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**Autistic With Power : Circles of
Speech and Silence In The
Intertextualized Wolrds of
Strindberg's the Stronger and
Pushkin's Mozartand Salieri**

By

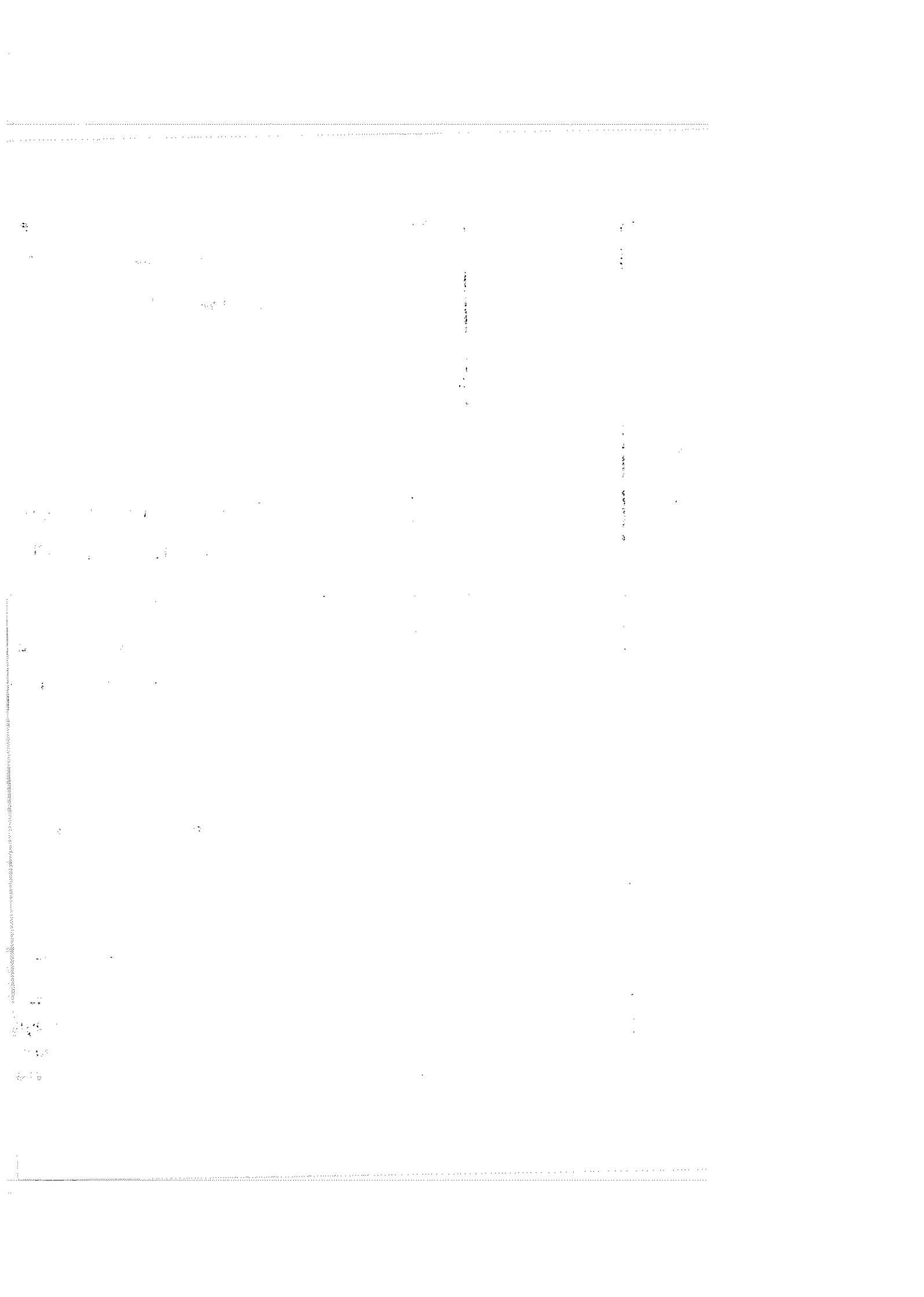
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AUTISTIC WITH POWER:
CIRCLES OF SPEECH AND SILENCE
IN
THE INTERTEXTUALIZED WORLDS OF STRINDBERG'S
THE STRONGER AND PUSHKIN'S *MOZART AND SALIERI*

Lobna Abd El-Ghani Ismail

The lure of Inter-textualization

The present paper is inspired by one of the most acclaimed experimental production that swayed the audience of Al'Hanager Art Centre, Cairo in September, 2001 (Selaiha 2001, 2006). The Egyptian production was titled *Too Late*. As the cover of the leaflet indicated, *Too Late* was an adaptation of August Strindberg's spellbinding, psychological monodrama, *The Stronger* (1889). However, the inside of the leaflet announced that Alexander Pushkin's little tragedy, *Mozart and Salieri* (1826) was to join in too. Why did the Russian ghost of Salieri cross the temporal distances that separate his early conception in the first half of the nineteenth century from his sisterly apparitions in the most famous of Strindberg's "quart d'heurs" (Barry vii-ix) to join the adapted lives of the two Egyptian female figures of *Too Late*?, one wondered as the worlds of the three plays intersected in the dramaturgical horizon of the stage. What makes *The Stronger* and *Mozart and Salieri* such an intriguing choice for an inter-textual play? What is the human magnet that draws these two desperate worlds to each other? The answers to these questions are the flesh and bone of the present paper.

Two Texts: A Preview

Hailed by Egil Tornqvist as "a masterpiece of brevity", *The Stronger*, is a "volatile" being of "rapid and constantly changing moods", with "an almost total lack of sustained moments" (1970). An experiment in performance art, the play is conducted in one act and one set. It unravels itself in one hour, around one event, one motivation, one driving theme, and one human soul bared to the bones in the midst of a very simple décor that works by suggestion rather than by statement. A gem of a play, this masterful study of human psychology depicts two actresses, an embattled yet silent Miss Y and a fiendishly outspoken Mrs. X, one unmarried and the other married, meeting by chance at a cafe in a Christmas Eve afternoon. As Mrs. X does all the talking the audience becomes ensnared in an arching revelatory experience of a power struggle beleaguered with memory-loaded and envy-steeped confrontations about the women's past-intertwined lives: friendship, careers and Mrs. X's husband, the absent yet absolutely and overwhelmingly present in this battle of the mind and heart over a man, which is stronger, the one holding the flute or the other sitting mute?

Mozart and Salieri, celebrated by Svetlana Evdokimova in her insightful *Alexander Pushkin's Little Tragedies: Poetics of Brevity* as another marvel of

compression, is written 40 years after the death of the great Mozart, and one year after that of Salieri. It brings into the profundity of its blank-verse the still fresh rumours of Salieri's confession of having poisoned Mozart. The best known of Pushkin's "Little Tragedies", the two scenes of the play are dominated by two substantial soliloquies focusing on Salieri at a crucial moment when he has to make a moral choice, a choice that will result in the destruction of his friend and rival, Mozart. The soliloquies are intersected with short dialogues between Salieri and Mozart. Spanning the tense minutes of the last hour in the life of the to-be-poisoned musician, Salieri's dramatic outbursts in the play are devoted to the exploration of his musical career, the nature of his art and Mozart's genius, his fatal relationship with Mozart, and his poisonous landscape of artistic jealousy and envy. When the curtains come down, the figure of Salieri stands alone, a damned figure consumed with the villainy of his murder of the once musical giant, Mozart.

