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The Social Construction of Envy

Maury Silver

I am envy, begotten of a chimney-
sweeper and an oyster-wife. I cannot read,
and therefore wish all books were burned.
I am lean with seeing others eat . . . .
But must thou sit and I stand? Come down,
with a vengeance!

--Christopher Marlowe,
"The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus"

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

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ENVY

by

Maury Silver

Adviser: Professor Stanley Milgram

Envy is discussed as a motive for action, an emotion that possesses a person, and a sin that a person may be guilty of. The analysis approaches envy as an emotion and motive from the perspective of envy as a sin--a transgression of a moral order. This approach, thus, treats envy as related to a system of mutually assumed norms that members of a community treat as 'objective,' i.e., having an existence independent of their particular purposes at hand.

Envy is one of the traditional seven deadly sins: sloth, lust, anger, gluttony, arrogance, greed, envy. The other sins point to transgressions committed while trying to achieve a goal that is natural, unproblematic, a part of human nature (rest, sexual pleasure, the expression of righteous indignation, food, self-esteem, and material goods). Not to pursue thoese goals requires explanation, to pursue them does not. Envy appears to be an odd member of this

group; it seems to lack any such natural goal. Lacking this obvious goal structure, envy has usually been seen as a cause of behavior in a way that the other sins have not.

The analysis attempts to demonstrate how envy does fit the model of the other sins by pointing out that selves are linked: the worth of an individual is assessed by himself and others with the attainments and attributes of others as background. Hence the success of one individual can inadvertently diminish another person. Envy is a subset of those actions in which a person pursues the natural goal of attempting to preserve his or her worth when it is indirectly threatened by the attributes or accomplishments of another. Such actions are a sign of envy when they transgress social norms in an attempt to undercut the successful individual's moral worth or the value of his accomplishment. Envy is then distinguished from competition, righteous indignation, jealousy, despair and normal attempts to preserve self-worth.

An experiment was conducted to determine whether this theory is reflected in naive subjects' perception and judgment of envy. A video tape of a scenario in which an individual achieved a valued goal and a friend did not was constructed from four modules. Variants of the scenario focused on the appropriateness of a criticism of the successful person, the relative success of the two

individuals, the degree of acquaintance, and the less successful individual's openly displaying either depression or admiration. Each of the six variants was constructed so as to alter the basic scenario, in which all of our criteria for the perception of envy were met. Five of these alterations were predicted to reduce the probability of subjects perceiving or judging envy. Each was effected by a change in only one module. Among other questions, subjects were asked how the characters felt about each other (without suggesting alternatives) and then asked to judge whether the person was envious or not. In the basic scenario 92% of the subjects spontaneously offered envy as their interpretation of the character's feelings. As predicted, in the variant conditions (except for a lesser success condition, per hypothesis, and an acquaintance condition, contra hypothesis) realiably fewer subjects offered envy as an interpretation than in the base condition. On the judgment question only the admiring condition produced a reliably less frequent judgment of envy, but judgments in all the other conditions were in the predicted direction. A content analysis of the reasons subjects gave for denying envy on this question further supported the theory's claim about the constituents of envy.

To Stanley Milgram

and

to my mother, Esther Silver

For whom I returned to graduate school.

Without whom I would not have remained.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

Part 1. Envy and the Seven Deadly Sins

Traditionally, 'envy' holds an important place in the account of human misbehavior. Cain slays Abel because Abel's sacrifice is more pleasing to the Lord. A Greek is cautioned to avoid the envy of the gods as well as that of his fellows (cf. the Athenian justification for the institution of ostracism (Ranulf, 1974). St. Thomas Aquinas excoriated envy as one of the seven deadly sins, which not only are evil in themselves but spawn other transgressions. Recently, Helmut Schoeck, a sociologist, hypothesized that deep-seated envy and the fear of the envious are primary energizers of society's ills--both of revolution and social stagnation (1969). Heider (1958), in a less sweeping analysis, has proposed that envy is one of a group of negative affects caused by the positive state of another: a person is envious when he wants what someone else has just because he has it. According to Heider, this feeling, in part, derives from an "ought force," that people who are similar should have similar outcomes.

Although much has been written about the sources and deleterious effects of envy, with the partial exception of Heider almost no attention has been given to systematic linguistic or phenomenological analysis of envy

itself. This may be due to the fact that we usually think of envy as a feeling, in the sense of an immediate unitary experience. Although questions are often asked about the causes of this experience, the experience itself is treated as a given, not susceptible to dissection. Yet, 'envy' is often used in ways that do not manifestly involve experiences, i.e., to characterize an individual or supply a motive for action. Our purpose will be to carefully analyze the ways in which the concept of envy is used; perhaps an examination of some of these various ways will even give us insight into the concept of envy as an experience.

Depending on the context, 'envy' may refer to an emotion ("He was overcome by envy"), a reason for action ("He is acting out of envy") or a characterization of an action as a transgression of a moral order, i.e., a sin. The category of sin points to envy as related to a system of mutually assumed norms which members of a community treat as 'objective', i.e., having an existence independent of their particular purposes at hand (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1967; Schutz, 1973). This objective aspect of envy, open to common sense discussion, clarification and debate, can be captured by the analysis of common sense talk. We shall first examine envy from the perspective of envy as a sin and then turn to what are considered to be the subjective, 'private' facets of the phenomenon--envy as a motive and as an emotion.

Envy is a curious sin. It is felt to be nastier, more demeaning, less human than the other sins. It is also puzzling--the reasons why people are envious appears to be less obvious than why people are, say, greedy or lustful. Merely look at envy's entry in a dictionary of thoughts (Edwards, 1957): "Every other sin hath some pleasure annexed to it, or will admit of some excuse, but envy wants both."--Burton. "Other passions have objects to flatter them and which seem to content and satisfy them for a while, but envy can gain nothing but vexation."--Montaigne. As Rochefoucauld has pointed out, "We are often vain of even the most criminal of our passions; but envy is so shameful a passion that we can never dare to acknowledge it." To articulate the odd qualities of envy, we need a selection of other sins to compare it with. The seven deadly sins provide us with a list touching upon what is considered to be some of the more common serious flaws in human nature--greed, sloth, wrath, lust, gluttony, pride and envy. Moreover, as it is a traditional collection, and since envy is already a member, we can be sure that our frame of comparison is not solely determined by its convenience for our analysis.

What do the seven deadly sins have in common? Most generally these words characterize a 'self' as demeaned, lowered or spoiled (cf. Goffman, 1971, for the notion of a spoiled identity). These sins typify a

person as greedy, lustful, arrogant, lazy, etc., yet the typification is not supported by other evidence about the self,[1] but about the particulars of the person's misbehavior. This is also true of other sins: if we say that a person is a murderer, then the behavior to which our charge points is killing.

However, the misbehaviors to which the seven deadly sins point seem to have a distinctive feature. Consider the accusation that a person is greedy. The behavior to which we point is acquiring goods. Killing another person is held to be wrong in itself in a way that acquiring a possession is not. Each of the seven deadly sins, perhaps excepting envy, designates behavior that is not in itself evil. If I say that an individual is greedy, I point to the acquisition of some goods, but I do not thus call acquiring goods, in itself, evil. Sloth is a sin, but rest, a commandment. Although lust is considered evil, enthusiastic conjugal sex meets with the highest clerical approval. To be able to experience righteous indignation is a

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[1] 'Self-worth' or 'self-esteem' would be more commonly used here. However, these phrases suggest subjective feeling rather than an objective social fact. In our usage, the 'self' is an object which can be known by the actor and others and has value as determined by socially grounded standards of comparison (cf. Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1964). We would reserve terms such as self-esteem and self-worth for the particular 'impression' that an actor has for the value of his 'self'. This impression may only loosely fit in with the perception of others. A person may be in error about his own value.

mark of virtue; anger is a sin. The priest denounces gluttony yet may wish you a hearty appetite without being a hypocrite. Arrogance is evil, but self-assurance is said to be the seal of manhood. The six deadly sins other than envy involve acts having goals which are not in themselves evil which have been done inappropriately or to excess. Moreover, not to pursue the very goals which are the ends of the proscribed sins is held to be pathological. Frigidity, anexoria, spinelessness require explanation; sexuality, appetite and self-assertion do not. It is easy to understand why these sins are, to follow Nietzsche, "human, all too human." To convince someone that we are incapable of lust or gluttony is to convince them that we are more or less than human. The deadly sins point to characteristic flaws of our common nature. Envy seems to be curiously out of place on this list, as it does not appear to point to a natural goal. This is a source of envy's paradoxicality. One purpose of this analysis will be to determine whether envy does fit into this pattern.

Envy is often advanced as an explanation of action (cf. Schoeck, 1969), yet if we consider the other sins we can see that they are rarely used with explanatory force. One way to explain an action is to point to a goal to which it was directed; but in most cases the other sin words are applied to behaviors where a goal is patent. If a person commits adultery, to accuse him of lust is not to

supply a goal for a sex act as if what he hoped to achieve by his action were mysterious.[2] Perhaps, then, sin words are used as causal explanations as opposed to explanations in terms of reasons and goals. In everyday talk, we often give a causal account of an action when it appears to have no sensible goal (cf. Peters, 1958; for present purposes we are bracketing the question of the ultimate compatibility of 'cause' and 'reason' explanations cf. Melden, 1961; Alston, 1967). (A causal explanation of general paresis is searched for precisely because shaking, stumbling, losing one's memory and dying are not the sorts of behavior for which sensible goals can be found.) Given that the goal of a sinner's misbehavior is present, sensible and only too transparent, however, what aspect of it remains to be accounted for by a causal explanation? The only aspect of behavior that a sin word might explain is what caused a person's transgression in the pursuit of a normal goal. Although these sin words point to a lack of restraint, they do not, in themselves, supply its cause. At most, they are stand-ins for such a causal explanation. For instance, in Catholic theology original sin is held to be the real cause of the failure of restraint to which the sin of lust

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[2] In certain exceptional cases, sin terms can furnish a goal for action, which has an explanatory force. For instance, we might explain that a prostitute's 'sin' is one of greed, rather than lust. The explanatory power of 'greed' in this example derives from its pointing to a deviation from the "obvious" goal of a sexual act.

points. Similarly, a hypothalamic disorder is held by physiologists to be, in some cases, the cause of overeating, 'gluttony'. Envy seems to have more explanatory force than the other sins; it appears to give a real causal account and not to be merely a stand-in for one. Our analysis will examine the manner in which 'envy' functions as an explanation. We shall be particularly interested in whether 'envy' does have more explanatory force than the other sins, and if so, in what way.

How does our approaching envy as a member of the seven deadly sins provide us with a framework for understanding what is perhaps the most striking feature of envy--envy as an emotion? Envy can be a feeling that possesses a person, takes hold of his consciousness, often to his dismay. Envious thoughts may come to us unbidden, even when we wish we could join in the celebration of a friend's success. Envy is often a consciously experienced feeling, i.e., it is episodic, e.g., "I had a pang of envy," "I felt envious for a moment." Yet, we must be careful when we speak of envy in this manner. Using a phrase like 'the experience of envy' may mislead us into assuming that answers have been given before we have explored which questions are to be raised. For instance, do we experience one mental content when we report an experience of envy, or is envy a way to characterize a class of contents? Are there particular experiences which in themselves constitute an envious feeling or

is it necessary that we have these experiences in a particular context for them to be described as envious? How does pointing to the presence or absence of the feeling of envy qualify our judgment as to whether a person is envious or not? Again, we shall take the tack of exploring these questions in regard to some of the other deadly sins, and then we shall turn to envy once we have created a framework for our analysis.

Let us first ask: what might be passing through the mind of someone who is guilty of the sin of lust?--fantasizing a sexual tryst, focusing on chest or crotch bulge, perhaps experiencing a genital tingling. But having these experiences, in themselves, is not equivalent to being guilty of lustful thoughts. I doubt that this description would currently be taken as evidence of lust, even by a conservative clergyman, if it were to refer to the thoughts of newlyweds on their wedding night. A Victorian, on the other hand, might hold that these thoughts would still be evidence of lust if entertained by a woman, though not by a man. (St. Paul might damn them both.) Lustful thoughts are not merely thoughts relating to particular sexual contents, but rather are thoughts of sex <u>which are held by a particular community to be inappropriate to their context</u>. Although the other sins can be shown to fit in this mold, the sin of envy is again problematic. Although all thoughts about sex are not

necessarily 'lustful', all 'lustful thoughts' are about sex. What are envious thoughts about? Are all such inherently envious, or does context separate the sin from the normal?

The other sin words, with the possible exception of anger, relate to experiences which are pleasurable in themselves. Thoughts of sex, food, possessions, prestige are typically pleasant. Envious thoughts are held to be typically unpleasant.

