

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to Zoey Lavalley, Rick Furtak, Alix Beeston, Tris Hedges, and Joel Krueger for entertaining my fledgling thoughts on self-envy and for your extremely helpful (and affirming) insights. Thank you, also, to Barrett Emerick for the kind and careful edits and, last but not least, to Sara for writing such a thought-provoking book.

NOTES

1. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 6.
2. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 21.
3. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 21.
4. Salice and Sanchez, "Envy and Us."
5. For accounts of how emotional experience reveals value, see, e.g., Furtak, *Knowing Emotions*; Mitchell, *Emotion as Feeling Towards Value*.
6. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 22.
7. E.g., D'Arms and Kerr, "Envy in the Philosophical Tradition"; Salice and Sanchez, "Envy and Us."
8. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 13.
9. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 130. For an excellent analysis of Incels, rage, and loneliness, see Tietjen and Tirkkonen, "The Rage of Lonely Men."
10. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 111.
11. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 27.
12. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 20.
13. Von Maur, "Taking Situatedness Seriously."
14. Widdows, *Perfect Me*.
15. Wilkinson, "Loneliness Is a Feminist Issue."
16. Lorde, "The Uses of Anger."
17. López-Corvo, "Self-Envy and Intrapsychic Interpretation."
18. Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You', 125.
19. I suspect that ageing is a common cause of self-envy, where we do not simply envy "young people" or "younger bodies," but our own younger bodies, as we used to be. Societal disdain of older women likely works as a driver of this kind of self-envy.
20. For a discussion of other-directed existential envy, see Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You'."
21. For discussions of transformative experience, see Paul, *Transformative Experience*; Callard et al., "Transformative Activities."
22. Trigg, "From Anxiety to Nostalgia."
23. Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You'."
24. Thank you to Rick Furtak for talking through this example with me.
25. Krueger and Osler, "Agency, Environmental Scaffolding, and the Development of Eating Disorders."
26. Mehmel, "Grief, Disorientation, and Futurity"; Millar and Lopez-Cantero, "Grief, Continuing Bonds, and Unreciprocated Love"; Ratcliffe and Richardson, "Grief Over Non-Death Losses."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Callard, A. "Transformative Activities." In *Becoming Someone New: Essays on Transformative Experience, Change, and Choice*, edited by E. Lambert and J. Schwenkler, 147–61. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

D'Arms, J., and A. D. Kerr. "Envy in the Philosophical Tradition." In *Envy: Theory and Research*, edited by R. H. Smith, 39–59. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Ferran, Í. V. "Narrative Fiction as Philosophical Exploration: A Case Study on Self-Envy and Akrasia." In *Literature as Thought Experiment?* edited by Falk Bornmüller, Johannes Franzen, and Mathis Lessau, 123–37. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2019.

Ferran, Í. V. "'I Could Have Been You': Existential Envy and the Self." In *The Moral Psychology of Envy*, edited by Sara Protasi, 77–92. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2022.

Furtak, R. A. *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Krueger, J., L. Osler. "Agency, Environmental Scaffolding, and the Development of Eating Disorders." In *Time and Body: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Approaches*, edited by C. Tewes and G. Stanghellini, 256–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

López-Corvo, R. E. "Self-Envy and Intrapsychic Interpretation." *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 68, no. (1999): 209–19.

Lorde, A. "The Uses of Anger." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 1/2 (1997): 278–85.

Mehmel, C. "Grief, Disorientation, and Futurity." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* (2021): 1–20.

Millar, B., and P. Lopez-Cantero. "Grief, Continuing Bonds, and Unreciprocated Love." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 60, no 3 (2022): 413–36.

Mitchell, J. *Emotion as Feeling Towards Value: A Theory of Emotional Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Paul, L. A. *Transformative Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Protasi, S. "Envy and Resentment in the Time of Coronavirus." *Journal of Hate Studies* 17, no. 1 (2021): 4–13.

Ratcliffe, M. J., and L. F. Richardson. "Grief Over Non-Death Losses: A Phenomenological Perspective." *Passion: Journal of the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions* 1, no. 1 (2023).

Salice, A., and A. Montes Sánchez. "Envy and Us." *European Journal of Philosophy* 27, no 1 (2019): 227–42.