Watching the attracted ends of *The Stronger* and *Mozart and Salieri* ingeniously magnetized in the Egyptian production, one cannot but grasp the fact that both texts investigate what famous Iago once described as "the green-eyed monster", the most psychologically consuming of human passions. Both dramatists explore the afflicting power of envy when it proliferates in thought, breaking into speech or erupting in action, filling the ground with human debris. Whether in *The Stronger* or *Mozart and Salieri*, it is envy injected with substantial doses of jealousy that sets the whole world tumbling. The present paper seeks to isolate the major thematic dominant in the plays, namely, envy, which forms the focus of the dramatist's psychological preoccupation in both texts. A variety of psychological and philosophic stances are brought to bear on the plays' protagonists to yield more insights into their nature and motivations. The paper also lays bare how Pushkin's "closet drama" and Strindberg's "sketch" intimate great psychological and philosophical truths in their investigation of the human condition via what seems to be an unassuming medium (Reid). A very brief evaluation of the inspirational *Too Late*, which will be presented after handling the original texts under consideration, will conclude a journey of inspiration that amateurishly started in 2001 and came to an academic close in 2006.

Envy, The Green-eyed Monster

Writing his own verdict on what he proposes to be *the* most deadly sin of the human heart, Angus Wilson states, "Envy is so unenviable. Envy is impotent, numbed with fear, yet never ceasing in its appetite; and it knows no gratification save endless self-torment. It has the ugliness of a trapped rat that has gnawed its own foot in its effort to escape" (11). Vehement statements like these abound in the literature of envy. Whether viewed from a religious, confessional niche as a "deadly" sin, or seen from a psychological analyzing lens as a malaise of a perverted human mind, or emerging from a philosophical, contemplative reflection as an aspect of the depravity and misery of the human soul, envy has always been diagnosed as the most endemic, "pervasive and interpenetrating" of human failings: "to err may be human. But to envy is undoubtedly so" (Epstein xvi).

Envy, in fact, has always had a bad name *and* press, "lending itself to vivid and unsavoury metaphors" (McTigue). As Henry Fairlie bluntly observes in his book *The Seven Deadly Sins Today*, envy is the one deadly sin to which no one readily

confesses. "It seems to be the nastiest, the most grim, the meanest, sneering and sly". If the other sins have been celebrated, however perversely, in popular songs down the ages, Fairlie goes on, envy, it seems, "has no song. It does not sing; it cannot bear to look, except through its slit eyes; it is unable to love, because it is riddled with fear" (68). Individuals may well admit to being proud, greedy, covetous, lazy, bad tempered or promiscuous, but *all* will be very charring in professing envy. "Why is it that envy is so repugnant?", psychotherapist Mary Ashwin asks in her invaluable exploration of envy in relation to the concept of sin. "[It] is to do with the understanding, conscious or not, that envy is so bound up with a feeling of deficit".

Defining Envy

Insightfully explored in Farrell (1980, 1989) and in Neu, envy is an emotion and as such it is crucially meshed with thoughts (beliefs and judgments), feelings (desires too), motivations, and bodily movements. Emotion theorists agree that envy involves (a) an envier or a "subject", (b) a party who is envied or a rival "object", (c) some desirable possession or a perceived "good". The whole havoc is triggered when an envious "subject", brought into a confrontational comparison with an unaware "rival", distressfully comprehends what s/he considers herself/himself as lacking or *not* possessing, i.e., the personality traits, achievement and supposed possessions (mental and material) of another (Parrot 1991). For something to be envied, three main conditions must be fulfilled. First, that 'something' must be seen as valuable or "superior" or of a "distinctive" mark. Second, it must be seen as belonging to someone else. Third, which is more related to that "someone else", the "subject" must feel, or rather reason himself/herself into feeling, that the "other", against whom s/he evaluates and assesses the worth of her/his well-being, is very much an *equal*. In fact, the more equal the "rival" object is, the more invidious the envious subject will be; envy, Alain de Botton explains, being seminally born out of a sense of "entitlement", or as Ben Ze'ev suggests, a "democratic" desire to level whatever one is powerless to possess or emulate (1992). But what is meant by an "equal"? Aristotle, whose *Rhetoric* have dealt so completely with the different manifestations of this crucial part of human nature, explains,

... by equals I mean equals in birth, relationship, age, disposition, distinction, or wealth. ... We envy those who are near us in time, place, age, or reputation. ... We compete with those who follow the same ends as ourselves: we compete with our rivals in sport or in love, and generally with those who are after the same things; and it is therefore these whom we are bound to envy beyond all others. ... We also envy those whose possession of or success in a thing is a reproach to us: these are our neighbours and equals. ... We also envy those who have what we ought to have, or have got what we did have once.

(II:10)

As far back as Aristotle and as relatively recent as Cooper and de la Mora, envy and "egalitarianism" seem to be attracted to each other. The suggestion that envy supplies the psychological foundations of the concern for justice, and especially, of egalitarian conceptions of justice and equality has been propagated by both philosophical, socio-psychological and political thought (Schoeck, Rawls).

Envy: A Tortuous Process

Crossing the first glimmer of apprehension, namely, the recognition of a "distinctive" good, as Kierkegaard describes it, the envious "subject" suffers a crawling, slimy feeling of contaminating sorrow and "pain at the sight of good fortune" (Aristotle II:10) Reluctant to see his/her own well-being overshadowed by the "distinction" of the equal Other, and crippled by a myopic or rather blind vision to see the intrinsic worth of his/her own well-being, the subject of envy experiences chronic states of dissatisfaction with its own current lot (Kant 6:459). From the perception that s/he *has less* to the fear that s/he *is less*, the "sickness" spreads in each and every cell of the envious person's being. The problem with envy, Kant expostulates, is not merely that it inwardly craves the fame, status, influence, material good, or personal qualities that others possess. Envy cancerously moves from wanting that "good" for oneself, to hating and resenting it as somebody else's, to harbouring an urgent desire to spoil and "take away" the "it" and to see the "somebody else" dispossessed. Envy's pain and dissatisfaction thus metamorphose into an "angry" destructive assault on the "desirable" and the "admirable", object and person (Klein 181). Obsessed with a sense of being "demeaned", the envious subject's impulse is, first and foremost, to "make something alive into something dead (Ulanov 91). The vice that threatens personal relations, and hence society as a whole, becomes thus manifest when the envious man proceeds to act, or fails to act, appropriately (Scheock 166). But how does the envious "act"? Like a "toad" which spurts its poison from a hole, as Schopenhauer once described it, Envy will attack from its three-cornered den, particularized by Mary Ashwin as "the heart, the mouth and the deed". The particularization, based on a reading of *Jacob's Well*, a fifteen century manuscript written as an allegory of the seven deadly sins, is so apt for the present argument that it is worth reproducing here in its entirety.

