

ENVY OF THE WOMAN IN THE WORK OF MAX BECKMANN

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From the gigantic scope and variety of Beckmann's paintings I have selected some examples that seem to reveal his envy of the woman. In the first part of this presentation I will tell you a bit about Beckmann and his background. In the second part I will briefly review the psychodynamics of envy and bring us up to date on the current controversies about the notion of primary envy. Finally, I will attempt to show how Beckmann's envy of the woman manifests in his work. His drastic rendering of barbaric brutality in paintings like The Night (1918-19) (1), both repulses and fascinates us. We viewers can't look at the event as tragic nor identify with the victims. It is also hard to look at these paintings without remembering the socio-political milieu Beckmann was a part of. As Burke (1984), an art historians puts it, "In our century, no artist has been more a part of his own times (p.53)".

Max Beckmann was born in Leipzig in 1884. Both his parents came from farming families. He had two older brothers and a much older sister.

Beckmann's father died when he was 10. Max was not a diligent student at school but he liked to draw. At the boarding school where he was a student he arranged for his classmates to pose for him in exchange for food that his mother was sending him. He did his first self-portrait at age 15. The important themes of his life's work were already formulated in childhood: eternity, an interest in mankind, self-questioning, and the desire to explore foreign cultures. In 1901, at age 21, he completed his first etched self portrait. While living in Paris he became deeply interested in the work of Cézanne. At age 26 he won a prize for the painting Young Men by the Sea (1905) (2). The prize included a scholarship at the Villa Romana in Florence. He married Minna, an aspiring painter who later became an opera singer, and moved with her to Florence. In the same year he began his life-long fascination with Schopenhauer. He and Minna established residence in Berlin and had a son, Peter. After a visit to an exhibition of Chinese art, he wrote in his journal: "My heart beats more for a raw average, vulgar art, which doesn't live between sleepy fairytale moods and poetry but rather concedes a direct entrance to the fearful, commonplace, splendid, and the average banality of life. An art which can always be present in the reality of our lives". In 1910 Beckman was the youngest member nominated to the board of the Berlin Secession and his work was widely exhibited throughout Germany. After a year in the war as a medical orderly, Beckmann suffered a psychotic break of which there is practically no documentation except that by this time he was racked with nightmares and recurring terrors. He had been eager to be part of this grand event, to stare horror in the face and to document it, which he did, but may have been unable to keep his distance from the carnage.

The heroic themes of his large paintings and his tryptics rival the art of the past and confront and renew subjects of extraordinary significance into the new

century. But he also concerned himself with more modest sketches and prints of city life, cafés bars, landscapes and still life. Beckmann was increasingly successful in the 20's gathering much recognition in artistic circles as well as an appointment as a professor in the Art Academy in Frankfurt in 1925. After 1929 Beckmann lived mostly in Paris but in 1933 he moved back to Berlin. Shortly after Hitler's election to power he was fired from his teaching post at Frankfurt. Although he was not Jewish, he was one of a number of artists whose works were proscribed by Hitler's government and was one of the main attractions in the "Degenerate Art" exhibition in Munich in July 1937, the culmination of four years' official attack on these artists. The day after the exhibition opened, Beckmann left Germany for Amsterdam, never to return to his country. With Departure (1933) (3), the first of his monumental tryptics, he symbolized parting from his homeland. By 1941 Beckmann was trapped in Amsterdam by the invading German army, isolated from friends and from the art world, alone with his second wife Quappi and in near-hiding. Between 1932 and the liberation in 1945 he had no exhibitions in Europe but he never stopped painting. In 1946 exhibitions were held in New York, Boston, San Francisco and other American cities as well as in Munich and Stuttgart. In 1947 he took a teaching position at the school of Fine Arts of Washington University in St. Louis and in the following three years Beckmann was lionized in the US where he rejoined society in a new and hospitable land. In 1948 the St. Louis Art Museum organized his first major retrospective recognizing him as one of the most important living European artists.