Often, people argue that they could not have acted out of envy, as they had no experience of envy. Is this a compelling argument when used with the other sins or does it appear credible because of some odd quality of envy? Consider lust--suppose a friend states that he was not guilty of lust, because he was not 'horny' that day--he just happened to find himself in bed with a woman. Does this modify our judgment of lust? No. If his partner was married and not to him, then our judgment of lust will depend upon our sexual ethic regarding adultery and not upon any assessment of his prior mental state. Is the prior experience sufficient, even though not necessary, to determine that someone has acted lustfully? No. There are many chaste 'horny' people, either through extraordinary effort of will or, more typically, through lack of opportunity. Hence, pointing to a prior experience can neither support nor defeat a charge of lustfulness. Although prior

experience is irrelevant to the moral characterization of an action, it may be a part of a causal explanation, e.g., "I woke up that morning and couldn't think of anything but sex. If I hasn't been so horny, I would not have accepted her invitation and . . ." Here a heightened sensitivity is given as one part of a causal account of why something happened. Hence, for the other sins, a prior mental experience does not enter into a moral characterization of an act, although it may furnish evidence of an unusual sensitivity which could enter into a causal account. Envy, perhaps because it lacks an obvious goal, seems to require the experience of envy in a way that greed or lust does not. If someone denies that he acted enviously because he did not feel envious, is he denying that a certain experience entered causually into his action?

We have thus far argued that the other deadly sins involve a person's transgressing in the pursuit of a typical human goal which is not, in itself, evil. We have also pointed out that sin terms rarely have an explanatory value but are merely stand-ins for a causal account. We have examined the relation between experience and behavior for these sins. At first glance, envy does not fit the pattern of the other sins; we have pinpointed sources of this oddness. In the next section we hope to show how envy, like the other sins, may be analyzed as a characterization of an individual which is grounded in particulars

of his behavior and experience. In doing this, we will see the manner in which envy parallels the other sin terms and will attempt to show how the paradoxes of envy arise and how they may be resolved. Our approach will be to first focus on presentations of self in interactions affected by the issue of success. We will then see how the characterization 'envy' emerges from the problematics of such situations.

Part 2. Envy as a Moral Accusation

There are many ways to lose standing in "the local scheme of social types" (Garfinkel, 1956) and wind up with a depreciated self. There are depreciations that we are fully responsible for and those that we merely fall into--crimes, faults, flaws, failures, gaffes and missteps. We may be depreciated through another person's malice and be falsely accused, snubbed, ridiculed, taunted or spat upon. Most curiously, a loss of esteem may just happen to us, not through our fault or another person's spite, but merely as a consequence of the way selves are linked in the social world. A person may be diminished inadvertently, as a by-product of someone else's success. It is often held that if an individual feels diminished by another person's accomplishments, then it must be due to his own idiosyncratic sensitivities, perhaps a "low self-esteem."[3] But when particular cases of success and failure are considered, what others have or have not achieved is a background to our

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[3]We might even say that a person who feels demeaned by another's accomplishments is prone to envy. It is tempting to immediately treat the concept of envy in this connection. Yet, to do so at this moment would confuse the issue. Only when the full complexity of this social situation is presented will we be able to elucidate the connection between this sort of depreciation and 'envy'.

assessment. It is not only that, as social comparison theory holds (Festinger, 1954), a person evaluates the appropriateness of his assessment of his own status by comparing his assessment with that of others, but rather that his or her status, as evaluated by himself or others is inherently comparative. Is there a question as to which of the two following events would be treated as entailing the greater loss: being rejected for a position that all of one's friends have attained, or being rejected when they too have failed?

How can a person defend an eroding position? If this erosion is caused by something he has done or has been accused of doing, then he has many options for remedial action. He may deny the charge and even return one, calling his accusers malicious or rude. He could give a justification, showing how his apparently inappropriate behavior was in fact appropriate, or an excuse, accepting the charge while pointing to mitigating circumstances (Austin, 1964; Goffman, 1971). He might belittle the import of the charge, admitting that it describes his behavior while stating that it constitutes a minor flaw, not a crime, or that although it might be a major flaw in someone else, because of his particular position it is not a telling flaw--an inability to add is a peccadillo in a poet but a major failing for an accountant. Barring all else, he might apologize, stating that his action was an

unfortunate slip. If these accounts are not tenable, then he could acknowledge that the act was typical of his behavior in the past but that he has now reformed. As a last resort, if he cannot lessen the loss of face, then he can at least avoid those who know of it.[4]

The remedial actions we have discussed can be used only when the individual and his audience are both aware that there is something that must be answered for. This occurs when an overt moral charge has been made or when the act is of the sort that typically calls for an explanation, apology, excuse, etc. Consider, however, the predicament of someone indirectly demeaned by the accomplishment of another. The defense of his lowered status must be made in the absence of an accuser or an overt charge. He has done nothing, hence he has nothing to retract or justify; nor can he point to the other person's deliberate harm-doing, since there hasn't been any.[5] The options open to him to

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[4]The extent of a person's objective loss is analytically distinct from the extent of his reaction to that objective loss, e.g., he may perceive that his social self is being lowered yet do nothing to prevent it. Perhaps status in the particular group doing the lowering is irrelevant to him; he isn't a member of the community. At the other extreme, the awareness of a minor loss may possess him, and he may find himself preoccupied with his lowered status.

[5]There are other instances of this predicament in the social life, e.g., it underlies the stickiness of dealing with being ignored. The difference between being ignored and being snubbed hinges on the fact that the ignored

prevent or minimize diminution of self are severely restricted and hedged with difficulty.

This sort of situation can also be uncomfortable for the individual announcing his success and even for witnesses. Consider a social occasion in which a success which may demean one participant is announced. The person who may be damaged, of course, has a problem in preventing an erosion of his esteem. Yet, he also, as a party to the interaction, is expected to unreservedly participate in the very acclaim that is undermining his position. The person who has succeeded is also in a difficult spot. He understandably wants his success known. Moreover, if he does not announce his success during the encounter, he may insult those present, his reticence being taken as evidence that their approval is irrelevant to him. On the other hand, any excess or poor timing in his announcement may leave him open to the charge of being a braggart. If he attempts to underplay his accomplishment, he must do so skillfully; otherwise he will be guilty of false modesty, or even worse, he may be seen as implying that the attainment is so easy that the others should have achieved it also. A third party who cannot be demeaned by this particular success

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cannot point to any special dereliction in the distribution of attention; being ignored is cumulative, not involving any over violation of constitutive rules of social interaction. Hence, it is extremely difficult to deal with (Geller, Goodstein, Silver, Sternberg, 1974).

still faces a problem: he must celebrate the success of one without tactlessly underscoring the lack of accomplishment of the other. Examining how a skillful third party can carry off this delicate maneuver will enable us to focus on some of the tactical possibilities in such a situation without bringing up additional complexities introduced by personal gain or loss.

How can he carry it off? He may take the fortunate person aside and congratulate him privately; he is then free to ignore or play down the matter in front of the person who might be hurt. If such an opportunity does not present itself and he must make his congratulations in the presence of the person whose position may be undermined, he will have to moderate his use of superlatives. Better yet, he might link the success to the other person's support, if this is at all plausible. It will also be necessary to attend to the temporal limits of the celebration by changing the topic at the appropriate moment. He might, if he can find a suitable context, pick a topic which will allow the unsuccessful person to display his accomplishments.[6]

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[6]This strategy is very delicate. You must choose a topic which will not in any way undercut the success of the person who is celebrating. Typically, the further this area of accomplishment is from the celebrant's, the better. In addition, you must be careful to pick an area of commensurate worth, or you will heighten the contrast and humiliate exactly the person you are trying to protect.

What if a person whose status is threatened were to use these same strategies? It seems doubtful that we would call him tactful. On the fact of it, the application of such techniques for selfish rather than altruistic ends would appear to be patently wrong, further demeaning their user. Yet, it can be misleading to identify a characterization of an action with its presumptive motive. Judgments of an action, as we have found in our analysis of the deadly sins, depends more on the appropriateness of the action to its context than on the psychic state of the actor. Consider a case in which a speaker has gone on too long. Changing the topic would be merely an appropriate response to a tedious monologue. Now consider a braggart for whom you supply the missing modesty by taking him down a peg. If this were done in an amusing manner, at the right moment, with finesse, your response would be an entertaining repartee, the perfect squelch--not a transgression. Everyday conversations involve a certain measure of self-presentation; they also involve changes of topic, turns at display, affirming team aspects of individual accomplishment, etc. If each of these parts is played without mishap, the propriety of the interactants is not called into question, even in the case where one or more of the participants could be seen as possibly demeaned by the success of another. But what if one of them blows his lines, e.g., changes the topic too quickly or brings up his own success

in a forced, clumsy manner? It is in this case that the question of ulterior motive arises--not because we did not previously realize that the parties in the interaction were displaying themselves or attempting to limit the display of others, but because until this moment, these aims were part of the natural fabric of the conversation.

As Peters (1958) points out, in common sense talk the question of motivation arises when a transgression of social norms is believed to have occurred. In such contexts, talking about motives, in part, supplies the goal that the person was pursuing when he transgressed. Of course, should they be pressed, participants in almost any interaction could supply such goals for perfectly blameless behavior ("self-enhancement," for instance, is one common goal of ordinary conversation). However, supplying a motive in common sense talk both points to a goal and characterizes its pursuit: it is, following Austin (1964), a "performative utterance," in this case, a performance which demeans the person to whom it is applied. When someone inappropriately pursues a goal of self-protection, common sense is likely to use the epithet "envy." This is especially true if he has done so by limiting the import of another person's success or in some other way devaluing that person.

Let us closely consider this analysis of the common sense use of 'envy'. It assumes the truism that people wish to have 'worthy selves'. The transgressions, or sins, that occur in pursuit of this end are broadly of two sorts--those of pride and those of envy. The charge of pride (arrogance, boastfulness, being a braggart) arises when the transgression is in the service of self-enhancement; the charge of envy arises when the transgression is seen to be the result of an attempt to prevent self-diminution. Since an attribution of envy presupposes that the actor's self has been diminished or at least that he perceives this to be the case, to be seen as envious is doubly damaging. Not only has he committed a transgression, but he has tacitly acknowledged his lessened worth.

Not every situation of inappropriate 'self' protection is proper grounds for a charge of envy. A student who, after failing an exam, calls its fairness into question in a patently self-serving manner is a whiner and complainer, but not necessarily envious. However, if he remarked on the unfairness of the test only after being informed that acquaintances had gotten A's, his behavior would warrant a charge of envy.

Only those situations in which the advantages, attainments, etc., of other people demean an individual

provide a context for the charge of envy.[7] But for a person's behavior to warrant this charge, it must not merely be an inappropriate response to being demeaned by another person's attainment; his response must be an attempt of some sort to protect himself from being lowered or at least must be interpetable as an abortive or blocked attempt to so protect himself. One might burst out weeping or commit suicide due to being demeaned by another's success. These actions, though inappropriate, need not be called envious. They may be signs of a painful recognition of, or perhaps incorrect belief in, the diminution of one's status, rather than an attempt to cope with a perceived diminution. There is one other element in our analysis of envy: the method of self-protection is by undercutting the other person. If we

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[7]We have so far stressed how the linkage among the statuses of individuals is an 'objective' phenomenon. Any social actor can understand how a person may be demeaned by certain successes of other people or that someone may attempt to protect himself from being demeaned. This objective aspect of the phenomenon provides us with a necessary background for our understanding of personal differences in reactions to other people's attributes or accomplishments. Using this socially shared knowledge allows someone to recognize that another person is feeling intensely envious even if he himself has never experienced a pang of envy. Some people appear to be much more prone to feelings of envy than do others. It is likely that this is related to idiosyncracies in the way an individual perceives his socially constructed 'self', i.e., that he perceives himself to be susceptible to accomplishments of others that would not even be noticed or would be considered irrelevant by ordinary common sense actors. However, such a study of the idiosyncratic aspects of envy necessitates a prior analysis of the social construction of the phenomenon--the grounds for judging that we are or someone else is envious.

redouble our own efforts because we are shamed by a rival's attainments, we are not considered to be envious. In fact, if our efforts are honorable, we are exemplifying the competitive spirit, indulging in virtuous emulation. A coach, in the movies if not in fact, may stimulate the waning spirit of his team by dwelling on how the other side's superior performance is making fools of them. Although being put down by the other side's performance is seen as a goad to competition, we would be very unlikely to call this extra effort envious, even if the effort were to involve poking, gouging, and other unfair play. The team might be guilty of poor sportsmanship, but insofar as they are attempting to prevent themselves from being demeaned by trying to win the game, they are not acting enviously.

We have thus far examined the question of when an action gives rise to a charge of envy. But when we call a person envious, we are typically not judging a single action, but a character, or 'self'. The fact that "envy" refers to both actions and selves adds further complexity to our analysis. 'Envy', to borrow and extend the use of Ryle's phrase (1949), is a "mongrel term," one which both characterizes a single act and makes a prediction about the actor. Because of this duality, commonsense actors may introduce evidence to support or refute a charge of envy in a specific case by mentioning facts which are not about the action under discussion, and would hence seem to be

irrelevant. These facts are about the person's typical ways of perceiving and reacting to situations involving his esteem or prestige. An action by someone who often brags is more easily seen as envious than the same act by someone else known for modesty. An individual who is obviously sensitive to slights, snubs, and other signs of lowered status will similarly be more liable to be seen as envious. An evidence of fragility in a person's conception of his self-worth will feed into the assessment of whether or not he is envious. Hence, we must bear in mind that the judgment that a person is envious is not simply reached by counting the number of times that he has committed envious actions. Judgments about selves are not collapsible in any simple way to judgments about actions.