Tietjen, R. R., and S. K. Tirkkonen. "The Rage of Lonely Men: Loneliness and Misogyny in the Online Movement of 'Involuntary Celibates' (Incels)." *Topoi* (2023): 1–13.

Trigg, D. "From Anxiety to Nostalgia: A Heideggerian Analysis." In *Existential Medicine: Essays on Health and Illness*, edited by K. Aho, 43–57. London: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2018.

Von Maur, I. "Taking Situatedness Seriously. Embedding Affective Intentionality in Forms of Living." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 599939.

Widdows, H. *Perfect Me: Beauty as an Ethical Ideal*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Wilkinson, E. "Loneliness Is a Feminist Issue." *Feminist Theory* 23, no. 1 (2022): 23–38.

Emulative Trait Envy Is Not a Virtue

Alessandra Tanesini

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

Sara Protasi's *The Philosophy of Envy* (2021) is an excellent example of the kind of clarity that empirically informed philosophy can bring to complex issues. In this book, Protasi presents a sophisticated account of envy as an episodic emotion and as a character trait. She explains how envy differs from other emotions such as jealousy and admiration with which it can be confused. She develops and motivates a principled taxonomy that individuates four types of envy, each of which is associated with different behavioral tendencies. One of Protasi's main goals is to offer a defense of envy as an episodic emotion, which in some instances can be morally permissible and prudentially valuable, and which, when it is emulative, could on occasion be the manifestation of a virtuous character trait.

In this short article, I first briefly sketch out Protasi's account of envy as an episodic emotion (section 1). Subsequently, I explain her account of emulative envy as an emotion and as a trait. I also present her reasons for thinking that this trait can be virtuous because it can be constitutive of a good or flourishing life (section 2). Finally, I raise concerns about Protasi's virtuous trait emulative envy (section 3). I argue that Protasi underplays the normative differences between emulative envy and admiration. However, when these are clearly brought into view, we have strong reasons to conclude that while a disposition to admire the admirable can be constitutive of flourishing, a tendency to emulative envy the enviable cannot be a virtue. The argument rests on the assumption that only motivations that are themselves intrinsically good can be constitutive of flourishing and therefore virtuous.

1. ENVY

Envy, like anger or shame, is an episodic emotion. As such it is a response to a triggering situation which lasts for a certain amount of time after which it wanes, perhaps to be rekindled when one reencounters some triggering circumstances. Hence, a person might envy another's wealth in response to seeing an article in a magazine detailing the lavish lifestyle of the rich. Envy has been the subject of bad press in philosophical circles and beyond, since it is usually taken to be a response that is morally unacceptable and often prudentially inadvisable.¹ Edifying literature is replete with envious characters that meet a bad end.² In her book Protasi seeks to reevaluate envy to show that it is sometimes useful, and that it can be morally neutral. Further, she claims that a disposition to experience episodic envy can, for some forms of envy, be constitutive of human flourishing.³

Protasi defines episodic envy as "an aversive emotional response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other with regard to a domain of self-importance, which motivates to overcome that inferiority or disadvantage."⁴ So defined envy is a psychological state or episode that has an unpleasant felt character (which is why it is aversive). It is a response to a triggering situation that elicits a judgment in which the subject compares herself unfavorably to another agent(s) with regard to some quality or property that matters to the subject's self-conception. Finally, it consists of a behavioral tendency to respond to this social comparison judgment by attempting to address the disparity. Hence, for Protasi, envy is a syndrome comprised of affect, judgments, and dispositions to behave.⁵

Episodic envy involves evaluations of its triggering situations. When a person envies another for some good or quality that the other person has, and the subject does not have (at least not to the same extent), the subject assesses the other person (the target of the envy) as possessing something (the good envied). These assessments can be accurate or be at variance with reality. They are accurate only if the envied good would actually be good for the subject, the target has that good, and the subject lacks it.⁶ When these evaluations are accurate, and the size of the envious response is proportionate to the significance of the issue, episodic envy is said to be fitting.⁷ Otherwise, it is not fitting.⁸

I grant to Protasi that episodic envy can be fitting. That is, it can be a kind of accurate evaluation. Some writers on envy, however, think that even fitting envy should be avoided. There are prudential reasons not to express or act on one's envy, and being seen to be envious is usually disadvantageous since envy is frowned upon.⁹ Further, it is often thought that even merely feeling fitting envy is always morally impermissible because of its motivation to close one's disadvantage compared to some other person by whatever means necessary.¹⁰

2. EMULATIVE ENVY AND THE GOOD LIFE

One of Protasi's original contributions to research on emotions lies in her distinctive taxonomy of varieties of envy. The development of this classification enables Protasi to articulate nuanced assessments of the moral and prudential reasons for and against feeling, expressing, or acting on different forms of envy.

