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WOMEN'S ENVY IN THE WORKPLACE: CONTEXTS AND CONSEQUENCES

by

PARA AMBARDAR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

2003

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S ENVY IN THE WORKPLACE: CONTEXTS AND CONSEQUENCES

by

Para Ambardar

Advisor: Professor Laurence J. Gould

There is a paucity of literature on women's subjective experience of being envious or being envied in the contemporary workplace. Yet envy, wanting what another possesses, is believed to thrive in a competitive interpersonal milieu, much like the modern workplace, where employees vie for limited organizational resources and rewards. Accordingly, there is a need to better understand envy's role in the workplace and move from an abstract, context-free conceptualization of workplace envy to one that is more differentiated and context-bound. Eighteen women were interviewed for this qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews. Results were analyzed using both psychoanalytic and social psychological theory and research. Findings revealed that professional women did experience envy at work as characterized by both Kleinian theory and social comparison research. Two contexts, referred to as 'withholding' and 'destructive differentiation' in this study, elicited envy in participants. Envy in the context of 'withholding' was evoked when one wanted: (1) a specific 'organizational good' such as a promotion or special assignment was given to another, (2) interpersonal rewards such as praise and recognition that another received, and (3) mentoring that another colleague acquired. Envy in the context of 'destructive differentiation' was felt

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(1) when a colleague with whom they identified achieved more success (2) when a colleague possessed talents or skills of special value and importance to their type of work. Four themes were also identified regarding the consequences of envy in the workplace. The four themes fell on a continuum, spanning from more to less destructive consequences: (1) envious attacks aimed at damaging the envied other, (2) withdrawing from a relationship of potential value, (3) devaluing oneself, and (4) improvements in motivation. The finding that participants' experiences fell on a continuum from negative to positive has important implications. If a continuum of experiences of envy exists, envy be a normative experience in the workplace and may have functional and adaptive purposes in the workplace rather than solely pathological ones. This study demonstrated the need for greater recognition of envy's role and impact on achievement, performance and productivity in the workplace.

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If your feet are muddy, you will look for water to wash it off. But if you are afraid to touch the water, the mud cannot be removed. -- Rumi

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This dissertation study is dedicated to my mother, Shanta Ambardar

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing and researching the subject of envy required an orchestration of deep emotional responsiveness onto a robust conceptual framework. Additionally, the process of writing this dissertation demanded vigilance about my enactments of envy in my own professional turf. As such, many others were instrumental in helping me manage these particular challenges and their faith in the 'process' kept me focused. First, I want to thank my doctoral committee: Larry, Debra, Steve, Jeff and Jama. Their teachings and steadfast encouragement in developing my vision afforded me the unique gift of truly getting to know my mind, heart and soul. Larry, thank you believing in this topic so whole-heartedly and providing me with the essential literature and thoughtful insight just at the right time. Jama, thank you for your steady encouragement as well and thorough and perceptive analysis of my ideas and writing. Your challenges helped me to account for my convictions and ideas more rigorously. Steve and Jeff, many thanks to both of you for your enormous sensitivity to my development as a researcher and clinician throughout grad school and to the rapid responses to requests I posed along the way.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF TABLES

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INTRODUCTION

There is a dearth of literature and research on the role of envy in the workplace. This is particularly noteworthy as it is becoming more widely accepted that emotions in the workplace and the subjective meaning of work relationships are important to productivity and understanding of organizations (Armstrong, 1999; Amado,1995; Diamond, 1993; Jacques,1995; Fineman, 1993; Gabriel, 1999; Gould, 1999; Zaleznik & Kets de Vries, 1975). Furthermore, some suggest that the workplace increasingly is becoming a center of social life, making the nature of the interpersonal relationships that emerge more significant (Hochschild,1997; Kanter, 1989). Envy is believed to thrive in a competitive interpersonal milieu, much like the contemporary workplace, where an individual believes that something they want and need is being withheld and possessed by another. For example, an individual envies, at times, what another colleague has, whether it is rewards, skill, talent or opportunities that is believed lead to the other's career advancement and security (Bedeian, 1995; Vecchio, 1995).

While the degree of envy varies in different work settings and work cultures, envy is felt to be more abundant in general as anxiety about long-term career security is on the rise. It has been proposed that careers are becoming increasingly portable and job security is being re-defined as emanating, not from the organization, but from within the individual (Kanter, 1989). As a result, there is increased responsibility falling on the individual to be flexible and ambitious enough to amass more opportunities in order to maintain an employable status. Those that succeed to gain organizational resources, or "goods" receive not just increases in salary or benefits but also opportunities to learn and

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to hone their skills. With this added level of personal responsibility, there may be even greater potential to evoke envy in colleagues who were denied the same opportunities that they feel they need for career advancement or long-term employability. Envy, in the workplace, may therefore be evoked not only for basic survival, but also in order to thrive, in the workplace.

Research is limited on the realities of envy in the workplace, from the perspective of the employees, and the lack of available models by which to understand envy in the workplace has shaped my purpose: to represent the forms and meanings of envy in the workplace. There is no research that shows the subjective experience of envy in the workplace. The few studies of envy's role in the workplace have been case studies, clinical conceptualizations and broad survey studies. This research study is a beginning attempt to learn more about the subjective experience of envy in the workplace. My goal here is to move towards naming, illuminating, and addressing the contexts and consequences of envy in the workplace using actual experiences shared by those interviewed. The broad aim of this study is to show if and how envy appears in the workplace and to demonstrate the need for the development of a greater recognition of its role and impact in the workplace.

Part of the impetus for this project arose from my years of working in various professional settings. I learned that one of the most difficult aspects in the workplace, and least discussed, was colleague's feelings of envy, both feeling envious of others and feeling envied by others. I myself recall one experience in particular that stands out when I think about envy and, no doubt, served as part of the inspiration for this project. I had been refused a fellowship at an externship site. The woman, a senior classmate, who

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received the fellowship, was a very skilled clinician: she had the power to empathize with a wide range of patients and she could formulate cases brilliantly seemingly spontaneously. I identified with her passion for clinical work yet was also aware that she had something I didn't. I wanted it and if I didn't have it, I felt that she shouldn't have it either. Most significantly, however, my envious behavior towards her prevented any chance of that happening. Collaboration or learning couldn't occur. I couldn't talk to her. I barely acknowledged her when we passed each other in the hallways and would act very busy and focused on a task should we find ourselves in the same setting. When she was selected to give a colloquium to the entire program, naturally, I didn't attend. During the hour she was presenting I tried to read some abstruse article in the library, hoping to find holes in her argument, yet the whole time intensely aware that the event, her 'event', was taking place. When other classmates lauded her work afterwards, I tried to minimize her abilities, attributing her talent to privilege --she did not have to work *and* go to school like many of us -- or secretly telling myself that if one talked to her at a social event, boy, was she a true bore. Because of my envious reaction, which I only acknowledged in retrospect, I couldn't learn from her, I couldn't work with her; I couldn't even feel comfortable in an office with her.

When I later shared this experience with others I knew, they began to tell me about their similar experiences. Traditional literature on envy doesn't suggest that this is envy or merely describes the above anecdote in the language of competition. But the word 'competition' does not suffice. The profoundly paradoxical nature of the experience I described, laced with feelings of identification, emulation, loss and destruction, is envy, envy of an ordinary and common variety.

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In this study, I attempt to clarify envy in the workplace and aim to use the data collected to move the conceptualization of envy in the workplace from an abstract, pathological, context-free definition to one that is more differentiated, normative, and context-bound. For purposes of this study, I examine the envious experiences of professional women and discuss the unique concerns women may have in the workplace and their connections that may give rise to envy in the workplace. Yet, from this research, I do not claim to provide the essential "woman's experience of envy in the workplace". To study gender implies studying both men and women and the ways in which gender influences envious phenomenon. While I recognize the need for a different, more expansive lens for understanding and interpreting male envy in the workplace, it is beyond the scope of this initial study.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature is designed to make the concept of *envy* more understandable in the context of the workplace. Both theory and research are presented in order to explore the contexts and consequences of envy in the competitive workplace environment. The introduction of the concept of envy to a workplace setting is as challenging as the concept of envy itself, being riddled with problems of conceptual bias and lack of clarity. Two fields of psychological theory, psychoanalytic and social psychological theory, are examined, in hopes of providing both depth and breadth to the examination of envy's role in the workplace.

Psychoanalytic thinking is helpful in highlighting envy's more unconscious and developmental origins, and social psychology steers the understanding of envy to a more normative social context. This combination should allow for the description of a wider range of envious experiences in the contemporary work place. The literature review will be divided into three sections for clarification. The sections which overlap have been, for the sake of clarity, separated into three parts that correspond to three questions: (a) What is envy? (b) What are the contexts in which envy emerges in the workplace? (c) What are the consequences of envy in the workplace? The first section, "The Concept of Envy ", is a general review; it covers the emotional and definitional spectrum of envy in the psychoanalytic and social psychological literature. Also discussed is how envy is used in everyday language and the ways in which the construct of envy overlaps with the construct of jealousy.

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In the second section, "The Contexts in Which Envy Emerges in the Workplace", relevant theory and research literature are presented that illustrate two contexts in which envy emerges: *withholding* and *destructive differentiation.* The first context referred to in this study is withholding. For the purpose of this study, withholding context is defined as a context in which the object or attribute one desires is possessed by another. Using Klein's thinking on envy, and Winnicott's subsequent work, I show how envy emerges in withholding contexts. This is followed by showing how withholding contexts arise in the workplace, using the related psychoanalytic theory on work inhibitions as well as social psychological theory and research on conditions that evoke envy and jealousy in the workplace.

The second context, destructive differentiation, is defined, for the purpose of this study, as the context in which differences between oneself and another person, with whom one also identifies, reveals inequalities in possessing something of value and importance. Using psychoanalytic and adult developmental theory, I demonstrate how destructive differentiation is connected to the evocation of envy. As stated in the introduction, this study is not primarily concerned with exploring the various differences between men and women with respect to envy in the workplace; however, feminist psychoanalytic theory and relational theory are presented to show how aspects of destructive differentiation have, for women, unique links to envy. Lastly, using relevant psychoanalytic and management theory, the way in which the context of destructive differentiation gives rise to envy in the workplace is shown.

The third section, "Consequences of Envy in the Workplace", is a review of the literature on interpersonal and individual consequences of envy. Beginning with the

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more destructive end, I present the psychoanalytic thinking on how envy impairs one's ability to maintain a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship with the envied person. Social psychological research also suggests that individuals withdraw from those they envy. There is limited research available on the various overt manifestations of envious attacks in the workplace aimed at devaluing the envied one. Psychoanalytic and social psychological theory are used to show envy's connections to thought disturbances and depressive and anxious emotional states in the workplace and its role in reducing work productivity.

Using relevant organizational psychology and psychoanalytic theory, I also show the present thinking that explores envy's particular role in limiting assertiveness and minimizing one's success in women. Lastly, I discuss envy's more helpful outcomes and presents social psychological research that suggests that envy can be a motivator for some individuals, helping them recognize what it is they desire and leading them to improve themselves in the area in which they feel disadvantaged.

Part One: The Concept of Envy

In this section, the emotional and definitional spectrum of envy in the psychoanalytic and social psychological literature is reviewed. Also discussed is how envy is used in everyday language and the ways in which the construct of envy overlaps with the construct of jealousy.

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Emotional Spectrum

Although envy has been widely studied within the context of theology and philosophy, it has been less widely examined in the field of psychology. Empirical work on envy views the experience of envy as a complex emotional state as opposed to a basic emotional state. Envy is described as *complex*, as it is often seen in combination with other emotional states (East & Watts, 1999). As such, it is challenging to identify envy's fundamental emotional components. Indeed, envious phenomena exhibit a great variety of combinations with other feeling states but, at a very basic level, envy is viewed as stimulating painful emotional activity. The emotional experience of envy is variegated and ranges from sorrow to hatred (Johnson-Laird & Oatly,1989; Plutchik, 1991). Psychoanalysts describe envy as akin to rage, destructive hostility, greed, shame, guilt and jealousy (Harris, 1999; Joseph, 1986; Klein, 1975, Spillius, 1993). The emotional spectrum also traverses emotional states such as desire and entitlement, longing, inferiority, self-criticism, dissatisfaction, and self-awareness (Bers & Rodin, 1984; Smith, Kim & Parrot, 1988).

The Definitional Spectrum

Envy, like any other emotional state, is connected to specific thoughts and beliefs that range in degree of conscious awareness and at various levels of intensity across individuals (Parrot, 1988a; Parrott & Sabini, 1989; Klein, 1975; Shengold, 1994). In the

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psychoanalytic literature, envy is viewed as a phenomenon between two people in which "angry feelings that another possesses and enjoys something desirable" emerge and the envious impulse "to take it away or spoil it" is produced (Klein, 1975, p. 181). Klein believed that in every individual frustration and painful interpersonal circumstances "rouse some envy and hate throughout life, but the strength of these emotions and the way in which the individual copes with them varies considerably" (Klein, 1975, p. 190). For those who are well-parented and fortunate, envy is a transient feeling, a temporary state, and the good or nourishing relationship to the other is soon regained. For these individuals, gratitude for what has been provided is more prevalent than disappointment for what is not given. In what Klein described as "excessive envy," the relationship to what is desired is "fundamentally damaged" because of envious attacks, which are attempts at self-protection, are much more frequent, and have a longer duration (Klein, 1975, p.187).

While Klein gave a sense that there was a spectrum of envious behaviors going on at various levels of intensity and ranging in targets, no further refinement of envy and its definition exists in the psychoanalytic literature. Thus, this review draws from related research in social psychology where theorists define envy as also occurring in the relationship between two persons, "when a person lacks another's superior quality, achievement, or possession, and either desires it, or wishes that the other lacked it" (Parrott and Smith, 1993, p. 906). Social psychologists have also categorized several forms of envy along a continuum of destructiveness. *Malicious envy*, similar to Klein's concept of envy, involves wanting what someone else has, and diminishing, or hurting the other when the need is not met. *Non-malicious envy* is a form of envy that is

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distinguished by the notion that an envious person may want what someone else has, but not necessarily at the expense of the other (Lieblich, 1971; Parrot, 1991). The motive behind non-malicious envy is to equalize the standing of the envious with the envied by motivating the envious person to act or improve his or her position rather than focusing on worsening the other's position (Neu, 1980).

The process of non-malicious envy still includes the experiences of pain and inferiority in comparing oneself to the envied, longing for what the envied has, despairing of having it; but it also includes that determination to improve oneself, or admiration of the envied (Parrott,1991). Thus, in this scenario it is possible for the two parties to have the desired object without taking away from the other but building it for oneself (Farrel, 1989; Neu, 1980), whereas in the more malicious conditions only one person is able to have the prize. This is also termed *emulative envy*, which "leads us to try and achieve what others have ...in a socially beneficial way" (Rawls, 1971, p.533). As we shall see, the important application to envy's role in the workplace is that the outcomes of envy may not necessarily be negative and they may motivate people to various kinds of adaptive reactions.

Significantly, Klein and social psychologists view envy as a phenomenon between two people, full of potential frustration and pain but also connected to gratitude and admiration. For Klein envy is normal *and* inevitable: it gradually diminishes and transforms through the emergence of guilt feelings that lead the reparative process with the envied object so that subsequent feelings of true gratitude and love can emerge (Klein, 1975). For social theorists envy is not necessarily malicious and it can lead to more constructive outcomes and admiration for the envied person. Therefore, it seems

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that in the integration of these formulations of envy lie the roots for examining envy in the workplace in a new important light: as normative, manifest in almost every relationship in various contexts, and finally, motivating individuals to various kinds of reactions, not simply negative, to their envy.

Envy in Everyday Language

In ordinary usage, envy is a slippery and elusive concept, at one time designating an act, at another an aspect of personality or a way of interacting. Envy can be external, manifested through behavior, or internal, manifested through feelings, fantasies, anger, and hostility. It can be used constructively, to lead one to one's wants, set things right, move societies toward equality, break harmful silences, pursue goals. Destructively, it is used to tear things apart, dominate and control others, harm, kill, or maim.

Yet envy still sounds to many people as though it is a dangerous state of affairs, a pathological experience in which individuals feel tremendous shame and humiliation in respect to envying others. Farber (1961) argues that the deeply painful affect of envy is the important reason why other affects interface with envy and conceal it. For example, in psychoanalytic theory jealousy is seen as a way of masking envy. As did Farber, Riviere felt that the narcissistic wounds and feelings of self-criticism experienced in normal jealousy defended against the even deeper pain of envy (Riviere, 1929). Klein also viewed jealousy and envy as having a complicated relationship: they can figure as motives for the same goals as well as serve to help manage and distort one's experience in interpersonal contexts. For example, Klein describes envy's role in jealous attitudes

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towards other people and feels that excessive envy influences and distorts frustrations that come from various other sources throughout development. Klein's examples are rooted in the Oedipus situation while still believing that envy plays a role in situations throughout life. Klein describes how excessive envy may influence the child to be more guarded, more suspicious, competitive, and envious of rivals as the father or siblings who are felt to have taken away the mother's breast and/or the mother (Klein, 1975, p.196). If envy is not excessive, then jealousy in the Oedipus situation can become a way of working through envy by distributing hostile and aggressive feelings more toward rivals and others instead of just toward one target (Klein, 1975, p.200).