We now return to the question raised earlier: whether envy fits into the pattern of the deadly sins. As in our earlier formulation, we propose that when someone says that another person is envious, just as when he asserts that a person is greedy or arrogant, he is denigrating the other's self, making a statement about what the other individual is <u>really</u> like. The charge refers to a self, but it is supported by pointing to a category of behaviors having a specific goal. We noted that for the other sins these goals of conduct were not considered evil in themselves. Their pursuit is considered normal, natural, obvious, not requiring special explanation. Rather it would be the

failure to pursue these goals which would more often require a special explanation. What made these behaviors sinful was not their end but the inappropriate manner of its pursuit. The sin of envy, on the other hand, seemed less human, as it did not appear to point to a natural goal. In the course of our analysis we have attempted to demonstrate that there is a "natural" goal in the envious person's behavior and that, as with the other sins, it is its inappropriate pursuit which constitutes the sin. When we say that a person is envious, we are, in part, implying that a goal of his behavior is to prevent himself from being demeaned. We have detailed a number of ways, both appropriate and inappropriate, that a person may attempt to do this. When we say that a person, in pursuing this goal, is 'envious', we ground our statement by pointing to a particular class of inappropriate behaviors--behaviors which directly or indirectly attempt to belittle another.

Our analysis has, in a sense, debunked the notion of envy by removing its mysterious quality. We have argued that the goal of the envious person is no more perverse than that of the miser or lecher. But if his goal is so obvious and natural, why do thoughtful common sense actors find envy so perverse?

Let us look again at our comparison of envy to the other deadly sins. Adultery is obviously a member of the class of sexual acts. Whether it is evidence of lust

merely depends on our sexual ethic--our evaluation of its appropriateness. Inappropriately belittling someone, on the other hand, may be an aggressive act, an envious act, a thoughtless act, an arrogant act, etc. It is only when we can connect someone's act of belittling to a goal of self-protection that we can see it to be a token of envy. To be 'greedy', a person need attempt nothing more than to acquire a good; an envious individual is attempting to belittle another person in order to do something else--in order to protect his self-worth. Envy's perversity derives from the fact that demeaning somebody is an end, i.e., something that the envious individual is trying to bring about, but not the ultimate goal of the envious person. What makes envy "natural"--self-protection--is not what betrays the act as envious: undercutting another person. What is immediately perceived is not the ultimate goal, self-restoration, but the indirect manner of achieving this goal, demeaning another person. The sexuality in a sin of lust is patent and unavoidable; the self-protection in the of envy is obscured by its secondary but more overt end, the demeaning of another.

Part 3. Envy as an Experience

We have thus far dealt with envy as if it were merely a name that we apply to a person's behavior when it seems to be inappropriate in a particular way. Yet, "envy" also denotes an experience. A person may be said to be tormented by envy or preoccupied by envy. We often speak as if envy were the content of consciousness of the envious person, yet as we mentioned earlier, when we say that a person is feeling lustful, we do not imply that "lust" is the content of his consciousness, but rather, thoughts related to sex. Sometimes recognition of a reduced position due to another person's real or apparent accomplishment may lead to thoughts which undermine the moral worth of that other person. One may merely notice the other person's unworthiness or perhaps be obsessed by it. On occasion the actor may recognize that his criticism or feeling of outrage is inappropriate. He may realize that his criticism is ungrounded or overblown, that the other's moral failings are none of his business, that his concentration on these failings betrays an obsessive preoccupation. He may also recognize that it is his own diminution by the other's accomplishment that has occasioned such moral charges. If an actor comes to believe that he has reacted in such an

inappropriate way as a defense of his reduced self, then he would be said to realize that he has experienced "envy." The fact that he has characterized this reaction as envious does not mean that it ceases to occur. It may keep popping into his mind, along with an awareness of tight muscles, pounding heart, etc., even though he realizes that the reaction is inappropriate. Such a recognition may lead to a further reduction in his self-esteem. This realization of the flimsiness of 'self' shown to him by his unwilled and uncalled-for defensive reaction is one of the torments of envy, or more properly put, the torment of knowing that one is feeling envious. On the other hand, it is possible to feel demeaned by another person's accomplishments, also feel critical of him and yet not believe that there is any connection between these two attitudes. Or perhaps we recognize the connection but do not believe our critical attitude is inappropriate; rather we perceive it as a justifiable response to his arrogant behavior. In this case we might be right, but at another time, even though we did not believe that we were envious, someone else, if he could show that our reported feelings were overblown, overpersistent, etc., would be warranted in the assertion that we were possessed by envious thoughts. He might even be able to convince us that we were envious.

We have argued that some form of criticism, undercutting or demeaning--either overt, implicit or

experienced--is necessary for envy. Yet, people sometimes firmly believe that someone is envious and may even offer evidence for their assertion, even though they cannot point to any belittling, etc. We would argue that in this sort of case, some of the criteria for a person being envious are manifestly fulfilled, e.g., his being shown up by the other person's success, his dwelling on this success, etc., and it is thus inferred that the person is envious, i.e., that the other criteria are also fulfilled. The force of this inference, saying that the person is envious, implies at the very least, that he is likely to, or would like to, or has some tendency to, begrudge or belittle the other person's success. If it could be shown that this was not the case, we would alter our judgment.

As Kenny (1963) would point out, our position is somewhat overdrawn in that we do accept partial cases as instances of emotion, even though they deviate from the standard case of the emotion. For instance, the paradigm case of fear involves an assessment of threat, a typical symptomology (shaking or trembling) and (qua motive) an attempt to avoid this threat. Yet, we meaningfully talk of objectless fear, etc. Consider the case of someone who cowers under a bed, says he feels afraid, and yet denies that he perceives a threat. In order to characterize this case, we would both call it fear and point out that it is

odd. We understand this truncated case in reference to the more central one. If this behavior were to become a typical instance, then our concept of fear would alter.

Part 4. The Social Construction of Envy: An Empirical Investigation

Procedure

Our analysis holds that a person is seen as envious when his action is an inappropriate attempt to demean another in order to protect his self-worth. Envy is not identifiable with a particular behavior, but emerges out of very specific contexts. In order to study the conditions that create our perception of envy, we have produced on video tape an encounter between two students. One of them receives news about admission to graduate school; the other reacts to this news by making some negative remarks about his fellow student to a third person. Our theory predicts that the degree to which these remarks are judged to express envy is determined by the circumstances spelled out in the previous analysis. We begin by constructing a context for this action in which we expect the actor to be clearly perceived as envious; we then vary this context in ways which should, according to our theory, lessen the perception of envy.

1. Baseline

The logic of this approach requires that only one element of the context be changed for each condition; hence, the video tapes were constructed by combining modules so that only the element we were focally interested in was altered. The baseline condition is made up of four modules. The first module shows that Dave and John are friends; the second shows Dave telling Ann, after John has left, that he has been rejected by all the graduate schools that he applied to; in the third, John returns, reports modestly that he has been accepted by Yale and then leaves; in the final module, Dave calls John a braggart. All other conditions use the identical video tapes for three modules and change one module. Thus, in the Acquaintances version, for example, there is a different first module in which Dave and John talk to each other as acquaintances. This segment is spliced on to the identical second, third and fourth modules. The procedure insures that changes in the perception of envy are caused by change in only one module. The following is the scenario for the baseline condition:

Part 1:

(John and Dave are seated, relaxing, in what appears to be a student lounge).
J: So what should we do this weekend David?
D: I don't know mm...You know what we ought to do? ...We ought to go to that place we went to last year.

J: Oh...Upstate New York?
D: Yeah, um, it would take us about three hours to get there.
J: I think about that long.
D: We could leave early Saturday morning, take a couple of cases of beer...an...
J: Right, right...And bring your guitar.
D: Yeah, that would be great.
J: Yeah, should be a good time. We had a good time last year.
Ann (off set): Hey Dave...Ready for our Spanish appointment? (camera pans to door)

Part 2:

(camera follows Ann approaching John and Dave)
A: Hi.
D: Hi, you're early.
A: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt anything.
J: That's all right. I was just leaving anyway.
D: Ann, do you know John?
A: Hi, John, how are you?
J: Hi (John gets up)...(to Dave): I have to go check the mail (John leaves). (Ann takes seat vacated by John).
A: So how are you getting along with your applications for school?
D: Uh...I got a letter today from the one school I was waiting to hear on, and I got rejected there too, so I didn't get in anywhere this year.
A: Ah...That's too bad.
D: Well, I'll just wait till next year and reapply.
A: Yeah, well, maybe you can use this year to do a lot of work...That will probably help next year.
D: Yeah...I'll probably get a job pretty soon... O.K., lets get along with the Spanish then.
A: O.K.
J: (from off scene): David, I just got a letter from graduate school.

Part 3:

(camera pans to door, then follows John as he approaches Ann and Dave)
J: David, I just heard from Yale--they've accepted me.

D: Oh, that's great... Congratulations.
A: Congratulations...That's wonderful
J: Boy, I hope it's not a mistake.
A: Well,..probably not.
D: No...no.
A: Isn't Yale really expensive though?
J: That's the best part...They're going to give me a fellowship.
D: Oh wow...That's great.
A: Oh my god.
J: Listen, I have to run...I have to tell Professor Smith...He wrote a lot of letters for me. I know he'll be pleased..So, I better run.
D: O.K. See you later...Congratulations.
A: Take care...Congratulations again...bye.
(John leaves).

Part 4.

(focus on Ann and Dave)
A: So how about that? Yale. That's really great that he go in.
D: Yeah, but did you see the way he went on about it? Think he was the only person that ever got into graduate school. That's all we're going to hear for the next week.
A: Well...Lets get back to Spanish. We have a lot of work to do.
D: How far did you get?
(pan out)

2. Acquaintances

Our first modification of this context is to alter the relationship between the central characters. This scenario is identical to the above except that the two actors are presented as acquaintances rather than friends. A criticism made by an acquaintance is less inappropriate than the same criticism delivered by a friend and is therefore less likely to be seen as envious.

The following is the transcript of the Acquaintances Scenario:

Part 1:

(John and Dave are seated, relaxing, in what appears to be a student lounge)
J: David...um...I hear you have a guitar to sell.
D: Yes, I do...uh...Are you interested in buying a guitar?
J: Well, I don't really know anything about them, but I was interested in picking one up. I wanted to learn how to play.
D: Well, I got an old Gibson. It's in pretty good shape; the only thing it needs is a new bridge.
J: Maybe I can come over and take a look at it sometime?
D: Sure, anytime.
J: Um...Do you want to give me your phone number, and I'll call you up next week?
D: O.K. It's 595-2847.
J: O.K. I'll call you, then.
A (off camera): Hey, Dave, are you ready for our Spanish appointment? (camera pans to Ann)

Parts 2,3, and 4: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

The role of relative success: a sine qua non for the perception of envy is that someone's objective worth is lessened by the success of another person or that it can be made clear to an observer how the actor fancies that his worth has been lowered. The relative success of Dave and John will be considerations in whether Dave's accusation is seen as envious.

3. Lesser Success

So far, Dave has been totally unsuccessful. What if he, too, were successful, although less so than John? How would this contextual change affect the perception of

envy? Perhaps Dave's moderate success lessens the likelihood that subjects see him as envious. Our theory, however, sees this situation differently. We propose that so long as there is any salient difference in success, Dave is equally likely to be seen as envious. Thus, in this condition, Dave tells Ann of a limited success: That he has gotten into North Dakota State Teacher's College rather than no school at all.

The following is the transcript of the Lesser Success scenario:

Part 1: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

Part 2:
(camera follows Ann approaching John and Dave)
A: Hi.
D: Hi, you're early.
A: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't want to interrupt anything.
J: Oh, that's all right, I'm just leaving anyway.
D: Ann, do you know John?
A: No...Hi, John.
J: Hi, Ann...I got to go check the mail (gets up) ...See you later. (John starts to leave)
D: Right.
A: Take care. (John leaves, Ann takes seat)
A: So, how are you doing with you applications to school?
D: Well, I got one letter today...I got into just one school...um...North Dakota State Teacher's College.
A: Oh...That's not bad.
D: Yeah, one, at least one.
A: Well, how about Spanish?
D: Yeah, lets get along with it...How far did you get?
J: (off scene) David...

Part 3 and Part 4: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

4. Equivalent Success

In this variation, Dave tells Ann, not that he was rejected by all graduate schools, but rather that he was accepted by Harvard. We predict that due to his equivalent success, although subjects may look for ulterior motives for Dave's inappropriate charge, they are less likely to pick envy as that motive.

The following is the transcript of the Equivalent Success scenario:

Part 1: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

Part 2:
(camera follows Ann approaching John and Dave)
A: Hi.
D: Hi, you're early.
A: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't want to interrupt anything.
J: Oh, that's all right, I was just leaving anyway.
D: Ann, do you know John?
A: No...Hi, John.
J: Hi, Ann...I have to go and check the mail. (John starts to leave).
D: O.K. See you later, John.
A: Bye-bye...Take care.
J: Right. (John leaves)
A: (Ann takes seat) So, how are you doing with your applications for school?
D: I got a full fellowship.
A: Oh, that's fantastic. Congratulations.
D: Yeah...I'm really glad.
A: That's really wonderful.
D: Well, lets get on with the Spanish.
A: O.K.
J: (from off scene) David..