The heart's [examples] are, judging falsely, thinking badly of another's goodness and being jealous of another's welfare. The examples of envy in the mouth are slander, bitterness, which means to exaggerate, and to spread calumny and backbiting. Lastly envious deeds are, restraining a man who commences well, ruining a man who tries to do right, and discrediting the name of a good man.

Oozing with malice, mortification and spite, that gnawing monster, Thomas Moore rightly states, is absolutely deleterious to the personality, it inhibits development and threatens the very essence of being for it involves "longing and rejection", i.e., lust for the life of another and an unconscious spurning of one's own (114).

Envy and Jealousy

It is worth noting at this juncture that Envy and Jealousy, which are two distinct emotions, are more often than not confusedly stacked up (Smith, Kin, Parrot 1988). Farrell (1980) and Neu propose that both emotions are directed towards or against those whom one perceives as rivals. Jealousy appears in triangular situations that involve three parties: a subject, a rival, and a beloved (person or an object). Jealous feelings are triggered when the subject perceives that the rival endangers what the subject considers himself/herself as *already* possessing, or what s/he considers is

rightly his/her own. So, with jealousy, the locus of concern is the beloved person whose affection the subject is losing or fears losing – not the rival (Ben Ze'ev 1990) Envy, on the contrary, is a two party relation, with a third *relatum*, that is to say, a "good" which the subject lacks or does not possess. The locus of concern in envy's case is the rival, not the beloved (Farrell 1980).

Kinds of Envy

Envy may be (a) existential, (b) social, or (c) patrimonial - corresponding to a person being envied for (a) his/her qualities, or, as Schopenhauer calls them, "the gifts of nature", "given" a person by "Divine grace", (b) his/her social position, rank or power, or (c) his/her possessions or wealth. The last two are the gifts of fortune, or chance, or another's favour. Of all these three categories, it is existential envy, directed at natural gifts and personal advantages, that is the most destructive, simply because the envious has no consolation or hope of one kind or the other to reach some level of attainment. Bitter and irreconcilable hatred of the person who possesses these natural gifts or privileges is the only remaining desire (Schopenhauer). A rationale of the first kind is of extreme importance to the analysis of both *The Stronger* and *Mozart and Salieri*. In both plays, it is the existential envy of perverted creative minds that excites the fire of events.

Existential Envy

Existential envy is perhaps the most "intellectual" of human emotions (Irbe). It arises from an "intentional" feeling - a feeling that one reasons oneself into, a feeling that crystallizes only after manipulating, arriving at, indulging and sustaining value delusions and corresponding value-judgments (as opposed to facts) concerning the possessions or attributes of others. Triggered by the sight of the superior degree of a rival's performance or enjoyment, supposed or actual, a stampede of the most sophisticated mental maneuvers, stratagems and procedures, rushes into the cerebral operational room to construe arguments for "the necessity for a crusade against superiority" (de la Mora 93). Mouth, mind and heart are set on alert for Mission Annihilation, so to speak. Regardless of the manipulative nature of these clever inversions of right into wrong, and vice versa, these arguments appear alluringly rational on the surface (Popper). One may wonder, from what dark corners of human nature are the powers of spurious reasoning so diabolically summoned to justify the inversion of right and wrong, and to carry such inversions into action, no matter how bad the reasoning and the action might be? The answer is one simple monosyllabic word: Pride.

Retreating from the glamorous light of others' achievement into its dark lair, envy's sophistry seems always to shift the direction of its trajectory, not from the coveted "good" to the rival "object" enjoying that good, but rather and more subtly though, from the spotless screen of the culprit's good to the x-rayed, threatening awareness of the subject's endangered pride at his/her own achievement. Envy is actually born from that particular category of pride; the pride that underlies a feeling of personal inferiority. It goes without saying then that whenever, and wherever, the envious subject's pride is provoked or pricked by a perceived superiority there will be an accompanying feeling of loss of status, that is to say, of inferiority or "deficit".

"The envious person is moved, first and last, by his own lack of self-esteem, which is all the more tormenting because it springs from an inordinate self-love" (Fairlie, 67).

It is worth noting here that, in psychologically healthy individuals, a temporary impotence experienced when contemplating the "distinctiveness" of others often engenders a desire to appropriate what one sees as essentially external or extrinsic to oneself. Often referred to as "excusable general envy" (Rawls) or "benign" envy (Roberts, Young, Neu), this desire finds expression in a wish to achieve the best in one's own performance, i.e. emulation. "For those suffering this hurt", Rawls argues, a boosted self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem via achievement, "would make the [envious] better off" (534). Impotence might be felt and become permanent though, and strike the subject with the bane of resignation. The subject accepts his/her real or supposed inferiority and finds refuge in being neutral (Cohen). Emulation and resignation are often linked to social and patrimonial envy. But with existential envy, the optimistic equation above simply does not work. Real existential envy aims at suppressing its pain, or *hurt* by bringing down or *breaking* other people. There is no desire to be *more*, or to accept being *less*; there is only one wish, namely, to render the one who is apparently happier, more skilful or more blessed less fortunate than s/he presently appears to be regardless of whether or not the malicious subject would benefit.

So, with the unbearable perception of one's inferiority of performance, with the disappointed attempts to overcome, to assimilate and to exonerate the implications of that self-assessed inferiority, the quantum of envy becomes so immense, central, and enduring. A thirst for power arises - the power to devour, to 'neutralize' the "envied" person. But that is not all. The envious subject attempts to nullify whatever positive value the rival has established in his journey of joy and success, by transposing that positive value into a negative *nothing*. Nietzsche calls this desperate last stand of frustrated "ressentiment", a turning upside down, or a topsy-turvy view entertained by the deluded mind (*Genealogy Treatise 1 10*). Kierkegaard describes it in more wordy terms.

Envy constitutes the principle of characterlessness, which from its misery sneaks up until it arrives at some position, and it protects itself with the concession that it is nothing. The envy of characterlessness never understands that distinction is really a distinction, nor does it understand itself in recognizing distinction negatively, but rather reduces it so that it is no longer distinction; and envy defends itself not only from distinction, but against that distinction which is to come.

It is this "sneaking" character, this "clandestinity" and "surreptitiousness" that is at the heart of existential envy. "Envy is above all the hidden emotion - so hidden that, often, one isn't aware oneself that it *is*, as it frequently can be, the motive for one's own conduct" (Epstein xx). The envious subject does not merely turn into an "inexhaustible inventor of tricks and artifices and devices for concealing and masking his procedure from the others in his/her social circle, in order that, unperceived, he may wound the object of his envy" (Schopenhauer), but s/he rather becomes his/her own deceiver. Garrisoned with rationalization, the self-deceiver hides his/her own depravity from the candid face of his/her social self to avoid facing up to [the] unpleasant and lingering truth of his/her impotence (Bach).