It is clear also that the concept of envy is often used interchangeably with jealousy (Neu 1980; Schoeck, 1969). Jealousy was seen to accompany envy in approximately 60% of the cases Parrott and Smith (1993) examined in their study and they found also a substantial similarity in the emotional experiences of envy and jealousy (Parrott & Smith, 1993; Smith et al.; 1988). As discussed, envy is a painful affect and Klein argues that this may be an important reason why other affects, such as jealousy, interface with envy to conceal and defend against awareness of its existence.

There is a push, however, to distinguish envy and jealousy, as it is increasingly common for the word "jealous" to mean either jealousy or envy (Burke, 2000; Smith, Kim, & Parrott, 1988). Salovey describes the differences as follows: "Envy is viewed as occurring when another has what one lacks and jealousy is more connected to the loss of a relationship. Jealousy concerns relationships with other people, whereas envy extends to characteristics and possessions. The most typical experiences of jealousy are fear of loss, suspicion, distrust and anger; those of envy are inferiority, longing and ill will. In

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accounts of jealousy one often finds the jealous person wondering what in the world the partner sees in the rival; by contrast, the envious person knows what is superior about the rival" (Salovey, 1991, p.23).

Part Two: The Contexts in Which Envy Emerges in the Workplace

In this section, "The Contexts in which Envy Emerges in the Workplace", the I present a contextual framework that links the experience of envy in the workplace to existing organizational realities that are evocative of envy. Relevant theory and research literature are applied to two contexts in which envy emerges: *withholding* and *destructive differentiation.* The first context is withholding. Using Klein's thinking on envy and Winnicott's subsequent work, the literature review will show how envy emerges in withholding contexts. For the purposes of this study, *withholding* context is defined as a context in which object or attribute one desires is possessed by another. I then show how withholding contexts arise in the workplace, using the related psychoanalytic theory on work inhibitions as well as social psychological theory and research on conditions at that evoke envy in the workplace.

Withholding

Klein wrote about envy's origins in the early relational life with its first object, the mother. Klein postulated that the infant, who feels dependant on its mother for survival, may feel envious of the mother's possession of what it wants and needs. Klein

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suggested that envy led to fantasies of attacking the frustrating object in attempt to mitigate the loss of what was wanted by trying to damage it (Klein, 1975). Klein used the drive and structural theories of Freud but formulated many original concepts around child development and personality formation. I will focus on some basic features of this theory, what Klein termed the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, which lay the foundation for the development of envy in specific contexts.

In the paranoid-schizoid position the infant fears persecution from malevolent external objects and relates to the mother as a part object--that is, her breasts, face, and hands--are recognized, not the whole person. Rather, it seeks to hold onto only the good and push away the bad. Klein suggested that this split occurs when the mother frustrates the infant during early development. In the paranoid-schizoid period, the infant experiences aggression that it needs to project outward onto the mother, fearing her attack and destruction. As a result, the infant's evolving ego psychologically splits the maternal object and perceives each part as either all good or all bad. The infant's goal is to identify with the good part and keep at bay, or evacuate, its persecutors. Thus, while the desired part and the feared part remain safely apart, they do not co-exist (Klein, 1975).

This process of safekeeping has a price. First, it results in a fragmented ego that splits the self and others into good and bad parts, creating a defensive structure that distorts reality. The major anxiety is that the fantasized persecutors will destroy both the self and the good object. In this persecutorial structure, what is 'good', and what is 'bad', 'me' and 'not-me', are not experienced except in the moment. There is neither history nor are there connections between events in order to ward off the possibility that hate would destroy the love (Bion, 1959). Only the onset of the depressive position leads to

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the integration of *good* and *bad* aspects of the mother, and the establishment in the core of one's ego is a sufficiently good and secure object (Klein, 1975).

Klein viewed the development of envy as characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid phase. According to Klein, the preverbal infant-mother dyad was the essential bond from which envy *inevitably* developed due to the infant's inherent feeling at some point in time that the 'good' was being withheld by the one who was depended upon to impart it. Klein felt that envy develops early on in the unconscious emotional life of the infant due to the unavoidable frustrations and disappointments attributed to the mother, who, unlike in the pre-natal environment, is no longer continually available. Rather, there are competing demands for her attention and care. For example, if feedings are inconsistent, the infant is deprived by the very one on whom his or her well-being and safety depend. Klein terms this "primary envy of the mother's breast" (Klein, 1975, p. 183) when the infant is believed to feel envy "at seeing the mother with what it wants for itself" (Klein, 1975, p.182). Klein believed that envy was not only experienced in relation to those on whom one is dependent but envy may be evoked *because* of the experience of dependence. The infant's resentment of its dependence on the mother, who is in possession and control over the "good," creates envy in a withholding context.

Unlike Klein, who believed that some degree of envy was inevitable, Winnicott believed that envy was caused only by the infant's experience in an especially frustrating external environment. As did Klein, however, Winnicott believed that envy did emerge in a withholding environment, more specifically in the context of the mother's "failure to be available" (Winnicott, 1959). Winnicott described the appearance of envy in contexts in which there is a 'tantalizing' representation of the object, believing that "envy of the

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mother for something 'good' about her could only appear if the mother is tantalizing in her presentation of herself to the infant" (Winnicott, 1959, p. 445). By tantalizing, Winnicott means that the mother shows herself to have something of good that is external to the infant. When the infant knows of something good in the mother but does not get it or it is withheld, the infant feels deprived and tries to destroy the maternal object through envious attacks. Winnicott believed that "if the good qualities in the mother are available to the infant then envy has no place and the question of envy does not arise" (Winnicott, 1959, p. 453). Conversely, if the good is not available, envy does thrive.

Withholding in the Context of the Workplace

While envy may begin early in life, it also continues well into adult life. Klein described the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions in a dynamic relationship to each other throughout life; i.e., a person could revert to the earlier paranoid-schizoid position, where envious feelings dwell, given certain emotional triggers (Joseph, 1986; Klein 1975). Some propose that the contemporary workplace is an environment that could be characterized as triggering internal feelings of envy or persecution (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1989; Kernberg, 1985; Main, 1985; Neumann & Noumair, 1997, Obholzer, 1994, Stein, 1997). Earlier forms of envy, where maternal goods were seen as withheld or provided inconsistently, are viewed as having their counterpart in the competitive work setting where the allocation of a limited supply of organizational resources creates the potential for envy between colleagues (Vecchio, 1995).

Just as in society at large, within the workplace, there are the *haves* and the *have-nots*. When one feels one's reduced position is due to another person's apparent gains

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and resources, it leads to what can be viewed as envious thoughts and feelings. Following what Winnicott described as occurring in the relationship between the infant and mother, the 'haves' may tantalize the 'have-nots' in the workplace when pay increases, promotions, special equipment, and better offices are allocated only to a special few. Rewards, praise, and recognition from senior management, the parental-like object in the workplace, or from colleagues in interpersonal settings are also considered as eliciting feelings of envy in the workplace (Bedeian, 1995; Minor, 1990). Mentoring relationships that confer promotions and prestige and also fulfill important developmental functions in the workplace may provoke envy in those that have not been able to cultivate such a gratifying relationship at work (Axelrod, 1998). Employees who believe they are recipients of not enough organizational rewards or goods, whether concrete or interpersonal in nature, may feel envy; that is, what is wanted is felt to be withheld.

Destructive Differentiation

The second context for the emergence of envy in the workplace is *destructive differentiation.* For the purpose of this study, destructive differentiation is defined as a context in which differences between oneself and another person, with whom one also identifies, reveal inequalities in possessing qualities of value and importance. The psychoanalytic concept of differentiation is applied to processes, starting at birth, whereby an individual comes to perceive physical and mental demarcations between self and the object world. It is believed that from a position of undifferentiated symbiotic unity with the mother, the child develops a sense of two interacting selves, a

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separateness, greater clarity of what is 'me' and 'not-me' (Klein, 1975; Mahler, 1975; Winnicott, 1971). Differentiation is also affected by the individual's separation-individuation process where establishing a firmer sense of differentiation, a 'me' and 'not-me', is achieved through the development of characteristics, skills, personality traits and goals that are uniquely one's own (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein,1977; Flax, 1978).

The process of differentiation is a dynamic process that evolves over time. One refines one's sense of one's strengths and limits as one engages with the external world in intimate loving relationships, friendships as well as through one's educational and professional interests. In adult development, the workplace is viewed as domain that provides continuous opportunities for one to come to know one's abilities, capacities and vulnerabilities. The work world is an environment that encourages the process of differentiation in individuals along multiple dimensions such as knowledge, skill, ambition, talent and success (Gould, 1972; Levinson et al., 1978; Colarusso and Nemiroff, 1981). For example, ubiquitous changes in business processes or just management structure require new roles to be filled, new skills to be learned or additional responsibilities to be claimed. In these scenarios, and many others, management regularly make a host of decisions and employee comparisons to best address organizational needs and maximize efficiency. Employees as well assess for themselves, more or less consciously, who is capable or likely to lose out, and in the process, examine the perceived similarities and differences between one another (Axelrod,1998).

Management selections and employees evaluations of others in the workplace are illustration of how more conscious organizational activities can produces contexts in which differentiation between employees occurs. The person found lacking views the

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'other', who received what they wanted, as better than them (or considers that someone in authority judged the other as better), implying an elevation of the 'other' and a devaluation of oneself. For some individuals, distinctions made between oneself and the person who possesses qualities considered of value and importance for one's success in the workplace can evokes feelings of envy. This form of envy is evoked in the context of what can be labeled as destructive differentiation.

Levinson et al.'s (1978) concept of the "personal dream" further clarifies why envy may emerges in the context of destructive differentiation. The authors describe the personal dream as being initially "a vague sense of self-in-adult-world. It has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality" (Levinson, 1978, p.91). Throughout adult life, the dream plays an important organizing and guiding function in work life. Levinson et al.'s personal dream demonstrates that people come to work with a sense of goals and ideals that they recognize, more or less consciously, need a combination of ambition, ideals and talents to satisfy. Even under the most optimal conditions, in competitive settings, there are obstacles and injuries to one's self-esteem. Along the way, in one's interactions with other colleagues or supervisors, who have similar work goals and interests by virtue of being in the same workplace, one recognizes others' special talents, skills or opportunities that are perceived to enable them to be more successful at work. For some individuals, differences between oneself and another person, with whom one also identifies, reveal inequalities in possessing something of value and importance for achieving one's work dream, that can be seen as a predisposition for envy in the workplace.

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Destructive Differentiation and Women

The process of differentiation for women is viewed in psychoanalytic feminist literature as having some unique characteristics. Many feel that mothers tend to identify more strongly with daughters than with their sons making the process of differentiation more complicated for girls (Chodorow, 1978; Jordan et al, 1991; Notma et al, 1986). Daughters are viewed as having the paradoxical task of psychologically separating from the very one on whom their final gender role identifications are based. What this means is that, for many girls, gender identity is built upon and does not contradict, like it does for males, the earliest identifications with the mother (Chodorow, 1978; Jordan et al, 1991). If this is the case, many theorists have discussed how women's means of identifications, based more on similarity and continuity, make the process of differentiating and psychological separation from the mother or, others later in life, fertile ground for the development of envy. The experience of envy in this scenario may fee like: "someone that is like me, similar to me, even a part of me, is gone. I need it and it is being withheld from me. Therefore, I am incomplete and inferior." Envy emerges to defend against this loss and attempts to prevent the separateness, the experience of 'difference', by spoiling what the other has (Applegarth 1986; Bernay, 1989; Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1983; Ellman, 2000; Harris 1985; Klein, 1975; Notma, 1986; Person, 1982).

Ellman (2000) postulates that envy is a universal part of a female development, with more or less destructive effects on a woman's ability to differentiate, depending on her type of attachment to both parents. In the vicissitudes of the mother-daughter

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relationship, there is believed to a reverberating cycle of envy and rejection, in which differentiation is taken as rejection and being different leads to envious attacks aimed at sabotage the growth of the other and re-establish a relationship based on earlier identifications. Adult women, particularly if they find have found it difficult to resolve, or even engage, in discussions with their mothers and friends around their emergent differences, find it difficult to tolerate their own and other's individuality and self-assertion in the workplace. Adrienne Harris (1999), in her article entitled, *Aggression, Envy and Ambition: Circulating Tensions in Women's Psychic Life*, writes about the difficulties women experience achieving in the workplace because of developmental and social structures in which the very act of female active self-expression is often pathologized and notions of female empathy and connection more often idealized. She states that for some women in the workplace ambition and achievement is difficult or, at best, compromised because it evokes masculine and feelings of aggression which threaten gender role congruence and constitute a threaten to evoke envy in their relationships (Harris, 1999).

In the competitive workplace, women may experience the emergence of envy in a context of "destructive differentiation " in a distinctive way. Differences between oneself and another person, with whom one also identifies, may reveal inequalities in possessing something of value and importance but they also may feel like an abandonment of gender rules, a sign of too much differentiation and self-assertion, that threatens to damage female relationships and connections. Because women have encountered frustrations and blocks to advancement, women in the workplace who are faced with greater work opportunities that bring more power and require autonomous decision-making and risk-

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taking, may evoke envy in their colleagues. This may be particular salient to their female colleagues for two reasons: one, these women will be seen as fulfilling Levinson's idea of their "personal dream" at what is felt to be at the expense of the other and, second, they will move beyond the safety and security of being "similar" to being more "authentic" and explore new facets of their lives and themselves.

Comparisons With Similar Others

While social psychological theory emphasizes the more conscious aspects of envy, it lends empirical support to psychoanalytic thinking about how the process of destructive differentiation can evoke feelings of envy. Social psychologists postulate that there is more potential for envy to accompany experiences of differentiation when two people are identified or more similar to each other (Salovey, 1991; Tesser & Campbell, 1980). The similarity provides the rationale for wanting to equalize positions and also enables a more accurate and valuable comparison (Heider, 1958; Lieblich, 1971). Tesser and Campbell use the term "closeness" rather than similarity and defined closeness as psychological.

Through comparisons, done more or less consciously, one examines what are the perceived similarities and differences between one another. Comparison is seen as closely linked to the evaluation of self-esteem (Morse & Gergen, 1970; Tesser & Campbell, 1980). Feeling envy results when one person feels inferior or deficient to the other in relation to some thing or attribute that is being compared and considered a valuable component of person's one's self-concept and self-esteem (Festinger, 1954;

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Heider, 1958; Silver & Sabini, 1978b, Neu, 1980; Salovey & Rodin, 1984). When one's abilities, achievements, or possessions compare poorly with those of another, there is the potential for a decrease in one's self-esteem and social stature, and this is a route to envy (Heider, 1958; Silver & Sabini, 1978a; Salovey & Rothman, 1991). Comparisons also evoke envy are often when the other's excellence is perceived as diminishing the other (Salovey, 1991). In this sense, it is the notion of differentiation once again that threatens to evoke envy.

Destructive Differentiation in the Context of the Workplace

In a competitive workplace setting, work organizations tend to encourage a sense of conformity among their employees through organizational norms, values, and goals that are created within the organization (Schneider, 1987). Yet organizational structures also encourage employees to be autonomous, differentiated workers in order to maximize task efficiency, innovation and the ability to creative work (Axelrod, 1998). To the extent that situations at work frequently foster contrast and simultaneously encourage conformity, envy due to destructive differentiation may result. Envy can also occur due to an endless range of points of comparison. A few examples cited in the literature are talent, opportunities, assignments, reputation, possessions, relationships in and out or work, or any other aspect that is defines a person's success as (Goodman, 1997). Envy is believed to emerge as an attempt of some sort to protect oneself from one's s being lowered to in order to protect one self from a lowered sense of self-worth.

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One pair of researchers offer a case study of envy as enacted during the peer evaluation process of an outstanding performer in a workplace setting (Mouly & Sankaran, 2002). The authors use the New Zealand/Australian concept of a *tall poppy* defined as "a conspicuously successful person and one whose distinction, rank, or wealth attracts envious notice or hostility" to investigate *tall poppy syndrome*, or the need to cut an apparently successful person down to size, in peers whose colleague, a *tall poppy*, is seeking promotion in an educational institution. They propose that the enactment of envy is related specifically to differentiation of one colleague from other colleagues. Based on her competence and success, they describe a peer evaluation process laden with envious attacks. Playing off of ambiguity in the stated criteria for evaluation, the peer review committee forged negative and skewed interpretations of the high achiever that led to the denial of a promotion or any distinction to the 'tall poppy'. The case study, while limited in scope, does illustrate the destructive power of envy in organizations.

