

## ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ НАУКИ

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### THE UNIVERSALITY OF ENVY AS ITS ATTRIBUTIVE PROPERTY<sup>1</sup>

**Purpose:** to justify universality as an attribute of envy based on the analysis of theoretical and empirical studies of the envy phenomenon.

**Results:** the envy universality is substantiated scientifically as its attribute based on the analysis of theoretical and empirical studies of the envy phenomenon. A brief review of the interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the universality phenomenon is carried out. The revealed patterns can be applied to further systematic theoretical study of envy and the development of diagnostic tools for its empirical studies.

**Conclusion:** taking into account the external and internal determinants of envy and relying on the system-relational approach to the study of envy by T.V. Beskova, we note that the socio-psychological nature of envy is that anyone can experience envy, including a successful one (since the assessment of success is subjective). Based on the analysis and generalization of the researchers' views, we can conclude that the idea of universality and the envy inevitability is dominant and defines methodological approaches to theoretical and empirical research of envy as a complex structured phenomenon. It suggests the possibility of considering envy as a basic anthropological category in interpersonal relationships. However, the universality of envy does not exclude individual differences in the intensity and the level of envy manifestation stability, as well as in the subject field of envy.

**Keywords:** envy, universality of envy, attribute.

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### ВСЕОБЩНОСТЬ ЗАВИСТИ КАК ЕЕ АТТРИБУТИВНОЕ СВОЙСТВО

**Цель:** обосновать всеобщность как атрибутивное свойство зависти на основе анализа теоретических и эмпирических исследований феномена зависти.

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<sup>1</sup>Статья публикуется в авторской редакции.

**Методы исследования:** анализ теоретических и эмпирических исследований зависти, сравнительно-сопоставительный метод, метод обобщения и систематизации.

**Результаты:** научно обоснована всеобщность зависти как ее атрибутивное свойство на основе анализа теоретических и эмпирических исследований феномена зависти. Проведен краткий обзор подходов к изучению всеобщности феномена с точки зрения междисциплинарности. Выявленные закономерности могут применяться в дальнейшем системном теоретическом изучении зависти и разработке диагностического инструментария для ее эмпирического изучения.

**Заключение:** принимая во внимание внешние и внутренние детерминанты зависти и опираясь на системно-реляционный подход к изучению зависти Т.В. Бесковой, отметим, что социально-психологическая природа зависти такова, что испытывать зависть может любой человек, в том числе успешный (так как оценка успеха субъективна). На основе анализа и обобщения взглядов исследователей можно сделать вывод о том, что идея о всеобщности, универсальности и неустрашимости зависти, предполагающая возможность рассматривать зависть как базовую антропологическую категорию в межличностных отношениях, является доминирующей и определяет методологические подходы к теоретическому и эмпирическому исследованию зависти как сложно структурированного феномена. Однако всеобщность и универсальность зависти не исключает индивидуальных различий в степени интенсивности и в уровне устойчивости проявления зависти, а также в предметном поле зависти.

### What this paper adds

The universality of envy was first studied as its attribute through theoretical and empirical studies of the phenomenon of envy.

### Научная новизна статьи

Впервые изучена всеобщность зависти как ее атрибутивное свойство на основе анализа теоретических и эмпирических исследований феномена зависти.

**Introduction.** *The growth of scientific interest to the problem of envy is facilitated by such characteristics of modern social relations as increased competition and rivalry, a fundamental overhaul of the value system, characterized by the priority of material values and an orientation towards consumerism, and increasing socio-economic differentiation. Scientific comprehension of the phenomenon in terms of theological, socio-philosophical, ethical and psychological approaches is based on the recognition of the sociopsychological origin of envy, its regulatory function (envy is a powerful regulator of relationships), ambivalence (discussions about the constructiveness/destructiveness of envy), secrecy (due to social disapproval, sinfulness). Aspects of envy have been addressed in psychoanalysis (Z. Freud, M. Klein), analytical psychology (K. Jung), individual psychology (A. Adler), the concept of humanistic psychoanalysis (E. Fromm), sociocultural theory (K. Horney), and dissipative personality theory (G. Alport), Existential psychology (V. Frankl), humanistic psychology (A. Maslow). The*

*understanding of envy is reflected in the works of V.N. Myasishcheva, V.L. Levy, K.K. Platonov, A.G. Asmolova, V.A. Yadova. Empirical studies of envy have been carried out in relation to the psychological characteristics of its subject: features of the value-semantic sphere, personality accentuation, communicative qualities, self-esteem, locus control type, adaptive potential, features of emotional response, coping strategies (T.V. Beskova, N. N. Gorshenina, E.P. Ilyin, T.K. Kasumov, K. Muzdybaev, P. D. Nikitenko, Yu.M. Orlov, A.V. Pilishina, E.E. Sokolova and others).*