A brief review of the main psychoanalytic views on envy is in order before delving into Beckmann's paintings. The history of envy in psychoanalysis began with Freud's formulation of penis envy in "On the Sexual Theories of Children" (1908), a paper based on the analysis of Little Hans. Freud always

maintained the hypothesis that the envy of the penis was at the center of feminine sexuality, although for him this envy did not have the destructive quality assumed later by Melanie Klein in her notion of primary envy in both men and women. For Freud, the woman searches for the penis in the father while the mother, for not having one, is disqualified in her potency. From the wish for the penis, the woman moves on to the wish for the father and, finally, to the wish for a baby (1917). Except in the case of Leonardo, at no time did Freud consider an analogous dynamic in the man for the woman's envy of the penis. In fact, in his paper on Leonardo, he only discussed the envy of the woman implicated in Leonardo's homosexuality.

Even though there were some precursors to Klein's theory of primitive envy in the work of Eisler (1921), and Abraham (1920), her notion is that envy is a dynamic factor of tremendous importance from the beginning of life, that this envy is directed toward the mother's breast, and that it occurs to the same extent in boys as in girls. For Klein not only does early envy exist but it is directed toward a particular object, the mother. In her paper "Jealousy as a Mechanism of Defense" (1934), Joan Riviere anticipated Klein's view. In that paper, Riviere expands Freud's idea that women are more jealous than men because jealousy hides envy. She observed in one of her female patients that the jealousy of her husband, by whom she felt robbed and dispossessed, was covering her wish to dispossess him and others of their belongings and pleasure. The fantasy of robbing him expressed her wish toward the object, which was ultimately the mother's breast in the transference. Riviere noticed that the patient's jealousy of her husband came to the fore each time she engaged in unconscious envious attacks toward her mother in the analyst. This dynamic in her paper also anticipates Klein's notion of projective identification.

In her early work Klein had linked envy with oral, anal and urethral sadism directed toward the mother in the early stages of the Oedipus complex. She had not related envy specifically to the desire to take away and spoil the mother's breast. In the preface to Envy and Gratitude (1957), she declares that what she formerly had considered as attacks on the mothers' body such as emptying out, destroying or robbing applies as well to the breast. We might want to clarify here that she is talking about an early paranoid-schizoid phase where the infant relates to part-objects rather than whole objects. Envy of the breast and its functions occurs earlier than the attacks on the mother's body as a whole object. In fact, for Klein there is a sequence in development in which the object of the envy is the breast, then the mother's body with daddy's penis inside, and then, what is envied is the combined figure of the parental couple. These envied objects are rooted in infantile phantasy and, according to Klein are, in part, genetically programmed. She based her theory on evidence she found working with very young pre-edipal children.

Envy is primary because it is addressed to the primary object which for Klein is the breast. What has been the cause of much argument is when object relations proper begin and whether the young infant can suffer envy. Classical analysts place the object relation with the mother after an autoerotic, narcissistic phase and, as a consequence, do not believe that primary envy exists. Others who can accept the idea of an early relationship to the breast still find it hard to accept the notion that newborns can experience envy. Primary envy also refers to the fact that envy exists from the beginning, as opposed to secondary envy which would indicate a later development. Primary envy would thus be constitutional as opposed to acquired, secondary envy. Klein (1957) assumed the propensity for envy to be constitutional and to

be an expression of the death instinct. However, she did not deny that the vicissitudes of development can increase or diminish this constitutional disposition. For example, a mother who projects her own envy into the child can increase the child's envy. In the same way, envy can be exacerbated in the patient if the analyst projects envy into him or her. There has been much confusion in the controversy over envy because for some primary refers to the primary object, the breast, whereas for others primary refers to the subject and would imply that envy is constitutional. While Klein contends that primary envy is constitutional she leaves unanswered the question as to whether what is constitutional is envy or greed, oral sadism, the tendency to narcissism, or the tendency to idealize the object, all of which increase envy. Some of Klein's followers have been trying to unravel these questions.