Part 3 and Part 4: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

5. A True Charge: John Boasts

Our analysis stresses that the perception of envy depends on an actor's doing something inappropriate. In the Baseline scenario Dave's implication that John is a braggart is without foundation. It is an inappropriate charge, thus it provides a basis for the perception of envy.

In this condition, John will announce his acceptance by Yale in a boastful, immodest fashion. This will greatly lessen theinappropriateness of Dave's charge, thus we predict that subjects will be less likely to see Dave as envious. (Even though true, a charge may not be fully appropriate; Sabini, 1976, on the notion of 'standing'.)

The following is the transcript of this scenario:

Part 1 and Part 2: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

Part 3:
(camera follows John as he approaches Ann and Dave)
J: David, I just heard from Yale...they've accepted me.
D: Yeah...Well, you know, you just have to apply yourself...If you really work at it, you know, and do some research...See, the important thing is to do research. When I had that idea...You know the research I was doing with Dr. Smith...When I had that idea to do that research with him, I knew that it was the sort of thing that they wanted because I think that that's probably the best research they've had for an applicant for Yale...I mean...
A: Isn't Yale really expensive?
J: Yeah, it is, but they're giving me a four-year fellowship--well they just recognize quality students and...It's that research I did that does it...If you just apply yourself and stick to it, you know, they'll take you...There's no big thing about getting into Yale. Well, I got to run...I got to go tell Dr. Smith...I'm sure he'll be very pleased to hear about this...I'll see you later.
A: Bye-bye.
D: Bye, John.
(John leaves)

Part 4: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

6. Admiration

If Dave makes no charge, but rather tells Ann that John, in fact, deserves his success, then his statement is appropriate and in no way demeaning of John; hence, subjects will be less likely to perceive Dave as envious.

The following is the transcript of the Admiration scenario:

Parts 1,2, and 3: the same as in the Baseline scenario.

Part 4:
(focus on Ann and Dave)
A: So, how about that? Yale...That's really great that he got in.
D: Yeah...I'm really glad...He really worked hard the last four years...If anybody deserves to get in, it's John.
A: Yeah...Well, lets get back to Spanish... We have a lot of work to do.

7. Depression

Not all inappropriate responses to another's success are evidence of envy. For instance, we predict that such a response, when it is an acknowledgement of a lowered worth, rather than an attempted defense, will not be seen as envious. In this scenario Dave, after hearing John's news, will tearfully dwell upon his own inferiority. We predict that subjects will be less

likely to perceive Dave as envious than in the baseline condition.

The following is the transcript of the Depression scenario:

Parts 1,2, and 3: same as in the Baseline scenario.

Part 4:
(focus on Ann and Dave)
A: So how about that? Yale...That's really great that he got in.
D: Yeah, that's really nice (depressed tone)... Well, I...I'm glad I found out now...I'm really not cut out for it...I didn't have the grades or marks or anything...It's better than sitting around for two years trying to beat your head against the wall to get in.
A: Yeah...Maybe it is...How about getting back to Spanish? We have a lot of work to do.
D: How far did you get?
(pan out)

Questionnaires were administered asking for subjects' perception of the interaction. The questionnaires attempted to do this in three ways, progressing from the least to the most structured: from questions on Dave's feelings toward John, to an adjective checklist with "envy" as one entry, to a question asking subjects to decide between someone who says that Dave is envious and someone who disagrees. These and other questions presented to the subjects will be given in full prior to the analysis of the subjects' response to each question.

Table 1

Summary of predictions: Comparative likelihood of subjects perceiving Dave as envious

1.	Baseline	equals	baseline
2.	Acquaintances	less than	baseline
3.	Lesser success	equals	baseline
4.	Equivalent success	less than	baseline
5.	A true charge: John boasts	less than	
6.	Admiration	less than	baseline
7.	Depression	less than	baseline

Subjects

One hundred and sixty six subjects were recruited for a study on "judging other's feelings" from Brooklyn College's "Introductory Psychology" classes. These students were fulfilling a course requirement, and almost all had participated in other research. The only restriction on participation was that English be the first language learned and the dominant language spoken in their homes; fluency in written English appeared to vary greatly. Sixty four of the subjects were male and eighty five were female; seventeen subjects did not divulge this information. Due to contingencies of scheduling, group size varied between one and seven students (median size 4, over 2/3 of the groups consisted of between three and five individuals). Groups of subjects were randomly assigned to conditions.

Prior to the video-presentation, subjects were told that they would be filling out a questionnaire on how the characters felt toward each other and that they would have to support their answers by referring to what was said or done in the presented interaction. After seeing the videotape, they were given a questionnaire. Page one asked how Dave felt about John. We did not raise the question of envy, here, as we wished to see if it would be spontaneously mentioned.

Subjects' Responses: The Perception of Envy

In our first group of questions, subjects were asked: "How would you describe in a sentence of two Dave's feelings or attitude toward John after their second conversation" and "If you had to use only a word or two to describe Dave's feelings, what word would you use?" They were also asked, "What did Dave say or do to give you this impression?" Subjects were taken to have perceived that Dave was envious if and only if they mentioned 'envy' or 'jealousy'[8] and did not specifically deny or doubt the description. Some subjects said things like---"not envy, but---", "it could be envy, but more likely----".

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[8]Envy and jealousy have areas in which their meaning are clearly distinguishable. If my lover runs away with another man, I might be jealous of that man, but not necessarily envious. I, also might be envious of this man if the savoir faire he displayed in seducing my lover clearly highlights my social clumsiness. (cf. Kingsley Davis, 1936, for a provocative analysis of jealousy.) In the sort of situation that we are depicting, envy and jealousy are used interchangeably. One entry for 'jealousy' in Random House 'American College Dictionary' is "envious resentment against the successful rival or the possessor of any coveted advantage". Since we are talking about a success, envy and jealousy are interchangeable. Although fine distinctions can be drawn between these two words, even in this domain, these fine distinctions are not typically attended to. In pilot interviews on the experience of envy, it was found that people freely interchanged these two words.

How did subjects respond to the presented scenarios? A substantial proportion of the subjects in all conditions stated that Dave was 'envious' or 'jealous' of John. Only in the condition where Dave expressed admiration for John was this proportion less than one half. The nature of the situation as experiment, the subjects as psychology students and the question format lead to the perception of ulterior motives. In addition, the character that Dave portrays is a touch sullen throughout, perhaps inviting the perception of a negative emotion. Subjects' responses, however, were sensitive to the differences among the situations that we created.

As Table 2 indicates, the number of subjects who perceived envy was not randomly distributed across conditions. All but two out of twenty four subjects in the baseline condition (with John and Dave as friends---John successful and Dave unsuccessful---John modestly announcing his success---and Dave, behind John's back, putting his friend down for bragging) perceived Dave as envious or jealous of John. Subjects in the depressed, equal success, admiring and boasting conditions were reliably less likely to perceive Dave as envious of John than were subjects in our basic situation. Subjects in the lesser success condition, per hypothesis, and subjects in the acquaintance

condition, contra hypothesis, were not reliably less likely to do so.

This group of questions did not suggest envy as a possibility. We were interested in how the situations would initially present themselves, the characterizations that would come to mind, i.e. the subjects spontaneous perception of envy as opposed to their judgement of envy. There is a potential objection to this treatment: perhaps subjects perceived envy in all the conditions and merely could not find the exact word to fit their perception. For instance, some subjects who did not write 'envy' or 'jealousy' used the word 'resentment'. Why should we not treat 'resentment' as an appropriate 'stand in' for the 'jealousy' or 'envy' that they could not find? Our answer is that not only did 'jealousy' and 'envy' occur with reliably different frequencies in the different conditions, but also that in the baseline, where all our hypothesized structural conditions for the perception of envy were met, twenty two of twenty four subjects did use these particular words--not in response to some check list, but as their immediate expresseion of "Dave's feeling or attitude toward John". Even though subjects might not be able to write an analysis differentiating 'envy' from 'resentment', the two words are likely to occur to people under different

TABLE 2[a]

Numbers of subjects who spontaneously described Dave as feeling envious or jealous of John by experimental condition

	Baseline	Depression	Admiration	Boasting	Equal Success	Lesser Success	Acquaintance
Described Dave as 'envious' or 'jealous'	22 (91.7%)	12 (54.5%)	8 (36.4%)	17 (58.6%)	14 (53.8%)	18 (85.7%)	19 (86.4%)
Did not describe Dave as 'envious' or 'jealous'	2 (8.3%)	10 (45.5%)	13 (63.6%)	12 (41.4%)	12 (46.2%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (13.6%)
Total	24	22	22	29	26	21	22 (N=166)

[a] Summary of comparisons [χ^2] between Baseline and other conditions

Comparison:	χ^2	.df.	P
Overall	29.31	6	P<.001
Baseline/Depression	6.54	1	P<.02
Baseline/Admiration	11.25	1	P<.001
Baseline/Boasting	6.357	1	P<.02
Baseline/Equal Success	7.078	1	P<.01
Baseline/Lesser Success	.025	1	not significant
Baseline/Acquaintance	.0106	1	not significant

circumstances. This should not be taken to mean that subjects have a theory of envy that matches ours, merely that their use of the word is sensitive to the sorts of differences in social situation that our theory holds to be the case. Let us look more closely at each of our conditions:

Admiration Condition. The admiration scenario is a morality play of virtue. Here, although Dave is hurt by his inability to get into a graduate school, he is able to muster the resources to tell Ann that "if anyone deserves to get in, John did". Fewer saw envy here than in any other condition (thirteen subjects did not see Dave as envious or jealous as opposed to eight who did). This is in contrast to the baseline condition where only two out of twenty four subjects did not perceive envy. Subject A21's reaction is typical: "He thought highly of him as an individual and was genuinely glad about the fellowship John had received." A little over one third of our subjects, however, did perceive envy. Subject A11, for example, stated, "Dave appeared pleased and happy for John, but he was not enthusiastic enough. He really felt resentful toward John. Dave is secretly jealous." Perhaps for some people, a situation in which one person's success underscores another's failure, is ipso facto one in

which envy is felt; however, we lean to an alternate interpretation. Even in this situation, subjects were able to find or construe some inappropriateness, social fault, begrudging in Dave's reaction to John. Let us look at the features of Dave's and John's behavior that subjects pointed to in order to explain their response. Of the eight subjects who mentioned that Dave was envious or jealous, four pointed out that he was not sufficiently enthusiastic in his direct or indirect congratulations, e.g., "Dave's attitude seemed cool and his congratulations seemed forced." Two subjects said that his look was envious and one's answer seems to straddle between looks and inappropriate congratulations: "he was happy, speaking, but faced seemed sad." (One subject gave his judgment without giving support for it.)

We shall discuss more fully later why subjects should be set to see some inappropriateness, sign of an ulterior motive in Dave's behavior.

Depression Condition. In the depression condition, reliably fewer subjects perceived Dave as envious of John than in the baseline condition (10 out of 22 subjects did not perceive Dave to be envious in this condition as opposed to two out of 24 subjects in the baseline condition).

In this scenario, Dave, in answer to Ann's statement, "Isn't it wonderful that John got into Yale", pauses and says in a choked voice, "Yeah, I guess so (pause) I'm glad I found out now. I guess that I am not cut out for graduate school. I haven't the grades--". Dave's mood and intentions shifts radically after John's news. When he initially tells Ann how things are going, he is a bit sad, but is intent on applying to graduate school next year. After John announces his good news, he apparently gives up completely and acts quite depressed. John's success is set up to occasion Dave's shift in mood. Ten out of twenty two subjects did not state that Dave was envious or jealous, yet all of them specifically mentioned that Dave was in some negative state--'depressed', 'discouraged', 'disappointed', etc. Seven of these subjects referred to John's success as the cause of, a component of, or as increasing Dave's negative feelings, e.g. "He feels even worse that John got in and he didn't (D22)", "hearing that John was accepted toward Yale disturbed him more than before (D20))", "when someone tells their good fortune while you're brooding over your misfortune, it can be very aggravating (D13)". These responses are not suprising, given the scenario and the fact that the question on page 1 focused on "Dave's feelings toward John". What is of import is that the perception of a

negative state directly related to the success of another is not in itself sufficient for the perception of envy. According to our theory, what is necessary is that the response in some way belittles the other--as is the case in the baseline scenario. Dave's response is primarily an acknowledgement of lessened worth rather than an undercutting of John's success; hence, according to our theory, subjects should be less likely to perceive Dave as envious than in the baseline condition. This prediction was confirmed.

