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Envy and Jealousy in Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*: A Psychoanalytic Study

A B S T R A C T

Envy and Jealousy are dangerous phenomena that obsess many people all over the world in the past and the present. Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* presents these concerns through the prototypical pattern of friendship between two girls, Elena and Lila, the protagonists of the novel.

This research deals with the two concerns of envy and of jealousy and their manifestations in the novel. It aims at defining them and highlighting the way they are presented. By contrasting Elena and Lila, the writer shows the subtle difference between a covetous girl and her better-lucked peer, and vice versa. The research adopts a psychoanalytic approach to the novel in order to examine and to have a better understanding of these two concepts and the way they turn from spontaneity and being a motivation to pure competitiveness to be pathological, destructive and lethal, leading to destroy people's lives, ruining social relationships and thus affecting society.

Finally, the serious consequences of both concerns in the novel are shown and an attempt to determine whom is more involved and why, is made. The destructive sides these concerns have and how they function in the context of the lives of people, in general, and in the novel in particular, are indicated.

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الحسد والغيرة في رواية إلينا فيرانتى صديقتي الرائعة: دراسة تحليل نفسي

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الخلاصة

الحسد والغيرة ظاهرتان خطيرتان تتملكان الكثير من الناس في جميع أنحاء العالم في الماضي والحاضر. تقدم لنا رواية فرانتى هذين الأمرين من خلال النموذج الأساسي للصدقة بين فتاتين، هما إلينا وليلا، بطلتا الرواية. يتناول هذا البحث مفهومي الحسد والغيرة ومظاهرها في الرواية. ويهدف إلى تحديدهما وتبسيط الضوء على الطريقة

التي يتم تقديمهما. بمقارنة إيلينا وليلا ، تُظهر الكاتبة الفرق الدقيق بين الفتاة الحسودة ونظيرتها الأكثر حظاً، والعكس صحيح. ويتبنى البحث مقارنة التحليل النفسي للرواية من أجل دراسة وفهم هذين المفهومين بشكل أفضل وطريقة تحولهما من العفوية وكونهما دافعاً على التنافسية البحتة الى ظاهرتين مرضيتين مدمرتين، يؤديان إلى تدمير حياة الناس وتدمير العلاقات الاجتماعية وبالتالي تؤثران سلباً على المجتمع.

أخيراً، يختتم البحث بحساب العواقب الوخيمة لهاتين الظاهرتين في الرواية وتحديد من هو أكثر مسؤولية ولماذا، كما ويشار إلى الجوانب المدمرة لهذين الأمرين وكيفية عملهما في سياق حياة الناس، بشكل عام، وفي الرواية بشكل خاص.

Introduction

This research deals with the problem of envy and jealousy in Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, one novel of a four-fold volume best known as the Neapolitan quartet. The importance of highlighting these two concerns can be seen in the way they penetrate and affect man's life. First and foremost, they are as ancient things as humanity. Recalling the famous story and parable of the first generation of man, one can say that it is all about them. Abel and Cain were the first children of Adam and Eve. They were born after the fall of man from paradise. Abel was killed by Cain obviously because of both envy and jealousy.

In many cases, like the aforementioned story, these two things turn, from their spontaneous normal range to be intent ones that incur serious consequences on people's lives. Their simplest definitions state that they are feelings, and this only increases their complications as they are conditionally related to the deep core of man. Freud asserts that:

“Complex emotions are not subject to logical analysis, because they are psychological states. A psychological state that feels like jealousy to one person may not feel like jealousy to another, and felt jealousy could be grounded in one type of psychological state for one person but have its seat in another type of psychological state for another person.”¹

Reviewing literature corpuses, one can see the many instances of envy and jealousy in all cultures, each with their own peculiarities. An outstanding instance that can be said to be serious or more appropriately pathological may be found in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Iago's malevolent envy drives and empowers Othello's monstrous jealousy. As Bradley puts it, “Iago has been represented as the incarnation of envy,”⁽²⁾ and on the other hand, the type of Othello's jealousy “converts the human nature into chaos, and liberates the beast in man.”⁽³⁾ Consequently, the tragic flaw that Othello has and Iago

manages to manipulate, which made him to kill Desdemona, his love and wife, is in Freudian terms, 'pathological' jealousy.