In their article entitled, *"Competition: A problem for Academic Women"*, Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen Moglen, both tenured professors, touched upon some dynamics of envy in the competitive academic world. In their article, they cite various examples of "daily realities" of envy in the workplace. For instance, they cite the example a senior colleague, Julie, subverting the more permanent appointment of another junior colleague, Heather. Overtly, Julie felt that the other's work would fail to add value to the departmental needs to serve the graduate students since she taught the same subject. More covertly, she was envious of Heather's talent, new ideas and more radical politics. The appointment Julie feared would lead to comparisons of their work in which she would end up feeling inferior and less special (Keller and Moglen, 1987).

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Part Three: The Consequences of Envy in the Workplace

As we have seen, the workplace provides the individual with an arena in which the experience of envy is probable. In this section, I review of the literature of interpersonal and individual consequences of envy. Beginning with the more destructive end, I present the psychoanalytic thinking on how envy impairs one's ability to maintain a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship with the envied person. Social psychological research also suggests that individuals withdraw from those they envy. I then present the limited research on the various overt manifestations of envious attacks in the workplace aimed at devaluing the envied one.

I then turn to psychoanalytic and social psychological theory to show envy's connections to thought disturbances, depressive and anxious emotional states in the workplace and its role in reducing work productivity. Using relevant organizational psychology and psychoanalytic theory, I also show envy's role in limiting assertiveness and its role in downplaying one's success in the workplace. Here I again present thinking that explores envy's particular role in limiting assertiveness and minimizing one's success in women. Lastly, I discuss the literature on envy's more helpful outcomes. I present social psychological research that suggests envy can be helpful motivator for some individuals, helping them recognize what it is they desire and leading them to improve themselves in the area they feel disadvantaged.

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Interpersonal Consequences of Envy

Psychoanalytic literature and social psychological research describe envy as damaging relationships of potential value. Klein saw envy as fundamentally destructive in its ability to interfere with the trust necessary to build a good relationship and sustain goodness between the mother and child. It was her belief that "[the] spoiling and destructive quality of envy in so far as it interferes with the building up of a secure relation to the good external and internal object, undermines the sense of gratitude, and in many ways, blurs the distinction between good and bad" (Klein, 1975, p. 230). The Kleinian concept of envy suggested that envy is particularly destructive because of its unique aim, i.e. "goodness". Other forms of aggression are directed often toward the 'bad' objects. Because envy is aggression directed toward what is 'good' in the other, the 'good" and the 'bad' are no longer separated from each other. In this case, there is no opportunity to "take inside" or introject the 'good' when envious feeling are present. Thus, one finds the envious person refusing to receive help or guidance from the envied object and undermining efforts by the envied one to provide what is needed. The thought of developing a relationship with the envied one in the hope of renewing access to what one wants is rejected. In fact, the envy may be due to the very fact that the other has the capacity to give what the other needs (Hinshelwood, 1989; Klein, 1975; Spillius, 1993).

Klein describes that one common defensive maneuver made by envious persons is withdrawing from the relationship that evokes envy and moving towards others who do not arouse envy (Klein, 1975). Pleban and Tesser (1981) also found that if someone is outperformed by another and it that evokes envy, the envious person will increase his/her

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physical distance from the better performing other. Salovey and Rodin (1984) also found that envious participants did not want a friendship relationship with an envied person.

Another means the envious person uses to defend against envy is aimed at removing or spoiling the desirable qualities contained in the other. Klein describes forms of hostile attacks directed at the 'good' breast and the creative aspects of the mother. The aim is to diminish the value of what is envied. In the adult, hostile attacks based on envy display a range of aggressive intentions. Reviews by Berke (1988) and Schoeck (1966/1969) provide many frightening accounts of attacks on envied persons, ranging from verbal abuse to the "evil eye" to physical assault and disfiguration. Envy has been seen as a motive to violent crime at work (Barling, 1996; Baron & Neuman, 1996; Schoeck, 1969; Van den Bos & Bulatao, 1996). In this review, I examine only non-fatal forms of envious attacks that are interpersonal, specifically, verbal and passive aggression. Envious attacks at this level aim to demean and disparage the other as well as impair the envied other's performance.

Overt manifestations of the hostility felt by the envious person that have cited by researchers range from attributing the envied person's success to luck or unfair advantage, back-stabbing them, spreading false gossip or misinformation to the supervisor, failing to provide the target with needed information, giving the target the 'silent treatment', and belittling the target's opinion/performance to others (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Bers & Rodin, 1984; Bedeian, 1995; Salovey & Rothman, 1991; Silver and Sabini, 1978a; Vecchio,1995).

Since the workplace often involves working in a team and cooperate to get the job done, envious attacks are not helpful for effectiveness and performance. Rather, the

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ability to admire another's person's achievement and skills is one of the factors making successful teamwork possible. If envy is too great, one cannot take pleasure and pride in working with people who sometimes can surpass our capacities (Klein, 1975). Envy plays an important role in the inability to allow others to succeed oneself and come forward and help them accept new responsibility well.

Individual Consequences of Envy

Emotional and Cognitive Consequences

Feelings of envy are considered to impair one's ability to think and feel at one's optimal level. In his paper "Attacks on Linking," Bion describes a psychic process that compromises one's capacity to think creatively. Due to frightening feelings of envy, dangerous thoughts and feelings are evacuated and projected outward, thus destroying the coherence of both thought and emotion. Consequently, curiosity, creativity and reality testing are impaired in the envious individual (Bion, 1959).

Depression and anxiety are also linked to envious feelings (Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Smith et al; 1999). Combined with depression and anxiety, envy decreases one's motivation, reduces concentration, focus, and the ability to maintain a goal orientation (Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Smith et al., 1996). In sum, envy appears to weaken many of the cognitive and emotional processes necessary to triumph in the workplace.

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Limits Assertiveness and Leads to Minimizing One's Success

The management of risk and reward in work life, like the relationship to opportunity, is also considered linked to self-assertion. The importance of risk in work life has been emphasized by Hirschhorn (1988): "Work entails risks, which are experienced psychologically as threats that must be aggressively met, contained, and ultimately transformed into challenges and opportunities" (p. 33). Meeting risks, for those that are envious, is a less exciting endeavor. Hirschhorn (1988) remarks that conflicts over aggressive feelings, like envy, can lead to withdrawal from risk, resulting in an impairment of task performance and deterioration of one's sense of opportunity.

The psychoanalytic literature also cites examples in which envy leads to work inhibitions that compromise successful achievement. The fear of success, as described in the psychoanalytic literature, is a fear of asserting oneself and being successful at some independent endeavor due the fear of possible consequences such as punishment, retaliation, retribution by those that one is envied (Bedeian, 1995; Berke, 1988; Horner, 1972; Person, 1982; Kets de Vries, 1992). This outcome of envy involves a form of internal inhibition that tends to prevent someone from performing at his/her best.

Some women harbor the belief that autonomous achievement will be met with severe disapproval or envy, which can be threatening for adults. For women affiliation is viewed as more important if they choose to remain part of the group and suppress their skills in order to avoid evoking envy (Miller, 1993; Person 1982). Trying to avoid evoking envy due to their achievements is common amongst women in community, educational settings, and across social and work interactions Person claims. Fear of

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being envied creates certain defenses, strategies or maneuvers, aimed at negating or reducing real or fantasied envious attacks from others. It includes: the devaluation of self, appeasement and placatory activities, such as fear of success, and a lack of pleasure at work. It is viewed to compromise ambition and creativity and leads to one minimizing one's own successes at work (Harris, 1999; Kreeger, 1992).

Keller and Moglen (1987) present a vignette that clearly demonstrates how women's desire to avoid envy by denying their own interests and opportunities for success. Two women, Karen and Harriet, were each other's confidantes and trusted advisors throughout the course of their training and early careers. They also had similar areas of competence and, as a result, found themselves applying for the same positions. Karen got a position that she knew Harriet particularly coveted and desired for herself. Although Karen found the offer attractive, she felt like she would betray Harriet and she would evoke her envy if she accepted and declined the offer. This example demonstrates how women face threats in their relationships at work and may decide to choose against their own professional self-interest to not jeopardize a friendship. Additionally, it is apparent how envy turns the focus of woman away from building her own goals and focusing on taking care of the other.

Both Ovesey (1962) and Kets de Vries (1978) described other forms of inhibitions at work that link to problems with the self-assertion. Ovesey believed that the fear of success at work has its origins in problems in the management of aggression in the family of origin such as severe intimidation, envy, hostile competitiveness. Because aggression is associated with violent destructiveness, many forms of assertiveness become inhibited. The unconscious desire to surpass more powerful rivals, which is a normal motivational

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dynamic in success, becomes associated early on with enormous guilt and fear of retaliation. Instead of being directed outward, aggression becomes inner directed, leading to work paralysis. Thus, the individual, beset by inordinate guilt, withdraws from competition in order to protect himself from envy and murderous retaliation. (Ovesey,1962)

Improvements in Motivation

Although they are becoming increasingly popular, the positive outcomes of envy are seldom recognized in the general envy literature (Parrott, 1991; Salovey, 1991; Vecchio,1995). Envy is seen to have a positive consequence in that it increases a person's motivation to improve in the area that they feel lack. Rather than just focused on depriving the self and other, envy can be used constructively to improve one's situation (Parrott, 1991; Tesser & Campbell, 1980). This is the case in situations in which both parties are able to have the desired object/attribute at the same time.

In the psychoanalytic tradition, envy is more often described in its destructive modes. Although there are several theorists that believe that envy ought to be recognized as a source of data rather than an emotion to be hidden. Ulanov and Ulanov (1983) assert that that envy is helpful: it "is a displacement of our relationship to the good" or the recognition of the 'good ' (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1983. p.9). Often women's experience of envy comes from parts of the self that are also unknown, unpracticed, and disavowed. They believe that when one recognizes what they envy, they can work to cultivate what one lacks in oneself. Therefore, they suggest that an individual's capacity to analyze

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their envy will pull them toward self- improvement. In allowing for envy, they claim that eventually one moves from destruction to emulation (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1983).

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METHODOLOGY

Research Participants

Eighteen female research participants were interviewed for this study. Participants ranged in age from their mid-twenties to their mid-forties. All the participants except one were employed full-time in professional work (see Demographic Data, Appendix A). Each interviews lasted approximately an hour. As an exploratory study, the *snowball* [1] technique was employed and volunteer participants were recruited from various organizations and industries in New York City.

An initial contact person within each organization was recruited through the personal and professional ties of the principal investigator and the team of researchers. The contact person worked to target recruits by informing them that research was designed "to explore the experience of envy in the workplace" and the objective was described as "to gain a better understanding of the experience of envy in contemporary organizational life." Participants were informed that the project was directed by a professor at Columbia University, Teachers College and the interviews would be conducted by graduate students in counseling and clinical psychology.

[1] The snowball samples begin from a core of known subjects and then are increased by adding new subjects given by members of the original sample. (*A Dictionary of Sociology*, edited by Gordon Marshall, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 605).

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Interview Procedures

Participants were asked to provide an hour and a half of their time for the study and that to protect anonymity, the interviews would be conducted over the telephone. Participants were requested to sign a consent form to agree that the data would be collected on tape and that the tape recordings would be used to prepare a written presentation of the research. The consent also indicated that all information shared will be confidential and that no identifying information will be revealed.

During the interview, participants were asked to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences of envy in the workplace (See Interview, Appendix B). Participants were first asked a general question about their definition of envy. The goal of this was to see what immediately stood out in their minds without further prompting. Then they were asked to describe their experiences of and association to the subject of feeling envy in workplace and later to the experience of being envied in the workplace. Additionally, participants were asked about factors they felt increased and decreased the likelihood of experiencing envy. The use of these two similarly phrased questions in all the interviews generally allowed for comparison of the descriptions of salient experiences by the various participants and provided specific data about common experiences which the participants were the most vivid as they began their interviews.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of specific interview questions covering a variety of the aspects of the experience of envy in the workplace. These questions also

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served to focus the participants on aspects of the experience of envy that they might not have addressed spontaneously, such as their affective responses, their behavioral reactions, the contextual factors, and the consequences of their envy. Furthermore, although these questions certainly addressed specific issues, the interviewers asked them in a way in which they tried not to suggest a right or wrong answer or to lead the subject to a particular conclusion. Rather, the questions were designed to elaborate the experience of what women sensed but had seldom articulated about their experiences of both feeling envy and being envied at work. Because many of the questions were, of course, interconnected, some were answered by the subject without ever being asked in the interview. The interviews were all audio-taped and transcripts of the audiotapes were used for the purpose of analysis.

Aims of the Study

The present study began as a qualitative research project, led by Professor Debra Noumair, that was begun in 1999 at Teacher's College Columbia University. The purpose of the research was to understand women's experience of envy in organizational life. Professor Noumair and her team of student researchers developed a research framework based on ideas about envy in organizational life that had been inspired by their personal observations and experiences at work, brainstorming with colleagues, and reviewing the literature. As the literature review of this study demonstrates, little work has been done to address the *actual* experience of envy in the workplace by employees. Therefore, an open-ended approach to data collection was justified. This present study

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attempted to draw upon the available theory to begin a process of substantiating the concept of envy in the workplace. The research goal was aimed at exploring three broad questions: (a) What is the experience of envy in the workplace? (b) Under what contexts does envy arise in the workplace? (c) What are the consequences of envy in the workplace?

This study aimed to further thinking about the nature and implications of envy in the workplace. I revisit the literature review through the lens of the study's findings on envy in the workplace to interweave themes to illuminate experiences of envy in the workplace. The broad task was to show how envy appears in the workplace and to demonstrate the need for the development of a greater recognition of its role and impact on the workplace.

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RESULTS

In this section, the results of this study are summarized in tabular form as they relate to the three main sections presented in the literature review: the concept of envy, the contexts in which envy emerges and the consequences of envy. Following this summary of results, I will provide more descriptive illustrations of these themes as well as a more detailed examination of the implications of these findings. In each major section, the various themes analyzed account for all 18 participants' experience. While several participants referred to multiple themes, participant responses, within each of the three sections, were coded according to the one theme they most clearly represented. Furthermore, percentages of participants describing each theme were calculated to provide a rudimentary basis for comparison across the themes within each section.

Part One: The Concept of Envy in the Workplace

Data in this section are organized to show the range of emotional experience and the variety of definitions of envy. Table 1 and Table 2 present the themes that emerged regarding the participant's experience of envy from two perspectives: the participants' experience of feeling envy and their experience of being envied in the workplace. Table Three presents themes from the interviews illustrating the various forms and definitions of envy and how the concept of envy overlaps with the construct of jealousy.

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Table One

The Emotional Spectrum of Feeling Envy in the Workplace

Theme	Participants	Number of participants	Percentage of Participants
1. Feeling longing, frustrated and angry towards the object of envy	Rebecca Claudia	2	11%
2. Feeling angry at oneself, feelings of inferiority, weakness or inadequacy, and lowered self-esteem	Jennifer Evelyn Shannon Susan Emily Paula Jill Melissa Christina Sarah Tracy Joanne	12	67%
3. Feeling both frustrated and angry towards the object of envy *and* a diminished sense of self-worth	Monica Elena	2	11%
4. Increased self-awareness, motivated to excel, desire and entitlement	Nancy Jeanette	2	11%
	Total:	18	100%

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Table Two

The Emotional Spectrum of Being Envied in the Workplace

Theme	Participants	Number of participants	Percentage of Participants
1. Feeling bad and guilty about evoking envy and trying to mitigate the envier's painful feelings	Shannon Christina Susan Rebecca Joanne Jeanette	6	33%
2. A mixed emotional experience: feeling both good about being envied and also worried that they did something wrong to evoke envy in another.	Evelyn Elena Emily Monica Tracy Jill Melissa Claudia	8	44%
3. Experience being envied as linked to privilege and power that is constructive and valuable	Jennifer Paula Sarah Nancy	4	22%
	Total:	18	100%

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Table Three

The Definitions of Envy in the Workplace and its Overlap with the Construct of Jealousy

Theme	Participants	Number of participants	Percentage of Participants
1. Wanting what another person has, whether it is a superior quality, achievement, or material possession	Evelyn Shannon Jill Melissa Monica Tracy Joanne Rebecca Claudia	9	50%
2. Wanting what someone else has that leads to improve motivation to possess what is lacked	Christina Susan Nancy Sarah	4	22%
3. Overlap with the construct of jealousy	Jennifer Elena Paula Emily Jeanette	5	28%
	Total:	18	100%

Part Two: The Contexts in Which Envy Emerges in the Workplace

Data in this section are organized to show the contexts in which envy arose in the workplace. Table 4 presents the data reflecting the emergence of envy in two contexts 'withholding' and 'destructive differentiation'. It shows the data from two perspectives: the participants' experience of feeling envy and their experience of being envied in the workplace. The three themes that emerged from the data illustrate that the workplace

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elicits envy if one feels that there are (1) withholding of promotions, special privileges and selective role assignments, (2) withholding of interpersonal rewards like praise and recognition, (3) withholding of mentoring relationships. For the context of 'destructive differentiation', envy in the workplace was elicited when (1) those with whom one identifies achieved greater success, (2) colleagues possessed more talent or greater skills that were felt to be valuable in the workplace.