Equal Success Condition. In the equal success condition[9] subjects were reliably less likely to perceive

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[9]As a manipulation check, we gave a subsample of subjects in this condition a multiple choice question concerning John and Dave's relative success. Of Thirteen subjects, ten indicated that Dave was equally successful as John and three that Dave was less successful than John. These three subjects present a problem for analysis. According to our theory they have a basis for perceiving envy. In fact, all three mentioned envy, however, it would be misleading, perhaps self serving to eliminate them. Since the manipulation check was given after the other questions were answered, perhaps for these subjects, the role of relative success was not salient. They might have made their response on the basis of the scenario, not taken account of our manipulation as important and then reconstructed what would be a strong case to support a judgment of envy previously given. Our manipulation checks allow us to conclude that, in general, the situation was taken, as we meant it to be taken. But, we shall not eliminate subjects on the basis of this check.

Dave as envious than in the baseline condition. 12 out of 26 subjects did not perceive Dave to be envious as opposed to 2 out of 24 in the baseline condition. In this scenario, since Dave has gotten into Harvard with a four year fellowship, his untrue criticism of John may appear to be unmotivated--at least in regard to protecting a threatened self worth. A major structural precondition for the perception of envy appears to be absent. How can Dave's objective worth be lessened if his accomplishment is equivalent to John's? But, as subject E16 points out, Dave,"...was very rude about it. Especially after he had just told Ann the same thing about himself". Dave's comments here, since they are both inappropriate, and on the surface unmotivated should be more likely to be perceived as strange or odd than the same remarks in other conditions. Subjects were asked, "How strange or odd is Dave's behavior, (if at all)?" As can be seen in Table 3, subjects were more likely to perceive Dave's behavior as strange in this condition than they were in the other conditions. Subjects may have resolved this oddness by deciding that Dave had reason to believe that John would go on about it even though there was no evidence of this in the particular interaction. For example, subject E16 states that Dave's behavior "seemed very strange, but I don't know what John is like,

TABLE 3[a]

Numbers of subjects who stated that Dave's behavior was strange or odd

	Experimental Condition							
	Equal Success	Baseline	Depression	Admiration	Boasting	Lesser Success	Acquaintance	Total For All Conditions Excepting Equal Success
Stated that Dave's behavior was strange or odd	9 (34.6%)	4 (16.7%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (10.3%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (13.6%)	18 (12.7%)
Stated that Dave's behavior was not strange or odd	15 (57.7%)	20 (83.3%)	20 (90.9%)	17 (77.3%)	25 (86.2%)	17 (81.0%)	19 (86.4%)	118 (84.0%)
Unclear	2	0	0	2			0	6
Total	26	24	22	22	29	21	22	142 (N=166)

[a] A comparison between Equal Success and the total for the other conditions:

$\chi^2 = 8.32, 1, p<.01$

maybe he is the type to go on talking about it, like Dave said he would". Another way the subject could resolve the problem is to assume some way that John's success could demean Dave. As John and Dave were close friends this would appear to be the easiest way to make Dave's unwarranted accusation sensible. Subject E2's response reflects this 'situational demand'. He is sensitive to Dave's appearance as envious, yet notes that the situation is not quite one in which Dave would be envious: "his attitude seemed <u>almost</u> envious or jealous (emphasis added, M.S.). A lot of people would behave that way, but you'd think that since he was accepted to Harvard, he wouldn't be jealous and would be happy for his friend." Ten subjects perceived envy or jealousy apparently viewing the situation as if this structural precondition were present. For instance subjects may perceive that Dave <u>feels</u> that John's success diminishes the <u>impact</u> of his own, e.g. "he had felt special until he found out that John had gotten a similar award so that he was no longer the center of attention. (E20)"

This hypothesized pressure to perceive the situation as one in which Dave is more successful than John is given further credence by examining subjects' responses to the manipulation check for the <u>equal success</u> condition.

Three subjects (of 13 queried) incorrectly stated that Dave was less successful than John (two of them perceived Dave as envious in question one; all three judged Dave to be envious in question three). No subject in the lesser success condition made the symmetrical error of indicating that Dave was equally as successful as John.

The way that Dave might be demeaned by John's success is not as immediately apparent in this scenario as in the baseline, hence we predicted and found that subjects should be reliably less likely to perceive Dave as envious.

Lesser Success Condition. Inequality of success, if discriminable, provides a basis for the perception of envy in a way that equal success does not.[10] In this scenario, since John's accomplishment, a full scholarship to Yale, is clearly greater than Dave's, admission to North Dakota State Teacher's College, we predicted that subjects would be no less likely to perceive Dave as envious in this condition than in the baseline. In the lesser success condition, eighteen out of twenty subjects (86%) saw Dave as envious. This does not differ substantially from the baseline condition in which twenty-two out of twenty-four subjects (92%) saw Dave as envious.

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[10] As a manipulation check we gave a subsample of subjects in this condition a multiple choice question concerning John and Dave's relative success. Of the nine subjects asked, eight indicated that Dave was less successful than John. One subject did not indicate a presented alternative, but responded facetiously, perhaps, that he did not know the academic credentials of North Dakota State. In this condition, our manipulation was quite successful.

Acquaintance Condition. In the acquaintance condition subjects were not reliably less likely to perceive Dave as envious of John than they were in the baseline condition.[11] In our baseline scenario, John and Dave are presented as friends. The situation was set up in this manner in order to underline the inappropriateness of Dave's behavior to John: more is expected of a friend than an acquaintance. In contrast in the acquaintance condition, John and Dave are seen as casual acquaintances. The study did not yield the results that we predicted--almost the same number of people perceived Dave as envious as in our basic scenario. We now realize that our scenario was not constructed to properly test our condition. What was needed to test the thesis was some behavior, which although appropriate from an acquaintance, was inappropriate from a friend. Falsely and emphatically putting someone down is quite inappropriate from either. Hence, our scenario was overstated for our purpose.

Some action such as congratulating another person would have been more suitable as a test of our hypothesis: A 'correct' congratulation from an acquaintance may be seen as overly formal from a friend.

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[11] As a manipulation check, we gave a subsample of subjects, a multiple choice questions asking whether John and Dave were strangers, acquaintances, friends or close friends. In the baseline condition, seventeen out of eighteen subjects asked, marked friends or close friends, one marked acquaintances. In the acquaintance condition, in contrast, twelve subjects marked acquaintances, eight marked friends and one was undecided.

Boasting Condition. Subjects in the boasting condition in which John flaunts his success, were reliably less likely to perceive John as envious than in the baseline condition. In this condition, twelve out of twenty nine subjects did not perceive Dave to be envious, while in the baseline only two of twenty did not perceive him as envious. For a charge to be appropriate, it must at least be true. If John is, in fact, boasting, then Dave's annoyed charge is accurate. In this scenario, since John prattles on in a tedious and immodest fashion, the charge, "Did you see the way he went on about it--it's all we are going to hear for the next week", has foundation. As subject B23 noted: "Dave felt very good toward John before John started to brag about his scholarship to Yale."

These results are a clear refutation of any position that would see envy as merely "focused hostility" toward another caused by that other's success. Not only is John successful and Dave unsuccessful, but immediately after John recounts his success, Dave showed a focused hostility toward him. Yet, subjects are likely to perceive Dave as envious than in the baseline. Hence, a focused hostility toward another caused by the other's success is not sufficient for the perception of envy.

Dave's tone, the warmth of his prior congratulations or the fact that he blurts out his charge immediately after

Ann says to him, "isn't it wonderful that John made Yale", or that he inserts in his charge, "think he was the only person that got into graduate school", may not be quite called for, but his reproach, because true, is definitely more justified than in the baseline condition. Subjects were therefore less likely to perceive Dave as envious in this condition than in the baseline.

Subject Responses: An Adjective Check List--The Second Group of Questions

There is another measure which we believed might be sensitive to the differences in envy among our scenarios. Subjects were given a list of twenty one adjectives (see appendix) and asked to pick the three words best describing "Dave's feelings immediately after his second conversation with John." They were also asked to respond on a five point scale, to the question: "How strongly does Dave feel each of the 'feelings' you have chosen"? As Table 4 indicates, there is an overall reliable difference in the numbers of subjects who chose 'envy' among the various conditions. This difference is largely attributable to the admiration condition

We also analyzed the response as to how strongly Dave felt envy, by a one way analysis of variance. The

TABLE 4[a]

Numbers of subjects who selected 'envy' from adjective check list

	Baseline	Depression	Admiration	Boasting	Equal Success	Lesser Success	Acquaintance
Selected 'envy'	19 (79.2%)	11 (50%)	10 (45.5%)	21 (72.4%)	15 (57.7%)	15 (71.7%)	13 (59.1%)
Did not select 'envy'	5 (20.8%)	11 (50%)	12 (54.5%)	8 (27.6%)	11 (42.6%)	6 (28.6%)	9 (40.9%)
Total	24	22	22	29	26	21	22 (N= 166)

[a] Overall $\chi^2 = 12.97$, df = 6, $p<.05$; Admiration/Baseline comparison, $\chi^2 = 4.246$, df = 1, $p<.05$; Depression/Baseline comparison, $\chi^2 = 3.20$, df = 1, $p<.1$

differences among conditions was reliable beyond the .01 level ($F=4.95$, df:6,159). A comparison of all conditions against the baseline showed that the admiration, equal success and depression conditions were reliably different ($p < .05$) from the baseline. These results indicate that even though on this question subjects were not reliably less likely to check 'envy' in the depression' and 'equal success' conditions, than in the baseline, none the less, when they did mark envy for Dave, they perceived him as less envious.

Subject Responses: Supporting or denying a charge of envy--the third group of questions

In another group of questions, we asked the subjects to indicate agreement with a) someone who said that Dave was envious or b) someone who said that he was not: "A friend of Ann overheard the conversation. He later mentioned to Ann that he thought Dave was envious of John. Ann disagreed. Do you agree with Ann's friend (that Dave was being envious) or with Ann (that Dave was not being envious)." "What did John or Dave say or do to give you this impression (try to be specific)."

There is an overall reliable difference among the conditions. Although the admiring, boasting, depression and equal success conditions, per hypothesis, contain the largest number of subjects who decided that Dave was not envious, the overall difference is largely attributable to the admiration scenario as can be seen in Table 5.

In the admiring condition, subjects were reliably less likely to agree that Dave was envious. Dave substantially and overtly fulfills his perceived obligation to congratulate John. The fact that Dave gave sufficient direct and indirect congratulations,

TABLE 5[a]

Numbers of subjects who agreed with person describing Dave as envious of John

	Baseline	Depression	Admiration	Boasting	Equal Success	Lesser Success	Acquaintance
Agreed with description	23 (95.8%)	18 (81.8%)	11 (50%)	22 (75.9%)	21 (80.8%)	19 (90.5%)	21 (95.5%)
Disagreed with description	(4.2%)	4 (18.2%)	11 (50%)	7 (24.1%)	5 (19.2%)	2 (9.5%)	(4.5%)
Total	24	22	22	29	26	21	22 (N=166)

[a] Overall $\chi^2 = 28.927$, df=6, p<.001; Admiration/Baseline comparison, 2 = 11,992, df = 1, p<.001

fulfills Dave's obligation to John, in a way that is difficult to undermine by our bringing up the possibility of envy in asking question 3.

In the boasting, equal success and depression conditions, subjects were reliably more likely to endorse 'envy', in response to question 3 than to perceive envy in response to question (Chi square for correlated proportions--'boasting', 'equal success', $p<.05$; 'depression', $p<.01$). Let us consider why this may be the case, not just as an artifact of a procedure, but in a way that illuminates analogous perceptions and judgements in everyday life. In law, or at least in detective novels, the prosecutor or sleuth may establish that someone has a motive for a crime, e.g. murdering one's uncle, merely by showing that the person had something to gain, e.g. he is next in line to inherit his uncle's fortune. Establishing a motive for someone does not show that he committed the act, felt like committing the act or even noticed that he had something to gain by the act, but it does make sense of why he would commit the act--provides him with a sensible goal. A good detective, or so the story goes, looks for the motive and then focuses on

the persons who have it--they are the primary suspects. For a suspect, what might ordinarily be seen as a slip, a gaffe', a tick or habit, now becomes a possible clue. One might say that in our scenarios (excepting equal success), Dave has an obvious motive for being envious of John in that John's success underscores Dave's failure. This can be seen even in the 'admiring condition' where Dave's behavior appears to be totally beyond reproach. Remember that substantial numbers of subjects spontaneously reported seeing envy (question one) in this apparently selfless behavior. Consider the response to question 1 of a subject in this condition who recognized the motive but denied it's hold--"Dave was still proud of John. He even said that John deserved getting into Yale because he worked hard for four years" (A14). We have left one part of this analysis, based on a detective metaphor, tacit: there must first be a crime for a detective to establish a motive. There are innumerable goals that it might be intelligible for an actor to pursue, but it is odd to search for them without a warrant, with no purpose at hand, (This does happen. A constant search of this sort is prevalent in both paranoia and psychoanalysis. In both cases, the search is made 'sensible' because of the belief in a universally prevalent, albeit hidden, 'crime').

Participating in an experiment is like starting to read a detective novel: it furnishes a reason for being sensitive to possible ulterior motives. In everyday life, a 'crime' is not eagerly awaited, but must first occur. In everyday life the 'crime' is some action, gesture, statement (or thought, if an actor is self reflective) that is somehow inappropriate, uncalled for, problematic in a particular situation. In our analysis of envy the 'inappropriateness of a behavior has a dual role; it raises a question of whether an actor has an ulterior motive and it is also part of what is meant by saying that someone has that motive, it is a criterion for having that motive, i.e., being envious.