*However, despite some research intensification on this phenomenon in modern psychology, envy belongs to those socio-psychological categories, the scientific understanding of which is inferior to the diversity of worldly ideas about it. At present, there is a definite deficit of empirical and theoretical knowledge about envy and the available information is often fragmented and contradictory, making it difficult to construct an integral system theory of envy.*

*Main Part*

*Among the controversial aspects of the envy theory is whether envy is a general and universal phenomenon, or are there people who do not envy? To answer this question it is necessary to take into account that the study of the envy in psychology is fundamentally different from the study of envy in other sciences: the psychological study of envy complicates its latency, secrecy, the tendency of the subject of envy to deny its presence.*

*In this regard, it is necessary to abandon the assessment of envy from the point of view of moral imperatives and to study objectively the determinants, forms of expression, types, properties of envy as a natural and inalienable phenomenon in the system of personal relations. This fact is stated by O.R. Bondarenko and U. Lukan: "... the psychology of envy should abandon its scourging and integrate it into the general psychological theory" [4, p. 266]. T.V. Beskova notes in this context that the psychological perspective of the analysis of envy provides, first of all, the neutral, non-judgmental position of the researcher to this phenomenon [2].*

*The history of envy is inseparable from the history of humanity. Biblical stories tell that the Serpent envied Adam and Eve, inclined them to sin, and thus put an end to their bliss. The first murder on Earth occurred because of Cain's envy of Abel because God graciously accepted the sacrifice offered by Abel and rejected Cain's sacrifice. But the most tragic example of envy is the envy of the Pharisees and scribes to Jesus Christ, which led to his death because Christ is much more successful than they [6].*

*In understanding the universality of envy, ancient thinkers pointed to its natural character, since the roots of envious relationships are always linked to social inequality and the need for human beings to make social comparisons..*

*It should be noted that the development and socialization of human beings from a very early age inevitably lead to the formation of patterns of envious behaviour. Examples of envy presented in folk and author's fairy tales (the older brothers envy the more successful younger, the stepmother envies the beauty and youth of the stepdaughter, etc.) accompanying the formation of the child and the models of his social relations. It contributes to the firm assimilation of the mechanisms of envy. The techniques and the methods of educational*

*practice in a family and an educational institution, based on the presentation of behaviour models of other more successful children for imitation or on the comparison of children with each other, firmly reinforce the mechanisms that have been learned.*

*One of the convinced supporters of the idea of the envy universality is G. Shek, who, considering envy as a motive of human behavior, calls it "the basic anthropological category" [15, p. 201]. In his opinion, envy is "universal ... and to determine its presence, often "unmasking "is required, designed to expose skilfully disguised envy [15, p. 201]. Indeed, the secrecy, disguise of envy, due to its total condemnation, sometimes gives rise to the illusion of its absence [11]. Empirical studies have repeatedly documented a high percentage of respondents who deny that they are jealous and claim that everyone else has it. In addition, direct and indirect research of envy always yields different results.*

*I.N. Mishuchkova explains the sources of the secrecy of envy by the religious tradition which refers to envy as the worst sins, and by the negative consequences that this feeling can cause: "... envy is a feeling that every person experienced at least once. Nevertheless, people are ashamed to admit that they are envious: envy is perceived in the public consciousness as a vice" [12].*

*The analysis of the scientists positions makes it possible to assert that the vast majority of specialists are inclined to state categorically that there is no person who has not experienced envy. So, Helvetius argued that "only he can consider himself free from envy, who has never studied himself" [6, p. 7]. This aspect of the problem analysis reveals a link to self-knowledge. Indeed, to recognize envy and differentiate it from jealousy, hostility, rivalry, admiration, one must have a certain level of reflection. Besides, envy contributes to the division of priorities and life values in to important and secondary ones. Envy never arises for those objects that are not important, that is, having studied the objects of envy, you can better understand the system of your attitudes and goals.*

*Asking the question: "Is the subject condemned to envy as soon as he is in a situation of inequality and begins to compare and evaluate the advantages of the other?" [9, p.*

98], V.A. Labunskaya responds to it from the standpoint of social psychology. The researcher assumes that not by itself comparison becomes a cause of envy, but some social attitudes: the desire to "equalize", the preservation of the existing value scale, as well as the frustration of the need for confirmation [9]. Agreeing with this postulate, we note that the most significant is the unmet need for confirmation of self-worth. A person confident in his uniqueness, relevance, performance, is not inclined to focus on the superiority of the other, as he sees the resources of his growth and development.