Table Four

Two Contexts for Envy in the Workplace: Withholding and Destructive Differentiation

Theme	Participants	Number of participants	Percentage of Participants
I. Feeling Envy in the context of 'Withholding':			
1. Withholding of promotions, special privileges and selective role assignments	Jennifer Nancy Elena Rebecca Monica Jeanette	6	33%
2. Withholding of interpersonal rewards such as praise, recognition	Christina Jill Joanne	3	17%
3. Withholding of mentoring	Sarah Melissa	2	11%
II. Feeling Envy in the context of 'Destructive Differentiation'			
1. Feeling Envy towards another, with whom one also identifies or feels similar to, who achieves more success	Shannon Susan Evelyn Paula Emily	5	28%
2. Feeling Envy towards another who possesses specific talents or skills of value and importance in the workplace	Tracy Claudia	2	11%
	Total:	18	100%

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I. Being Envied in the Context of 'Withholding'			
1. Being Envied for receiving promotions, special privileges and selective role assignments	Emily Sarah Evelyn Christina Rebecca	5	29%
2. Being Envied for receiving interpersonal rewards like praise, recognition	Elena Melissa Shannon	3	18%
3. Being Envied for receiving mentoring	Tracy	1	6%
II. Being Envied in the context of 'Destructive Differentiation'			
1. Being Envied by a colleague when one achieves greater success than the other	Jennifer Joanne Jill Paula	4	24%
2. Being Envied by a colleague who possessed less talent or skills of value and importance in the workplace	Claudia Jeanette Nancy Susan	4	24%
	Total:	17*	100%

** One participant, Monica, did not report an experience of being envied in the workplace.*

Part Three: The Consequences of Envy in the Workplace

Data in this section, presented in Table 5, deal explicitly with the material presented on the costs and consequences of envy in the workplace. The participants' responses fell on a continuum spanning from more to less destructive consequences. Their responses are organized into four major themes of consequences: (1) envious attacks aimed at devaluing the envied other, (2) withdrawing from a relationship of potential value, (3) devaluing oneself and, (4) improvements in motivation.

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Table Five
Consequences of Envy in the Workplace

Theme	Participants	Number of participants	Percentage of Participants
When feeling envy:			
1. Destructive/Envious Attacks (e.g. verbal abuse, resistant to the work, taking over the other's responsibility, damage reputation with boss or colleagues)	Jennifer Evelyn Nancy Rebecca	4	22%
2. Withdrawing from relationships (e.g. leaving work, changing schedules, not pursuing relationships with object of envy)	Elena Jill Monica Melissa Jeannette Paula Susan Emily	8	44%
3. Devaluing oneself	Sarah Claudia Tracy Christina Joanne	5	28%
4. Motivates individuals	Shannon	1	6%
	Total:	18	100%
When being envied:			
1. Destructive/Envious Attacks (e.g. hard work and success disparaged, authority, talent or skill minimized by colleagues)	Evelyn Elena Shannon Emily Sarah Melissa Jeannette	7	41%
2. Withdrawing from relationships with whom one previously identifies	Jill Christina Rebecca	3	18%
3. Devaluing oneself	Jennifer Joanne Tracy Claudia	4	23%
4. Motivates individuals	Paula Susan Nancy	3	18%
	Total:	17*	100%

One participant, Monica, did not report an experience of being envied at work.

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ANALYSIS

The analysis of the results of this study is presented is they relate to the three main sections in the literature review: the concept of envy, the contexts in which envy emerges and the consequences of envy. In the three sections that follow, I provide descriptive illustrations of the themes that emerged from the data. In doing so, I integrate the theory and research presented in the literature review with the data from of the interviews in order to illuminate the more subtle nuances and implications of envy in the workplace.

Part One: The Concept of Envy in the Workplace

This section provides an analysis of what participants reported regarding their emotional experience of envy, the definitions of envy, and the overlap with the construct of jealousy. It presents the experience of envy from two perspectives: the participants' experience of feeling envy and their experience of being envied. Furthermore, I explore the implications of the findings in greater depth and connect them to relevant theory and research. I also provide more descriptive illustrations of the various themes that emerged from the data.

The Emotional Spectrum of Envy in the Workplace

When each participant was asked directly about their experience of feeling envy, four themes emerged from analysis of the data. Eighteen women sketched out emotional

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experiences either of (1) longing and anger directed at the object of envy, (2) feeling inferior and angry at oneself, (3) feeling both angry at the object of envy *and* oneself and (4) the experience of feeling envy leading to an increased desire, self-awareness, and feeling motivated to excel.

The four themes that emerged echo the literature. First, envy has been described as a *complex* emotion, as it is often seen in combination with other emotional states (East & Watts, 1999). In this study, approximately 90 percent of the women described feeling envy in combination with other painful emotional states such as anger, longing, sadness, and frustration. The remaining ten percent described feeling envy as associated to more positive thoughts and feelings such as increased self-awareness, pleasure and entitlement that was also found to be correlated with envy (Smith, Kim & Parrot, 1988).

Only a small percentage of women described feeling frustrated or angry towards the object of envy when feeling envious. Theory and research on envy suggest that the hallmark of malicious envy is the holding of destructive wishes to harm one's object of envy in some way. In this study, however, only two women openly acknowledged having deeply destructive wishes or behaviors towards their object of envy. Research indicates that for many women the construction of gender roles and injunctions against female displays of overt aggression make expression and acknowledgement of malicious envy difficult (Brody and Hall, 1993; Harris, 1999, Person, 1982). In this study, the majority of professional women, from diverse backgrounds and ages, who felt envy in the contemporary workplace appeared to operate along internalized traditional or conventional gender identifications that discourage the disclosure of rage and hostility towards their object of envy.

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Rather, the overwhelming majority of women interviewed, 67 percent or 12 out of 18 women, described more culturally sanctioned experiences of feeling envy. They denied aggression towards their object of envy and acknowledged envy giving rise to a diminished sense of self. Women described feeling dejected, shameful, and inadequate as compared to their object of envy. It is possible that what may occur in lieu of overt hostility towards their object of envy is that professional women may turn envy against themselves. In doing so, they diminish their good internal objects and impoverish their sense of self which fuels various degrees of self-denigration and self-criticism of their competency and achievement (Klein, 1975). This pattern also corroborates social psychological research that suggests that the experience of envy is considered a combination of thoughts and feelings of lowered self-esteem, inferiority, and self-criticism (Smith, Kim & Parrot, 1988).

From the data collected in this study, 12 women endorsed that when feeling envy, destructive attacks, in the form of criticism and denigration, were directed more at their own sense of competency and worth. Melissa, a 32-year-old graphic designer, reported that experiencing feeling envy reduced her sense of competency. She stated, "I feel weak. Definitely. And I can feel furious, not necessarily at the person. No, I don't necessarily feel angry or furious at the person, but geared towards myself." Jennifer, a 26-year-old, assistant to a college dean, also commented that she felt "bad about myself like not accomplishing more on my own, not sticking to my own goals better." Additionally, Tracy, a 38-year-old attorney, also described her experience of envy as linked to a critical self-appraisal. "I feel bad. I feel bad about myself. I feel very bad that I can't do something I want to." When envy is aroused in the workplace, for some

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women, the hostility is turned back against oneself, weakening one's ability to feel competent at one's job and a diminished sense of self-worth.

When feeling envy, two women described feeling frustrated and angry both towards the object of envy and a having a lowered sense of self-worth. Elena, a 31-year-old broadcast manager, described her experience of envy as one where she "feel[s] frustrated and resentful at those times because they have something that I want and I feel anger towards myself, [I feel} that I'm a failure basically." Monica, a twenty-five-year-old who works in a non-profit agency, spoke of being "very angry at both myself and at them".

Lastly, two women, Jeanette and Nancy, described their experience of feeling envy as leading them to acknowledge their desire and sense of entitlement for what could be possible for them if they persisted in their work (Bers & Rodin, 1984). Jeannette, a 42-year-old nurse, described that feeling envy " stirred up her curiosity" and she was more observant about what she wanted at work. Nancy, a 33-year-old associate fashion designer, reported, "I feel like I better get my act together because if she can do it or he can do it I can do it....and if I feel envious then I know that it's linked to whatever insecurities I have and I try and explore those. I don't always consciously try and explore those. First I go through those stages of wow, I really wish I could do that. I wonder how I could do that. Let me see....and just try and map out something that would be realistic to my life and my situation, my circumstances."

The four themes identified in the analysis of the experience of feeling envy support the central features of the developmental positions as described by Melanie Klein. As discussed in the literature review, Klein characterized the earliest organization

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of the defenses as the 'paranoid-schizoid' in order to stress both the way one's fears take the form of phantasies of persecution and the way in which one defends against persecution by splitting, a schizoid phenomenon. Through splitting, one attempts to defend against the dangers of the 'bad' objects by keeping these 'bad' images separate and isolated from the self and good objects. If the bad is kept away, there is no reason to feel the discomfort of envy (Klein, 1975).

Klein characterized envy as reactivating paranoid-schizoid persecutory anxieties throughout the life span. When confronted with the anger and loss inherent to feeling envy, Klein proposes that defenses such as projection and splitting are used to create 'good' and 'bad' objects and hold them rigidly apart. In themes 1 and 2, women showed evidence of employing splitting as a defense in order to keep 'good' and 'bad' separated. For example, in theme one, when the participants felt angry and frustrated at their objects of envy, the 'bad' was projected outward and the self was kept as 'good'. Similarly, in theme two, 'good' and 'bad' were also separated, yet, in this case, the self was 'bad' and the other was preserved as 'good'. For these participants, envy serves to fragment their internal and external world into polarized and undifferentiated emotional experiences (Klein, 1975).

Theme three, when participants felt both angry at the object of envy and oneself and theme four, when participants' envious feelings led to increased desire, self-awareness, and motivation to excel, demonstrate Klein's depressive position orientation in relation to the experience of envy. In theme three, the capacity for a more differentiated understanding of self and other appears as women recognized that both the other and self are inter-connected and embedded in a larger system. Their destructive

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impulses are handled with greater discrimination and are directed both at the other and self helping them to contain and differentiate aggression against the self and other more appropriately. In theme four, women demonstrate the most adaptive management of envious feelings. In their descriptions of envy 'stirring up their curiosity" and "try[ing] to map out something that would be realistic" for them, they present a greater level of awareness of separate, whole objects and the ability to introject and learn from the object of envy by risking measuring oneself against the separate identity of the other. In this case, envy is in service of emulation, admiration, and enables one to cultivate what one lacks in oneself.

The Emotional Spectrum of Being Envied in the Workplace

Unlike the experience of feeling envy, participants' responses were more evenly distributed amongst three themes: (1) feeling bad and guilty about evoking envy and trying to mitigate the envier's painful feelings, (2) a mixed emotional experience in which participants felt good about being envied and also worried that they did something wrong to evoke envy in another and, (3) being envied linked to privilege and power that is constructive and valuable (See Table Two). Taken as a whole, participants reported a range of experiences spanning from feeling bad and guilty about being envied to feeling flattered and proud of being objects of envy, clustering most in the mixed emotional experience of feeling good about being envied and also concerned that they elicited envy in another.

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A third of the participants described the experience of being envied by someone else at work as evoking feelings of guilt and, in general, as a negative experience. Often they rushed to consider the envier's painful internal experience. This empathy for the envier evoked immediate feelings of guilt for causing distress in others. Shannon described her immediate reaction as feeling misunderstood or misinterpreted by her colleagues when they envied her. She described "putting herself in check" forcing her to wonder, "am I doing something?" because she did not want the envy to "be bothersome, annoying and inhibiting in the relationship." Susan, 46, both a horticulturist and a legal assistant, commented that the experience of being envied by the other was "the same thing as intimidation". In other words, she felt that she was intimidating to the envier and added, "I don't want anyone to feel badly." Rebecca, 35, in publishing, described feeling guilty for being envied for a job she loved. She explains, "I got into this publishing job that I really loved and I really excelled at. It was a new role for me to really be enjoying it [work]. And I think it made me uncomfortable to feel like I had everything going so great when some friends or colleagues were feeling more disgruntled." She described being envied as causing her to feel alienated. "There's a certain bonding that can come from complaining about work and if you don't feel like complaining, you're not doing that bonding."

These women's experiences showcase how being envied in the workplace sets off intrapsychic and interpersonal anxieties threatening loss or damage to relationships with others. Shannon presumes that she is guilty of doing something 'wrong' to evoke envy in her colleagues and that she needs to watch herself more carefully as envy may damage her current work relationships. Susan feels that being

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envied for her talent and skill is akin to her 'intimidation' of others. She fears her success at work as having the capacity to do damage to others. In addition to her discomfort when her colleagues appear less satisfied at work, Rebecca also described the fear of abandonment by those she depended upon that was revived in her by the others' envy of her greater satisfaction and success at work. In fact, almost eighty percent of women in this study described fear of loss or a fear of doing damage to relationships when envy of their success and achievement in the workplace emerged.

Approximately forty-four percent of the eighty percent of women in this study who described fear of loss of, or damage to, relationships that were important to them when they were envied at work discussed having both positive and negative feelings about being envied. Tracy, a 38-year-old attorney, described her experience of being envied at work as one where she felt "both good and embarrassed." She clarified that she felt "embarrassed that I'm feeling good" because "feeling good" when one is envied she believed was "inappropriate. Like I'm gloating." Although she asserted she had a mixed reaction, Tracy, like other participants who felt more negatively about being envied, elaborated more on her concern about the envier's reaction to the fact that she possessed enviable characteristics than about her internal experience of feeling pleasure.

Other participants also declared that the experience of being envied was a complicated one because it led to one to feel good about oneself and, at the same time, be wary of others who were less fortunate. Evelyn, a 30-year-old-year-old associate director for a not-for-profit educational foundation, elaborated she feels both "special and embarrassed." She added that when she was envied in a professional environment, she " feel[s] that there's something about me [her] that is special, that's unique, that I have

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what somebody else doesn't have and it's because I'm a better person. The embarrassed part is because I feel that maybe there is something that I have done wrong to elicit those feelings from someone else. There's a feeling of superiority that I'm running around with, that person has those feelings because I'm doing something to act superior and that it makes them feel inferior."

Jill, a 28 year-old executive director of a scholarship foundation, also acknowledged that being envied by colleagues was a "mixed" emotional experience. She explained that she felt, "uncomfortable and sort of happy to be either accomplished or whatever the trait is that one's envious of, but I think envy is something that feels bad. And I don't like to be in a position to make someone else feel bad." Similarly, Melissa, 32, a graphic designer, described her experience as associated to feelings of "strength" gained illegitimately. She stated, "I feel strong, but not in a very good way. I feel strong because I feel like I gained power in an illegal manner somehow. It's like a fake power and it doesn't make me feel good. I mean I feel the power, but it's not a positive power, the fact that somebody envies me for something that they can have too. I mean, I don't know, at some point, you probably get a rush, and [you think] you're great! But, on the other hand, I don't feel good about it."

For these women, being envied by others does seem to be a marker for achievement or possession of something valuable in the workplace. However, their experiences of being envied became anxiety-provoking events, or evoked, at best, ambivalent feelings about their achievements rather than experiences to feel joy and pride. Women's inability to enjoy the good things that one work hard to accomplish and the incapacity to take pleasure in professional accomplishments is disconcerting. There

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is the presence of a "cruel fate" -- the feeling that one's attempts to do what one desires to the fullest of one's potential will be met with forces of opposition -- and that danger is lurking around the corner. For example, Tracy and Evelyn were both less able to take pleasure in their accomplishments and success, focusing more immediately on how unpleasant it was to be an object of envy. Melissa also described feeling like she gained power 'illegitimately' when being envied for her success at work.

When these women were envied, they described concerns that they were somehow being 'inappropriate', gaining power in an 'illegal' manner or doing something 'wrong' to engender envy in their colleagues. One may infer that these women have internalized fears of success as they associate punishment or retribution with their success and experience of being envied. Tracy's and Evelyn's internal worlds may contain fears of destructive envious attacks from persecutory others as described by some as accompanying female competitive urges and ambitions (Ellman, 2000; Harris, 1999; Person, 1982).