Our first group of questions and the experimental situation itself, sensitized our subjects to perceive Dave's behavior as problematic. Our third group of questions transformed our subject's task by raising the possibility of one particular motive, envy, in a set of situations (excepting equal success) in which the structural conditions for envy were clearly present. The questions in effect ask can Dave's behavior be seen as protecting his self esteem by begrudging John his due congratulations, undercutting

his success, belittling him, etc? This shift in the subject's task is analogous to a problem that sometimes arises in everyday life. Much pleasurable everyday banter involves pricking pretensions, teasingly putting another person down, etc. This behavior often helps make a social situation pleasant, amusing; but consider the following example: after a particular witty repartee, everyone laughs, but a bit later someone seriously raises the issue of whether the humorist was really envious. Let us say that the target of the joke has just had a success that could be construed as reflecting on the raconteur. How could it be shown that the humorist was not envious? The joke was funny, but why should he have made it? Was it really quite called for? Even if the charge should never have arisen, once it does arise, it is difficult to squash. This is especially the case, since a repartee is an insult contained by its humor, its nonserious treatment.

We have just argued that once a question of envy arises, it is difficult to win an acquittal; subjects are set to see envy. In addition each scenario provides all but one of the major structural supports for the charge (excepting the base line, lesser success and, as it turns out, acquaintance scenarios in each of

which the charge of envy is fully grounded). Given this, if a subject in one of these conditions does see Dave as envious, he may just point to one of the general supports rather than fashion an argument showing how an apparently absent support is actually present. Subjects who deny that Dave is envious are not afforded this prop in making their case; in each condition there is a presented support for a different reason which, according to our theory, would be sufficient to defeat a charge of envy. There are, in addition, other such grounds which our theory sees as reasonable, but not focal to that scenario. If our theory correctly depicts the grounds for a judgement of envy, then the reasons the subjects adduce to support a denial that Dave is envious should reflect these grounds. In order to test this proposition, we will first articulate these grounds for each condition and present a table with each subject's response categorized according to the principal reason he gave. In this manner, we will be able to see how many subjects refer to the <u>expected reason</u> for a particular condition; how many refer to a <u>sensible grounds</u> for denying envy, but ones not especially appropriate this condition or a <u>general defense</u> appropriate to

any common sense theory of envy; how many refer to reasons that are not compatible with the theory; and finally how many are unclear. For each response we shall underline the portion that supports our categorization. In discussing the table we shall, in addition, point to other reasons mentioned by the subject as they typically offered several supports for their position. In this section, we shall also bring up two additional issues which are particularly revelant to question 3: the relation between admiration and sincerity and between John's boasting and Dave's being envious.

Depression Condition. Our theory claims that subjects should not see Dave as envious in this condition because Dave does not undercut John's accomplishment, but points to John's success to re-enforce, not evade his own lack of worth. We expect to find subjects who deny envy will claim that Dave is not angry with John, but upset with himself or that Dave's behavior is directed at himself, not toward John. We shall analyze five responses, four giving reasons why Dave was not envious, one (D20) why he was not very envious.

Table 6

Subject's Support for Denying that Dave was Envious: Depression condition

	Expected Reason
D18	"I agree with Ann". Dave's actions were not aggressive enough to positively show envy. His sad negative behavior showed that he felt sorry for himself, not envy of John. He told Ann that he was better off finding out now that he was not capable than wasting two years. His statements sounded sad, rather than aggressively envious."
D19	"With Ann." "Dave did not get annoyed or angry when he heard the news."
D20	"He was not very envious, he was more concerned with himself at the moment" "John said to Dave, "I was accepted to Yale." Dave said in a low, almost understandable voice, "Oh, that's great."
D22	"I don't believe he was really envious. If he was, he didn't show it. He would have told Ann something about how unimportant medical school was or big deal. But he didn't. He congratulated John. He felt defeated." "Dave congratulated John in a nice way and was happy for him."
	Unclear
D21	"I agree with Ann." "Dave acted nonchalantly."

As the above table shows, four of five subjects give the expected response; one subject's response is ambiguous. Note how subject 22, not only denied that Dave was envious, but refers to what would be need for Dave to be envious--belittling John's accomplishment.

All five of the subjects who denied envy on this question, in giving their initial perception of Dave in question one, saw him to be in a negative state: three used the word 'depressed' (20, 21 and 22), one used the word 'down' (19), and one described Dave as 'too involved with his own negative feelings (18).

Boasting Condition. According to our theory, the truth of Dave's charge provides grounds for denying that Dave is envious: subjects may merely repeat Dave's claim, or repeat it and say that it is warranted or say that Dave knows that it is true from his relationship to John or merely point out that John was, in fact, bragging.

As Table 7 shows, five of seven subjects (23, 26, 27, 28, 29) alluded to Dave's recognition of John's boasting as a defense--the theoretically expected response for this condition. As an addition support, subject 23 mentioned that Dave was not really interested in graduate school--a general defense. Subjects 24 and 25 deny envy by offering grounds to show that Dave was depressed. This is a sensible response, in accord with our theory, but it is not one that this scenario was designed to elicit. In

Table 7

Subject's Support for Denying that Dave was Envious: Boasting

	Expected Reason
B23	"Dave did not appear to be envious. He simply appeared to be annoyed that Dave (John, M.S.) couldn't handle his acceptance to Yale more cooly." "In his conversation with Ann, Dave gave the impression that he didn't want to go after scholastic achievement. He even said he would look for a job. Considering all of this, I don't think Dave would be jealous.
B26	"Dave was not being envious." "Dave said he'll hear
B26	"I agree with Ann." "Dave knew John well enough to know what he would be like for the rest of the week. He didn't go on and on about it, but just mentioned it, like thinking out loud."
B28	"I would agree with Ann that he was not being envious." "Dave mentions that it was the only thing that John will be saying for the rest couple of weeks. This is not enough to say he is envious."
B29	"Dave was not being envious." "Dave commented that, "that's all we will hear for a week." This shows Dave's feelings, being more annoyed than anything else. It does not show any sign of his being envious."
	Sensible grounds or general defense
B24	"Dave was not being envious." "His position in the chair indicated sadness and defeat more than envy."
B25	"I'm really not sure if he was being envious as much as frustrated at himself for possibly not working at his goals. "His statement that John will be talking about his acceptance all week and that people get accepted all the time does hint at envy. However, envy usually occurs because you don't feel right about yourself."

addition, subject 25 appears to propose a causal account of envy (a thesis within a thesis) which, if not in contradiction to, is clearly different from our theory.

In this scenario John was presented as excessively dwelling upon his success. Here, it is reasonable that subjects could point to Dave's statement and yet say that Dave was not envious. Did subjects perceive John to be boastful? Immediately after the questions relating to Dave's envy, subjects were asked to decide between Ann and her friend as to whether John was boasting. In this condition twenty subjects agreed with the statement that John was boasting, seven disagreed and two were not sure. In contrast, in the baseline condition, only one subject agreed that John was boasting, twenty-two disagreed and one was unsure. According to our analysis, the seven subjects in the 'boasting' condition who did not see John as boasting should be more likely to see Dave as envious since his charge is unwarranted. Of the seven subjects who agreed that John was not boasting, six said that Dave was envious and one said that Dave was not envious; of the twenty-two who held that Dave was, or might be boasting, sixteen said that Dave was envious and six denied envy.

Equal Success Condition. Subjects in this condition should say that Dave is not envious because he has nothing to be envious about--he is as successful as John.

Four of the five subjects (22, 24, 25, 26) offer the defense that we hypothesized would be most sensible in this scenario, one that any competent defense counsel would use. Subject 23, on the other hand, offers two defenses, both incompatible with our theory. His first, pointed to a way that John's success demeaned Dave, yet the subject denied that Dave was envious (jealous) because the feeling was fleeting. This may imply that if the feeling endured, it would be envy. His second defense refers to Dave's friendship and general manner of expression. 'Friendship' is irrelevant to and hence, inconsistent with our theoretical perspective; 'manner' is too vague to categorize. According to our theory, if friendship could have any effect in this condition, it would be to intensify the perception of envy, not to undercut it. (See Table 8.)

Admiration Condition. According to our analysis, subjects in this condition should point to Dave's comments in praise of John or to his general positive attitude or deny that he said anything negative to John. (See Table 9.)

Nine of the eleven subjects gave the theoretically expected response; they offered Dave's attitude toward or congratulation of John as the reason for saying that Dave was not envious. Subject 18 denied that John's success

Table 8

Subject's Support for Denying that Dave was Envious: Equal success condition

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Expected Reason

ES22 "With Ann. He had accomplishments of his own, so there was no reason for envy. He just didn't care if John was successful." "Dave mentioned he was accepted to some program. And when John wondered if it was a mistake, Dave said no and seemed to be down, even though he really didn't care."

ES24 "With Ann; Dave also got into a fine school." Dave felt John was making a fuss about getting into grad school, John was too happy."

ES25 "I agree with Ann. Because Dave had said that he had gotten a fellowship to Harvard. I don't see any other reason for envy. "Actually, what he said, about John being the only one to get to go to Yale, made him sound envious. But I'd still agree with Ann and think of Dave's comments as first actions."

ES26 "No." "He had been accepted to a good school."

Not compatible

ES23 "It wasn't really jealousy but a feeling of no longer being unique, but it will eventually pass, so I guess I agree with Ann." It was the manner in which he expressed himself and his friendship toward David that draws me to the conclusion above."

'got to Dave', a general reason for denying envy. Subject 12 concluded that Dave responded normally. This statement is ambiguous, unclear. If the subject means that Dave, although sad, offers the kind of response expected of a friend, then his response fits well with our theory. If, on the other hand, the subject means that Dave did not offer appropriate congratulations, but in not doing so, was acting as anyone who had failed would act, then his response contradicts our theory.

In this condition, subjects who deny that Dave was envious take his complimentary remark at face value. In effect, they commit themselves to the position that Dave is being sincere. Must subjects who found Dave to be envious affirm that he is insincere? Eleven subjects in this condition were asked whether Dave was sincere. Five of the eight who found Dave envious held him to be insincere, but three believed in his sincerity. The three subjects who denied that Dave was envious all found him to be sincere. In what way may Dave be both envious and sincere? Perhaps subjects are contrasting what Dave 'ideally wants to do' in this situation with what he, in fact, does--i.e., Dave is carried away by envy in the face of his original congratulatory intent.

Table 9

Subject's support for denying that Dave was envious: Admiration condition

	Expected reason
A13	"I agree with Ann." "John was not boastful or haughty about his success, but shy, insecure and from what Dave said, he seemed not really envious, but pleased with John though disappointed in himself."
A14	"I agree with Ann because when Dave said that John deserved the good news, he didn't have to say it." "I feel this way because David was John's good friend because they were talking of going on vacation together. Since he was a friend, David must have known that he applied to Yale so he knew he might be accepted. Also, he didn't have to say what he said about John. He said it out of friendship, not envy."
A15	"I don't think he was envious of John. I think that he was really happy for John. If there was any enviousness having to do with it, it was enviousness of himself, not of John." "He said that he was really glad that John had made it to Yale. He was happy for him."
A16	"I feel that Dave was absolutely not being envious." "Dave was quite relaxed and controlled feeling his own defeat (personally). He said nothing bad or hurtful to John."
A17	"I agree with Ann." "Dave looked confident and relaxed when he told Ann that he thought John deserved this because he had worked hard for this these four years."
A19	"I agree with Ann that Dave wasn't envious." "In the beginning John and Dave discussed a trip they were both going on and by mutual consent agreed on the responsibilities of each as to the food, drink, etc. After John's announcement, Dave did the expected thing by congratulating him, etc."

Table 9 - continued

A20 "I agree with Ann in saying that Dave was not being envious of John. Although John may have felt envious, he certainly did not say it or act that way, as friends, I think Dave really wanted the best for John and even though he has failed he still believes that he will make it next time."

A21 "Iagree with Ann that Dave was not being envious." "Dave conceded that John had worked hard and so deserving of it. John's humility reflected in his surprise at being chosen would eliminate any harsh feelings that Dave would have."

A22 "Well, I agree with Ann because I saw no indication that Dave was envious of John." "They had just finished conversing on something mutually agreeable to both of them, when Ann walked in and when John returned with the info on his acceptance with a scholarship to Yale. I notice no change in Dave or John's reaction."

Sensible grounds or general defense

A18 "I agree with Ann." "Dave acted very relaxed and tried to show that by him not making it that it's not the end of the world.

Unclear

A12 "I disagree. Dave was just reacting to human emotions." "Dave responded normally to John's good news. You would not expect him to exactly jump for joy since he too wanted to hear from the university.

'Insincerity' is a difficult concept. It is often taken to involve a mismatch between what a person says or does and what he "really feels"; yet this formulation is inadequate. If, 'insincerity' merely referred to a disconsonance between expression and internal mood, then all subjects in this condition should have perceived Dave as envious since he was presented as suffering from his lack of success. One can sincerely avow love while experiencing a gas pain. Can one sincerely congratulate another while regretting his success? This appears to be a difficult feat. It may be, but it is possible, since it is what is meant by good sportsmanship. In fact, one can congratulate the winner of a race for his superb skill even while telling him that you wished that the race had come out otherwise: for instance, if you had bet on his opponent. (personal demonstration, John Sabini).