In The Psychoanalysis of Children (1932), Klein suggested that oral frustration leads to a desire to enter the mother's body but twenty five years later, in Envy and Gratitude (1957), she modified her view to maintain that envy cannot be explained only as a response to frustration. This point is highly debatable because it has to do with the relative weight we attribute to endogenous or exogenous factors, nature versus nurture. Thus, environmentalists will oppose the idea of endogenous envy in favor of a frustration-aggression theory whereas those who tend to emphasize constitutional givens will be more prone to accept the idea of constitutional differences in the experience and expression of envy. One thing is clear: the frustration-aggression theory does not resolve all the problems when it comes to the person's hatred of the object. The sicker the patient, the more the frustration-aggression theory fails to account for his or her envy, even though the patient may say he or she feels frustrated and never admit to feeling envy. This is especially the case when patients feel frustrated and angry after

receiving something good. In this case, the generosity of the other is responded to with frustration. But would this not be primary envy rather than envy due to frustration? Etchegoyen and Rabih (1987) offer a good example to make this point: "If we make a patient wait and he says we frustrate him, he is right but if a patient says we frustrate him because we are punctual and he can't be as punctual as the analyst, this is different: because, actually, what should we do in order not to frustrate him? If we arrive late, he is going to say that we frustrate him because we are making him wait; if we are punctual, that we frustrate him because he doesn't have that virtue" (p 372, italics mine). Thus, while the analyst is putting his skill at the patient's service, the patient experiences it as a frustration or attributes his hatred of the analyst to this frustration rather than his envy. From here there is a short step to finding something in the analyst that can be frustrating to express hatred due to envy when, in fact, it was what was good about the analyst that provoked the envy.

In last year's Melanie Klein Memorial Lecture of the Psychoanalytic Center of California Elizabeth Spillius (1991) outlined a complex interactive model of the factors that mitigate envy or exacerbate it. In her model, she examined the giver/receiver relationship in which envy is likely to be aroused. In addition to the factual reality about the nature of the giving and receiving, she considered the conscious and unconscious feelings and perceptions of both giver and receiver. Spillius' model constitutes an important reminder of the many sides to be considered in the understanding and interpretation of envy and points out the special need to pay attention to the analyst's countertransference.

Now we turn to the manifestations of envy since unconscious envy is usually inferred from its defenses. The most common defenses against envy are 1)

devaluation of the object which, through projective identification, leads to the corresponding devaluation of the self (Klein, 1957 ; Segal,1964; Joseph,1986; 2) projection of envy in which the person feels surrounded by envious and destructive people (Klein ,1957; Joseph, 1986); 3) idealization of the envied object so that comparisons with oneself become irrelevant (Joseph, 1986); 4) identification with the envied object through projection (getting inside the object) or introjection (taking possession and fusing with the object) (Klein, 1952; Rosenfeld, 1964), and 5) a form of masochistic defense in which the person feels hopeless as long as the envied object is proven worthless (Joseph, 1986).

Another angle from which one can examine envy is narcissism. The relationship between narcissism and envy is a complex one. Narcissistic vulnerability is responded to with defenses which may involve envious attacks on the all powerful, bountiful maternal object that makes one feel small and vulnerable. We can now begin to examine these notions about envy in Beckmann's work. In this triptych painting called Beginning (1946-1949) (4) we may assume that the punished student with his arms raised against the wall was Beckmann, who as a child did not do well in school. He may also be the child passing his drawings to the other children, which he wrote about in his journals. The vulnerable Beckmann reveals himself in some of his early self-portraits. In an early one in drypoint, Self Portrait (1901) (5), he shows only his face, his mouth wide open to the viewer in an outcry, reminiscent of Munch's painting, The Scream, done five years earlier. The Self Portrait as a Medical Orderly (1915) (6) reveals him in an unstable pose as he looks at the viewer confused and terrified. In a masterful pen and ink drawing, Self Portrait (1917) (7), he has a distressed look and clutches his own throat. At other times Beckmann displays the arrogant stance of the narcissistic defense. In

these self portraits he seems to engage the audience in a very direct and defiant way. As examples we have a Self Portrait with Cigarette on a Yellow Background (1923) (8), a Self Portrait with Beret (1944) (9), a Self Portrait with Tuxedo (1927) (10), a Self Portrait in Tails (1937) (11), in which he seems less certain, a Self Portrait in Black in which he turns to the viewer (1944) (12), and a Self Portrait with Blue Jacket, done in the US (1950) (13).