Yet, before setting out in analyzing the text of study, definitions of envy and jealousy are necessary and crucial to our understanding of the text. The case as such, we find that the lexical definition of each one of them is that envy is simply "to wish that you had something that another person has,"⁽⁴⁾ whereas jealousy is but "a feeling of unhappiness and anger because someone has something or someone that you want."⁽⁵⁾ Sometimes, confusion and overlapping occur between them, and it should be noted that, when generalizing, the discussion is inclusive of both. Doing more checking up on the terms, we find some attempts to make the point more clear. A comparing definition of the terms states that:

"Jealousy and envy are either exact synonyms, totally different words, or near-synonyms with some degree of semantic overlap and some differences. It is difficult to make the case, based on the evidence of usage that we have, for either of the first two possibilities. Both jealousy and envy are often used to indicate that a person is covetous of something that someone else has, but jealousy carries the particular sense of "zealous vigilance" and tends to be applied more exclusively to feelings of protectiveness regarding one's own advantages or attachments."⁶

The problem with the lexical definitions, essential though, is that they do not identify exactly the nature of the terms. They do not decide on whether they are feelings, abstractions, drives or an amalgam of all. A recent attempt to approach them sounds daring. Cohen-Charash and Gonzalez see that:

"Envy is a complex, formative or aggregate construct, in that it is caused by the combination of feelings, cognitions, motivations, and other components that typically comprise an emotion. Therefore, envy does not occur if one of these components is missing. For example, people can feel pain and hostility without an upward social comparison, such as when a goal is blocked or one is treated unfairly."⁷

To use Cohen-Charash and Gonzalez 'construct' coinage, one can say that there is a unanimity on the fact that envy (also jealousy) is a two-faceted construct in nature. Van Dijk, Ouwerkerk et al, dichotomize envy into: benign, positive or constructive, and malicious, negative or destructive.⁽⁸⁾

In order to conceptualize them, many attempts are made to locate them within the behavioral sciences - as they relate to man, habits and behaviors. One more specialist definition states that: ““Envy is a drive which lies at the core of man’s life as a social being, and which occurs as soon as two individuals become capable of mutual comparison.”⁽⁹⁾ Out of this latter definition we can extract two important things about envy. First, it is a ‘drive’, and second, it is to do with the ‘core’ of man. The fact that envy is an elementary drive, like hunger, fear ...etc. needs us to pay more attention to its reality and seriousness. For being as such entails that we are dealing with an uncontrollable force, that exceeds logic and rationality. The same is applicable to the other element questioned in the research, i.e. jealousy. In the Freudian tradition, though he prefers to call them ‘psychological states,’ these drives are out of control of the consciousness. He explains that to be rational, jealousy (and envy) must be “under the complete control of the conscious ego,” and he goes on describing them as ‘complex emotions,’ which are not “subject to logical analysis.”⁽¹⁰⁾

Moving on to see about the consequences both envy and jealousy incur, and as nothing good in their context may one expect, we find that all over the world, they are condemned. There is, in fact, no need to count the negative sides and effects each inflict to humans, and one can sum these up in one word, namely, destruction as some critics judge:

“Envy can also turn man to destruction. Almost all the fragmentary literature which has hitherto dealt with envy (essays, belles-lettres, philosophy, theology, psychology) has constantly seen it destructive, inhibitory, futile and painful element. In all the cultures of mankind, in all proverbs and fairytales, the emotion of envy is condemned. The envious person is exhorted to be ashamed of himself.”¹¹

As for jealousy, which we identified also as a drive, we can say that it enjoys a stronger frequency among people. Although many analysts limit jealousy to sex or the man-woman relationship, one can see the instances of jealousy at home among brothers and sisters, children and adults, at work, and everywhere else. Most critics agree upon the fact that jealousy is something that all humanity shares. They see that “jealousy is a universal experience; it is the most primitive characteristic for both humans and mammals.”⁽¹²⁾ Analysts like B. P. Buunk, see that jealousy can be classified variously according to its cause and effect. He points three types of jealousy out: the reactive, the possessive and the anxious jealousies.⁽¹³⁾

S. M. Pfeiffer and P.T. Wong modify jealousy according to the ways of experience. They identify “cognitive and emotional jealousies as different ways one experiences jealousy.”⁽¹⁴⁾ On the one hand, cognitive jealousy relates to the

cognitions, thoughts, and worries one experience. On the other hand, emotional jealousy refers to the experience of a perceived threat to a valued relationship. This second way corresponds to the third type identified by Buunk.