For some participants, however, being envied by another is linked to power that is constructive and valuable. Four women reported feeling pleased and flattered when envied by others in the workplace. Paula, a 31-year-old-year-old white-collar crime investigator, said that she felt "flattered, powerful, and successful" when envied by her colleagues. Nancy, a 33-year-old, fashion designer, described feeling " empowered" by another colleague's envy of her. She explained further, " I just feel completely empowered. I know that I'm doing something right, that I'm doing something better. I'm doing something inspiring. The reason why they're envious is because they can't do it or they don't know they can do it yet. I feel like I'm setting an example. I feel this

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sense of leadership. As quirky as that may sound, I really do feel that way when someone is envious."

These women describe their experience of being envied as a more positive experience and one that is empowering and inspires leadership in the workplace. It is unclear why these women were less concerned about destructive aspects of being envied and the potential loss of important relationships. To better understand the adaptive management of envy it would be important to examine women's object relations and why the fear of hurting is less potent than fear of being outdone. As described by Nancy as "I'm doing something better " and "the reason why they're envious is because they can't do it or they don't know they can do it yet", adaptive management of being envied involves the capacity for a differentiated sense of self and other described by Klein as a hallmark of depressive position development (Klein, 1975). Additionally, adaptive management of envy implies an ability to contain aggression directed at oneself, lead others while respecting differences of opinion, learn from the other's experience and trust in a productive competitive experience between two people, in which neither the self nor the other is destroyed, but rather are motivated, by successful achievement (Gould, 2003; Gould, 1999).

Definitional spectrum of envy in the workplace

Participants interviewed for this study were asked to provide definitions of envy at the start of each interview. Over seventy percent of the participants' definitions of envy corresponded to the definitions of envy as revealed in the psychoanalytic and social psychological literature (See Table Three). Definitions of envy given by half of the

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participants in this study consisted of "wanting what another person has, whether it's a superior quality, achievement, or material possession." In their definitions, these participants provided descriptions of envy as an active emotional state comprised of emotional such longing, wanting, desiring. Most significantly, the participants, when defining envy, did not explicitly identify envy's malicious or destructive objectives or envious impulses to take away or spoil what the envied possesses (Klein, 1975; Parrott, 1991).

When asked for a definition of envy, four participants offered definitions of envy as "wanting what someone else has that leads to improve motivation to possess that is felt to be lacking." This corresponds to what is described as *non-malicious envy* and is distinguished by the notion that an envious person may want what someone else has, but not necessarily at the expense of the other (Lieblich, 1971; Parrot, 1991). For example, Sarah, a 26-year- old reporter, added, " I guess [envy is] wanting something that you don't have...not the most desirable of feelings. Probably one that people wish they didn't experience, or experienced less. But something that personally makes me always re-evaluate what I do have, put that into perspective so I can get to where I want to go."

Overlap with the construct jealousy

In this study, five women gave a definition of envy that included the use of the concept of jealousy as point of reference. A few women appeared to use the concepts interchangeably, acknowledging a commonality. For instance, Jennifer, a 26-year-old woman who works as an assistant to a college dean and has a master's degree, described

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envy as, "just longing for something someone else has that you don't have. I think envy is really just a form of jealousy." Some simply used the concepts interchangeably. For example, Elena, a 31-year-old broadcast manager, reported, "If I'm jealous of somebody or envious of somebody it's because they have something that I want.

Other participants believe that envy has a relationship with jealousy if only a vague one. Paula, a 31-year-old, white-collar crime investigator, explained, " Okay, I guess there's negative and positive attributes with envy. I guess in my mind, the positive side would be because you have aspirations of something better and then the negative side would be because there's a certain amount of jealousy involved." Additionally, Emily, a 37-year-old program officer in an education not-for-profit, clarifies that her envy was over a state of mind or a specific attribute the other possessed but connected to a relationship and thus more linked to jealousy. She explained, "I don't envy that specific person but I envy that she has that relationship."

Distinguish envy and jealousy is a challenge as it is fairly common for the word 'envy' to mean either or both jealousy or envy (Burke, 2000; Smith, Kim, & Parrott, 1988). Yet if envy still sounds to many as though it is a dangerous state of affairs, a difficult experience in which individuals feel shame and humiliation in respect to envying others, it may be why other affects interface with envy and conceal it. Envy remains something that is difficult to identify and define. This research suggests that envy is not something people can clearly label and define in the absence of context. We shall see in the following sections where the concept of envy will be embedded in some data about how the concept of envy emerges more freely in the lives of these professional women.

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Part Two: The Contexts in Which Envy Emerges in the Workplace

This section presents an analysis of the contexts in which envy emerges in the workplace (See Table Four). The analysis suggests that the context of 'withholding' in the workplace occurs in the following three forms: (1) promotions, special privileges and selective role assignments, (2) interpersonal rewards like praise, recognition and (3) mentoring relationships. The second context, 'destructive differentiation' also is found to be a contributing factor in evoking envy in the workplace. Participants' responses consisted of the following two themes: (1) envy towards colleagues and supervisors with whom they identified or felt similar to, who achieved more success at work leading them to feel inferior and, subsequently, disadvantaged and (2) participants also revealed envy towards another colleagues who possessed talents or skills of value and importance in the workplace. In this section, I provide more descriptive illustrations of the various themes that emerged from the data and explore the implications of these themes in greater depth by connecting them to relevant theory and research.

Withholding in the Workplace

In general, participants' responses did correspond with the contexts that may evoke envy described in the literature review. The first context of withholding, i.e. when employees feel they are not the recipient of enough organizational rewards or 'goods', whether it was in the form of promotions, special privileges and selective role assignments or more interpersonal in nature, like praise, recognition and mentoring

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relationships, did correspond to the contexts in which participants' felt envy. Envy that emerged in this context was often translated into anger, destructiveness and disappointment, or a sense that there is "not enough to go around".

Theme One: Withholding of promotions, special privileges, or special assignments

In this study, one third of the participants revealed feeling envy when promotions, special privileges, or special assignments, allocated by senior management, were withheld from them. Participants responses gave credence to the idea that the contemporary workplace is an environment that could be characterized as triggering internal feelings of envy or persecution (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1989; Kernberg, 1985; Main, 1985; Neumann & Noumair, 1997, Obholzer, 1994, Stein, 1997). Furthermore, it does appear that envy arises in the competitive work setting where there is a limited supply of organizational resources such as promotions, privileges or assignments. For example, Nancy, a 33-year-old fashion designer, described a situation in which she felt envious when a colleague got a promotion over her. She stated, "I thought this was crazy and I was pretty envious. I was very angry, I felt very slighted. I felt that I had no credibility as hard as I worked, and as much as I devoted myself, to any particular project, it didn't amount to anything."

Elena, 31, a broadcast manager, described feeling very envious when a colleague, she helped hire, got a promotion she wanted. She commented," I worked at an ad agency a couple of years ago and I worked very hard to prove myself and to show I was a dedicated worker, etc. I felt that I could do a better job than she did or she would have

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and they didn't give me the opportunity to do that."

Rebecca, 35, in publishing, described feeling envious when a colleague was "given a lot of privileges and clout on the job automatically." Similarly, Monica, 25, non-profit education associate, presented a vignette in which she felt envy due to her colleague's receiving the 'choice' assignments. She explained, "he got the best pick of the assignments, whereas I got what was left over."

Conversely, in the workplace, those employees that receive the 'goods' that often feel withheld from the others acknowledge being envied as arising in contexts when organizational goods are offered to them at the expense of others. For example, Emily, 37, an attorney who works for an education non-profit organization, described being envied when working in a law firm "and the other people were envious of the experience that I was getting. The trial experience.....the ability to be on trial. I had been there a shorter period of time than they had been but that I was getting more experience than they were getting."

Sarah, 26, a reporter, also described a project she was chosen to work on that gave her a special role albeit temporarily, and her colleagues' envy piqued. "We had a project around last October, when the company that I worked for was undergoing a lot of internal change and they selected people from around the company to form a group that they called 'communicators' and the communicator's responsibility would be to ensure that people knew what management was doing with this internal restructuring. I was one of five people chosen from my area from the News Wire and this was really a non-newswires type of project. And I was out of the office for four days training and just part of a whole new group. When I came back, some people, my immediate colleagues, were

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envious of the opportunity I had to go out and do something new and to meet people from all over the organization and taking a role that was pretty high profile."

Another participant, Evelyn, also described a situation in which she felt envied because she was selected for a role that her colleagues also desired. "I actually taught through a program called Teach for America. They decided to make a video about the first year of the program that is the year that I started doing it. There were 500 people in the program and they picked 7 people to follow throughout the year and I was one of the people that they followed." Christina, 24, Desktop Publisher, mentioned her ability to travel for work as the type of opportunity that roused another colleague's envy towards her. Additionally, Jennifer, while she voiced that she is low on the company's totem pole, she offered that her company's hires many temp workers who like working there and envy her more permanent position.

In summary, it is apparent that the women interviewed in this study were ambitious and competitive for organizational goods. When women felt disadvantaged at work, because what they desired or felt they deserved, was withheld, envy emerged as a consequence of feeling thwarted in their attempts to excel in the workplace. Conversely, when women felt advantaged at work, because they were awarded something that their colleagues also wanted, they felt envied by others. Furthermore, as discussed in the literature review, envy in the context of ' withholding' did emerge regardless of the position or level the participant held on the organizational chart as employees at all levels are seen to require organizational resources to remain competitive in the workplace (Neumann and Noumair, 1997). In this study, participants, across levels of authority and status at their jobs, felt envy and were envied in the workplace.

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Theme Two: Withholding of interpersonal rewards like praise and recognition

Like Monica alluded to above, rewards like praise and recognition given to others by senior management or by colleagues in interpersonal contexts also are considered to elicit feelings of envy in the workplace. Participants presented situations at work in which envy was embedded in fairly mundane situations that nonetheless created a need for recognition, praise or credit. When it felt like it was withheld from them, envy resulted. For example, Christina, 24, a desktop publisher, described a situation in which she felt much envy when her work went "unnoticed" and her colleague's work, with whom she collaborated, got "praised and a lot of recognition." She felt envy when she was "watching her take all the credit and me just being in the background and actually seeing them give her credit right in front of me.... whereas I really didn't even get any credit." Joanne, 28, in finance also had a similar context in which she felt some envy towards her colleague when her colleague received praise from the boss and she did not. She explains, "the two of us were working on the project together and it seemed that our boss made a comment about what she did or something like that. She was recognized and I was not. I was just really envious that she was recognized..... you know part of me wanted to stand up and scream, hey wait a minute!"

Interpersonal praise and recognition were also the contexts that predisposed Elena, Melissa and Shannon to be envied by their colleagues. For instance, Elena, describes, "my current position now is Broadcast Manager at an advertising agency. Ever since I started there I've been pretty confident, I'm a competent worker. I believe in

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following through and taking the appropriate steps to understand things....I find out in detail how to do things, the reasons why you're doing them, etc. And, I think whenever my boss asks me a question, I have the answer usually right off the top of my head. And I think she appreciates that and I know that she has said in a meeting that 'Elena" is one of the best hires that [this company] ever made. Therefore, when people came out of that meeting someone had said oh, [the boss] loves you and all this other stuff and I sensed that.... I don't know if I want to say animosity or what, but I could sense envy."

According to Levinson (1978), the workplace is an important source of recognition for one's work, talent, or abilities. Recognition is believed to strengthen one's identification with one's chosen field of endeavor. In the workplace, ambitious employees are highly influenced by other colleagues and supervisors' appreciation of their skills, values, and accomplishments (Levinson, 1978). While praise and recognition are also correlated to increased material and status rewards (Minor,1990), the women in this study described interpersonal rewards in the workplace as enviable because they were connected to a sense of belonging in the organization, an increased understanding of areas of potential contribution and increased likelihood of achieving specific and future-oriented goals (Axelrod, 1998). As a result, praise and recognition received in the workplace promoted the achievement of one's 'personal dream', as conceptualized by Levinson (1978), and led one to a more differentiated sense of their strengths and weaknesses in their work roles. This thinking suggests, therefore, that when interpersonal rewards are withheld, development of role expertise and growth in work life may be stunted. Consequently, feelings of disappointment and disillusionment emerge

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and evoke envy towards those colleagues who receive what is both desired and withheld from them.

Theme Three: Withholding of Mentoring

Mentoring relationships or relationships in which special attention and time is given to one colleague over another in the workplace also seems to provoke envy. According to Levinson, entering the world of work in one's 20s, a young worker must learn to harness the high energy and ambition of this period (Levinson, 1978). Mentors help to give the young person a role model and someone who takes special interest in her development of work habits and skills and helps her to identify with group goals. Mentors also often confirm a novice's sense of being a valued, legitimate member of the workplace. When mentoring is withheld, envy may emerge as a result of seeing another possessing something that is desired and felt to be deserved. For example, Sarah, 26, a reporter, described feeling envious of the mentoring that other colleagues received that enabled them to advance in their career. "I work for Dow Jones News Wires. So I cover the bond market, but the News Wires compose of many different subsets of News Wires that cover all different sorts of markets and global markets. And I think in February, News Wires announced awards for six or so, either individual or teams of reporters around the world for work they had done in the last year. And, from this list, there were maybe three people from bureaus overseas and maybe the three other sets came from my own office. I was not on the list and had not expected to be because I had not submitted my work for the contest."

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Sarah described envying various colleagues work groups where they had people who cared about making them the best reporters they could be. She found her own group to be unhelpful and it was hard to capture their attention. She continued to say that she envied their possession of "someone who motivated them, challenged them, brainstormed with them. I always wish that I could be part of teams that collaborate and so, that was the thing that I really envied most. That they had that in place, they had those resources or maybe just infrastructure whereas I was working with a different set of people who didn't really didn't take the leadership to number one, develop stories during the year that probably would have been considered award worthy and then two, didn't even bother to try to put them together and try to come up with anything. You know, and these other teams put in an inordinate amount of work to get it all together and they packaged their stories really well. I think that was a time where I just felt like I knew I could have done as well at a job if I had had more leadership or help."

Tracy, 38, an attorney, described being envied for the very thing that Sarah was describing. Tracy shared that she was envied by her colleagues for the mentoring she received that conferred prestige and greater opportunity. "I remember some other peers in the office where I work now were envious of the fact that I had worked very, very closely with the boss on a very big case and had gotten very close to him. We had worked very closely together under difficult circumstances. And because of that I had kind of a special relationship with him and in general conversations discussing the boss, other people kind of expressed a little bit of envy, i.e. they wished they had a relationship like that."

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Like interpersonal praise and recognition, mentoring relationships are usually seen as serving an important developmental function-although their salience varies across types of work environments. They seem especially important where disadvantage or inexperience is characteristic of a particular group in the workplace (Axelrod, 1998). In this study, three women described mentoring relationships as related to evoking envy in the workplace. While people vary in their need for and receptivity to a mentoring relationship, conflicts over feeling dependency as an adult, feeling a lack of entitlement to a mentor, or a lack of adequate numbers of mentors in the workplace for women may explain why few women discussed envy in connection to mentoring (Levinson, 1994).

Destructive Differentiation in the Workplace

Participants' envy was evoked in the context of destructive differentiation, i.e. a context in which differences between oneself and another person, with whom one also identifies, reveal inequalities in possessing qualities of value and importance in the workplace. Participants' responses consisted of the following two themes: (1) envy towards colleagues and supervisors with whom they identified or felt similar to, who achieved more success at work leading them to feel inferior and, subsequently, disadvantaged and (2) participants also revealed envy towards another colleagues who possessed talents or skills of value and importance in the workplace.

Theme One: Feeling envious towards another colleague with whom one identifies who achieves more success in the workplace

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Almost thirty percent of the participants experienced envy towards other colleagues, whom they regarded as similar to them or with whom they compared to across "level" or "age", who achieved more success at work or were set apart due to superior skills or other advantages. Most obviously, this experience was supported by the fact that only three out of the eighteen women described feeling envious of men in the workplace. Women described feeling and being envied most frequently by female colleagues that were regarded as similar to them and with whom they could identify. Recent psychoanalytic thinking has suggested that recurrent women's identifications with other women are the product of the earlier mother-daughter relationship in which the daughter does not have to deny identifications with the mother to satisfy her gender role. As a result, women are seen as forming relationships based on mutuality, empathy and it is proposed that women tend to have relationships with others as extensions of their selves rather than more highly differentiated objects. As a result, for some women, relationships based on mutuality may make differentiation, autonomous strivings and independent success more threatening as it conveys putting a premium on 'self' assertion and repudiating the values of sameness, dependency and closeness (Gilligan, 1990; Jordan et al, 1991; Chodorow, 1978; Miller & Surrey, 1997).

Some participants described how colleagues with whom they share similar qualities, outperforms them, they feel little justification for not doing as well as their colleagues, which then leads them to feel inferior and envious. Evelyn, 30, an associate director for a not for profit educational foundation, described feeling envy towards a colleague who was the executive director of the organization where she worked. She was quick to point out that this woman was like her: we are both women and we're both in

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the same age group and have about the same level of experience. She continued that the two worked most often as team and were very closely involved in each other's work inside the organization. However, when their roles were differentiated according to who would be more adept at interfacing with the media, Evelyn revealed that it was the first time she "had to deal with the fact that [her colleague] was the person who was better than me [her]...and she always got her name in print and was pretty much the spokesperson for the organization. It was something I was very envious of and it's something that I've had to sort of you know struggle through."