In one of the paintings that depict his family, like this one called Family Scene (Beckmann Family) (1918) (14), Minna, Peter and his mother-in-law are in the front plane while he seems unengaged in the background and in a world of his own. Here in Family Portrait (1920) (15), he again appears uninvolved in the action while projecting his narcissism onto his wife who is looking at herself in the mirror, her back to the viewer. In Before the Mascarade (1922) (16), Beckmann is the only one looking at the viewer, reflecting perhaps a preoccupation with himself.

We might turn to what Beckmann has to say in order to throw some light on what so far appears as a narcissistic vulnerability and its defenses. In his diary Beckmann writes about a dread of his instinctual needs, with all its implications. He says, "The more strongly, deeply, and burningly moved I am by our existence, the more resolutely my mouth is closed; my will is all the colder to grasp this horrible quivering monster Vitality and lock it up in sharp lines and planes, clear as glass, to repress it, to strangle it" (quoted in *ibid*, page 28). The closed mouth he is referring to brings to mind a lithograph from 1946 entitled I Don't Want To Eat My Soup (17) where a child is refusing the food offered by her mother. An older woman is knitting while sitting behind the child's high chair, perhaps the grandmother. Thus the child is surrounded by

enticing women. The closed mouth is also like those closed spaces in some of his canvases. Space and vitality are constricted or denied. One is reminded of Fairbairn's (1952) notion of the anti-libidinal ego, the ego that hates the enticing object as well as the self that needs it, wants it. Beckmann's tight mouth is an expression of this anti-libidinal ego which protects him in all his narcissistic vulnerabilities. In this sense, the tight mouth and the cigarette in his hand in some of the self-portraits may be both an expression of an omnipotent declaration "I have it. I don't need anything, anyone!" and thus, his outward self-assuredness and arrogance.

In an often quoted diary entry of July 4, 1946 he writes, "Cold wrath reigns in my soul. Is one ever to be set loose from this eternal, hideous, vegetative physicality? Are all our acts ever to remain laughable inconsequentialities in relation to the boundless universe? ...Nothing is left to us but protest -- Boundless contempt for the lascivious bait with which we are repeatedly lured back to take life's bits in our mouths. When we are then half dead of thirst and want to quench it, the mocking laughter of the gods appears --You lick salt, you poor megalomaniacal slave; sweatily and endlessly comical, you dance in the arena of endlessness to the thunderous applause of the divine spectators. The better you do it (take the bait, that is), the more comical you are. The most comical are the ascetics, who invent for themselves yet another sensuality in renunciation or self torment -- Saddest of all is the absolute profligate, because he drinks pitch instead of water -- Let us hold on to contempt" (italics mine). The anti-libidinal ego is at work here, mocking the temptation - which he calls a lascivious bait - and mocking the self via the internal mocking gods who laugh at the sight of his thirst. Here not even a closed mouth seems to help. He laughs at the ascetics' solution since they cannot escape the masochistic pleasures inherent in self-torment. He also

laughs at those who surrender to the dissipation of the flesh: they drink tar instead of water. He writes that we are lured to take life bits in our mouth, which reminds us of the mother with the spoon trying to feed the child. One can't help think of the baby being lured by the mother's presence to take the nipple into his mouth, as though she stimulates a desire that he wants to squelch. His only solution is thus contempt. Contempt may represent a focus of Beckmann's defensive denial of his dependency on others, which supports his omnipotent stance (Klein, 1940). In this light it is easy to conclude that defiance and contempt are defensive solutions that permeate his work.