Formally speaking, Protasi thinks of episodic envy as a three-place relation between a subject (the envious person), a target (the envied person), and a good (what the target is envied for). She identifies two independent variables on the basis of which to individuate varieties of episodic envy. The first concerns whether the focus of the emotional response is on the target or whether it is on the good.¹¹ The second is about whether or not the envied good is perceived as obtainable.¹² These two variables generate four kinds of envy: inert envy, spiteful envy, emulative envy, and aggressive envy.¹³

Protasi characterises episodic emulative envy as "unpleasant reaction to the perceived superior standing of a similar other in a domain of self-relevance. It feels less painful than any other kind of envy because it involves the hope to improve one's situation and the confidence that one may be able to do so. The envier looks at the target like a model, someone to emulate rather than defeat or bring down. Consequently, emulative envy is completely void of malice or ill will."¹⁴

Emulative envy, like other forms of envy, is thus an aversive emotion in response to a comparison with a target who is perceived to have a good that matters to the subject's self-conception but which the subject judges herself to be lacking by comparison. In emulative envy, the focus of the subject's attention is more on the good than on the target, while the good itself is experienced as obtainable. Further, emulative envy is also characterized by a tendency to emulate the target. That is, the subject of emulative envy acts to close the disadvantage by attempting to pull themselves up, rather than trying to push the target down. For this reason, for Protasi, emulative envy is devoid of malice or ill will toward the target.

One might object to Protasi that emulative envy is not envy. It is instead admiration. In response, Protasi offers a careful and empirically informed discussion of the important differences between emulative envy and admiration.¹⁵ First, envy is reserved for targets that are perceived by the subjects to be not too dissimilar from them. When the target is perceived to be vastly superior, only admiration—but not envy—is possible. Second, the focus of admiration is

wholly placed on the target as an admired model. Instead, the focus of envy is always comparative and thus is partly directed to the self who is experienced as inferior to the target. Third, admiration is an affiliative emotion. Emulative envy is competitive even though it is not adversarial (since one holds no ill will against the target). That is, the admirer has wholly positive feelings for the target of their admiration. The envious instead cares that they are (by their own lights) inferior to the target, and thus their attitudes to the target are more ambivalent, since they think of themselves as being in a competition with them.

In my view this characterization of the differences between envy and admiration misses an important normative distinction between these two emotional syndromes. Admiration is reserved for good-making properties or goods that are creditable to the target because they are achievements. Any good or good-making property, irrespective of how it is obtained, can be the focus of a subject's envy. I defend the importance of this normative distinction in section 3 and deploy it to argue that trait emulative envy is not a virtue.

Protasi argues that, because of the absence of any ill motivation toward the target, emulative envy as an episodic emotional response that spurs one to improve out of a competitive spirit, can be prudentially beneficial, and is morally permissible. For example, intense rivalry might help some athletes to achieve their best in sporting competitions. Thus, episodic emulative envy can be prudentially valuable as a motivation that promotes sporting success. Further, sporting rivalries, provided that they are conducted with a spirit of fair play, would seem morally permissible.

Protasi builds on these considerations to defend the even more controversial claim that emulative envy as a character trait can be constitutive of flourishing and can therefore be a virtue. This is the claim that I seek to rebut in section 3.

In order to assess Protasi's view, it is useful to make a distinction between episodic envy as a momentary process triggered by a situation and envy as a "stable emotional trait."¹⁶ Trait emulative envy would then be a stable disposition to respond to situations of perceived disadvantage over obtainable goods in domains of self-importance by experiencing emulative envy. This disposition is, very roughly speaking, the character trait of being a fair competitor. It is a tendency (1) to care that one is at a disadvantage compared to others with regard to some goods that one cares about; (2) to feel optimism that these goods can be obtained; (3) to address the disadvantage through self-improvement.