Participants also expressed being envied when in situations where they felt that someone they identified with, had a friendship with or with whom they compared themselves achieved more success or opportunity. Joanne, 28, shared an example when she surpassed a "a good friend and a co-worker." She reports, we "started on the exact same day in August of '96, we went to training together, we had the same title, the same job. She had experience in the business, however I had management experience. And in June a spot came open and I was the one chosen for it, and I know she envied me. Because she was still there and I was the one promoted and moved on. She told me, we were good friends, she told me flat out that she felt very envious and that she was very upset because, although she's happy for me, she was very envious that I was the one being moved on and promoted and she was not."

For both Evelyn and Joanne, envy emerged in their relationships at work with someone with whom they felt emotionally connected. Envy was evoked when comparisons of their competence and success in the workplace acknowledged differences that were previously less salient. In these cases, envy emerged in the context of self and

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other differentiation when something previously experienced as part of the self, or belonging to the self, was experienced as only being part of the other. As Klein described, it is in these moments that envy arises to defend against the perceived loss of self (Klein, 1975).

Some psychoanalysts also described how envy may be due to the very fact that the other possesses different capacities than oneself or the capacity to give what the other needs (Hinshelwood, 1989; Klein, 1975; Spillius, 1988). In this study, Shannon, 25, who worked in an educational setting, described a situation where she envied her supervisor's success and capacity for generosity. Shannon explained her envy of her supervisor's ability to help her. "She was so comfortable in her place that she was actually able to be a giving and encouraging and open person and trusting of me. Before I had arrived there I hadn't those aspirations to apply to school until I realized that my bachelor degree landed me as an assistant, making 10 dollars an hour and not a very, what is it, a secure position. I was applying to schools to get my masters, well actually, ideally, to get my Ph.D. in school psychology. So it was hard because I'm coming with aspirations or admiration for this person, but at the same time, what I felt could be contextualized to be envy, since I wished that I was in the position that she were in, i.e. with a degree already, employed at this place. I can tie into envy in the sense that she was so sound and solid in her place. I was kind of in a vulnerable place, not knowing whether I was going to be accepted into schools and not knowing whether to actually be where she was, was an actual possibility. What I was pursuing wasn't for certain, so I suppose I felt like I was challenged by her."

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Lastly, one woman felt envy when she identified with a colleague who made different choices for herself in her work and personal life. Emily, 37, works for an education non-profit organization, and described the context in which she felt envy. "It was a law firm. I was an associate attorney and I was envious of another associate attorney who had both the ability and desire to commit herself more fully to the organization than I did and that was recognized and rewarded in terms of how the organization treated her as opposed to how it treated me. I was feeling very conflicted about my own desires and the conflict between my professional life and my personal life [made me feel] angry at having to make the choices. I was feeling, at that point, she was lucky not to have made these choices."

Emily described her experience of envy as laced with feelings of identification and loss about her conflicts around finding a comfortable balance in her professional and personal life. For Emily, a colleague who has more time to devote to her professional goals and who made different choices possesses the 'goods'. Indeed, it is more complicated now to identify what women envy in the workplace as women today have a wider range of feminine images with which to identify. For instance, professional women of today are mothers or some choose not to bear children. Women are secretaries, politicians, physicists, bankers, university presidents, and professional athletes or some choose to work at home. They are independent, dependent and some inter-dependent; some women are sexually confident and liberated, others are promiscuous and while others are sexually repressed. Some women yearn for the perfect man, others for the perfect woman, and some others want both; some women pay for

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themselves, some women pay for their husbands, and some women are taken care of by their partners.

The list of descriptions is only partial yet the significance is evident. Women today have multiple paths to pursue when fashioning their own lives, yet the question about what is the best and who is the fairest of them is still posed by society. Social progression has been evident yet the extent to which it embraces women's achievement and ambition in the workplace and not at home remains in question. Ambivalence regarding women's achievement and ambition is betrayed by the statistics showing very few women in senior positions and or stories about successful professional women in the contemporary workplace who still seem to struggle to find a legitimate place.

As we begin this next millennium, the capacity to work successfully has become an equally crucial aspect of women's adult identity and a central source of women's self-esteem across the life span. In the clinical setting, psychologists hear professional women talk about conflicts over 'wanting it all' or 'being it all'. Women discuss not knowing what it is they have come to expect for themselves and what is expected of them at home and at work. They express a range of feelings such as anger, sadness, envy, and competition and a chronic self-doubt about not being adequate wives, mother, and workers and fears about being undermined at the office by their competitors or fears of success about rising above their colleagues (Recinello, 1999).

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Theme Two: Envy towards another who possesses specific talents or skills of value and importance in the workplace

Many participants' envy was evoked when they identify with someone who possessed skills or abilities of value and importance in their field of endeavor. For instance, Tracy, 38, an attorney, felt envy when other colleagues and two partners in the law firm were talking about another colleague's superior skill. Tracy reported that, "they were discussing her extraordinary abilities as a lawyer and how she was one of the best lawyers they had ever known." Tracy described feeling envious and wishing that she "had the kinds of talents to be described that way and that people had that kind of regard for my work. I wanted people to think of me the way they were thinking of her."

Claudia, 30, an academic advisor and instructor in a college, had a colleague whom she described herself as "similar to" but had a level of skill and work experience that made her feel inferior and, subsequently, evoked envious feelings in her. She elaborated, "there's another colleague of mine.....same position, same level and in terms of job description we do the same things, we're both academic advisors. Now, I've been on board first, so I'm the veteran. She's been a director before in another program, so this is actually a little bit if a step down for her. From the beginning, she has it so together, she has more experience than I do, and I'm always trying to catch up to her...that's how I was always feeling..... [she has] qualities of just looking really together when she's speaking in front of other people. So I guess that part of me is still sometimes envious of her. If I do something, she has to expand on it and do it better."

In this study, participants' unique abilities, talents or skills in their respective fields also made them targets of other's envy. For example, Jeanette, 42, a senior nurse,

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felt envied for her interpersonal skills at work that made her gain the trust of a marginalized group of workers in her hospital in a manner her boss could not. She reported there is "a certain kind of camaraderie between the nurses and the aides" that the boss is not privy to and her boss envies her ability to manage her co-workers and gain their respect. Claudia, 30, an academic advisor and instructor in college, discussed receiving the highest student evaluations for the second year and the tide of envy it induced in her colleagues. "There are three academic advisors plus the director in the program... we've got one advisor, he's African American male, we've got another one who is female and Jewish and I identify as Latina. I work with freshman and a lot of it is academic advisement but it's also personal issues and personal counseling. We always get evaluated by the students at the end of the semester and this is the second year that I had the highest evaluation". She explained, "although my colleagues were happy for me, I detected envy. We each have a number of students that we have to take care of in terms of academic advisement and teaching and sometimes a lot of Latino students will just come to my office because they either look at me as a role model or they're first generation also. We just have things to talk about and sometimes there are students from the other advisors and although they know who their advisor is they tend to talk to me. I think there's a little envy there too."

In this study, it seems clear that comparisons of talent, skill, and competencies in the workplace produce envious experiences. Differentiations made around talent or skills were experienced as the envied object possessing a talent or skill at the expense of another in the workplace. These women describe scenarios at work where they appear eager to try to wrest particular qualities away from the other to claim for themselves. In

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other words, there is the assumption that one's coming to possess a certain quality means that one has to take it away from someone else and the goal, when feeling envious, is to establish individual distinction. Thus, this may be a common context for envy in the workplace: when one feels anxious and apprehensive about one's unique set of skills and value at work when compared with others who possess superior skill or talent.

Part Three: The Consequences of Envy in the Workplace

This section deals explicitly with the analysis of the four themes presented on the costs and consequences of envy in the workplace. The participants' responses fell on a continuum spanning from more to less destructive consequences. I present four themes of consequences: (1) envious attacks aimed at devaluing the envied other, (2) withdrawing from relationship of potential value, (3) devaluing oneself, and (4) improvements in motivation. In this section, I provide more descriptive illustrations of the various themes that emerged from the data and explore the implications of these themes in greater depth by connecting them to relevant theory and research.

Theme One: Destructive/Envious attacks

In this study, four women described making a range of hostile envious attacks towards their object of envy. This supported research that attributed envy to causing attacks in the forms of back-stabbing, spreading false gossip or misinformation to the supervisor, failing to provide the target with needed information, giving the target the

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'silent treatment', and belittling the target's opinion/performance to others (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Bers & Rodin, 1984; Bedeian, 1995; Salovey & Rothman, 1991; Silver and Sabini, 1978a; Vecchio,1995). Some women felt a need to counter attack when feeling envy towards another colleague or supervisor and others described how feelings of envy fueled much verbal abuse towards the person they envied. For example, Susan, 46, working in a law firm as a legal assistant, used expletives to describe her boss, whom she envied, to her colleague. Claudia described making "biting" remarks towards the woman she envied. She professed that she "[made] sarcastic remarks, saying something like well, not all of us have as much experience as you do", or "not all of us were director at some point."

Jennifer, a 26-year-old woman who works as an assistant to a college dean, whose feelings of envy centered on her boss described herself as acting "resistant to doing the work", and pseudo-stupid, that is, she pretended that she did not understand the boss's request when in fact she did because she was trying to convey to her manager that she could not give clear instructions and did not deserve to be in a position of authority over Jennifer. She lamented, " I probably instead of just going, "Yeah, sure," [when delegated a task] I made it more difficult and asked more questions than I needed to like, "Oh what do you want it on?" even though usually I'd just do it as fast as I could without asking questions. I made it a little more difficult. I knew I was just going to go ahead and do it. I thought I just should have just said alright and not gotten into a big question and answer session." Jennifer's examples demonstrates how envious attacks can be not immediately obvious and appear in common forms of daily resistance and challenge to someone's authority in the workplace

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Evelyn, a 30-year-old associate director who worked in an non-profit educational organization, discussed a more direct attack on her envious rival. Evelyn wanted the recognition and status her close associate, the executive director of the organization, possessed. She described having a chronic feeling of envy towards her colleague who was a few years less experienced than her in the field and was younger than her. She explained that her envious feelings first emerged as concerns in her mind of the 'fairness' of certain policies. Later, they triggered her to question her competency. She commented, "I was questioning my own abilities and the issues of fairness, and issues of race and class and privilege, the other woman is a white woman and I am Hispanic and I'm also black. So it's just thinking a lot about I've been treated unfairly and this is unjust, and you question, well, why does she get all the credit? She added that her feelings made her feel helpless and child-like and she coached herself to "act as an adult no matter what your particular feelings are."

As a result of feeling envious, Evelyn described her envy triggering to usurp her rival's role of interfacing with the media. She described her specific envious behavior response as the following: if a person from the media calls, [I] would try to field the call and try to talk to them before they get to her, even if they're asking for her specifically because she is the spokesperson, the one that they've talked to, she's the media contact."

Evelyn described a situation at work where she felt envious of her colleague who was a few years less experienced than her in the field and was also younger in age than her. Evelyn compared herself to this colleague along fairly common criteria: her age and level of experience in the field. According to Evelyn, her rival excelled in their workplace without having superior professional qualifications. There are two possible

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interpretations for the origins of her envy and envious attacks. If Evelyn is denying her rival's excellence because she is envious, Evelyn's envy may be a result of feeling inadequate and less successful than her colleague as she is older and has more field experience. Evelyn would then feel little justification for not doing as well as her colleague, and envious feelings may result. If Evelyn is accurately depicting her rival as not having superior professional qualifications, then her envy may be a result of seeing her competitor excel, who appeared younger yet in a more privileged role than her. Both scenarios could cause threat to her self-esteem and may make feeling envy likely. It is also possible that someone younger than oneself advancing faster contradicts the traditional trajectory in the organizational hierarchy. Perhaps envy of this nature is more painful and tends to engender envy that is accompanied by more overt attack and hostility. It also possible that this envy of successful 'youth' may be more common as the workplace is becoming less formal and high-quality ideas, not only past experience and role, are being more commonly the route to the top of the organizational chart.

Furthermore, in the above vignette, Evelyn, who identified herself as Black Hispanic, and two other women of color in this study, Claudia and Nancy, who described themselves as Latina and African-American, respectively, commented on the process of feeling envy toward their rival as leading them to think about issues of race and class and privilege and marginalization. While it is out of the scope of this study, it is important to better understand what advantages and disadvantages stem from social injustice or cultural factors and how they impact one's experience of envy and achieving success in the contemporary workplace. The parameters and contexts for envy are much broader

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than the factors this study describes and when one contemplates how complex the situations are that promote envy, one appreciates envy's potential ubiquity and influence.

Another form of envious attack described by several participants was attempts made to verbally belittle or dis-empower their objects of envy with their boss or other colleagues. When Nancy envied a promotion her colleague received, she described her envy leading her to try to undermine her by damaging her reputation with her supervisors. She explained, "I hate being in that reactive state but I also hate feeling dumped on.... I need to be as strategic in getting my point across so this does not happen again. So I handled it well but I was relentless. I didn't stop. I went to my boss. I went to my bosses' boss and I made an appointment to see the chairman of the company." Jennifer also felt justified in her negative comments about the person she envied claiming that "no one particularly likes this individual" and so she told "a few people who [I'm] friendly with, about three or four other people who are around my level maybe some are a little higher and some a little lower." In these cases, when in the throes of feeling envy, these women's reactions were quick and hasty. They did not consider the impact their behavior would have in the workplace nor did they feel that colleagues and supervisors may have interpreted their disparaging comments about the envied object as erroneous or being motivated by envy. When feeling envy, effective problem-solving and reflection were not feasible for these women.

Interestingly, envious attacks were most frequently expressed as a consequence of being envied by others in the workplace. Seven, or forty-one percent, of the participants reported feeling their hard work, competence and success were disparaged by envious colleagues. For example, Evelyn, a 30-year-old associate director who worked

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in an non-profit educational organization, was envied for being selected for a special role in her organization. She reported that she was undermined at work when her work was more scrutinized and criticized by the individuals who envied her. She explained that she "experienced a lot of people making comments and people came up to me and said comments such as, "what did you do to get in there?" or "who did you talk to?" and "it's not fair the way that they pick the people." Elena, a 31-year-old broadcast manager, added that when she received high praise from her boss for her work, her colleagues started conversations with her in which she felt that she had to "explain myself" and justify why she earned her praise, defending herself by saying " I'm a hard worker and they know the responsibilities I have and I get the job done."

Sarah, a 26-year-old reporter, mentioned her colleague's envy resulted in them making light of the authority and distinction she had been conferred when asked by senior management to help lead a re-structuring of their department. Subsequently, she was ignored by envious colleagues when she tried to work with them. She was asked, "why were you chosen? " and she took it to mean that they were wondering, " Why was I not chosen?" In addition, the group of envious colleagues were "skeptical", "rolling their eyes" and questioning her more than was usual about "why is management doing this?" and declaring, " this is ridiculous.....we're not going to listen to this stuff." Sarah felt it made her task much harder and she "had to be extra prepared to minimize my [her] threat to them". In the end, Sarah could not get their cooperation and their envy contributed to her failure in her role and destroyed the advantage she may have had over her colleagues.

Lastly, Nancy, a 33-year-old fashion designer, described a case in which the envious attack aimed to mitigate her competency and talent by attributing her successful

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achievement to a physical attribute she possessed. Nancy felt envied for her success at work by a colleague who was less talented and, therefore, did not get opportunities to travel and promote her work. She explained that her envious colleague said to her, "well, I guess you're not afraid to travel alone because you're tall." Nancy added, "I remember just thinking that it's such a bizarre thing to say to someone and so I attributed it to envy. Later, when I left, I remember her saying to me that [I] traveled so much because [I was] tall and [that's why I had] more confidence. I think she was just trying to ignore why I was well-liked or why, when I go to a store in Pasadena and I get on that selling floor, the sales increased for the day or just what was so special about me."

The behaviors of the envious colleagues in these examples seem to corroborate the notion that envy aims to destroy the other's success in order to defend against feelings of inferiority. One may recall that the majority of participants in this study described being ambivalent about being envied in the workplace because they worried that they might be the targets of destructive or envious attacks such as the ones described above. In fact, most participants who were envied by colleagues did receive various forms of envious attacks aimed at disparaging their hard work, talent, or skill. Therefore, fear of being envied due to its attendant envious attacks may create ambivalent competitors in the workplace who are reluctant to achieve distinction or reach their full potential at work.