*Motzart and Salieri*¹

There is no justice on the earth, they say.
But there is none in heaven, either. To me
That is as plain as any simple scale. (1)

Salieri's opening soliloquy, direct and revealing, features a man who spent his entire life desperately devoted to the art of music composition which would make him immortal. It furnishes the audience with his rationale of envy which takes the form of an argument *for* the justifiable murder of Mozart, the whole text, in fact, technically speaking, is based on such an argument. Like a dark windowpane opening onto a happy gallery of memory-steeped portraits, the thesis of the argument appears at the very opening lines of the soliloquy: "There is no justice on the earth, they say", is the first of Cain-like Salieri's tormented cries in the play. "But", a scorching anguish eats at his very soul, "there is none in heaven, either". To him the injustice, and it seems the shocking favouritism, of "heaven", is "as plain" as any simple fact. Why is it *that* plain? And why is he so seethed with its plainness? The rationalizing keys to the darkness within lie at the colourful backdrop of Salieri's early "involuntary" answer to his siren-calling, i.e., dedicating his life to a "priesthood" of music, coming right after his bitter outburst. These not only form the background information in an introduction to the hard evidence brought forth in the development stage of the perverted argument for Mozart's destruction, but they clarify the Faustian bargain struck by a younger Salieri and an allegedly sympathetic "heaven".

My love of art has been with me since birth,
And as a child, when in our ancient church
The organ would send forth its lofty sound,
I listened and was lost in it; my tears
Involuntarily and sweetly flowed.
I turned away from idle pastimes early;
All studies alien to music I
Found hateful; Stubbornly, disdainfully,
I disavowed them all and gave myself
To music alone. Hard is that first step taken,
And dull that first of roads. I overcame
My early adversities. (1)

The audience thus moves from, what an older Salieri implies, a preordained love for music, to an inevitable infatuation with the "lofty" sounds of the church organ, to a life-long fascination with the wonderful, melodious tunes "sent forth" to his craving ears, to honest, innocent "tears" sweetly flowing from ecstatic depths, then, and here lies the first glimpse into the mystified mind of a potential murderer, the bargain with what will turn out to be a treacherous, unjust "heaven". In her insightful analysis of the play, Nancy K. Anderson suggests that Salieri's approach to his "calling" is coloured by a transactional view of "heaven" (131-2). Devout Salieri renounces all "idle pastimes", "studies" and worldly "adversities", offering his sacrifice to "heaven", i.e., vowing chastity, perseverance, industry and humility in exchange for the holy gift of inspiration. This is *the* "good" he craved, the "good" that would make his fame and glory. And so the transaction seems to work with Salieri carrying his part of the bargain. Who can say that hard work and dedication do not have their rewards?

..... my fingers gained
A dry obedient dexterity,
My ear reliability. I deadened
The sounds, dissected music like a corpse,
Proved harmony by algebra. And then,
Then only did I dare, with all my lore,
Yield to the bliss of my creative fancy.
I started to compose, but quietly,
In secret; I didn't dare yet dream of glory.
How often, after sitting days on end,
Not eating, sleepless in my silent cell,
Tasting of rapture and fears of inspiration,
I'd burn my work and look on coldly as
My thoughts, the sounds I'd fathered, rose in flames
And vanished in a little puff of smoke. (1-2)

The above portraits, however, while showing real hardships, strikingly betray the kind of artist he is: a dexterous (as opposed to gifted), disciplined craftsman who seeks "extrinsic" glory in the hearts, or rather the eyes, of men. His "bliss of creative fancy" and the rapture at those apparitions of "inspiration" are, it turns out to be, the fruits of straining hours and hours of "perseverance" as opposed to real talent and "Divine Grace". Yet, there is more to be unearthed here. The quite pride-full memories of Salieri's early musical achievements are clouded with the burning smoke of his fuming manuscripts; unsavory streaks of a self-masked sense of inferiority splash the idyllic picture. The seeds of Salieri's pronounced perception of his inferiority when he, later on, encounters the "distinctiveness" of Mozart are laid bare. It is that phantom of "deficit" that will distort his vision when attainment of "intrinsic" glory seems out of reach.

But again Salieri's argument goes on with more hard evidence, rhetorical questions, and negation of early malice or meanness of character. All are posed by the apparent sobriety of the spurious mind of envy's solid candidate.

What am I saying? When great Gluck himself
Appeared, unfolding to us new mysteries
(And deep enthralling mysteries they were),
Did I not give up all I'd known before,
And dearly loved and fervently believed in?
Did I not briskly follow him, without
A murmur, like a man who's lost his way,
And meets another who can set him right?
By strenuous and dogged perseverance,
I finally reached, in the infinities
Of art, a lofty level. Glory smiled
On me, and in the hearts of men I found
Some resonance to what I had created.
Yes, I was happy: quietly took joy
In my own work, success and fame, and in
The labors and successes of my friends,
Co-workers in this wondrous art of ours.
Oh, never did I know a moment's envy,

Never! Not even when Piccini caught
The untamed ears of the Parisians,
Not even when, for the first time, I heard
The opening of Iphigenia played. (2)

The flood of happy memories of craftsmanship above is meant to water and rationalize the foundation of the hatred to come. Salieri was "never" jealous, he states, of the successes and achievements of his fellow inventors in the sacred art of music. Gluk and Piccini, his contemporary composers, are brought as supporting evidence. He was "never" jealous, he insists. On the contrary, he argues, he "took joy in others' work" because they were all "co-workers" - they belonged to the same circle of royal musicians and priestly composers like himself. They shared the same "good", or rather somehow the same *kind* of "good". Even when he heard novice Mozart's aria, Iphigenia, from *The Marriage of Figaro*, he hardly experienced any sense of rivalry or threat. Salieri was still reveling in his newly won "lofty level", his celestial-given "glory" and his hailed place in the hearts of admirers. Self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence were still wrapping the aspiring musician in their warmth. Kind "heaven", it seemed then to the priest of music, had kept its side of the bargain.

But when Mozart's unparalleled, superior gift, fame and glory asserts itself, when Salieri perceives the superior quality of Mozart's "good", Salieri's pride at his gauzy talent, seen now from the magnifying lens of furtive envy, is violently overthrown. Mozart, that human god of "profundity", "boldness" and "perfect form", calls everything into question. Mozart's unchallenged, applauded entry into the musical scene threatens Salieri's newly gained self-esteem. And regardless of the fact that he was a fellow musician and a "co-worker", Mozart's "distinctiveness" was beyond emulation or competitiveness. The relentless pride-full character is rendered mediocre, inferior; insulted and blasted from its heights. He acknowledges his suffering, his impotence and inferiority. Existential envy sprawls over the following lines.

Who is there who can say proud Salieri
Was ever that low thing, an envious man,
That trampled snake that only lives to bite
The gravel and the dust in impotence?
Nobody!...Now, though -- I myself must say it --
Now I am envious. I envy deeply;
Yes, I am wracked with envy. O heaven, where,
Where is the justice, when the holy gift,
Immortal genius, comes not as reward
For any burning love or self-denial,
Labor, diligence or prayer, but lights
Its radiance instead in heads of folly
And frivolity? (2)

That the "holy gift" and "immortal genius" are given to what Salieri (heart, mind and mouth) evaluates as nothing (according to his own prefabricated, puritan concepts of the artist proper) but a frivolous, obscene creature, who is, he tells him later in the first scene, "unworthy" of himself, appears to the dedicated believer a hideous insult from an unjust "heaven". The "chosen" Able, whose profound compositions are, he tells Salierie, "just a trifle", "jotted down" "ideas that came into my head" (3), was

proof enough to the envy-stricken Salieri that "heaven" had turned a blind eye to his very existence. "Heaven" has ignored her most obedient servant and generously conferred her gifts on a vulgar buffoon. This is the purport of the surface meaning of Salieri's case against Mozart. The intensity of the outburst in the opening lines are thus brought to a full circle.