Protasi is extremely careful to enumerate necessary conditions that must be satisfied if competitiveness is to be a virtuous character trait. First, the good about which one is competitive must be something that is genuinely valuable. Second, one's perception that the good is attainable must be accurate. Third, one must act appropriately on one's emulative envy.¹⁷ Given these demanding conditions virtuous trait emulative envy is hard to achieve, but it is not impossible. Protasi argues that a competitive spirit in life can help one achieve many goods that contribute

to flourishing. But further, in her view, this character trait is not merely instrumental in achieving some goods that make a life good, it is also in itself constitutive of some forms of flourishing.

It seems true that competitiveness can be a spur to the kind of achievement that can be constitutive of a good life. We can imagine a person who loves sport or dance, and whose ability to pursue full time what they love depends on being among the best in their field. Being a top athlete or a top ballerina can be, for some, part of what makes them flourish in life. These are cases where caring that one is better than others, and thus experiencing pangs of envy when one is not, may supply the kinds of incentives that are instrumental to obtaining goods that make a life a flourishing one. Provided that such individual holds no ill will against their competitors, and acts fairly, it would seem that their envy can be fitting, prudentially valuable, and instrumentally good since it is a means to leading a good life. In this regard, I believe, we can agree with Protasi.

What is a matter of dispute is whether the character trait of being a fair competitor (understood as trait emulative envy) can itself be constitutive, at least for some, of a good life. Protasi takes herself to have two arguments for this further claim. The first is that for some kinds of good envy as a trait is the only mechanism in humans that can motivate someone to achieve them. Envy would thus be a necessary means to a good life for some, and in this regard be perhaps thought to be constitutive of it.¹⁸ The second consists in offering descriptions of lives that were made good (or better) by being dominated by intense rivalries.¹⁹ Protasi's example are the two female protagonists of Elena Ferrante's quartet of books.²⁰

In what follows I want to argue instead that emulative envy as a character trait cannot be constitutive of flourishing, even though it can be in some cases instrumental to it.

3. TRAIT EMULATIVE ENVY IS NOT A VIRTUE

Protasi's first argument for the intrinsic value of trait emulative envy is that it is the only humanly available means to some forms of self-improvement.²¹ Setting aside the issue as to whether its alleged unavoidability could make competitiveness intrinsically valuable, I submit that Protasi's claim is not correct. Admiration is a possible alternative motivational force to emulative envy in the cases that matter for leading a good life.

As I suggested above, Protasi ignores a key difference between what is admirable and what is enviable. Any good-making feature or good can be enviable. However, only achievements are admirable. Imagine a subject who compares herself to a target who is in very good health. Good health is an intrinsically good feature for a person. Arguably, it is constitutive of flourishing. Suppose that the subject thinks that the target's good health is due to genetic good luck. In this case, the subject might envy the target's health, but it would not make sense for her to admire the target for their health. However, if the subject thinks that the target's health is due to the target's efforts to exercise and eat well, it is possible for the subject either to admire or to envy the target for their health.

More generally, admiration is reserved for those among the goods possessed by the target that are perceived as achievements. An achievement is a good feature that a person possesses due to their competence and to their efforts.²² Achievements can be lesser or greater in proportion to the amount of effort or level of competence that they require. The more difficult it is to obtain a good in this manner, the greater the achievement.

These considerations highlight two further significant differences between admiration and emulative envy. First, a subject who admires a target and seeks to emulate them is someone who aims to obtain a given good (health, knowledge, first place in the race) but only in a manner that is creditable to them because it is obtained thanks to one's efforts and abilities. By contrast, the person who envies a target and seeks to emulate them might be content with obtaining the good by morally permissible means even though the eventual success cannot count as an achievement of theirs.

To see the point, consider two subjects Nadia and Mchiwa. Mchiwa admires a scholar for their knowledge. Nadia, instead, envies that same scholar for their knowledge. Moved by her admiration, Mchiwa seek to gain knowledge though studying in order to improve her competence. If Mchiwa were offered a pill that would secure knowledge without much effort, she would refuse it, because gaining knowledge in this manner is not an achievement. What Mchiwa admires, and what she seeks to emulate, is the achievement itself and not merely the achieved goods. Nadia, instead, seeks to gain knowledge and become the equal of the scholar in that regard. She holds no ill will to the target or any other subjects. She also does not wish to obtain any unfair advantage over others. Supposing that her gaining knowledge by taking the pill does not result in cheating another person out of a job, there is no reason for Nadia not to take the knowledge pill. Quite the opposite, her perception of the scholar's knowledge as an enviable feature motivates her to obtain it by any morally permissible means which in our imaginary case involve taking the pill.