Analyzing the external and internal determinants of the universality of envy, G. Sheck notes that envy as a negative emotion is an unavoidable (and even necessary) element of human relations [15]. Analyzing the socio-psychological function of envy, the author notes "I believe, nevertheless, that I can prove ... that envy is much more universal than it has been recognized so far, and, moreover, exclusively envy makes any kind of social interaction possible" [15, p. 26].

Moreover, G. Sheck argues that a person could not exist in a society without envy: "a utopia of a society free from envy, in which there will be no reason for envy, is unlikely to be replaced by a completely utopian plan to eradicate envy from human nature with the help of education system" [15, p. 26]. The researcher notes that a society in which there is never any reasons for envy would not be feasible even as a theoretical experiment: "We can never say that in such a culture and such a social situation, none of the participants feels envy "[15, p. 51-52].

K.L. Erofeeva joins the supporters of the envy universality, enriching these views with arguments: "there is no man completely free from envy" because "you cannot always be completely satisfied with your place in the world of people, it is impossible not to compare your achievements with the achievements of others" [5, p. 330]. Therefore, according to the author's view, the more important question is the degree of envy and how this feeling manifests itself, what actions direct the subject to [5].

The views of A. Adler are particularly valuable and significant in the framework of the analysis. He called envy as one of the basic attitudes of friendly relations, noted that "the nature of each of us is not alien to a certain

feeling of envy, if not being too intense, does not harm. However, it is necessary to realize how useful for our life the feeling of envy, which can be easily allowed at work, striving for success, in collisions with difficult situations" [1, p. 41]. While continuing to reflect on the mechanism of envy, which involves the constant comparison of one's successes with others, the author notes that "very few people do not feel envy at least occasionally. None of us is completely deprived of it" [1, p. 41]. One can see that Adler's position reflects not only his degree of confidence in the envy universality but also the recognition of the stimulating constructive function of envy.

The inevitability and envy universality is noted by T.V. Beskova: "envy is an irreplaceable element of social life and one of the strongest regulators of interpersonal relations" [3, p. 127]. In addition, T.V. Beskova states that attributive properties of envy indicate confidence in the universality and envy universality. Among the attributes that are important in determining the position in this context are "traditional - the inherent nature of all societies, regardless of their stage of development; sociality is the intrinsic personality in connection with its inclusion in society, in the system of groups"[3, p. 187]. It allows us to conclude that the very fact that individuals are socialized and integrated into social relations creates conditions for the envy of each individual.

N.N. Isachenko supports the opinion about the universality of envy: "There is no doubt that humanity is subject to envy to a some extent. Envy is inherent in a person regardless of gender, temperament, character, all people are subject to it, regardless of class, status, privileges, age "[7, p. 78]. A similar point of view is expressed by V.V. Murugova: "We also hold the view that envy is indestructible. Of course, the growth of pathological components of envy in society is dangerous, but, even with the disappearance of many social vices in society, envy will remain "[14, p. 152]. This opinion of a modern specialist is in line with the thought expressed by Moliere in the Age of Enlightenment "Envious people die, but envy never" [6, p. 7].

With a thoughtful and prepared reading the envy properties are revealed in the poem "Envy" by E. Yevtushenko (1955). They are revealed



with sufficient content and depth from a psychological point of view. The author, with his sincerity, writes a universal work that every person can read on his behalf. The poem is based on contrasting characters and destinies. The author is not jealous of success or even talent, but of any striking manifestations of the other's uniqueness. Yevtushenko rightly points out that in the real or imaginary world there is always another one who can be better, more successful, more talented, more efficient, and the very recognition of the existence of a more successful Other gives rise to a wide range of feelings.

The author observes with great precision another essential property of envy – disguise, the desire to hide it:

“... I will hide my envy.

I will smile.

I'll pretend I'm a simpleton ... ”

It should be noted that while there is consensus among researchers that envy universality is its essential characteristic, there are also timid attempts to define the conditions under which envy may not occur. Thus, K. Muzdybaev claims that envy is generated by the lack of internal worldview and psychological balance, harmony, therefore, it rarely arises in an independent, self-sufficient, unbiased person, carried away by his own, and not other's affairs.

**Conclusion.** Thus, taking into account the external and internal determinants of envy and relying on the system-relational approach to the study of envy by T.V. Beskova, we note that the socio-psychological nature of envy is such that any person can feel envy, including a successful one (since the assessment of success is subjective). Based on the analysis and generalization of the researchers views, we can conclude that the idea of the generality, universality and inevitability of envy, which implies the possibility of considering envy as a basic anthropological category in interpersonal relations, is dominant and defines the methodological approaches to the theoretical and empirical study of envy as a complexly structured phenomenon. However, the generality and universality of envy do not exclude individual differences in the intensity and in the level of stability of the envy manifestation, as well as in the subject field of envy.

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