Salieri's *rational* anger and gnawing self-torment do not, however, as his inversions of right and wrong suggest here, spring merely from a transactional view of a deceptive "heaven". His *logical* sorrow is not, as some critics suggest (Reid, Nadezhda, Evdokimova), that of a man consumed by disappointment as he perceives "heaven's" rejection of his sacrifice. Salieri's real "hurt" is born out of a view that upholds that the radical equality of dignity enjoyed by humans, which proceeds from our being created in God's image, or from our being created free, should lead to the assumption that everyone "should be able to do and experience and enjoy everything that everyone else can do and experience and enjoy" (Fairlie 62). At the heart of Salieri's tormented cry is the same notion of equality and entitlement which has been "perverted into the idea that we are identical" (Fairlie 63) But then Mozart, according to Salieri's manipulative reasoning, was even less than identical. Compared to his fervent love, total self-rejection, toil, exertion and prayers, the "son of harmony", blessed with heaven's gifts and favour without having to sacrifice, was just an idle profane jerk, a licentious savage. The natural differences of individual talents, distinctiveness or genius do not count here; that Mozart's "savage nature may be the explanation of his genius .. without constraints upon [his] natural impulses – such as those imposed by the church" (Gleaves) is simply crossed out and inflated by the deluded mind into a case of heavenly injustice and favouritism.

In the second soliloquy which closes the first scene of the play, Salieri's conceptualization of his fallacious reasoning and spurious manipulation of value-judgments proceed in their "crusade" to nullify what has been established by Mozart's art as positive value. Prior to this soliloquy, Mozart pays a friendly visit to Salieri and plays him some music, "a trifle", he describes it, that came to him when "insomnia was racking" his sleep the previous night. Salieri invites him to dinner in a close-by inn. When Mozart is gone, his friend's frustrated emotions, and the sophistry of his perverted thinking, delirious with existential envy, reaches its most painful heights. The chains of wrong arguments concerning Mozart's gifts string together their specious locks of interrogation and negation. The conclusion is that it is his "fate", he claims, as the "chosen one", to "stop" Mozart from seducing the priests and ministers of music to unreachable heights then leave them estranged in the dust of their mediocrity. His "heavy debt" (7) to art, to his fellow workers in the kingdom of "dust" must be paid then, the "healing knife" that would "cut away a throbbing limb" (7) must massacre the songs of paradise. Why? Clandestine envy turns whatever is positive (rival and "good") into everything that is negative.

Otherwise we all will perish,
All of us priests and ministers of music,
Not only I with my dull-ringing fame.
What use is it if Mozart stays alive
And reaches even newer summits yet?
Will he uplift the art by doing so?
No; it will sink again when he is gone;

He leaves us no successor. What's the use
In him? He brings us, like a cherub, certain
Songs of paradise, and afterwards,
When he has roused in us, us children of
The dust, a wingless longing...flies away!
So fly away! The sooner you do, the better. (4)

In the second half of the soliloquy, Salieri unveils the history of the bottle of poison which would allow Mozart to "fly away". Given the hermit of music as a "final gift" of love, the poison had often lured Salieri in his depressive, almost suicidal *and*, not surprisingly now, *murderous* moods.

Here's poison; it's Isora's final gift.
For eighteen years I've carried it with me,
And often in that time my life would seem
A wound not to be borne. I'd often share
A table with some careless enemy,
And never to the whisper of temptation
Did I yield, although I am no coward,
Although I feel an insult deeply and
Care little for my life. No, I held back.
When thirst for death tormented me, I thought:
Why should I die? It could be life will bring
Some sudden gifts to me, it could be too,
I will be visited by rapture, by
The night of the creator, inspiration. (4--5)

The lines betray the composer. Again and again, the same things are brought together in what seems to be a vicious room of mirrors: "gifts", "rapture", and "inspiration" always face the specter of impotence, inferiority, and deficit. The perverted mind, looking from its "height" has finally spotted its admirable enemy: Mozart, the new Hyden in whom the proud has taken delight *and* hate. Salieri's failure to act *creatively* gives birth to the insoluble dialectic of love and hate symbolized here by the poison as a cherished gift of love.

It could be some new Haydn will create
Great things, and I will take delight in him.
While I was feasting with my hated guest,
I'd think: it could be I will find a worse
Enemy yet, and that a bitterer
Insult will blast me from a prouder height.
Then you will not be lost, Isora's gift.
And I was right! At last I have found both:
I've found my enemy, and a new Haydn
Has made me drink deliciously of rapture!
And now -- it's time. Most cherished gift of love,
Tonight you pass into the cup of friendship. (5)

Before Salieri *acts*, Mozart, sitting at the dinner table and telling his friend about his *Requiem* (the last composition Mozart wrote before his death), wonders about Beaumarchais, the writer of both Salieri's operatic success, *Tarere* and Mozart's *Marriage De Figaro*, "Salieri, is it true that Beauamarchais once poisoned somebody?", to which Salieri answers, "I don't think so. He was too droll a fellow for

such a trade". Mozart agrees, quite significantly, "Besides, he was a genius like you and me. And genius and villainy are two things incompatible, aren't they?" (6). Listening to Mozart's outstanding *Requiem* after dinner, ruminating the rumours about Beaumarchais, and soaking the echoes of Mozart's generous tribute to his "genius", Salieri never flinches. His thirst for power over his admired foe is so overwhelming. Villainy is rationally jammed with the desire to devour. When Salieri passes the poison into "the cup of friendship" thus murdering a fellow "priest", betraying his calling, renouncing the grail of his own glory given him by "heaven" and applauded by his friend (Anderson 154), unaware Mozart salutes him for the last time, announcing the overwhelmed audience's condemning verdict on the villain who has been filling the stage with his faulty rhetoric and self-deceiving rationalization.

Mozart:

If all
Could feel like you the power of harmony!
But no: the world could not go on then. None
Would bother with the needs of lowly life;
All would surrender to spontaneous art.
We chosen ones are few, we happy idlers,
who care not for contemptible usefulness,
But only of the beautiful are priests.
Is that not so? (8)

The answer to Mozart's question is meant to fill the stage with the green ugliness that has spurted out of Salieri's darkness. But more darkness awaits the audience with the last of Salieri's rhetorical questions,

But is he right,
And I'm no genius? Genius and villainy
Are two things incompatible. Not true:
What about Buonarotti? Or is that just
A fable of stupid, senseless crowd,
And the Vatican's creator was no murderer? (8)

His "not true" is however totally untrue. Inordinate self-love has been cleaving for self-deception and madness. The deluded mind prefers believing that Michael Anglo, also accused of killing his model to render his plastic incarnation of the human body more plausible and believable, is also a murderer. The last word hangs in the air of the auditorium: a murder of envy has been committed and there ends the tragedy; but not the suffering that it entails for someone who sought to rejoice in his own inferior genius.