The actual madness in Beckmann's world and his own madness is most clearly reflected in his treatment of the relationship between men and women, who always appear to be at odds with one another as in the tryptic Temptation (1936-37) (18). In the details you can see how the woman is shown either bound (19), viciously seductive while the artist is bound (20), or bestial, where he mocks motherhood by showing a caged woman suckling a dog (21); or does he feel reduced to a dog at the breast? In Woman Bath (1919) (22), another instance of a crowded space, women are cruelly rendered, shown as grotesquely vulgar. The main theme in the dry point of Adam and Eve (1917) (23), the painting Adam and Eve (1917) (24), where the figures are reversed, and Man and Woman (1932) (25), seems to be that the woman represents a threat to man's integrity. In Prodigal Son (1949) (26), he is covering his ears while surrounded by women, supposedly luring or tempting him, just as in the lithograph I Don't Want to Eat My Soup where he doesn't want to open his mouth.

The woman is often portrayed as a seductress, as in Fisherwomen (1948)

(27), or in The Bath (1930) (28), where the man is taking the bath but it is the woman who dominates the scene. In the pen, ink and wash A Walk (The Dream) (1946) (29), the man is falling into the sea which has been transformed into a woman's body. In the lithograph The Fall of Man (1946) (30), a tall man is surrounded by a serpent while the woman lies down self-satisfied. The woman is also self-satisfied and relaxes as an odalisque in the drawing in black chalk The Night (1926) (31), while the man covers his face in exhaustion and/or shame. In City of Brass (1942) (32) the woman is also relaxed while the position of the man is strained and expresses a sense of burden and guilt. One wonders whose aggression those spears in front relate to.

The woman seems to carry another point of view toward life that is absolutely alien to Beckmann's own, which is premised on a radical individuality and defiance. Examples are: Reclining Nude (1929) (33), Sleeping Woman (1935) (34), Woman with Mandolin in Yellow and Red (1930) (35), where the mandolin, like a fish in other paintings, reaches for her while she seems oblivious to it. Morning (1946) (36), a lithograph, also depicts a self-assured woman in a prominent position whereas the man appears smaller, darker and in a second plane. This calls to mind Winnicott's (1971) views on the female element of both men and women that bases one's sense of self on a capacity for being as opposed to the masculine element of both men and women that has to do with doing. "In Beckmann's paintings women seem to exist without struggle...they seem immune to narcissistic injury (Kuspit, 1988, p78)". The woman seems indifferent to the heroic, defiant mode of being. Her passivity is a better instrument of survival than Beckmann's active confrontation of the gods. Her fullsome presence implicitly undercuts and trivializes his own.

Beckmann seems to despise and envy woman's basic attitude, her ontological self-containment, which makes her so desirable. His envy makes him depict her in a debased form as in this lithograph Crawling Woman (1946) (37).

Beckmann is not the only artist in whose work we find evidence of the ubiquitous envy of the woman. We can find a precursor to Beckmann in Leonardo da Vinci. Freud's analysis of Leonardo da Vinci, written in 1910, could be recast into a Kleinian framework. The vulture that Leonardo recalled as fluttering his tail inside his mouth when he was a baby may be the transformation and devaluation of his mother's breast into the tail of a ruthless carion-seeking bird. As we will see later, Beckmann's paintings contain various kinds of ferocious birds attacking women in which Beckmann himself, through introjective identification of the transformed object, has become the predatory bird. Further evidence for Leonardo's envious attacks on women is provided by a drawing of an anatomical sagittal section of sexual intercourse (38). While he depicts the male figure as complete, the woman is represented as part object. with a flabby and sagging breast.. He makes no mistake in the representation of the male organ but is quite innacurate in depicting female anatomy. The vagina can be made out but the uterus, the basis of the woman's procreative capacity, is represented by confused lines.

Leonardo's homosexuality represents a narcissistic turning away from the good object, transformed by Leonardo's envious attacks on a bad object. The anatomical errors in this drawing were pointed out by Reitler in 1917. In a footnote added in 1919, Freud writes : "It is precisely in the process of portraying the act of procreation that this (Leonardo's) excessive instinct for research has totally failed - obviously only as a result of his even greater sexual repression. The man's body is drawn in full, the woman's only in