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Theme Two: Withdrawing from relationships which evoke envy

Envy can make it difficult to sustain the integrity of the relationship. Psychoanalytic theory and social psychological research suggests that envy in interpersonal contexts is particularly destructive because once envy arrives it often causes one to withdraw from the very relationship that could provide the means to develop and mature in oneself what one feels is missing (Klein, 1975; Pleban and Tesser, 1981; Salovey and Rodin, 1984). In this study, eight, or forty-four percent, of the women described vignettes where withdrawing from relationships with those they envied was the major outcome of feeling envy in the workplace. In fact, it was the most frequently cited consequence when feeling envy in the workplace. Likewise, those that were envied by colleagues also felt that the envious colleague withdrew from the relationship and they felt more distant from the ones who envied them. In this study, withdrawal came in multiple forms, ranging in more overt to subtle varieties. Participants revealed how envy at work led them to leave their jobs, to change career paths, and made them withdraw from a relationship in which collaboration and transferring knowledge or expertise could have been a possibility.

Three of the eight women who attributed feelings of envy as leading them to withdraw from relationships at work described their envy as damaging their relationships at work to the point where they wanted to leave their jobs. Elena, a 31-year-old broadcast manger, envied a colleague, whom she also described as a friend, when she got a promotion she had wanted. Elena left the job soon afterwards because she felt disgruntled. She reported, "I stayed for a little while. I did my job as usual to the best of

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my ability and then I left. I got a new job because I felt I wasn't being treated fairly because I did want that position and I felt that I was more qualified than the person that was getting the position." Jill also described how her feelings of envy towards her boss partially motivated her to leave her position. She felt her boss was not deserving of the praise bestowed by her colleagues and she "made a decision to leave the job and try to do something on my own. I wasn't getting enough credit [and] I felt I was working for a person who has seemed to have fooled the world."

Melissa, a 32-year-old graphic designer, also felt that her envy prompted to leave her job. She described her envy of her colleague as something that was impossible to ignore. She recounted, "my first instinct was to just ignore it [my envy] but it was like an emotional outburst. I didn't really want to work there at that point any more. I really just wanted to get this done and over with and leave this place." Additionally, Jeannette, a 42-year old nurse, felt that she envied her nurse manger and also that the same nurse manager envied her. Jeannette's discomfort was significant enough to make her try to avoid this woman completely. As a result, she requested never to be scheduled when this particular nurse manager was working. Although it was a more inconvenient schedule for her, Jeanette explained that her envious boss "hone[d] in" on her and "bother[ed]" her and "gave her a hard time at work. So now I don't have to work with her anymore. I've been asked if I want to go back to those particular nights she's working. I said no. I prefer to work opposite shifts."

All four of the vignettes presented in this section demonstrate the painful disruptiveness of envy and the significant costs to withdrawing from relationships and contexts in which one feels envy. This behavior is maladaptive because other

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opportunities may not be readily forthcoming and their basic survival may be at stake. Furthermore, if withdrawal was motivated by paranoid-schizoid defenses such as an inability to tolerate self and other differentiation and acting out of destructive impulses, the behavior is less adaptive. However, the response to feelings of envy by withdrawing may be more adaptive if it is not rooted in a splitting posture where the self or other is entirely 'good' or 'bad'. Rather, feeling envy may help one to take decisive action in the face of obstacles preventing access to scarce organizational resources. Furthermore, it also may help to facilitate the attainment of one's professional goals in another organization (Gould, 1999; Klein, 1975).

Several other participants, however, withdrew from relationships that contained envious threads due to their inability to develop the relationships with those they envied. As Klein suggested, envy is particularly destructive because of its unique aim, i.e. 'goodness' (Klein, 1975). As a result, for these participants, there was little ability to 'take inside' or introject the 'good' from the other when envious feeling were present. Thus, one finds the envious person refusing to receive help or guidance from the envied object or undermining efforts by the envied one to provide what is needed. Additionally, the thought of pursuing a relationship with the envied one in the hope of renewing access to what one wants is rejected. For example, Jill, 28, an executive director of a scholarship foundation, envied a woman who ran a similar but more successful program. She described that she "simply wanted to have a program like hers, that was well respected and that was clearly doing good work and recognized for doing good work." She described, " not talking to her" when she was visiting her program and actually, while she also "had the desire to recruit her and to work with her" she did not contact her

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or approach her.

Like Jill, Claudia, 30, an academic advisor and instructor in a college, had a colleague whose skill and knowledge from a past work experience evoked envious feelings in her. Her colleague had been a director of another program and Claudia felt she was "always trying to catch up to her." Consequently, when Claudia did something her colleague had "to expand on it and do it better." Claudia felt incompetent and inferior and experienced defeat when her colleague engaged and built upon her ideas. While her colleague's behavior may contain competitive elements, it could also be viewed as an expression of collaboration and working with Claudia as a way to seek greater excellence together as a team on behalf of their organization. When there is envy, one loses the ability to trust the envied colleague who could be well-intentioned and may help invigorate or motivate one to achieve more in the workplace.

Feeling envy in the workplace, as we have begun to see, creates an environment in which collaborative relationships cannot flourish. Yet some women in this study spoke sadly about losing connection, relatedness, or relinquishing whole friendships as a result of feelings of envy emerging in the relationship. Participants described fear of falling out of relationships in which their differences, whether in talent, skill, opportunities given or choices made, threatened the identificatory pull that guided the relationship. The envy that comes forward in this example is the kind that comes from feeling side by side e.g. "we're running the same race" or "it could be me" and "I can kind of put myself in her place" and appears to turn into a sense of surprise when a shared endeavor has yields envy and advantage. The distance, fear and sadness produced by another's woman's envy in such a case was discussed by Jill, 28, executive director of a

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scholarship foundation. She felt envied by her faithful colleague when she got the role of director and the close colleague became her subordinate and the relationship grew more distant. Jill felt her colleague envied her because "I'm sure she recognized and felt like she was equivalently able to play sort of the starring role, if you will. We both openly talked about the fact that someone has to be the director and it's not as fun being number two." Jill pondered over how hopeless she felt that things could be different for women in the workplace given the realities of "hierarchy" and the comparisons made upward. She lamented, " there's very little we can do. There's nothing you can do to completely rectify it...I guess finding roles where we both can shine, ways in which we both can shine, i.e. both playing a leadership role is important and being supportive of her if she ever decides to do something out on her own. But just creating opportunities, creating niches in which each of us can shine differently is what we try to do."

Diverging career paths between female colleagues also seems to provide fertile ground for envy in the workplace and threatens the bonds between women at work. For example, Emily, 37, who works for an education non-profit organization, was having difficulty reconciling personal and work demands and strained to be home for her family and also take on new responsibilities at work. She described feeling envious of her colleague with whom she had previously identified who chose against having a family in favor of having giving her full attention to her career. Envy emerged at a time of differentiation in their relationship when Emily recognized her colleague made an autonomous decision based on her professional self-interest. Emily stated, "I was feeling very conflicted about my own desires and the conflict between my professional life and my personal life.....and angry at having to make the choices. I was feeling, at that

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point, she was lucky not to have those choices." As a result, Emily stated that her colleague had "a growing sense of being aware that I was very frustrated and angry with what I was experiencing when looking at her and seeing that I was now looking at her differently than I would have looked at myself." The differences they embodied could not be absorbed in their relationship and the relationship was sacrificed. In Emily's case, connection was threatened when an intimate colleague made a different choice that was envied by the other. As a result, Emily avoided pushing through her ambivalences about the personal and professional choices she made had by choosing to withdraw from the relationship.

Theme Three: Devaluing Oneself

Nearly a third of the participants described their feelings of envy leading them to devalue their abilities and their own accomplishments in the workplace. Participants cited envy as compromising their concentration, motivation, and creativity and also leading to self-doubt, a sense of inferiority, and limiting self-assertion. Their descriptions echoed the literature on envy's link to decreases in one's motivation, reductions in concentration, focus, and the ability to maintain a goal orientation (Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Smith et al., 1996).

Envy consistently emerged from the data as an emotion, when combined with others such as sadness and anger, used by participants to condemn themselves from attaining that which they longed for and, often, had felt deprived of in the workplace. Participants articulated that their feelings of envy, for which they judged themselves

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harshly, confirmed feelings of unworthiness, or low self-esteem. Nancy, a 33-year-old fashion designer, exemplified the process of self-doubt when she felt very envious of her colleague's promotion and asked her supervisors to be moved out of the department or have her colleague transferred. When nothing changed at work, she described, "I became more consumed with my feelings and then I began to get really insecure about myself." She felt, "Well, maybe they did this because I'm really not as good as I think I am. I doubted myself based on someone's definition of me. I felt like I didn't deserve what I was entitled to so I started doubting myself. "

Feelings of envy are also considered to impair one's ability to think and feel at one's optimal level. In his paper "Attacks on Linking," Bion (1959) described a psychic process that compromises one's capacity to think creatively. Due to frightening feelings of envy, dangerous thoughts and feelings are evacuated and projected outward, thus destroying the coherence of both thought and emotion. Consequently, curiosity, creativity and reality testing are impaired in the envious individual (Bion, 1959). For instance, Sarah, 26, a reporter, described losing her capacity for creative problem-solving and became highly self-critical when faced with a tide of envy towards her colleagues. Sarah described feeling envious of the mentoring that other colleagues received in their workgroups that enabled them to advance in their career. She admitted to feeling "disappointed with myself in not seeking out, maybe leadership in other areas that I could have or just being my own leader, instead of letting other people dictate sort of my work climate. I could have probably just done a lot more myself, but I was just faced with a very low motivation to really do that. It's very hard to work by yourself and climb against everyone. Looking at those other teams I was trying to figure out how do they do

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what they do. Could I have done the same thing in their situation? Was it just that I was in a different situation [an envious one]? At the same time, I remember feeling just very disappointed in myself."

Being envied also made four, or 23 percent, of the participants devalue themselves through chronically minimizing or downplaying their achievement. This consequence of envy prevents someone from performing to his/her fullest potential as one fears punishment or retaliation for autonomous and independent behavior (Bedeian, 1995; Berke, 1988; Horner, 1972; Person, 1982; Kets de Vries, 1992). For women affiliation is viewed as highly important and in order to remain part of the group, they suppress their skills in order to avoid evoking envy (Miller, 1993; Person, 1982). Trying to avoid evoking envy due to their achievements creates certain defenses, strategies or maneuvers, aimed at negating or reducing real or fantasied envious attacks from others. It includes: the devaluation of self, appeasement and placatory activities, such as fear of success, and a lack of pleasure at work. It is viewed to compromise ambition and creativity and leads to one minimizing one's own successes at work (Harris, 1999; Kreeger, 1992).

In this study, participants minimized their achievements and success when faced with envious colleagues. Joanne, a 28-year-old woman working in finance, expressed that when she outperformed "a good friend and a co-worker " she tried to suggest that to her envious colleague that she would also get promoted. The company "w[as] making a big deal about my promotion and it was very hard for me to look across the table at her and not make her feel bad." She tried to manage the situation by telling her supervisor that her close colleague "also did a great job and should be considered next. When

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nothing really came up, I felt better because I said that." The guilt and need to make magical reparations denies the work reality that these women share in two distinct ways. First, there is an inescapable competition for high-powered jobs in finance and opportunities for women are not readily forthcoming. Joanne risked appearing naïve when she requested that her colleague should be considered next. Second, Joanne tried to avoid acknowledging her unique set of skills and competence that got her the promotion. She minimized her superior skill as she feared it would only drive a wedge between her and her colleague and deprive her of a much-needed support.

When Claudia, a 30 year-old academic advisor and instructor in a college received the highest student evaluations for the second year in a row, the envy it generated in her colleagues made her want to downplay her pleasure and success. She recalled that she immediately found herself doing was explaining away her achievement. She explained "how the statistics could be skewed because sometimes it depends on how many students responded" and she tried to deny their differences in competence by saying, "I think we're all pretty good at what we do." She also tried to give them explanations for their inferior performance by alerting them to the possibility that "sometimes these evaluation [results] depend on when they [the students] were writing or filling out the evaluations. So maybe you gave them out to them on a day that professors were returning papers because with students you never know." She admitted that she, "tried to compensate for it [her superior evaluations]. I didn't want to say, oh yeah, well, I guess this is the way it is. I tried not to make them feel bad about it. I tried to downplay it." In this study, therefore, it appears that when some participants are envied, autonomous achievement and success, instead of constituting a value, come to be

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seen as something that one downplays and minimizes in order to maintain the work relationships one values.

Theme Four: Envy's capacity to motivate individuals

In this study, a small percentage of participants described that the experience of envy helped to motivate some to identify their goals and improve themselves. Women describe being envied by others as a form of compliment and a source of positive feelings about oneself. These positive outcomes of envy are also recognized in the general envy literature (Parrott, Salovey; Vecchio, 1995). In this study, envy is also seen to have a positive consequence in that it increases a person's motivation to improve in the area that they feel lack. Rather than just focus on depriving the self and other, envy can be used constructively to improve one's situation (Parrott; Tesser & Campbell, 1980).

In the psychoanalytic tradition, envy is more often described in its destructive modes. Although there are several theorists that believe that envy ought to be recognized as a source of data rather than an emotion to be hidden. Ulanov and Ulanov (1983) assert that that envy is helpful: it "is a displacement of our relationship to the good" or the recognition of the 'good' (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1983, p.9). Often women's experience of envy comes from parts of the self that are also unknown, unpracticed, and disavowed. They believe that when one recognizes what they envy, they can work to cultivate what one lacks in oneself. Therefore, they suggest that an individual's capacity to analyze their envy will pull them toward self- improvement. In allowing for envy, they claim that eventually one moves from destruction to emulation (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1983).

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Similarities that participants felt with the envied other also led them to feel that the goals reached by the other were possible for them, i.e., if she can do it or he can do it, then I can do it. For instance, Shannon, 25, who worked in an educational setting, described that envy had a positive impact on her life. Her envious feelings towards a supervisor led her to draw comparisons between her career goals and her supervisor's career path and decisions. As a result, she reflected on her life and identified her future career path. Shannon asserted "before I had arrived there I hadn't those aspirations to apply to school until I realized that my bachelor degree landed me as an assistant, making ten dollars an hour and not a very secure position. So my envy was an eye opener so, I decided to apply to school and further my education." Shannon remarked that she did not express her envy destructively. Rather she reported that her supervisor and her "talked openly about my [her] future plans." Here Shannon's behaviors echo the literature review, in which her non-malicious envy creates an attraction toward and emulation of what is good in the other. Shannon's envy was the means by which she learned what she wanted and her object of envy helped her to know how to meet her desires.

Several women, Paula, Susan, and Nancy, admitted to feeling pleased and flattered when envied by others in the workplace. In their cases, their colleagues did not say, "that's wonderful, I envy you because you received high praise, got the promotion, etc." Rather they described feeling complimented by envious feelings when their success or possession of something valuable reminded them they were indeed special or possessed something of value when compared to their envier. Paula felt pleased that her envier felt vulnerable and dis-empowered when compared to her. She stated she "felt flattered... part of me felt like, "Thank God I'm in my shoes and not in hers." Nancy

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also described a situation in which she felt driven by the other's envy. She reported that her colleague's envy of her led her to "do the best that I can .....I really just focused on what I was doing and was consistent and just very efficient that it would just anger her more. I felt really good about myself."

There is a dearth of literature and research about the positive consequences of envy in the workplace is disappointing. Why some women are more capable to use envy to identify what they want and then make attempts at self-improvement is important to further understand. At present, from the data collected in this study, it seems possible for envy to play a beneficial role in helping one to achieve and succeed in the workplace.

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DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss the implications of the findings of the study in greater depth, acknowledge the limitations of this research and also address future avenues of inquiry. This discussion presents the hypotheses that were generated from the data collected in order to move the conceptualization of envy in the workplace from an abstract, pathological, context-free definition to one that is more differentiated, normative, and context-bound.

Workplace Evokes a Range of Experiences of Envy

In this study, all eighteen female participants, from various professional backgrounds, ethnicities and ages offered their subjective accounts of experiencing envy in the workplace. It is essential to call attention to this fact as envy has not been given careful consideration in the research and theoretical literatures on women's experience in the workplace. This study corroborates the presence of envy in the workplace and demonstrates that women, from their own perspective, are in a position to envy in the workplace.

As women expressed their experiences of envy at work, they presented diverse perspectives on the concept of envy. Women sketched out various emotional experiences ranging from negative to positive feelings about being the object, or subject, of envy in the workplace. Women experienced envy on a continuum from anger at the other,

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sadness, self-hatred and self-blame to delight and pleasure as they recollected and described their experiences of feeling envy and being envied in the workplace.

Only recently is the perception among psychological researchers and scholars changing, allowing some room to explore how the workplace is an area of endeavor that is affected by the usual human emotions. What emerged from this study was that envy remains for women in the workplace a taboo experience. Although many spoke openly about disabling feelings of envy, few subjects appeared before their interviews to reflect on envy in the workplace in any great depth. Furthermore, women often asserted they did not disclose their envy, even with their closest colleagues and friends, even if they were not the object of their envy. Consequently, asking open-ended questions about their experience of envy, with little time to reflect, may have posed difficulties for the participants.