Again, we can see that W. G. Parrot revolves around the same prototype of the man-woman relationship. He states that:

“Jealousy is an emotion experienced when a person is threatened by the loss of an important relationship with another person to a rival. The loss may be feared, actual and present, or as a part of the past. The prototypical cases of jealousy involve romantic relationships.”¹⁵

Defining jealousy, Freud states that it is:

“a complex emotion that can be categorized into different components. Jealousy is associated with grief. It may be grief of a loss of your partner to another person. Or, it may be a loss of the partner’s trust or a belief to the effect that you “own” the other person.”¹⁶

Here, Freud expands the modification of the ‘emotion’ of jealousy to be ‘complex’ and to tangle such emotions as grief, for instance. He does not depart others’ conceptions so far, in terms of the man-woman relationship, yet he adds an important clue in his explanation. He elaborates on the causes of jealousy stating that “jealousy can arise even when nothing is lost. Some people get jealous for no good reason at all.”⁽¹⁷⁾ In this sense, we can impress an assertion of the assumption that jealousy is but a drive, too. It seems to root deep in the core of man. It is not conditioned by an outer stimulation as do the other feelings and emotions. For no good reason jealousy is stimulated.

An important aspect that should be highlighted is the toleration and acceptability of envy and jealousy, on the part of the individual subjected to them. We find that, in some instances of jealousy, some kind of toleration and acceptability can be seen, in cases like rivalry when a superseding rival entertains and his pride is satiated with the knowledge that he is coveted by his rival; a lover wins a competed for love over another lover, the instances of envy cannot be tolerated.

To sum all the aforementioned discussion, one can say that envy and jealousy are twin brothers, tightly bound back-to-back, and this explains why they are misplaced one in the other’s place. Their contingency shows that there is a complementary relation between them. The relative acceptability of jealousy admits the being threshold for the more advanced state of envy. But, this does not deny the serious consequences jealousy might alone incur.

Talking about consequences, we see them in our everyday life, but when they take the pathological turn, they prove to be destructive and lethal especially when they coincide vindictiveness. Vindictiveness comprises anger and hostility as vehicles to the ultimate ends it seeks. Freud says that “Anger and hostility toward the successful competitor often is not exactly component of jealousy.”⁽¹⁸⁾ Albeit, they are the vehicles with which the competitor is usually dealt with.

Analysis

To apply this to Elena Ferrante’s *My Brilliant Friend*, we have to record a score for the writer that she prepared the elementary ingredients of the recipe of envy and jealousy beforehand, to enable a ‘comparison,’ which is a requirement for the recipe. Some scholars believe that an “upward social comparison” is the basic requirement of envy.⁽¹⁹⁾

Elena and Lila, the young intelligent girls are close friends ever since the elementary school. They project envy and jealousy upon each other. The novel, which takes Naples, Italy as a setting, tells the life story of both, Elena Greco, nicknamed Lenu and Rafaela Cerullo, also nicknamed Lila. It follows the ups and downs of their lives from the point of view of Elena, who some critics identify as the writer, herself. The first time we can locate the shadow of envy and jealousy in the novel is when Lila is discovered to be a prodigy because she managed to educate herself by learning reading and writing all alone, and by showing brilliance by taking high scores too easily. What fascinates Elena is Lila’s obvious genius shown through the first story she writes. The writer records Elena’s reaction:

“She struggled to maintain control, and succeeded: on the outside her anguish hardly showed. It’s true that in the tumult of explosions and colors I didn’t pay much attention to her. I was struck, I think, by her expression, which seemed increasingly fearful. I also realized that she was staring at the shadow of her brother—the most active, the most arrogant, shouting the loudest, bloodiest insults in the direction of the Solaras’ terrace—with repulsion.”^(20: 118)

In order to understand the meaning of envy and jealousy in the text, we have to have a closer look at the situation in which Lila attempts to persuade her brilliant friend to skip school just to let her parents halt their support for her middle and high schools. Deep inside her heart, Lila loves and admires Elena. This is obvious in the close companionship and the mutual competitiveness between the two girls. However, for a reason that is out of her rationale and

consciousness, Lila finds herself fervently trying to persuade her friend to skip school. This is only understandable in terms of something that is out of her control, a drive other than a feeling. Freud explains, “These jealousies... take root in the depths of the unconscious.”⁽²¹⁾

At the beginning of the novel, Elena starts to realize that Lila is better than her in everything; she reacts to the envy and jealousy by always saying that Lila is superior to her:

“I suppose that that was my way of reacting to envy, and hatred, and of suffocating them. Or maybe I disguised in that manner the sense of subordination, the fascination I felt. Certainly I trained myself to accept readily Lila’s superiority in everything, and even her oppressions”. (20: 32)

In their childhood, the two protagonists grow up in a neighbourhood that is characterized by poverty and violence, where gangsters rule over the neighbourhood through drugs dealing. Elena’s jealousy of Lila can be seen in her insistence to keep up with her by means of competitiveness, in school performance, vitality and boldness. When Lila decides to restore her and Elena’s dolls by going to the dangerous place where they dropped them, Elena insists to go:

“That image of power had passed in a flash, four young people in a car—that was the right way to leave the neighborhood and have fun. Ours was the wrong way: on foot, in shabby old clothes, penniless. I felt like going home. Lila reacted as if that encounter had never taken place, insisting again that she wanted to go for a walk where the fancy people were. She clung to Pasquale’s arm, she yelled, she laughed, she performed what she thought of as a parody of the respectable person, with waggling hips, a broad smile, and simpering gestures.” (20: 12)

The story goes on and the two girls separate only when Elena’s parents decide to pay the tuition fees for her to go through the middle school, urged by another jealousy, this time her mother’s, who envies the educated and feels much jealous about them. The writer says:

“In appearance it was no different from what happened at my house when my mother got angry because there wasn’t enough money and my father got angry because she had

already spent the part of his wages he had given her. In reality the difference was substantial.”(20: 55)

In her turn, and because her father forbids her from completing school, throwing her through a glass window onto the pavement, Lila shows jealousy and out of envy, she urges Elena to quit going to school so that they stay equal. She tries hard saying:

“In some very secret part of myself I looked forward to a school where she would never enter, where, in her absence, I would be the best student, and which I would sometimes tell her about, boasting. But immediately I began to falter, many of the others proved to be better than me.”(20: 61)

The feeling of jealousy drives Lila to recompense by working on new designs of shoes in her father’s shoes shop. :

“I passed Fernando’s shop only to see Lila at her workplace, sitting at a little table in the back, her thin chest with no hint of a bosom, her scrawny neck, her small face.” (20: 66)

Another revealing instance is when Lila gets married to Stefano Carracci, the grocer. This occasion triggers the fire of jealousy and envy in her friend, whom is consumed with different annoying contradicted ideas like the use of study or whether her study was just a waste of time and youth:

“In the middle of August. By the end of the month. I said: you can’t kiss, touch a person and be touched, and be only a little fond of him; Lila loves Stefano very much, I did not love Antonio.” (20: 193)

At the beginning of the novel, there is a shift to the memories of Elena’s childhood. Here, the reader could recognize the events that follow as reactions on her memories. It also brings out the ambivalence of her friendship with Lila: the language of “winning” suggests that she thinks of Lila as a rival, and that she seeks to undermine Lila’s attempt at disappearing by documenting their friendship. This framework serves as a reminder to the reader that the events of the novel are not narrated from an objective perspective, but only from a subjective one.

“We’ll see who wins this time, I said to myself. I turned on the computer and began to write—all the details

of our story, everything that still remained in my memory.”(20: 16)

The development of jealousy appears in the plot of the novel, her classmates start to recognize her behavior and how she starts feeling jealous of them.

“Then it happened that Signora Cerullo came to class and Maestra Oliviero revealed that Lila was far ahead of us. Not only that: she called on her to sit next to her more often than on me. What that demotion caused inside me I don’t know, I find it difficult to say, today, faithfully and clearly what I felt. Perhaps nothing at first, some jealousy, like everyone else.” (20: 31)

Elena starts to show a sign of envy when she describes Lila’s physical features and how she feels about her. She always considers herself as inferior to Lila. Here we can see that the plot develops this envy throughout the novel up till the end. The entire plot of the novel turns on the advances in harmful jealousy, as well:

“Lila, too, at a certain point had seemed very beautiful to me. In general I was the pretty one, while she was skinny, like a salted anchovy, she gave off an odor of wildness, she had a long face, narrow at the temples, framed by two bands of smooth black hair. But when she decided to vanquish both Alfonso and Enzo, she had lighted up like a holy warrior. Her cheeks flushed, the sign of a flame released by every corner of her body, and for the first time I thought: Lila is prettier than I am. So I was second in everything. I hoped that no one would ever realize it.” (20: 35)