part...The woman's breast reveals two defects. The first is an artistic one, for its outline gives it the appearance of a breast that is flabby and hangs down unpleasantly. The second defect is anatomical, for Leonardo the researcher had obviously been prevented by his fending off of sexuality from ever making a close examination of a nursing woman's nipples...he drew only a single duct extending far down into her abdominal cavity... " Later on Freud continues, "...even if we are ready to excuse the artist's defective knowledge of anatomy by referring it to the circumstances of his time, the striking fact still remains that it is precisely the female genital that Leonardo has treated so carelessly. The vagina and something that looks like the portio uteri can no doubt be made out, but the lines indicating the uterus itself are completely confused" (S.E. Vol IX, p. 70,71). In addition, the features of the man's face are marked by a resistance that is positively indignant. His eyebrows are wrinkled and his gaze is directed sideways with an expression of repugnance. His face expresses only indignation and aversion. This is not the only work where Leonardo shows his view of the woman. His portrait of the Mona Lisa depicts the woman as a temptress. For Freud, the enigmatic smile represents "...the contrast between reserve and seduction and between the most devoted tenderness and a sensuality that is ruthlessly demanding - consuming men as if they were alien beings (S.E. Vol IX, p108)".

As we have seen, in many of his paintings Beckmann also represents the woman as a seductive temptress. In the left panel of the tryptic Dance Rehearsal. Amazones (1950) (39), the only tryptic containing only women, they exercise with a serpent, the symbol of temptation. In Carnival Mask; Green, Violet and Pink Columbine (1950) (40), the woman offers herself most directly and with a threatening aura. In other paintings the temptress becomes a victim rather than erotically desirable and, as Leonardo, Beckmann

devalues her generativity (remember her suckling a dog).

Beckmann's envy of the woman comes through clearly in his depiction of her: the more erotically desirable, the more he tends to attack or entrap her body, violating the reality of her being by violating her appearance. The woman who potentially frustrates him becomes a bad object that has to be annihilated. We see here again the workings of his anti-libidinal ego which attacks both the object of desire as well as his own desire. In some paintings the attack on the woman is most explicit. In Parisian Carnival (1930) (41), a soldier attacks the back of the woman. In The Dogs Grow Larger (1947) (42), a pen and ink watercolor, a woman is being attacked by an oversized dog/bird creature. There are also more subtle attacks. In a lithograph entitled Magic Mirror (1946) (43), Beckmann represents a woman without her own reflection. This may be his own envious solution to Dancing Couple (1946) (44), another lithograph of the same year where the only prominent figure is that of a woman's head and yet he entitles it Dancing Couple. In the horror scene of The Night (1918-19) (45), where there are five murders, the female figure being tortured on the right is in the same position, back to the viewer, on the right of the canvas as his first wife Minna in Family Portrait (1920) (46), where she was looking at herself in the mirror on the left side of the canvas. One wonders if this depiction of an attack is related to the feelings of hatred stirred up by the prospective separation from Minna, a transformation from the woman into whom his narcissism had been projected to a vicious attack into the same woman that seemed so self-satisfied. Not only is the woman attacked in Beckmann's paintings, but through projective identification, the man ends up suffering the same fate as the woman. In Odysseus and the Sirens (1933) (47), the man is being attacked by a woman bird-creature just

as, in other paintings, a woman had been attacked by a man-bird creature. In the nightmarish scene of Birds' Hell (1938) (48), a fettered young man is having his back sliced open with a knife by one of the monstrous birds while a Fury-like goddess of fertility arises from an egg and seems to direct the torture. A still more primitive and extreme version is represented in a painting entitled The Snake King and the Stagbeattle Queen (1933) (49) where a small-headed phallic being attacks the armored woman, equipped with pincers and claws. Attackers and victims now become interchangeable and it is unclear as it is in the painting The Night, or in the right panel of Departure (1932-33) (50), or in the entanglement between the man and the woman in Air Balloon and Windmill (1947) (51) who are the victims and who are the torturers.