***The Stronger* ²**

Whereas Pushkin's little tragedy is built around Salieri's confessional soliloquies, *The Stronger* relies on a turbulent stream of one-sided monologues delivered by Mrs. X. at Miss Y. These are intersected with stage directions that reveal Miss Y's silent, but contemptuous grinning and edgy, tense reactions. When the play begins, Mrs. X has already gone through the early stages of "pain" and "hurt" and sorrow, and came, or acting as if she is, somehow triumphant. Unlike Salieri, Mrs.

X's envy is skirted with emotional jealousy which steers the manifestation of her existential envy into a totally different direction than that delineated in Pushkin's little tragedy. And unlike Mozart, Miss Y is quite aware of her "friend's" malicious feelings toward her, *and* has been touched, before the encounter begins on stage, by the negative energy masked by Mrs. X's apparent social *finesse*.

In *The Stronger*, Mrs. X's machination of envy does not rely on argumentation and self-deception ploys as much as it relies on, or rather metamorphoses into, a dark, creative process that generates a series of mental, sensory images for Miss Y to recreate and to rationalize. Rationalization becomes in this play both an intrinsic and extrinsic objective of the envious mind. Created and rationalized inside the intermingling circles of Mrs. X's speeches and Miss Y's embattled silence, each image generates what Rosemary Lloyd calls in her perceptive analysis of *Jealousy* in literature, multiple explanatory narratives. In *The Stronger*, originally directed at Miss Y, Mrs. X's narratives eventually blossom into a mania for the analysis of both self and Other. During that blossoming process, Mrs. X's inversions of hypothetical right and wrong and vice versa, give rise to a crucial struggle for power over Miss Y. Strategically thrown at mute Miss Y, these images or narratives crystallize worlds within worlds of deprivation, distressing loneliness, social failure, and self-defeat. Powerlessness (for Miss Y) and empowerment (for Mrs. X) are the ultimate goal here. The resulting inferno of powerlessness fueled by Mrs. X is meant to maliciously force Miss Y onto a roller-skating emotional journey into a vacuum of dispossession with loops of supposed injuries that Mrs. X brings up for discussion then abruptly disclaims as Miss Y's mere fantasies and value judgments. All is devised to transplant and inflict the destructive envious energy accumulated in the wrap and woof of Mrs. X's self onto Miss Y. The end result is to ostracize, render less fortunate, level, break, and finally eliminate Miss Y.

The image of a distressing Loneliness

The play begins with what seems to be a chance meeting at Christmas Eve. When Mrs. X's one-sided conversation begins, triggered, it seems first, by the reference to the festive occasion and Miss Y's solitary presence in the café, the audience realizes that Mrs. X has intentionally hunted down her "friend" to carry out her Mission Annihilation. Mrs. X composed animosity directly unravels itself with the first key in her first narrative which aims at taunting Miss Y, or Amelia, with her ostracized, lonely existence.

Mrs. X: Well, hello, Amelia! Darling, what are you doing here – alone on Christmas Eve? Like some poor bachelor.

Miss Y Looks up, nods, and resumes her reading of a magazine

Mrs. X. Oh, Amelia, dearest Amelia! This is distressing. You mustn't sit here all by yourself, alone on Christmas Eve, in a restaurant. I won't have it! Reminds me of when I was in Paris and saw a wedding party in a restaurant, and the bride sat there looking at the comics in a magazine, while the groom played billiards with the best man and the ushers. My God, I said to myself, if it's like this on the wedding night, how will it be in the morning, how will it all end? ... Playing billiards on his wedding

day! – Well, she was reading the comics – that's what your' thinking. Not the same thing, though, is it?. (331-2)

An image of marital deprivation as opposed to that of female achievements

Mrs. X's second narrative strikes deeper and digs further back in the past to bring alive the ghosts of personal, emotional insecurities and failure. Depravity gazes on from its closet of pain. The notes of innocuous gloating and fazed, but vicious, flaunting are inescapable .

Mrs. X. You know what, Amelia? Whatever I may have thought then, now I think you should have held on to [your fiancé] I know I was the first to tell you to forgive and forget. You do remember that, don't you? Why, you'd be married now, and have a home for yourself. Remember last Christmas, how happy you felt out there on the farm, visiting your fiancé's parents? How you went on about the joys of family life – how you wanted to get away from the theater? ... It's true Amelia; having a home is still the best - after the theater – And children, of course. Darling, you wouldn't understand that.

Miss Y. gives her a contemptuous glance

Mrs. X takes a few sips of chocolate, using her teaspoon. Opens her basket and displays Christmas presents

Mrs. X. Let me show you what I've bought for the kiddies (shows a doll). Isn't it cute? It's for Lisa. Look it can roll its eyes, and its neck turns. What do you think, hmm? – And this is for Maia: a toy gun.

Mrs. X loads the popgun, aims it at Miss Y, and shoots.

Miss Y gestures in fear. (332)

Supposed injuries and alleged Innocence

Mrs. X's third narrative, with its deceptive, pleading voice, cruelly presses the sour wounds of Miss Y. The triumphant undertones of the speech and the intentional microscoping of Mrs. X's harsh lens on Miss Y's professional defeat and disappointment (despite her talents), further intensifies the battle for power. The whole speech reeks of suppressed hatred.

Mrs. X. Afraid? You didn't really believe I'd shoot you, did you? Really! Bless my soul, I didn't think you'd harbor such nasty thoughts, darling. Now, if *you* had wanted to shoot *me*, that wouldn't surprise me. After all, I did get that part you had your heart set on, didn't I? You'll never get over it, I know. But I assure you I had absolutely nothing to do with it. You still believe, don't you, that I plotted to get you out of the City Theatre. Well, I didn't. No matter what you believe, I didn't. ... What's the use of talking. No matter what I say, you still believe I was behind it all. [Takes out a pair of embroidered slippers.] And here's what I got for the old man. Tulips! I embroidered them myself. I simply abominate tulips, really I do, but he has to have tulips on everything.

Miss Y raises her eyes from her magazine, suddenly interested, a sardonic expression on her face. (332-3)

Marital bliss

Bob, the husband, the absent/present entity that gives the devouring mission a monstrous touch, is used, glaringly, as a scaffolding for the fourth narrative. A picture of marital bliss, with the "nice" husband in the middle and some funny anecdotes dramatized through vocal and physical miming, is exquisitely portrayed to lash at the edges of Miss Y's impenetrable silence. If Salieri's poison has been a "cherished gift of love", Mrs. X's narrative of cherished Love is her very poison.

Mrs. X: (Putting a hand in each slipper): he's got such tiny feet, Bob, has. Don't you think? – And he walks so elegantly. We, you've never seen him in his slippers, so you wouldn't know.

Miss Y laughs aloud.