When do we say that a person is insincere? Perhaps we notice that he is self servingly inconsistent (congratulating another, yet belittling him behind his back); perhaps his performance did not come off--his congratulations were too perfunctory, lacked enthusiasm, etc. These performance are often viewed against an assessment of an actor's overall intent. Three of our subjects appeared to hold that Dave sincerely "tried" to congratulate John, but wound up doing something else and hence was envious.

Returning to our principal task, let us summarize the results of our investigation of the reasons for denying that Dave was envious. Up to this point, we have considered the four conditions in which we provided clear structural support for this denial. Of the twenty-eight subjects who denied envy in these conditions, twenty-two (78.7%) referred to the theoretically expected reason for the particular condition, three (10.6%) gave responses referring to sensible grounds, which our theory incorporates, for denying envy, but not those especially appropriate to the condition, two subjects' (7.1%) responses were unclear and one subject's response (3.6%) was clearly incompatible with the assumptions of our theory.

Our task in our next three scenarious is somewhat different. The lesser success and baseline conditions were constructed to provide no specific basis for denying envy; the acquaintance condition was in effect misconstructed to do the same. We shall follow the same procedure used with the four previous conditions using only 'the sensible', 'incompatible' and 'unclear' categories.

Baseline Condition. This scenario was constructed to offer no defense.

Table 10

Subject's support for denying that Dave was envious: Baseline condition

	Not compatible
BL2	"I agree with Ann that Dave was not being envious." "Dave said that John acted as if he was the only one being accepted to Yale, which wasn't true."

The subject appears to be using a different concept of envy. What she may have had in mind was the use of envy as a compliment as in the statement, "Oh, that's beautiful, I just envy your new dress."

Acquaintance Condition. This scenario was constructed on the assumption that since Dave did not know John well, he would not be expected to congratulate him warmly; hence Dave's coolness should not be taken as a sign of envy. Unfortunately, Dave's attack is inappropriate for friend or stranger.

Table 10A

Subject's support for denying that Dave was envious: Acquaintance condition

	Not compatible
AC22	"There are many words one can use to interpret Dave's feeling. Only Dave knows how he feels (if anyone knows). Dave might be envious or there may be a better word like competitive, frustrated, a little hostile." "Well, I thought that what Dave said after John left was a little unkind. Dave should be adult enough to understand how John feels about his acceptance, after all, how would Dave have reacted had he got accepted to his first choice of colleges, with a fellowship no less."

The subject seems to have an articulated theory of the determinants of envy, mixed with an admonition to be more adult. We leave him to pursue his analysis of envy while we pursue ours.

Lesser Success Condition. As with the baseline, we constructed the situation to offer no defense.

Table 11

Subject's support for denying that Dave was Envious: Lesser success

	Not compatible
LS21	"I go along with Ann." "Dave mentions that he would have to listen to John all week. If he (Dave) was interested, he wouldn't mind listening."
LS20	"Envy is not accompanied by annoyance as Dave showed. Envy usually implies a vicarious feeling of happiness. Jealous would be a better word. Since Dave could not in any way be glad for his friend--he was too upset about his own defeat." "Dave did not get very enthusiastic for John and his facial expression was very sad even though he tried to smile and say, "that' great." The atmosphere became very stiff and pressured. Then when Dave said (after John left) in a sour grapes tone that John would carry on, etc., it was obviously jealousy.

These subjects, especially 20, give clear evidence that one can give envy a complimentary sense. In the context we established, the term 'envy' was rarely used in this complimentary sense.

A complete categorization of the responses of subjects who deny envy in each of the seven conditions yields the following results: Of the thirty-two subjects who denied envy (including one subject who denied that Dave was very envious) twenty-two (68.8%) referred to the theoretically expected reason for the particular condition, three (9.4%) gave responses referring to sensible grounds for

denying envy, two (6.2%) responded unclearly, and five (15.7%) supported their judgment in a way that is incompatible with the assumptions of our theory. Of these five subjects, three seem to have taken 'envy' to be complimentary.

So far, we have attempted to explain why the subject responses differed in the 'judgment' as opposed to 'perceptual' questions. We have examined the way in which the subjects supported their judgments for evidence as to whether they were sensitive to the conditions we set up. Although our account of the difference between these groups of questions is plausible, it is not conclusive. Perhaps the hypothesized conditions for the construction of envy merely determine whether the person will initially notice it, pick it up or perhaps these conditions are relevant to the denial of, but not the affirmation of envy. We are confronted with two conflicting positions. The one we propose suggests that question 1 provides us with information about when and whether people in everyday life will notice that someone is envious and that question 3 illustrates how our judgments of whether another is envious or not may be dominated by the prior fact of whether the question has been raised at all: the other suggests that our hypothesized conditions, although making envy more salient (question 1) did not enter into a Judgment (question 3) of whether an individual

is envious; our analysis of the reasons subjects gave for denying that Dave was envious makes the former account more plausible, but a way to further clarify this issue would be to have the subjects directly compare the various scenarios with the baseline and judge whether Dave is more, equally or less envious in these scenarios than he is in the baseline scenario. We introduced this comparison later in the course of experimentation. Because of certain limitations this comparison should be viewed as an informative but tentative probe aiding our interpretation of the more formally obtained results.

Subject Responses: A direct comparison of the conditions with the baseline the fourth group of questions.

After the subjects completed the questionnaire on the presented scenario, we asked a number of them (depending on their availability) to view the baseline scenario, first telling them, "We have altered the scenario in some aspects, we are interested in when such a difference makes a difference in your perception of the character's feelings toward each other." We then asked the subjects once again whether they agreed with Ann's friend or Ann as to whether Dave was being envious. In addition, they were

asked "if you said that Dave was envious of John. Was Dave more, less or equally envious of John as compared to the first video presentation that you saw? Explain." On a separate page, the subjects were asked what was the difference between presentations.

Before reporting results for this group of questions, we should point out that the data is flawed by certain technical and theoretical limitations: 1) The conditions are not counterbalanced. The order of presentation was always 'other condition - baseline' with the exception of three 'baseline-depression' and seven 'baseline-boasting' conditions (there is no reliable difference between the two orders of presentation). 2) This series of questions was introduced early on for the 'boasting' and 'acquaintance' condition and was only later introduced for other conditions, hence the number of subjects per condition varied greatly (from 17 to 4). 3) There is a theoretical problem as to what sort of process this direct judgment is comparable to in everyday life. 4) Subjects saw the second condition about fifteen minutes after seeing the first.

Now that we have presented the caveats, let us look at the data. (See Table 12.) Using a binomial expansion, we determined the exact probability that, if there were no

TABLE 12

Numbers of subjects who judged Dave to be less equally or more envious than in the Baseline condition

	Depression	Admiration	Boasting	Equal Success	Lesser Success	Acquaintance
Dave judged to be less envious than in the Baseline condition	8 (51.1%)	7 (100%)	7 (41.2%)	4 (100%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (35.7%)
Dave judged to be as envious as in the Baseline condition	5 (35.8%)	0	9 (52.9%)	0	4 (57. %)	8 (57.2%)
Dave judged to be more envious than in the Baseline condition	1 (7.1%)	0	1 (5.9%)		1 (14.2%)	1 (7.1%)
Total	14	7	17	4	7	14
Probability that the observed difference between judgements of more or less, envious would occur if they were equally likely	.019	.008	.035	.062	.375	.109

differences between the baseline condition and the condition we compared it to, we would obtain the observed number of subjects claiming that the baseline depicts more or less envy than the comparison condition. Subjects who decided that the conditions were equal were excluded from this analysis. Depression (8 to 1); 'equal success' (4 to 0), 'admiration' (7 to 0) and 'boasting' (7 to 1), are reliably judged to depict less envy than the baseline condition. As hypothesized, the lesser success condition does not show this difference (2 to 1). It should be noted that while no subject considered Dave to be equally envious in the equal success and admiration conditions, 5 out of fourteen subjects in the depression condition and 9 out of seventeen in the boasting condition did so. It would seem that the 'depression and 'boasting conditions' provide grounds for judging Dave to be less envious than in the baseline condition, but that these grounds are not necessarily called upon in making the judgement. These results give some additional, albeit tentative, support for the view that situational differences between conditions do not only determine when 'envy' will come to mind, but that these differences are reflected in the subjects' <u>comparative judgements</u> of envy.

Examining comparative judgement brought into focus an interesting feature of our experimental presentation. In the post experimental interview, it was often difficult for subjects to believe that we had only changed one segment of the film and left the other parts identical. One change in what was said or done in one of the four segments of the scenario altered subjects' overall impression of the tone of the overall interaction between Dave and John during the entire scenario.

Reconsiderations and Theoretical Implications

What additional insights have we gained from the experimental portion of this investigation? In what ways does it force us to modify our theory?

Envy as a compliment. Our theory has attempted to explicate the implicit criteria people use to recognize envy in themselves and others. Our perspective has been to view the individual as part of a social world, using socially 'objectified,' (Berger and Luckman, 1967) although implicit, standards to interpret his experience. We have approached envy through the conditions of use of the word 'envy' since language is a primary means of this objectification. One problem that this approach encounters is that words typically have several senses. Our theory attempted to confront a central, moral, use of the term 'envy'--the way 'envy' is used when a person complains that he is bothered by his own envy or that he has been maligned because of the envy of others. However, we must beware of assuming that every use of this term in any context must share the same 'essence'. Wittgenstein (1953) has pointed out that a single word may have overlapping uses which may resemble each other in different ways.

A few of our subjects used a complimentary sense of envy--a sense of the term that can be seen in the sentence, "that's wonderful, I envy you". This is surely one member of the family 'envy'; but one can distinguish between a central use of a term which illuminates other uses and derivative uses of that term (Austin, 1964). Consider the following three phrases: "a healthy body", "healthy exercise", and a "a healthy complexion". Is there one underlying similarity in these three phrases--some underlying sense of health? As Austin points out, although there is no one similarity, the second and third phrase can be understood with reference to the first central phrase. Healthy exercise is a way to maintain a healthy body; a healthy complexion is one sign of a healthy body. We would argue that the complimentary sense of envy is understood because of its metaphorical relation to envy as sin, e.g. your success is so great that one could envy it. For instance, it is sometimes said, "That's wonderful, I'm green with envy". Green with envy, if a true report, surely a most unpleasant state, not one of happiness for the other, is used to emphasize and thus celebrate the other person's good fortune.

Heider (1958) suggests that the compliment "I envy you" is most likely to be used by one, who in the particular situation, is not likely to be seen as 'really' envious.

A likely state of mind, criteria for a state of mind and a symptom of a state of mind. We have discussed how raising the question of an ulterior motive transforms the way in which actions are viewed. A person may be perceived as envious, once the question comes up, even though his behavior would not have, on its own, called forth this description. We have shown one way this comes about--a number of subjects were able to find, on re-examination, some evidence of inappropriateness in Dave's behavior toward John--begrudging or tepid congratulations, an inadequate celebration, etc. Sometimes even this is not necessary; one subject in the admiration condition stated, "Dave had to be envious because John got something which Dave wanted badly" (emphasis added). This subject is making a conceptual leap, but it is one that we often make in every day life. A distinction can be drawn between cases in which a judgement is made in the absence of information which would be necessary to clinch the case and instances (such as our baseline scenario) in which the case is essentially made even though new information could upset

the verdict. We sometimes assume that a person is probably envious because of our knowledge of his situation, of human nature, and of his past behavior- his sensitivities, weaknesses and follies. Yet the statement that "Dave had to be envious", does not imply that being in Dave's position is equivalent to his being envious; rather, the force of the judgement comes from the fact that there is a separation between the individual's behavior and the interpretation of it offered by saying that he is envious. By saying that someone is envious, we interpret his behavior (assuming our criteria to be the proper ones) in a way that sees him as reacting to being demeaned by, shown up by another's success and attempting to, or perhaps merely wishing to or disposed to undercut the other's worth in an inappropriate manner. Hence, even in a situation in which most people might feel envy, if it could be shown that a certain person does not perceive himself as demeaned by another's success, then he, ipso facto would not be envious. This highlights the difference between referring to a criterion for envy and pointing to evidence that a situation is one in which envy is likely to appear.

In practice, as can be seen in the results of the equal success condition, the sort of situation

we have studied can almost always be interpreted so that the criteria are fulfilled. Several subjects in the'equal success'condition, for instance, specifically pointed out various ways in which John's success could demean Dave.

Since the criteria for envy rest on an interpretation of behavior, the judgement is inherently reversible. New evidence may turn up. It is sometimes argued that one can never be sure if a person is envious because envy is a feeling, a private experiential state. According to our analysis, the tentativeness of the verdict 'envy' is not due to the fact that the defendant has some private mental experience in principle inaccessible to us, although he may be in a better position to know what he is doing than we happen to be, but rather that such an interpretation of a behavior or set of thoughts is never final, and could be revised by new evidence.