Jealousy starts to affect the life of everyone in the novel, as those who bear the negative characteristics associated to jealousy, which are pointed out by Buunk namely, Neuroticism, anxiety, and hostility, come into the highlight. The main two characters in the novel are the most affected ones. Their behavior and the language in which they communicate show that they feel jealous of each other, and it proves that their friendship is based on jealousy:

“Besides, the teacher acted very shrewdly. It was true that she often called on Lila to sit next to her, but she seemed to do it more to make her behave than to reward her. She continued, in fact, to praise Marisa Sarratore, Carmela Peluso, and, especially, me. She let me shine with a vivid

light, she encouraged me to become more and more disciplined, more diligent, more serious. When Lila stopped misbehaving and effortlessly outdid me, the teacher praised me first, with moderation, and then went on to exalt her prowess. I felt the poison of defeat more acutely when it was Sarratore or Peluso who did better than me.” (20: 32)

Jealousy may take different forms and directions. The physical features, for instance are immediate targets of jealousy. Elena starts to feel jealous of Lila’s physical shape. She starts to realize that she is prettier than her:

“Maybe that’s why I became focused on Lila, who had slender, agile legs, and was always moving them, kicking even when she was sitting next to the teacher, so that the teacher became irritated and soon sent her back to her desk. Something convinced me, then, that if I kept up with her, at her pace, my mother’s limp, which had entered into my brain and wouldn’t come out, would stop threatening me.” (20: 31)

Another way of manifesting jealousy towards physical features can be seen in Ferrante’s uses of the comparative and the superlative degrees of preference to compare how some characters are preferred in some features, mainly the physical ones, other than other characters. It also sheds the light on how the rival may feel being better than others. By using this, the development of envy and jealousy in the novel could be recognized. In the novel, we see that Elena’s childhood insight of Lila highlights her admiration of her friend. Gradually, the comparison used by Ferrante lays emphasis on Lila’s power and strength, and that her language shifts from comparing her to other children to comparing her to adult authority figures. Juxtaposition is created between Lila’s physical fragility, which is remarked on throughout the novel, and the power of her intelligence and courage. Elena’s description of Lila suggests that she envies Lila’s ability to avoid consequences, but also creates foreshadowing that someday Lila’s recklessness may catch up with her:

“She seemed the strongest of us girls, stronger than Enzo, than Alfonso, than Stefano, stronger than her brother Rino, stronger than our parents, stronger than all the adults including the teacher and the carabinieri, who could put you in jail. Although she was frail in appearance, every prohibition lost substance in her presence. She knew how to go beyond the limits without ever truly suffering the consequences. In the end, people gave in and were even, however, unwillingly, compelled to praise her.” (20: 44)

The manifestation of jealousy and envy in the novel takes another form. It is turned to the relational level of the characters. With respect to Elena, she envies Lila for having a brother, who supports her even against her mother, and who is loyal to her. She always says that Rino could do everything to satisfy his sister and Lila always depends on him:

“I envied Lila that brother who was so solid, and sometimes I thought that the real difference between her and me was that I had only little brothers, and so no one with the power to encourage me and support me against my mother, freeing my mind, while Lila could count on Rino, who could defend her against anyone, whatever came into her mind.” (20: 78)

The fear has also an impact on Elena’s personality. She is always afraid of Lila’s achievements, which is a continuation of the fear of being surpassed by her friend. She is often envious of Lila, and used to assuming that Lila’s life is more interesting than her own life, and she always imagines that Lila will forget about her. Here, the metaphorical use of ‘losing pieces,’ that Elena makes use to describe the sense of loss and fragmentation is expressive of love of possession, possession of things one cannot possess.

“I missed only Lila, Lila who didn’t answer my letters. I was afraid of what was happening to her, good or bad, in my absence. It was an old fear, a fear that has never left me: the fear that, in losing pieces of her life, mine lost intensity and importance.”(20: 141)

The geographic separation in Elena’s life has an impact on the development of the jealousy in the novel. When Elena starts her journey in Ischia, it is obvious that she starts to engage in a new community where everything is different from her previous one. Jealousy takes a space in her life, which makes her continue to feel more competitive and jealous towards her friend. She wanted to be the one who is more successful in love, and the one who has more achievements than others:

“I used him to escape Nino Sarratore. When, for the first time after Ischia, we saw each other from a distance, Nino came toward me in a friendly way, but I dismissed him with a few cold remarks. And yet I liked him so much, if his tall slender figure merely appeared I blushed and my heart beat madly. And yet now that Lila was really engaged, officially engaged—and to such a fiancé, a man

of twenty-two, not a boy: kind, decisive, courageous—it was more urgent than ever that I, too, should have an enviable fiancé and so rebalance our relationship. It would be lovely to go out as four, Lila with her betrothed, I with mine.”(20: 171)

At the end of the novel, Elena shows her envy and jealousy to Lila when she told her about her wedding, which will be before her oral exam. Here, Elena believes that Lila is luckier than her and achieving a lot in her academic and personal life:

“The concreteness of that date made concrete the crossroads that would separate our lives. And, what was worse, I took it for granted that her fate would be better than mine. I felt more strongly than ever the meaninglessness of school, I knew clearly that I had embarked on that path years earlier only to seem enviable to Lila. And now instead books had no importance for her. I stopped preparing for my exams, I didn’t sleep that night.” (20: 187)

Another form of jealousy shows up in the novel. During her vacation in Ischia, Elena, while enjoying her time outside the neighbourhood, still cannot get her out of her mind. She keeps thinking about her and feels missing her because she assumes that Lila’s life is more interesting than her own. So, she was very eager to know and document each and every detail in Lila’s life in order to hone her own. In the following excerpt we can see that, through the metaphorical description of the ‘lost pieces,’ Elena shows weakness and a feeling of loss:

“I missed only Lila, Lila who didn’t answer my letters. I was afraid of what was happening to her, good or bad, in my absence. It was an old fear, a fear that has never left me: the fear that, in losing pieces of her life, mine lost intensity and importance.” (20: 211)

The vehemence of envy and jealousy continues to the last scene in the novel. We can see how Elena’s emotions fall in confusion towards Lila just in her wedding day. By means of a sensual language, Elena expresses a great deal of possessiveness towards Lila. This kind of possessiveness - to have and not to miss - is closely connected to the argumentations of envy and jealousy. The sensational expressions Elena uses hint at the fact that she envies/ is jealous of Lila being the gaze-thing, in her full form of a bride. The tone of heartbreak with which Elena expresses that means a lot:

“Today I can say that it was the embarrassment of gazing with pleasure at her body, of being the not impartial witness of her sixteen year old’s beauty a few hours before Stefano touched her, penetrated her, disfigured her, perhaps, by making her pregnant. At the time it was just a tumultuous sensation of necessary awkwardness, a state in which you cannot avert the gaze or take away the hand without recognizing your own turmoil.” (20: 213)

In one way or another, the infection of both envy and jealousy spreads out to infect the other people of the neighborhood. We can see that jealousy is also a source of tension in the neighborhood. As the Solara brothers become more successful and rich, many of the young men in the neighborhood are envious and jealous of them for being able to have power and properties like those theirs.

“It’s Stefano’s new car.” We walked to where the car was parked, in front of the grocery store, which had been enlarged, had two entrances now, and was extremely crowded. The customers, waiting to be served, threw admiring glances at that symbol of well-being and prestige: a car like that had never been seen in the neighborhood, all glass and metal, with a roof that opened. A car for wealthy people, nothing like the Solaras.” (20: 157).

Conclusion

In representational terms, each of Elena and Lila can be deemed representations of envy and jealousy; yet, each on a varied scope. In some instances, we see Lila championing in envy and jealousy. In fact, it is Elena, who is the typical representation of both. From the beginning of the novel up till the end, Elena envies and is jealous of Lila, in all senses. Her infatuation of Lila she shows expressly in a way that the reader understands possessive. She is haunted by all about Lila that she feels unable to miss, even a single moment, out of her life.

From the outset of the novel, one can trace how Elena’s childhood admiration for Lila develops into obvious envy and jealousy that are, sometimes pathological. As a young woman, Elena showed envy and jealousy towards Lila’s intelligence, luck, personal traits and even relational aspect.

At the end of the novel, we can see how Elena is consumed with the fire of the lack of access or reach for Lila. She takes Elena as a mirror, opposite which she

sees the image of herself. Lila's presence not absence is what makes her feels alive. In her own words, "*losing pieces of her (Lila's) life, mine (Elena's) lost intensity and importance.*" She admits that what gives her life 'intensity and importance' is being an indivisible part in Lila's life, and hopes that Lila could not forget to keep her and her memory in hers.

Notes

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