Mrs. X: Then when he gets mad – look – he stamps on the floor – like this. "That damn cook! Can't she ever learn how to make a decent cup of coffee?" ... Now there's a cold draft blowing across the floor, and his feet are cold ... (She rubs the slippers together, the sole of one against the toe of the other)

Miss Y. guffaws

Mrs. X: Now he's just come home, and he's looking for his slippers, which Marie has put under the bureau ... Oh, I shouldn't be making fun of him like this. He's such a sweet man, really, my dear little hubby. You should have one just like him, Amelia. Do you a world of good – what are you laughing at? Hm? Hm? What's so funny? (333)

The Perfect husband

The flaunting of Mrs. X's baggage of goodies goes on. The establishment of a "superior" level of "distinctiveness" that might give Miss Y a taste of how bitter it felt to see her once brimming cup keeps building up. Mrs. X's imperative is to place a wider and wider interval between herself and the standards against which, at some point in their history as fellow actresses and friends, she assessed her self-worth and self-esteem. So, the triumphant narrative goes on.

Mrs. X: Listen, darling. One thing I know for sure: that he is faithful, true to me. Absolutely. He's told me all about it. – Now what are you grinning at? – That time when I was touring the provinces and along came that disgusting ogress Frederika and tried to seduce him. Can you imagine anything quite so infamous? (Pause) I would have scratched her pink little eyes out if she tried anything like that while I was him. I would have (pause.) Fortunately Bob told me all about it, so I didn't have to hear it via the grapevine.. the women go gaga over him. He's *my* husband, but they want him. Evidently, they think he's got something to say about their contracts because he works in the administration ... I suppose you've been on the prowl after him, too ... I've never really trusted you, but there is one thing I do know: he was never interested in you. And you always bore him some sort of a grudge. Well, that's how it struck me.

Pause. They glance at each other both a little tense and edgy (333-4)

Miss Y's "provocative silence" with its sardonic expressions, guffaws and almost mocking outbursts of laughter, Nihad Seleiha perceptively states, "proves to be more powerful and devastating than Mrs. X's verbal avalanche: it works on [Mrs. X] like a spell, leading her to betray more of her hidden doubts and suspicions than she ever cared to admit to herself" (2006). Hence, a relaxing of the tenacious hold on silent Miss Y appears at the end of the speech above. A wavering occurs. Mrs. X's thirst for power, the power to devour, seems to give way to a momentary, confessional exposure of her early stages of panic and dissatisfaction, fear and "deficit" when she first met Amelia.

Mrs. X: It was so odd – our friendship. When I met you for the first time, I was afraid of you. So scared I didn't let you out of my sight. No matter where I went, I always found myself near you. I didn't dare have you for an enemy, so I became friends with you. Still there was a wall between us even when you visited us at home ... (334).

The narratives now take another turn as they halt, for a while, the operation of Mission Annihilation to contemplate a history of friendship and to bring from Mrs. X's own closet of pain her suspicions that Miss. Y had an illicit relationship with her husband, the nice Bob of the early narratives. A commotion of value-judgments, rationalized hypotheses and, it appears, logical evidence huddles around for an analysis of the self and the Other. Jealousy and envy reign high.

Then all of sudden you became great friends [with my husband] It was as if the two of you couldn't let down your defenses until you had found some security. And then -? What *did* happen? I didn't get jealous, no So strange! ... I remember the christening, when you were there as godmother, and I made him kiss you. And he did kiss you, and you got so flustered. Funny, I didn't think of it then. Didn't think of it till later. Never thought about it till – *this moment!* (*Stands up abruptly*) Why don't you say something? You haven't said a single word all this time. You've just let me sit here prattling on and on. Sitting looking at me, dragging out my thoughts. Like raveling out silk from the cocoon, where they've been lying all this time. Sleeping thoughts. Things I suspected but didn't dare – . Let me think—why did you break your engagement? Why did you never come to our house after that time? Why won't you come home to us tonight? (334-5)

The more Mrs. X desires to have access to the circles of silence into which Miss Y has barricaded herself, and the more defeated she gets, the more entrapped she feels. Her trials to snare Amelia turns the cards against her. She is thrown again into the abyss of her earlier "hurt". A sense of frustration accompanies her lack of control and leads to a desire to reduce and then deny the uncontrollable other. In the process of Mrs. X's battle for power, she never suppresses the pain of her envy nor does she seem to accept her unacceptable impotence. It all comes to the open in stark English (or Swedish) when she moves from the confrontational procedures to the inability to assimilate or do anything about the implications of her relative past and present inferiority.

Mrs. X: No, don't say it! You don't have to say anything. I can see it all now. The whole thing Why that was. – And that. – And that. Oh, yes. It all adds up. That's it, all right. – How disgusting! I refuse to sit at the same table with you.

She moves her things to the other table.

That's why I had to embroider tulips on his slippers. I detest tulips. It was you who liked tulips. That was why –

Throws the slippers on the floor

We had to have our summer place up at Lake Malar: because you simply couldn't stand the ocean. That's was why my boy was named Eskil. Because that was your father's name. That was why I had to wear colors that suited you, read books you liked, eat your favorite dishes, drink your favorite drinks - hot chocolate, for instance. That's why —.

The enormity of the thought strikes her.

Oh, my God! Oh, God in heaven. How awful! How disgusting! (335)

It is not just her awareness of her own inferiority, it is the more painful awareness of her generic fragmented existence now, seeking completion, not through an aspired pattern of self-fulfillment, but by collecting herself from the "Other". She is not real, and she knows it, only a mosaic, a pastiche of the Other's narrative, the Other's identity. The co-presence of multiple and conflicting voices and identities becomes a threat. Not unexpectedly, she, again, accuses Miss Y of being the culprit. The following is perhaps the most poignant of Mrs. X's speeches in the play. It is not professional jealousy. It is pure envy that burns within.

Everything, even what we did when we made love – everything comes from you ... your soul crept into mine, like a worm into an apple, bored its way in, ate and burrowed until there was nothing left but the skin and some black crumbs. I wanted to get away from you, only I couldn't. You lay like a serpent, your black eyes bewitching me. I wanted to run away from you but my feet were like lead. I felt like I had been thrown into the water with my legs tied together, and the more I struggled with my arms, the faster I sank. Down ... down until I hit bottom. And there you were, lying in wait, like a gigantic crab, to catch me in your claws. That's where I am now. (335)

The quantum of existential envy is so immense. It is not held in check anymore, the justice of the attack is brought to the foreground. Open lashing comes to the rescue in an attempt to shore up the floundering powers of the self.