The difficulty women had even naming or repeating the feeling they were being interviewed about suggests that many were threatened by feelings of envy. Often, it was referred to by its associated feelings such as anger and longing. Participants may not have wanted to disclose the intensity and prevalence of their envious feelings for fear of increased shame and vulnerability. The disclosure of envy tends to reveal the envier as not only capable of envy, hence 'bad', but also vulnerable, lacking precisely that which one envies. Additionally, the distorting effects of time, memory as well as self-protection may have buried more detailed accounts of envy in the workplace. While it was clear that women experienced envy and its associated feelings, in the future, it would be valuable to meet with participants multiple times, for several hours each, to allow time for the rapport to have developed sufficiently so the topic of envy might more easily be

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broached and participants could then reflect in greater depth upon their experiences.

Contexts in which Envy Emerges in the Workplace

This study sought to elucidate the contexts in which envy developed in the workplace. Initial findings indicate the contexts in which envy is evoked can be understood in relation to both the existing theoretical literature on 'withholding' as well as the context of 'destructive differentiation.' Women's experiences of envy in the workplace were displayed in the context of withholding, i.e. envying colleagues whom they felt possessed 'organizational goods', like promotions, special privileges, praise for a job well-done and mentoring they wanted. Envy in the workplace also was displayed in the context of destructive differentiation, i.e. envying another colleague's superior skills or talents that enabled them to be more successful in the workplace.

Women described feeling and being envied most frequently by colleagues that were regarded as similar to them and with whom they could identify. Likeness, match of goals, personality, desires for similar relationships, and similar careers often led to the experience of intimacy and empathy in their work relationships. Most obviously, this experience was supported by the fact that only three women described feeling envious of men in the workplace. When women envied their colleagues they spoke of feeling guilty and ashamed about comparing themselves to their colleague; but they also felt betrayed by and separated from the colleague by her difference, her success, talent, skill or opportunities. The collegiality had, in my perception, suddenly changed from a mutually supportive endeavor, "us against the world", into one where the colleague had turned into

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the world. More successful, she became part of the envied world that must be guarded against.

Recent psychoanalytic thinking has suggested that recurrent women's identifications with other women are the product of the earlier mother-daughter relationship in which the daughter does not have to deny identifications with the mother to satisfy her gender role. As a result, women are seen as forming relationships based on mutuality, empathy and it is proposed that women tend to have relationships with others as extensions of themselves rather than more highly differentiated objects. For some women, relationships based on mutuality may make differentiation and autonomous strivings more threatening as it conveys putting a premium on 'self' assertion and repudiating the values of sameness, dependency and closeness (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1990; Jordan et al, 1991; Miller & Surrey, 1997).

Some argue that the privileging of the affiliation between women to produce empathy, empowerment and mutuality overlooks the difficulties that can ensue for some women who feel that their sense of self is confirmed only within the context of a mutually satisfying relationship (Lerner, 1988; Miller, 1993; Stiver, 1991).
At work, highly-charged affective relationships are not common on a routine basis. Nonetheless, relationships do form, and while they may be compelling, they are inherently limited. Work relationships are defined by role and task and, in the end, are instrumental in nature. As such, the envy produced when comparisons of talent, skill, and competencies are made, is so often feared that women often avoid acknowledging competition to prevent these emotions from surfacing. As evidenced in this study, women spoke about the sameness with the one they envied and also described feeling

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internally damaged, and somehow inadequate. Women insisted on feeling incompetent rather than compete and/or withdrew from competition in order to prevent evocations of envy when competent women unexpectedly pulled ahead or when they feared being defeated by someone with whom they also may have had a valued work relationship.

One broad implication, in addition to the pain involved in stifling one's envy, is that women's ability to be empathically attuned cannot be channeled into cooperation and collaboration because of the fear of competition and envy that may ensue. Furthermore, this loss of overt connection should not be mistaken as a lack of interest in relationship. Rather, women leaving relationships can be seen actually as preserving the relational model. They withdraw in order not to destroy their friends or colleagues. At times, disconnection seems the only way that women stayed connected to the envied figures in their lives.

Perhaps for some of these reasons, the puzzles of envy remain for women. First, women have few models for expressing "negative emotions" and using envy positively, for expressing anger creatively, for being passionate and assertive without fearing one is being murderous and destructive. Second, a woman's gender socialization may threaten to arouse her own, and others', envy when fears of isolation, separateness, and retaliation emerge. However, it is clear that each woman forms her own envious experiences by balancing a complexity of personal intentions, fears, and social messages.

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A Range of Consequences of Envy in the Workplace

This research also proposes that the consequences of envy in the workplace span a continuum from more destructive to constructive: envious attacks aimed at devaluing the envied other, withdrawing from relationship of potential value, devaluing oneself, and improvements in motivation. Participants described making a range of hostile envious attacks towards their object of envy in the forms of back-stabbing, spreading false gossip or misinformation to the supervisor, and belittling the target's opinion/performance to others. Consistent with Klein's theory, the sense that many women expressed, that "there is not enough to go around" activated envious acts of hostility and aggression towards their objects of envy.

Although there was a range of consequences of envy in the workplace, the most frequent outcome when feeling envy was withdrawing from a relationship with the object of envy. More specifically, the most common emotional, cognitive, behavioral sequence was the following: one woman envied another female colleague, with whom she felt identified, and the differences she perceived between them led her to feel weak, inadequate, and angry at herself, which subsequently caused her to withdraw from the relationship with her object of envy. Some of the recent theory and research on gender and emotion sheds light on why this description of women's envious experience in the workplace is most common. Many scholars have shown that the relationship between emotion and gender is highly complex and there are strong cultural and social notions that distinguish between males and females in term of emotionality (Chodorow, 2000; Lutz, 1990; Langford, 1999).

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Stereotypes for women being more emotional than men and also injunctions against female expression of aggressive emotions like envy still prevail despite social progress. Due to gender role inscriptions, women may have the tendency to suppress, and repress, envious experiences. Because of their ability to bear and nurture children and their socialization into the care-taking role, the inhibition of aggression in women seems necessary to protect the species. Although it begins with the need to protect the helpless infant, the prohibition against expressing aggression gains strength from an irrational belief about women's power, which is regarded as devastating if unleashed. This belief stems from the early experience of the infant with the mother, which if unresolved continues unconsciously as the irrational fear of female aggression (Harris, 1999; Lerner, 1982; Miller, 1976; Turkel, 2000).

To the extent a woman follows more traditional gender inscriptions, the psychic price includes inhibitions on the expressions of aggressive feelings like envy and anger. As a result, envious feelings are displaced and masked by other feelings and thoughts in order to defend against its direct expression. Similarly, in this study, women tend to describe envy as "hurt", "sadness", "longing" or "jealousy" and women's feelings of envy are converted into attacks against oneself and devaluing the self. In this study, women's envious feelings led them to feeling "inferior", "inadequate", and "hopeless" in the face of needs that felt withheld and differences that felt destructive.

Envy seemed to both confirm and extend a pre-existing sense of being internally damaged, longing, and feeling deprived which predisposed women more seriously to feeling envious. Particular envious experiences, therefore, only confirmed for women why they were in the position to envy. I believe that women may also see envy as

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evidence not only for being without what they longed for, but also why they deserved to be without it -- they were 'bad' women who envied. As a result, envy prevented women from feeling they deserved what they envied and from trying to pursue it: envy appeared to be a truly paralyzing emotion.

When women in the workplace cannot acknowledge their envy, they do not take adequate action in service of their needs. Rather they withdraw from relationships that have the potential for collaboration and do not ask for what they want and need to help them succeed. How does envy cause one to so quickly doubt one's inner worth? Women in this study appeared to have formed a notion of themselves as 'bad', and others as 'good', in order to justify why another inevitably frustrated them. These women may have become 'bad' in order to make sense of their abandonment. This sense of low self-esteem, or perception of the self as damaged, riddled women's experiences of themselves before and after envy. Therefore, the sense of being inferior and undeserving appears to be another condition that makes women vulnerable to feeling any degree of envy.

In this study, when women did disclose their envy to supervisors or bosses, it was a risky endeavor as they often left their jobs as a consequence. They risked being trivialized, misunderstood, invalidated or pathologized. In these situations, the healthy and nuanced management of one's envy proved difficult for many reasons. If women suspended blaming themselves long enough to entertain other sources for their feelings of envy, they tended to avoid examining their own behavior at all. Women seemed to project and blame others and events outside of themselves to an extreme. This may lead to venting envy in unexpected outbursts or more exaggerated exchanges, as several women in the study portrayed. In these scenarios, women may unintentionally conform

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to the frightening false stereotype of unbridled and destructive rage by becoming "out of control" or displaying "emotional outbursts." Regardless of their behavior, if aggression is aimed at the self or the other, women are living up to the view that to feel and acknowledge envy is a disturbing phenomenon.

Clearly, the taboo, both historical and personal, on envy for some women carries a powerful ban on the very disclosure that might diffuse it. However, there were some women who discussed how their examination of their envy in the workplace helped them move from a more paralyzing envy to experiences of envy that were more liberating. Instead of punishing themselves for their wants and desires, these women turned inward for envy's etiology *and then* outward toward the success they now felt they wanted and worked toward. Ultimately, these women appeared to feel less damaged and undeserving of what they longed for than the other women interviewed.

Several women described how experiences of envy led to more positive feelings such as feeling flattered and feeling powerful. Others suggested that envy helped them to identify what they wanted and motivated them to work towards the goal. Perhaps if one is not trapped in defensive expressions of envy, the recognition of when something is needed, missing or needs changing is more possible. In other words, envy can prompt one to act against mistreatment, violation, or injustices in the workplace. Therefore, acknowledging the constructive forms of envy is important and the actual reality of that envy, e.g. the desire for a better job, a different career, a more available boss, could turn the envier towards emulation and motivated strivings.

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A Functional Continuum of Envy

The hypothesis that the participants' experiences of envy fell on a continuum from negative to positive has several important implications. A continuum of experiences is instrumental in reframing envy as having not only negative and pathological properties but positive and helpful features. It allows for the re-conceptualization of envy as having normative and adaptive functions and may allow envy to surface as a more acceptable facet of work life. The value of the continuum also lies in suggesting a broader, more differentiated understanding of envy, permitting an individual to locate more specifically how, what, when and who they envy. Thus, envy reaches into the relational world of the contemporary workplace not only as a pathological intrusion, but a normative process helping to promote self/other differentiation. In other words, one can reframe the emergence of envy. Traditionally in the psychoanalytic literature, envy is viewed as a sign of poor self/other differentiation that leads to hostile attacks towards the self or other (Klein, 1975). This study suggests that the emergence of envy may be more normative. It may, in fact, be a moment of opportunity or development when one can acknowledge difference and sameness between oneself and the envied other to gain a differentiated sense of who one is, what one wants, one's relative limits and strengths. In this way, envy can then function as a force to drive one forward developmentally rather than just hold one back.

In the workplace, only when women can then recognize the impact of their envious interactions will they work to create options and structures to manage their envy-based exchanges in more collaborative and supportive ways. In this respect, the

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presentation of a continuum of experiences and consequences of envy in the workplace would help envy serve a functional rather than pathological purpose in organizational life. Women could support their strivings *and* their recognition of what is unique to her, rather than requiring perfection. When women have a range of feelings, options and choices, they begin to deepen and more authentically express, long for, or tolerate what they want and need. In doing so, they expand the scope of their achievement and performance in the workplace.

Limitations and Future Directions

It seems that professional women would benefit greatly from more attention to the subject of envy. There are a number of limitations to this study that make it clear that more research must be continued to explain what envy in the workplace is, when it occurs and what its consequences are. Currently, there is a need to rethink the approach to investigating the experiences of envy in the workplace. A progressive and integrative approach might help move away from the traditionally narrow ways researchers have come both to understand and to interpret other's lives, thereby eventually enabling one to overcome the deficiencies discussed earlier.

In order to reach a greater understanding of the experience of envy in the workplace, one must look beyond its traditional sources and investigate both internal, external and organizational factors that play an interconnected and dynamic role in creating, expressing and driving one's subjective experience of envy in the workplace. For example, the diverse experiences and consequences of envy could also be a result of

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the fact that participants spoke from diverse work settings, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, classes, and ages. One of the deficiencies of this study of women's envy in the workplace was that it is not able to clearly link the origins for the different experiences of envy to specific internal, external or organizational factors.

Envy driven by internal, personality driven factors must be more deeply examined as the compounded impact of the core identity elements of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and class will affect one's envy in the workplace. By building on the psycho-biographical dimensions of employee's lives to create culturally-embedded, more holistic, developmental portrayals of them within the workplace will help elucidate envy's role in success and achievement within the workplace.

Further research must consider envy's ties to economic, political, and historical trends that influence the intensity and type of roles, status and opportunities available in the workplace. Gender patterning of jobs, wages, hierarchies, power, and subordination that influence senior management decisions, whether intentionally or not, may alter forms and patterns of envy. Organizational structures (such as flatter or more traditional hierarchies) or diverse organizational cultures (such as they are private or public companies) influence worker incentives and may give rise to unique forms and intensity levels of envy that are independent of employee differences in the workplace. For example, this study examined how the workplace can be seen as capable of evoking various forms and consequences of envy in their employees, assuming a relatively stable environment. While it was beyond the scope of this study, it has been hypothesized that emotional life '*in*' organizations is distinct from the emotions '*of*' organizations and that

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researchers must discern the difference (Armstrong, 1999; Gould, 1999; Jacques, 1955; Menzies Lyth, 1960; Miller, 1993, Neumann and Hirschhorn, 1999; Stein, 2000).

In future studies, it is suggested that the nature and interconnectivity of envious phenomena in the workplace needs to shift to a multi-level analysis that is constituted intra-psychically, interpersonally and organizationally; understanding how each constituent part of envy is mutually reinforcing. This reworking of research on envy will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of envy in the workplace as it explains the nature and interconnectivity of various components of the envy in the workplace.

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APPENDIX A
Demographic Data

	Participant	Type of Organization	Job Title	Age (yrs)	Race/ Ethnicity	Socio-Economic Class	Last Degree
1	Jennifer	Education non-profit	Assistant to Dean	26	White	Upper Middle	MA
2	Evelyn	Education non-profit	Associate Director	30	Black / Hispanic	Working Poor	N/A
3	Elena	Advertising agency	Broadcast Manager	31	White/ Spanish	Middle	MA
4	Shannon	Educational Resource Room	Administrative Assistant	25	White	Low	BS
5	Susan	Law Firm	Legal Assistant	46	White	Lower Middle	MA
6	Emily	Education non-profit	Program Officer	37	White	Upper Middle	JD
7	Paula	Investigation Company	White collar investigator	31	Italian American	Upper Middle	BA
8	Jill	Scholarship Foundation	Executive Director	28	White/ Protestant	Middle	BA
9	Melissa	Graphic design firm	Graphic Designer	32	German	Middle	BA

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APPENDIX A
Demographic Data

	Participant	Type of Organization	Job Title	Age (yrs)	Race/ Ethnicity	Socio-Economic Class	Last Degree
10	Nancy	Retail Company	Fashion Designer	33	African-American	Middle	BA
11	Christina	Desktop Publishing	Desktop Publisher	24	Italian	Middle	BA
12	Monica	Education non-profit	Education Associate	25	White	Middle/ Upper-Middle	BA
13	Sarah	Financial News Company	Reporter	26	White	Upper Middle	MBA
14	Rebecca	Publishing Company	Publisher	35	White/ Jewish	Middle	MA
15	Tracy	Law Firm	Lawyer	38	White/ Jewish	Upper Middle	JD
16	Joanne	Financial Service	Fund Manager	28	Irish, Lithuanian, English, Polish	Middle	MBA
17	Claudia	College	Academic Advisor	29	Latina	Working to Middle	BA
18	Jeannette	Nursing Home	Staff Nurse	42	Black	Low	MA

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APPENDIX B
Interview

I. Demographic Information:

- Current place of work
- Job title
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-economic class
- Last degree

II. *Associations to* Envy:

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of envy?

III. Definition of Envy:

Imagine you were going to write a definition of envy, what would you write?

IV. Experience of feeling envy in the organization:

Using your definition of envy, could you tell me about a situation from your work setting when you felt envious of someone else?
Probes:

- What did you consider doing?
- Did you show your envious feelings when you felt it?
- How did you respond?
- Did you handle the situation the way you wished you had?
- Did the other know you were expressing envy?
- Did you discuss it with anyone?

V. Experience of feeling envied in the organization:

Could you tell me about a situation from your work setting when you felt envied of someone else?
Probes:

- What behaviors or clues made you feel that you were the object of envy?
- What did you consider doing?
- How did you respond?
- Did you handle the situation the way you wished you had?
- Did the other know you felt envied?
- Did you discuss it with anyone?

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