life to children. The fact will turn out to be, however, that none of this will have much (sometimes any) reality for him or her—especially compared with that encompassed in the “other” breast. Accordingly, a perfectly adequate analysis can be done—only to meet the same fate!

As I shall attempt shortly to illustrate, I think the analysis has to be conducted in what it much amuses me to call a hermeneutically sealed room. When appetite has evolved, the analysand will have also developed an interest in food for thought. One’s interpretations are used to that end. But when greed is ascendant, each interpretation is likely to be used to proliferate possibility and evade choice. Permit me now to reach into my consulting room for three examples. They are misleading because they involve so much talk, but as they are only illustrations perhaps they will serve.

It is coming to summer break time and the 8-year-old says that he, in his persona as a Norwegian water rat, and the gerbil, who he also is sometimes, and Herman, the hooded cobra, who he never “is,” but whose exploits he enacts with great admiration, are going on an around-the-world cruise in the QE-2 with their band, which consists of Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Michael Jackson, etc.

He says: “You and Baby Jane can come too.” Baby Jane is nominally my daughter, but generally a very greedy, envious and jealous creature: a split-off from, variously, himself and myself.

I say: “Thank you. But Baby Jane is wondering why she is invited. Is she to be part of everything or is she to be the greedy creature that wants everything?”

He says: “Tell her she can bring her automatic breast.”

I say: “She is much relieved to hear that, but she wonders: Is it her job to be the greedy creature so you can be

the generous ones who have every thing good inside of you?"

He says: "You don't have to worry, Baby Jane, you'll have a good time."

I say: "You don't like me to talk about you, yourself, wanting every thing."

He says: "I don't want *everything*."

I say: "Everything would include me inside of it, and you don't want to know about wanting me. The QE-2 is like a dream of being inside everything good and then having Cindy and Rick and Michael as your insides."

He says: "It'll only be a month. C'mon! Let's play!"

I say: "I wonder if I am supposed to feel envious?"

He says: "That's crap again. *C'mon!*"

I say: "I think you are wanting to collect very good experiences because you are worried that when we are apart you will collect hurts and injustices and nurse on all your grievances."

He says: "I'll nurse on you if you don't shut up." He is very excited here and it is plain that he is contemplating biting me: Would it be an appetitive love bite out of the same wish to have me shut up and play or a bite of envy at my self-containment?

A second illustration:

The room is chilly, but there is an afghan. The young woman says, "It's chilly in here. Or is it?"

I say: "You are afraid of certainty?"

She says: "I could take the afghan, I suppose. But perhaps that would be acting out. Perhaps I should free-associate to being cold—if it is cold—or to the afghan. Or something. I don't know." [*Silence*]

I say: "I don't know if there is a choice. I don't want to know. I don't want to choose. I hate certainty. Maybe associations are better than warmth or warmth better than associations: I want the better one. No, no I want both."

Some months ago the silence would have continued and I would have needed to talk of the "greedy guzzling of good breast of grievance." Now the silence continues, during which I imagine this young woman is waiting for me to say some such thing again—or for me to say something more, better, different. But I do not. If I did, I imagine she would immediately become further occupied with what I want—for her to associate? to take the afghan? to ask me a question? I feel it would be a disservice to mislead her into still believing she has a breast I greedily want.

It doesn't matter what she does now—associate, take the cover, continue the silence, go back to the question of whether it is cold. Any of these would be a choice and a loss of the alternatives. Instead, she “changes the subject”—which is not a choice, but an evasion.

Toward the end of the session she will plaintively ask, “What has been going on in this session, d'you know?”

“Going on is right,” I will say after a while. But she will prefer not to understand me and leave as she arrived, feeling angry and deprived. But of course she has a high tolerance for such deprivation; otherwise she would have foregone the satisfaction of the urge enviously to ruin the session (breast; penis) for me. Later, with luck, she will become at least interested in the repetitive quality of such sessions as these (a foray into appetite) even at the cost of the pleasure of nullifying the possibility of work, “changing the subject.” Such “small-scale” events, when gradual enough and managed without confrontations, constitute the process by which the smelting of the metamorphosis happens.

I add another vignette:

A young man, also in his thirties, has been speaking of how wretched he feels having succumbed (as it feels) to an invitation to dinner and thereby lost the opportunity to work during that interval. As I well know, he works at least eighteen hours of every twenty-four, as it is.

As he talks I begin to get the idea that he is getting the idea that he is telling me this for a reason: that the communication exists within the transference, quite probably that I am the dinner. He begins to falter, calling what he has been saying “drivel.”

I say: “You hope?”

He says: “What do you mean?”

I say: “That it's only ‘drivel!’”

He says: “I don't understand.”

I: [Silence]

He says: “I felt you were thinking ‘Well, if he feels he ought to work, why does he go out, or if he goes out, why does he go on and on about how he should have been working?’”

I say: “So what's the answer?”

He says: "I can't *stand* it!" He smashes the Kleenex box with his fist.

I say: "I am not supposed to return the knowledge to you?" Then: "Why is the Kleenex there?"

He says: "I'll be damned if I'll cry."

I say: "I don't know. It's possible. I suppose the question is, by whom?"

He says: "By myself, I guess."

I say: [*Silence*]—(giving that drive the respect it deserves.)

He says: "You are thinking that I say 'I guess' and 'by myself' because I don't want to give the devil his due."

I say: "You must feel tormented by my always thinking this or that about you. On the other hand, you are careful not to think it of yourself. Bad as the 'about,' it is better than 'of.' Will this become, I wonder, another thinking I will be doing about you?"

He says: "I *want* you to think about me."

I say: "So you don't have to cry?"

He says: "So I don't have to cry?"

I say: "With two sets of thoughts, yours and mine, what's to cry about?" He says: "Hmm" in a way that gives me to understand he has taken my point in a way that is allowed to coincide with knowledge he has of himself, like a stereopticon coming into focus.

Such a conjunction—synthesis, integration of truths-about into the-truth-of, as gleaned from investigation, not assertion, represents a movement from proliferation to choice: from greed to appetite. I think it is approached—as in the first illustration—or does not take place—as in the second—or does take place—in the third—in a series of little events, of small encounters. When the anxieties have been identified—differentiating those arising from the genetic imperatives, later elaborated into the superego, from those arising from the threat of the force of the conjunction between desire and object, which might lead to appetite, and those from the anxieties generated from a fear of counterattack—the groundwork is laid for construction. I do not much illustrate constructions as such here because the entire communication is, essentially, a construction. In any case, the analysis ultimately makes the better constructions; one's own are but the scaffolding and the armature.

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Notes

[1](#) See Boris, *Envy* (1994). Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

[2](#) For a consideration of the force of supposed-to's in group situations, see Boris and colleagues (1975). The "Group" has special resonance to species-oriented fantasy.

[3](#) These are the circumstances of which Melanie Klein wrote in her "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms" (1946) and her book *Envy and Gratitude* (1957), and of course her other works.

[4](#) For an elaboration of this observation, see Boris 1984a and 1984b.