My God, how I hate you, detest you, abhor you! Let me look at you. You just sit there, silent, indifferent Quite and unmoving, like a cat at a rat hole. You don't know how to catch your prey on your own; you don't know how to hunt it down; all you can do is outwait it. (335-6)

But the confusion takes its turn again, elimination by ostracism, envy disguised as contempt, a pejorative intention covers all judgments. The narratives continue, the mission is resumed, the triumphant monster relives *and* acts, properly:

By the way, darling, you know what they call [your corner of the café], don't you? – because of you – "The Crocodile's Den." ... The crocodile flicks her tail, figures out who'll sink, who'll swim, looks for victims and collects her tribute. (336)

Mrs. X's envy holds itself in check again, because it is only victory that becomes her; that must become her. Psychological murder, poisonous and intentional, is executed now:

Poor, dear Amelia. You know, darling, I really feel sorry for you. I can't help it. Because I know you are unhappy. Unhappy because you have been hurt I can't even get mad at you. I want to, only I can't. Because you are such a little person. So small and helpless. (336)

The implications of the unraveled discoveries are "jammed" by the gigantic power of rationalization. Evidence-gathering becomes selective, positive reinterpretation takes front-stage position, input and output emotional charge is *controlled* (Bach). Self-reliance, positive comparisons, self-bolstering and selective ignoring are reactivated (Salovey and Rodin).

All that hanky-panky with Bob – why should I bother about that? What's it got to do with me? If you hadn't taught me to like hot chocolate, somebody else would have. What difference does it make?

Sips a spoonful of chocolate. Assumes a know-it-all air.

Besides, chocolate is very good for one's health – Maybe I did learn from you what sort of clothes to wear. So what? *Tant mieux*. Now he 's more mine than ever before. Where you lost, I won; In fact, to judge by certain indications, I believe you've already lost him. – Of course, I know what you thought would happen: I'd leave him. That's what you thought. Because that's what *you* did [with your fiancé] But, Amelia dearest, I have not intention of leaving him. (336)

Mrs. X's explanatory narratives prevail. Her psychological annihilation of Amelia is carried out to the very last detail. She becomes the court, the case, the jury, *and* the verdict.

Maybe after all is said and done, maybe at this moment I really am the stronger of us. You never got anything from me. You only gave things – ideas. I feel almost like a thief in the night. You woke up, and I had everything you'd lost. How else can you explain it? Everything you touched became worthless. You had the touch of sterility. You couldn't keep his love. You can never keep a man's love with your tulips and your passions—but I can. You can't learn how to live from your authors, as I have learned. You have no little Eskil to cherish, even if your father's name was Eskil. And why are you always silent, silent, silent? I thought that was strength, but perhaps it is because you have nothing to say! Because you never think about anything!

Rises and picks up the slippers.

Now I'm going home—and take the tulips with me—*your* tulips! You are unable to learn from another; you can't bend—therefore, you broke like a dry stalk. But I won't break! Thank you, Amelie, for all your good lessons. Thanks for teaching my husband how to love. Now I'm going home to love him. *Goes* (336-7)

Too Late: An Inter-textual Embrace

Plucked from *The Stronger's* one-sided conversations, remarkable moments of emotional intensity are fleshed with exquisite ingenuity into the Egyptian production, and edited in the Egyptian vernacular, Mrs X becomes Wafaa, Miss Y becomes Amal. Then these moments are meticulously stitched into Salieri's carefully chosen confessional soliloquies which on their turn are carefully scooped from their eighteenth century Vienna setting, edited in formal Arabic, and structurally interwoven into *Too Late's* shifting female battle for power, exposing the audience to the "heat and light" of the intertextual rubbing that the Egyptian production generates on stage. Two adamant females and a ghost of a dead composer, the perpetual voices of a desolate, progressive present injected with the occasional doses of a haunting past thus alternately create a third world on stage, with the ghost watching, listening (sometimes addressing) and feeling both women who don't have the slightest idea that he is there. Where the ultimate strength or glory lies, is the question that keeps bleeding its dark colours as the circles of silence (this time, of both Amal and the audience) are persistently invaded by Wafaa's and Salieri's revelatory speeches.

Coming to the stage as the ghost of the dead composer, Salieri enters the Present of a modern empty stage soon to be filled with the speech and silence of Wafaa and Amal. Addressing the audience, Salieri journeys back and forth across the years of his story. Like the pearls of an aged necklace the lines of the original, Russian soliloquy are dispersed on stage. Amal and Wafaa, respectively come to an empty backstage setting, they re-enact the artistic rivalry of the ancient composer whose presence on stage overshadows *and* acts as the Shadow of the ironically named Wafaa (Loyal). Salieri's happy reminiscences, which are gradually devoured by his petty jealousies and murderous designs, assume the role of a chorus. The audience occupies a perceptual space in and through which it becomes both a viewer and a subject of Salieri's meditations. On an ontological level, the audience thus reproduces the experience of silent Amal (Hope).

Salieri's monologic spurts thus provide qualifying opening and closing statements on Wafaa's sinister conversations and Amal's silence. Whatever ideas are presented by the chorus-like ghost when he takes his queue, they seem later on to sprawl all over the contours of Wafaa's speech. Subtle echoes and ironies resound on stage. Inter-textualized worlds provide interlocked screens. Ideas, themes and motifs presented by Salieri's phantom directly and interchangeably rub Wafaa's smooth, go-to-the-kill speeches and her feigned social fineness. The timely, dynamic intersection of their progressive life-lines on stage ends with the physical act of Mozart's murder related by Salieri as the final chapter in a love-hate relationship, and Wafaa's actual psychological killing of Amal enacted to the horror of the embattled audience. The disparate "fragments" of Salieri, Wafaa and Amal's experiences thus structurally demonstrate the sheer ugliness of human nature turned monstrous by the relentless urge for artistic power combined with the dark forces of envy.

This is physically enhanced on stage by (1) a complex pattern of diagonal and circular movements marking the intersecting lines of the lives in the choking heat of a battle for power and supremacy, (2) by a clever employment of light and shadow, drenching Salieri's Shadow with light and throwing the frames of Amal and Wafaa's

body into the shadows of a darkness that finally devours them, and vice versa, (3) by an extremely functional use of Mozart's music (*Symphony no.40* in G minor, *Piano Sonata* in A major, *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and finally Mozart's overwhelming last composition *Requiem*) which acts as a subtext for the development of events and the escalation of tension as the air on stage fumes its murderous miasma. The achievement of *Too Late* as an inter-textual inspiration to the present paper lies in its plastic creation of a network of juxtapositions and richly threaded echoes and recycled emotions via various media which always shift the audience's attention (exposed to the three texts all at once) from what is being presented on stage to the means employed in the act of presentation. It is just that epistemological adventure (the knowledge part) and ontological experience (the shifting of one's entity, from being a viewer to an actual participant in the inter-textual game (Docherty) on stage to a virtual character (silent but highly active) that have lured the writing of the present paper.

The Russian, Swedish and Egyptian palimpsests of the dark side of human nature successfully demonstrate that envy is a *damaged* emotion. It is not merely a repulsive, negative, perverted (and perverting) human affliction, it is the most rationalizing of our emotions, because its origin lies in reasoning, a reasoning that involves both audience and character. As a member of the audience, I came out of the Egyptian auditorium with this thought in mind (and heart): there can be no value in suffering because of the happiness of others; there can be no strength in rejoicing in the subsequent misfortunes of others if and when they occur. It takes only "una" play to show that, *Too late* has offered the stage a trio

Notes

¹ Page numbers refer to the translated text by Alan Shaw

² Page numbers refer to the translated text by Evert Sprinchorn.

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