Second, Protasi seems to think that admiration is reserved for targets that are vastly different from the subject.²³ If that is her view, it is mistaken. It is possible to admire someone while thinking of oneself as their equal. For instance, a scientist can admire another's achievements while thinking of herself as his equal. Hence, there needs to be no perceived inferiority in admiration. One might seek to emulate a model one admires, and regards as one's equal, by working hard in order to not rest on one's laurels or stop trying to achieve.

These considerations suggest that whenever the envied good is an achievement, admiration is a viable motivational mechanism alternative to envy. It is also one that is preferable to envy when trying to achieve a good life since, as Protasi also notes, it focuses attention on ideals, on long-term gains, while stimulating openness in cognitive processing.²⁴ Admiration is not suitable when focusing on goods that are not achievements, but often such goods are not obtainable, at least by morally permissible means, and thus are not the proper focus of permissible emulative

envy either. There are exceptions, however. A person might envy another's lottery win. Their envy might motivate them optimistically to purchase lottery tickets every week. I submit that while it is possible that they might one day win, and that winning might be good for them, this kind of strife for what is enviable without being admirable is generally not conducive to leading a good life.

I hasten to add these considerations should not be read to suggest that emulative envy cannot be a motivation that facilitates the acquisition of goods that are constitutive of a good life. A person's envy of another's health might motivate this subject to exercise, become healthy, and lead a better life. Instead, they are intended to cast doubt on the necessity of envy as the motivator of aspiration.

Given that envy is not, *pace* Protasi, necessary for life-enhancing self-improvement, Protasi's case for thinking of trait emulative envy as a virtue rests on her case studies of characters whose lives are good but dominated by intense rivalries.²⁵ It is hard to assess these cases. I limit myself to noticing that our human emotional lives are often complex. It is possible for one's admiration of another to be tinged with envy, or vice versa. Protasi's examples exemplify this complexity. I submit, but I do not have an argument for this, that these lives go well, to the extent they do, because of the relations of mutual love and admiration that sustain them. They are also marked by envy which, being aversive, might detract from the quality of these lives.

Be that as it may, there is a positive argument why trait emulative envy cannot be constitutive of flourishing. The argument rests on the plausible premise that only motivations (understood as dispositions to be moved by certain kinds of motive) that are intrinsically good can be constitutive of flourishing. Irrespective of the fittingness of the episodic emulative envy which manifests this character trait, the disposition to be motivated by emulative envy is not itself an intrinsically good motivation. Intrinsically good, or virtuous, motivations require that one seeks things which are themselves good in the right way and for the right reasons. Even when focused on genuine goods, some of which are, like health, intrinsically good, even fitting emulative envy might move one to seek to get the good in ways that, albeit morally permissible, are not overall good. For instance, envy might motivate a person to obtain goods in the wrong manner because it encourages the seeking of shortcuts to short-term success to the detriment of long-term achievement.²⁶

In conclusion, Protasi's detailed account of the nature, variety, and value of envy is an admirable achievement. In this short article, I have taken issue with her characterization of the differences between envy and admiration and for underplaying the normative aspect of the distinction. Deploying a more normatively robust account of admiration, I have also argued that trait emulative envy, while potentially instrumentally valuable for obtaining things that make lives good, cannot in itself be, even partly, constitutive of flourishing because it is not an intrinsically good motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the audience at the SWIP (Italia) “Libri di Donne” event dedicated to Protasi’s book for their feedback on my presentation and Barrett Emerick for his valuable comments on this paper.