Is Beckmann merely reflecting a diseased world or is he imbuing the world with his own internal drama? As Kuspit (1984) puts it, "It is not clear if the world is inherently 'diseased', a place where it is impossible to feel comfortable, or the disturbance is in the self (p73)". Both his defiance and contempt for his own dependency and his hatred of the tempting and luring woman are projected into the grotesque caricature in his allegorical paintings. In a late journal entry, written four years before his death, Beckmann writes, "I am still unable to find my way in the world, the same measureless discontent that I felt 40 years ago still fills my heart...(9,17,1946, quoted by Cornelia Stabenow in Schultz-Hoffman & Weiss (1984) p 302).

The crowded spaces in Beckmann's paintings provoke the viewer in many ways. The oppressive situation seems to express a helplessness that transcends personal fate. At the same time it is possible to think that these crowded spaces also represent Beckmann's internal world. The claustrophobic feeling may result from the unconscious fantasy of intruding

inside mother's body in order to control her and then feeling trapped inside (Rosenfeld, 1965). In this light, the small cat reaching for Fridel's breast in the Portrait of Fridel Battenberg (1920) (52), Quappi with Cat (1944) (53), or the fish in Woman with Fish (1948) (54), may be seen as attempts at possessing and fusing with the mother's body as a way to escape from the pain of dependency and the loss of the union with her. In a cast bronze entitled Adam and Eve (1930) (55), Beckmann depicts a seated Adam holding a small woman next to his chest in a reversal of roles of the cat and fish paintings that seem to eliminate the possibility of a reciprocal relationship. In one of the entries in his diary he complains of not ever having had a carnal experience that was truly satisfying. A satisfying experience would have required that he be able to separate from his object and surrender to it (Klein, 1940). These paintings then suggest that there may have been a boundary problem between him and his mother resulting in a disturbed relationship with anyone he was dependent on. The absence of gaze in the double portraits with his wives, an early one with his first wife entitled, Double Portrait of Max and Minna Beckmann-Tube (1916) (56), and the two portraits with his second wife, Double-Portrait Carnival (1925) (57), and Double-Portrait, Max Beckmann and Quappi (1941) (58), suggest a "taking for granted" characteristic of an unconscious fusion with them. They were part of him and perhaps they functioned merely as self-objects. The state of fusion with his objects may account for the sense of entanglement with others depicted in the paintings. The absence of psychic space then finds a representation in pictorial space where either the people involved are in close proximity but with no communication between them or they are entangled in a hopeless claustrophobic confusion.

With the help of Beckmann's paintings I have attempted to present to you a

pictorial account of his envy of the woman. The best account for the evidence of envy and its early nature derives from Melanie Klein's work with Richard, a 10 year old patient who, during his analysis did many drawings depicting his envious attacks on his mother and on Klein, his guilt for such attacks and his reparative efforts after the attack was made conscious through interpretation (1961). Klein found similar envious attacks of the mother and of the analyst in the transference in little boys, girls and adults of both sexes. I have tried to show how Beckmann's envy of the woman was linked to an idealization of the woman and to an omnipotent and narcissistic response to his vulnerability toward her. As Segal has pointed out (1969), envy and narcissism can be seen as the two sides of the same coin. Thus, the self portrait paintings can give us as much evidence of the envy of the woman as the more direct paintings depicting an attack on them.

This pathologizing of Beckmann does not imply a lack of integration in his work nor detract from its greatness. Just as in Rembrandt, whom he greatly admired, the central concern seems to have been a representation of humanity with all its contradictions. For both artists there have been many unsuccessful attempts to assign a precise meaning to any portion of their work. As the scene becomes more allegorically distorted in Beckmann, the surface of the painting decompensates into crude painterliness. This would denote for some the loss of a firm grasp on the reality being depicted, which becomes more and more mad. Just as a defensive omnipotent structure can temporarily pull a person together, the glue that pulls Beckmann's paintings together seems to be his omnipotent defiance and contempt of man's passions and society's ills. Another way to think of the glue is by remembering that Beckmann was not alone with the canvas. His wives Minna and especially Quappi must have provided him with the holding environment

that enabled him to use the canvas as a container for his despair, loneliness and confusion, as well as for his defiance and contempt. We have another instance of a mad artist for whom imaginative achievement goes hand and hand with his envious attacks on the woman and with his use of primitive defenses.

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