In the'admiration condition',subjects who perceived envy may have used their knowledge of what would be a likely state of mind in a particular situation to buttress their conclusion. In the'depression condition',rather more was involved. A particular sort of behavior can be seen as a sympton

of an emotional state without being a necessary condition for that state. Several subjects in the 'depression condition' pointed to Dave's depression as evidence that he was secretly envious or that his depressed remarks were a rationalization for envy. That we call this 'secret' envy points out that this is not the sort of behavior in which the actor is patently envious, but that it is the sort of behavior which is typically associated with one who is envious; hence, it is a symptom of envy.

Depression is not only a symptom of envy, but is logically related to it. One of our criteria for envy is that someone's success demeans another. If a person dwells on his being demeaned, we say that he is depressed. Although depression is not the same as envy, dwelling on our reduced status is a common element of both. Hence, the link between depression and envy is conceptual as well as empirical.

Our data may be compatible with several alternate formulations of the criteria for envy. We will consider some of the more prominent alternatives.

Alternate formulations of the criteria for envy: self focus. In the 'depression condition', several subjects, in denying that Dave was envious, pointed out that his behavior was

focused on himself and not John. Two of our criteria--that one is demeaned by another's accomplishment and that one attempts to undercut the other, encapsulate a 'focus on the other'. Do we need these two criteria, can we not replace them with just one? It must be remembered that some subjects mentioned that Dave's depression was caused by, or at least intensified by John's success and yet did not see Dave as envious; others used Dave's depression as evidence of envy. By considering two literary examples, we may see how this is possible, further clarify the role of our two crtieria, and see how they best explain the force of the 'self/other focus' dichotomy. In a letter (New York Review, 1977) Edmund Wilson described how reading a draft of the 'Great Gatsby' saddened him by showing how far he was from mastering a style shown in its polished form by Fitzgerald: "I was re-reading 'The Great Gatsby' last night, after I had been going through my page proofs, and thinking with depression how much better Scott Fitzgerald's prose and dramatic sense were than mine. If I'd only been able to give my book the vividness and excitement, and the technical accuracy, of his! Have you ever read Gatsby? I think it's one of the best novels that any American of his age has done."

Why would we not consider Wilson in this passage as being envious of Fitzgerald? Wilson makes clear how it is Fitzgerald's particular accomplishment that perfectly brings out his own failings. But in this passage Wilson is clearly admiring Fitzgerald, there is no trace of backbiting, begrudging, demeaning. In contrast, let us consider a passage from a light novel by John Powers (1975):

> His family was extremely wealthy. He was good looking and smart, he was a great athlete and he could play seventeen different musical instruments, all at the same time. Worst of all, Earl Benninger had such a pleasant personality that it was impossible for anyone, including myself, to dislike him. Earl Benninger was a very depressing person to be around.

The protagonist in this passage appeared to be envious, albeit in a minor key, in a way that Wilson did not. Although he points out that it is impossible for any one to dislike Earl, calling Earl a depressing person to be around fixes the reason for depression on Earl--what he is, what he has done. The force of the passage is not that the protagonist was depressed, but that Earl was depressing: the protagonist can be seen as demeaning Earl by making or at least hinting at a moral reproach (Sabini, 1976). Since he, himself said that Earl's

behavior is blameless, the reproach is inappropriate and hence, evidence that he is envious.

As the above examples illustrate, the fact that someone's success demeans another, even if depressing, is not sufficient grounds for a claim of envy. The force of subject's stating that Dave's depression is self focused and hence, not envious is that if Dave's behavior is not focused on John, but on himself, then he cannot be attempting to demean, reproach, snub or belittle John.

Alternate formulations of the criteria for envy: hostility toward another. Many subjects denied that Dave was envious by pointing to a lack of hostility toward John or affirmed envy by maintaining that Dave was really hostile to him. Responses in the 'boasting condition' showed, at least for the initial perception of envy, that a focused hostility to a more successful other is not sufficient for 'envy'. However, this condition was constructed to make Dave's response to John more appropriate than it was in the baseline condition. We still have not distinguished between an inappropriate hostility to another because we are demeaned by his success and an inappropriate attempt to

undercut the other because we are demeaned. We may like someone, yet, to protect ourselves, undercut the value of his or her success. Are we disliking them, hostile to them at the moment we are doing so? If Dave had calmly mentioned that Yale was not quite the school it used to be, he would be envious, but would he be hostile to John? When subjects warrant a charge of envy by saying that Dave, as a friend, did not congratulate John sufficiently, are they implying that Dave is hostile? Any undercutting of another person's worth may be said to be hostile, but to do so blurs a distinction. It makes sense to say, both, that Dave is envious of John and that he feels friendly toward him; it is considerably odder to say that a person is simultaneously hostile and friendly.

If such an inappropriate hostility is not a necessary condition for the charge of envy, is it sufficient? If so, we have broadened our theory. Can we not say that any hostile action is, in itself, demeaning and so subsume hostility under our other criteria? If Dave had knifed John (in the context of our story), surely, he would be seen as envious. Does knifing another demean the other? Perhaps, yet it does not appear to be its focal intention. Seeing this knifing

as an extreme, even deranged form of self protection, ridding oneself of the reminder of one's inferiority, makes the act 'intelligible' in that it shows that it is related to an understandable goal. Be this as it may, an observer without making this analysis would probably call the behavior evidence of pathological envy. Yet, if we found that someone deliberately and with forethought killed another because the other's success demeaned him, even though he realized that his victim's matryrdom would increase the contrast between them, then his behavior would be just bizarre, not pathologically envious. This case is similar to finding that someone deliberately manipulated the stock market for a profit on one stock, while knowing that it could cause greater losses on the other, more valuable stocks he possessed. This would not be evidence of pathological greed, but bizarre behavior.

Our analysis is a bit overdrawn. What made these cases bizarre is that we described the behavior as deliberate, planned. Sometimes we say that a person is 'blinded' by envy or greed. We say this in exactly the sort of situation in which an appraisal does not lead to a goal directed action, but to an unreasoning, impulsive response. Peters (1965) marks this distinction

as that between a motive and an emotion (e.g. he was overcome by envy, blinded by envy).

The relation between envy and hostility is complex, but if our argument is correct, hostility in itself is not a criterion for envy. A hostile action against another person (whose accomplishment has undercut one's position) which is seen to enhance the other's position is not envious unless it is a blind emotional reaction; on the other hand, demeaning or belittling another person, while sincerely liking him is still proof of envy.

Alternate formulations of the criteria for envy: attempt at protecting a lowered self. Our subject's reactions indicate one place that the theory was overstated. We held that for Dave to be envious, his responses need to be an attempt to undermine John's success. This formulation must be qualified. Often subjects pointed to inadequate or cool congratulations to support their contention that Dave was envious. Although not congratulating another person sufficiently underplays the value of his success, this response need not be, and typically is not, a thought out planned attempt.

In our theory, 'attempt' serves two functions: 1) an attempt may fail--Dave is not exculpated from a charge of envy just because his belittling John is not successful, in fact, if he is perceived as envious, his attempt is ipso facto a failure and may serve to enhance John's prestige. 2) The use of 'attempt rules out the possibility that Dave demeaned John mistakenly, inadvertently or accidentally, e.g. that he thought that congratulating John quietly would be the most effective way to make John feel good, but his quiet congratulations was mistakenly interpreted as a lack of enthusiasm. The second function of 'attempt' was not sufficiently distinguished from 'actively trying' in the original formulation of the theory and must be emphasized.

Implications of theory. We have treated envy as a word in a language, a concept people treat as objective. A virtue of this nominalist approach is that it restrains the tendency to view envy or emotions and motives, generally, as entities causally and hence, contingently related to their consequents. Following the logic of this latter view, we might assess the strength of any envy motive, perhaps by a T.A.T. based procedure, and then discover the relation between 'high envy' and such hypothesized consequents as belittling another.

Yet, if we did not discover such a relation, would we not say that we were not, in fact, studying envy. Belittling another person is part of what we mean when we say that someone is envious. Treating this as an empirical discovery and not a conceptual clarification is misleading and leads to studies whose persuasiveness actually reside in our understanding of the meaning of the term we use. The nominalist approach does not preclude empirical investigations on 'the effects of envy', but it refocuses this research.

Instead of searching for the cause of envy, for instance, we might look at the way that selves are linked in our 'objective' moral universe, how people commonly and idiosyncratically interpret or react to this linkage and the moral failings attendant on these reactions. Envy as a failing is subjective in that some people seem to suffer greatly from it and others are not touched. As an example, Scheler in 1910 (tr. 1961), pointed out that women were considered to be the envious sex. For the sake of argument, let us consider this to be true. Instead of looking for the biological or historical personal antecedants for women's susceptibility to this particular emotion, we would first look at the determinants of objective comparability

in a particular social structure at a particular moment. At the turn of the century, given the almost complete restriction on women's entry into careers, politics, etc., the dimensions on which middle class women, at least, were comparable to each other, e.g., attractiveness, domestic ability, clothes, husband's earnings were fewer and more widely shared than those in which middle class men were comparable. This is not a fact about feminine personality per se, but about women's position in life. There are further questions to be asked about the idiosyncratic, personal, reactions of individual women; understanding this social structural aspect of comparability gives us a background against which to study its personal component. Note that the focus of investigation has now shifted from the study of the determinants of envy to how individuals interpret and react to social comparability.

The lability of self worth is common to depression as well as envy. There are many ways a person may react to a belief that his worth has been lowered. He can strive harder, show how the other's accomplishments are really in a different area than his, show how selves are linked such that the other person's success enhances his own or he may perceive a diminution

and do nothing. In the study of envy, we would look for the determinants of why an individual put down another as opposed to emulated the other, strived against the other, dwelt on his demeaning, did nothing, etc. The determinants for the selection of any of these responses may be different than the determinants of why the person was sensitive to or imagined a particular self diminution. In addition, which response is made is related to opportunity as well as personality. We are not denying that some people are more prone to envy than others (Farber 1961, and Daniels 1964). We believe that this is the most important issue and one we have not addressed. We have attempted to clear the ground for such an analysis. If an investigation starts from an unarticulated notion of envy, especially a conception of envy as a simple state causing certain effects--one that does not treat the personal aspects of envy against the background of 'objective' socially shared knowledge--then empirical advance will be hampered.

Although starting from different points and expressed in different language our analysis leads us to a position compatible with those of Bem (1967) and Schachter (1964). The major thrust of the attribution

perspective on emotion has been to focus attention on the fact that judgements of our own as well as others' emotions are determined in part by our understanding of the social context in which our reactions are embedded. Schachter, in particular has relied on the concept of an 'appropriate cognition' to determine which emotion one is experiencing. Emotions differ in the degree to which one can simply specify what an appropriate cognition is. The standard examples for illustrating feat, charging bears and burning buildings, are appropriate in that their threat represent clearcut danger to the physical organism. To explicate the notion of an 'appropriate cognition' for envy is a more complicated task precisely because envy is an emotion tied to the maintenance, not of an intact physical self, but an intact social self. It is also for this reason that the study of envy may illuminate broader questions about the nature of the individual in his social context.

APPENDIX: EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Initals_____ Exp Condt _____

Day_____, Date_____

Time_____

Sex_____

#1 How would you, describing in a sentence or two, Dave's feelings or attitude toward John after his second conversation with John.

#2 What did Dave say or do to give you this impression?

#3 If you had to use only a word or two to describe Dave's feelings, what word would you use?

#4 How strange or odd is Dave's behavior (if at all)?

#1 Pick the three words which best describe Dave's feelings immediatly after his second conversation with John:

Happy_____
Sad_____
Self Confident_____
Indifferent_____
Angry_____
Admiring_____
Competitive_____
Frustrated_____
Bored_____
Upset_____
Defeated_____
Amused_____
Envious_____
Sympathetic_____
Unimportant_____
Boastful_____
Relaxed_____
Puzzled_____
Anoyed_____
Shy_____
Hostile_____

#2 How strongly does Dave feel each of the 'feelings' you have chosen?

Feeling (word)	not really	slightly	somewhat	moderatly	very

A friend of Ann's overheard the conversation. He later mentioned to Ann that he thought that Dave was envious of John. Ann disagreed.

#1 Do you agree with Ann's friend (that Dave was being envious) or with Ann (that Dave was not being envious) ?

#2 What did John or Dave say or do to give you this impression, (try to be specific) ?

#1 How would you describe John's feelings or attitude toward Dave during the second conversation (when John tells his news)?

#2 What did John say or do to give you this impression?

#1 A friend of Ann overheard the conversation between John and Dave. He later mentioned to Ann that he thought that John was really boasting in the way that he told Dave of his success. Ann disagreed. Do you agree with Ann's friend (that John was boasting) or with Ann (that he wasnt)

#2 What did John say or do to give you this impression, (be specific)?

#3 Who got into Yale, John or Dave?

In this videotape

#1 John and Dave
(a) don't know each other_____
(b) are acquaintances_____
(c) are friends_____
(d) are close friends_____

#2 Was what Dave said to Ann after John left appropriate, called for (be specific)?
Explain

Do you feel that Dave was sincere?

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