NOTES

1. Taylor, *Deadly Vices*.
2. Aesop, *Aesop’s Fables*.
3. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86. In this she goes beyond D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value,” who claim that envy can be a positive motivation to achieving goods which are part of what makes life good.
4. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 3.
5. The view of emotions as syndromes has been developed by D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value.”
6. Here, for Protasi, lies the difference between jealousy and envy. The first focuses on goods one has lost to the other person, or goods one could have been expected to have but for the other person’s activities. Envy instead is concerned with goods that one lacks (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 12–17).
7. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 31. See also D’Arms and Jacobson, “The Moralistic Fallacy”; D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value.”
8. Protasi tends to restrict her discussion to fitting envy (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 31). I follow her in making this simplifying assumption.
9. Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality*.
10. Cf., D’Arms and Kerr, “Envy in the Philosophical Tradition.”
11. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 38–41.
12. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 41–44.
13. In inert envy, whose characteristic behavioral disposition is sulking, the focus is on the good which is perceived as unobtainable (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 55–61). In spiteful envy, which promotes a tendency to spoil the good, the focus is on the target’s possession of a good that is perceived as unobtainable by the subject (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 63–65). In aggressive envy, which leads to stealing, the good is perceived as obtainable and the focus is on the target (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 61–63). I explain emulative envy in the main text.
14. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 45.
15. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 48–50.
16. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86.
17. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86–88.
18. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 90.
19. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, Ch. 4.
20. Ferrante, *L’amica geniale*; Ferrante, *Storia del nuovo cognome*; Ferrante, *Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta*; Ferrante, *Storia della bambina perduta*.
21. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 90.
22. Bradford, “Achievement, Wellbeing, and Value.”
23. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49.
24. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49–50.
25. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, Ch. 4.
26. This is not to say that it must. It is possible for envy to give rise to achievement. When it does, envy is instrumentally good.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aesop. *Aesop’s Fables*, edited by L. Gibbs. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Bradford, G. “Achievement, Wellbeing, and Value.” *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 12 (2016): 795–803. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12388>.

D’Arms, J., and D. Jacobson. “The Moralistic Fallacy: On the ‘Appropriateness’ of Emotions.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, no. 1 (2000): 65–90.

———. “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value.” In *Oxford Studies in Metaethics: volume 1*, edited by R. Shafer-Landau, 99–125. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

D’Arms, J., and A. D. Kerr. “Envy in the Philosophical Tradition.” In *Envy: Theory and Research*, edited by R. Smith, 39–59. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Elster, J. *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Ferrante, E. *L’amica geniale: infanzia, adolescenza*. Roma: Edizioni E/o, 2011.

Ferrante, E. *Storia del nuovo cognome: giovinezza*. Roma: Edizioni e/o, 2012.

Ferrante, E. *Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta: tempo di mezzo*. Roma: Edizioni e/o, 2013.

Ferrante, E. *Storia della bambina perduta*. Roma: Edizioni e/o, 2014.

Protasi, S. *The Philosophy of Envy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Taylor, G. *Deadly Vices*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.

Responding to My Very Friendly Critics

Sara Protasi

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

I am truly thankful for these contributions by Rosalind Chaplin, Lucy Osler, and Alessandra Tanesini. Not only do they interpret my views charitably and generously, but they also exemplify different and equally valuable ways of responding to an author. Chaplin aims to provide a friendly expansion, Osler offers a novel application, and Tanesini presents a challenge to my views; all of these are compliments that I receive with gratitude. In the limited space at my disposal, I respond to their critiques, but I hope this is a beginning of a more protracted conversation not only among ourselves but within the larger philosophical community.

1. ON ENVY AND COMPETITION

Rosalind Chaplin’s insightful response focuses on a crucial aspect of envy: its competitive nature and how different competitive contexts affects envy’s varieties. She argues that even emulative envy can be adversarial, while remaining nonhostile and nonvicious. In some contexts, such as zero-sum competitive sporting events, envying someone in an emulative way may involve not only the desire to level up with the envied, but also the desire to *outperform* the envied.

To bolster this view, Chaplin draws from anecdotal evidence and intuitions on friendly rivalries and, in particular, a promising case study: the longstanding friendship between long-distance runners Haile Gebrselassie and Paul Tergat. Gebrselassie defeated Tergat in every race in which they competed for five consecutive years. It’s reasonable to suppose that Tergat felt envy. Suppose, furthermore, that his envy was emulative—wouldn’t it be natural for him to *also* feel the desire to finally *defeat* Gebrselassie? Yet, that seems compatible with what we know of their relationship: that they were genuine friends and pushed each other to improve, without ill will.