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Tracing jealousy and envy: A semantic journey through English with HTOED

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Shorter Article

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Abstract

This study offers a diachronic analysis of jealousy- and envy-related vocabulary in English, drawing on 95 lexical items from the Historical Thesaurus of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*HTOED*). While research on emotion concepts has traditionally focused on synchronic patterns and metaphorical structuring, comparatively little attention has been paid to the historical development of these notions. The present investigation adopts a systematic, thesaurus-based approach to trace how jealousy and envy have been semantically encoded across the history of English. *HTOED*, integrated with *OED* data and supported by its chronological organization of semantic fields, provides a uniquely comprehensive resource for examining lexical diversity, semantic change and shifting conceptual associations.

The analysis highlights the breadth of jealousy- and envy-related expressions, ranging from early medical or colour-based metaphors (e.g. *jaundice, yellowness*) to figurative idioms (*green-eyed monster, sour grapes*) and more recent slang formations (*player-hater*). The dataset encompasses nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and idiomatic phrases, revealing how jealousy and envy have been framed as emotional states, behavioural tendencies, interpersonal dynamics and culturally embedded metaphors. To connect the diachronic findings to present-day English, the study supplements *HTOED* data with evidence from contemporary corpora, enabling an assessment of the current productivity, distribution, and semantic tendencies of jealousy- and envy-related expressions. Overall, the findings demonstrate that jealousy and envy have been conceptualized through a rich interplay of bodily imagery, moral evaluation, social comparison and cultural narrative.

1. Introduction

Jealousy and envy are emotions that pervade human experience and are expressed across countless languages. The present study focuses on the use of semantically related vocabulary in English. While contemporary English offers a rich repertoire of expressions for these emotions, their historical development, conceptual structuring and lexical diversity have received comparatively little systematic attention. This study addresses that gap by tracing the diachronic evolution of relevant vocabulary and by situating present-day usage within a broader historical trajectory.

The *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth *HTOED*) serves as the primary source for collecting and analysing jealousy- and envy-related terms attested throughout the history of English. The present paper draws on a dataset of 95 lexical items and meanings retrieved from *HTOED*. The compilation of the *Historical Thesaurus*, initiated in 1964 at the University of Glasgow and incorporated into the *OED* in 2009, is based largely on *OED* data but reorganizes it semantically, grouping lexical items according to their meanings rather than alphabetically (Kay et al 2001, 173). This semantic structuring makes it possible to identify lexical clusters, conceptual associations and historical patterns that remain obscured in dictionary-based or intuition-driven approaches.

HTOED arranges lexical entries chronologically within semantic fields, enabling researchers to trace the emergence, persistence and decline of particular expressions. Published in two volumes, the first contains the thesaurus itself, while the second provides an index of most entries. A searchable digital version is available via *OED Online*, linking each *HTOED* entry to the corresponding *OED* evidence. This integration allows for detailed exploration of etymology, semantic development and historical usage contexts. As Allan and Kay (2016, 222) observe, the combination of *HTOED*'s semantic organization with the *OED*'s documentary depth creates a uniquely powerful resource for historical

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lexical research, particularly when supplemented with corpus data that provide insights into usage patterns, frequency and register variation.

Most research on emotion concepts has focused on synchronic analysis, often within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Scholars such as Kövecses (2000, 2006, 2010, 2020) have examined conventionalized expressions (e.g. *love lasts forever, I am crazy about you*) and mapped metaphorical patterns across a wide range of emotions, including 'anger', 'love', 'lust', 'happiness', 'pride' and 'shame'. While this work has been foundational, it typically relies on contemporary data and linguistic intuition, leaving the historical dimension underexplored. Moreover, methodological concerns have been raised about Conceptual Metaphor Theory's dependence on introspection, its tendency to generalize across irregularities, and the limited empirical evidence on which many analyses rest (Kövecses 2011, 23; Fusaroli and Morgagni 2013).

Only a small number of studies adopt a diachronic perspective. Geeraerts and Grondelaers (1995) trace cultural and metaphorical traditions of 'anger' across centuries; Tissari (2003) investigates changes in the conceptualization of 'love' from Early Modern to present-day English, drawing on digital corpora and the then-incomplete Historical Thesaurus; Geeraerts and Gevaert (2008) analyse Old English 'anger' expressions; and Underhill (2012) explores how socio-political and cultural factors shape concepts such as 'love', 'hate', 'war' and 'truth' across European languages. These studies demonstrate the value of diachronic approaches but also highlight the scarcity of systematic, lexically grounded research on the historical development of emotion concepts. Notably, jealousy and envy – despite their cultural salience and moral complexity – have received even less diachronic attention than emotions such as 'anger' or 'love'.

Responding to these gaps and methodological concerns, the present study adopts a systematic, thesaurus-based methodology to investigate the concepts of 'jealousy' and 'envy'. Its primary aim is to provide a historically grounded account of how these notions have been semantically represented over time – an aspect largely neglected in previous scholarship. Jealousy- and envy-related terms were extracted from *HTOED* (winter 2025), and *OED* evidence was consulted to trace their origins, semantic developments and contextual usage. To connect these diachronic findings to present-day English, the study also incorporates data from contemporary corpora, including balanced corpora of British and American usage (*BNC, COCA*) as well as corpora reflecting informal and conversational registers (*Movie* and *TV Corpus, Soap Corpus*, *Spoken BNC 2014*). This allows for an assessment of current frequency, distribution, collocational behaviour and semantic tendencies. This triangulated approach – *HTOED, OED* and modern corpora – offers a comprehensive perspective on both historical continuity and contemporary relevance.

2. Jealousy- and envy-related terms in *HTOED*

In *HTOED*, the semantic classification of jealousy- and envy-related terms is arranged under the hierarchy 'the mind > emotion > jealousy and envy', with the mind as the major domain, encompassing words and senses relating to emotions, and jealousy and envy forming a distinct subdomain. As previously emphasized, the number of jealousy- and envy-related terms amounts to 95 lexical items. The material is subdivided into general terms (Table 1), jealousy-related vocabulary (Table 2) and envy-related vocabulary (Table 3). This subdivision is not provided by *HTOED* itself but was established for the purposes of the present analysis. The categories were defined on semantic grounds, drawing on the meanings and pragmatic–contextual uses of the lexical items as evidenced in the *OED* quotations and in corpora of modern English. These categories will be discussed in turn, beginning with the general terms that capture 'jealousy' or 'envy' in a broad, non-differentiated sense.

Table 1. General terms related to jealousy or envy

EModE (ca 1501 – 1700)	ModE (ca 1701 –)
NOUNS RELATING TO JEALOUSY OR ENVY	
downcrying (1575)	
envying (1587)	
envies (1622)	
jaundice (1629)	
ADJECTIVES RELATING TO THE FACT OF BEING JEALOUS OR ENVIOUS	
invidious (1668)	*jaundiced* (1711)
VERBS RELATING TO THE STATE OF BEING JEALOUS OR ENVIOUS	
emule (1595–1816)	*emulate* (1611–54)
VERBS ASSOCIATED WITH JEALOUSY OR ENVY BECOMING ENTRENCHED	
worm (1627)	
VERB RELATING TO THE ACTION OF MAKING JEALOUS OR ENVIOUS	
to make a person's nose swell (1675–1876)	
PHRASES RELATING TO JEALOUSY OR ENVY	
	sour grapes (1760)
	lucky you (1821)

2.1 General terms related to jealousy or envy

As shown in Table 1, *HTOED* includes 12 general terms related to 'jealousy' or 'envy' that are not assigned to a specific subcategory. They were first attested in *HTOED* in Early Modern and Modern English. The dates listed after the lexical entries in the tables indicate the earliest recorded uses as documented in the *OED*.

The lexical items listed in Table 1 include four nouns - *downcrying, envying, envies* and *jaundice* - and two adjectives, *invidious* and *jaundiced*. They relate to broader attitudes of disparagement, resentment, or hostile comparison. These items are grouped together because, in the senses recorded in the *OED*, they do not denote jealousy or envy as discrete emotions

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Table 2. Jealousy

ME (ca 1101 – 1500)	EModE (ca 1501 – 1700)	ModE (ca 1701 –)
FACT OR ACTION OF BEING JEALOUS		
jealousness (circa 1380)	*zealousy* (1542)	*green eye* (about 1845)
jealouste (about 1382)	*zelotypia* (1566)	*jealous-hood* (1846)
heart-burning (circa 1425)	*heartburn* (1579)	*sibling rivalry* (1930)
jealousy (circa 1425)	*yellowness* (about 1586)	
	yellows (1601)	
	horn-madness (1613)	
	horn sickness (1613)	
	green-eyed monster (about 1616)	
	zelotypy (1623)	
JEALOUS INDIVIDUALS		
	yellowhammer (1602)	*player-hater* (1993)
COLOUR ASSOCIATED WITH JEALOUSY		
	yellow (about 1616)	
CRIME MOTIVATED BY JEALOUSY		
	crime passionnel (1892)	
ADJECTIVES RELATING TO THE STATE OF BEING JEALOUS		
jealous (about 1250)	*zealous* (1545)	
yellow (circa 1405–1858)	*eyndling* (1568)	
	jealisom (1599)	
	green-eyed (1600)	
	indling (about 1614)	
	zelotyping (about 1660)	
ADVERBS RELATING TO THE MANNER OF ACTING JEALOUSLY		
asquint (1413)		*jealously* (1718)
VERBS RELATING TO THE ACTION OF MAKING JEALOUS		
	heart-burn (circa 1550–1669)	
	enjealous (1619–89)	
	enjealousy (1665)	
VERB RELATING TO THE STATE OF BEING JEALOUS		
	to wear yellow hose (1607)	
VERB RELATING TO THE ACTION OF REGARDING SOMEONE WITH JEALOUSY		
	heart-burn (1612–34)	*jalouse* (1879)

but rather broader evaluative attitudes associated with them, such as disparagement, resentment, or hostile comparison. For example, *downcrying* denotes the act of 'belittling a person or thing' (*OED*), while *envies* refers to '[i]nstances of envy; envious feelings, jealousies; rivalries' (*OED*), capturing the competitive or resentful stance that may accompany envy. Another illustrative case is *jaundice*, a term originally borrowed from French as early as 1303 to denote '[a] morbid condition caused by obstruction of the bile, and characterized by yellowness of the conjunctiva, skin, fluids, and tissues, and by constipation, loss of appetite, and weakness' (*OED*). Over time, the word also developed a range of transferred meanings, alluding 'to the colour and reputed yellow or disordered vision of jaundiced persons' (*OED*). The adjective *invidious*, meaning 'envious, grudging, [or] jealous' (*OED*), has become rare in modern English.

Two verbs relate to the state or being jealous or envious: *emule* and *emulate*, the latter used transitively in the sense 'to desire to rival' (*OED*) and, by extension, 'to be jealous of, envy, or feel a grudge against' (*OED*). Under 'become embedded (of jealousy or envy)', the verb *worm* is listed, used figuratively of jealousy or envy insinuating itself into a person's mind or affairs. *HTOED* also records one expression under 'make one jealous or envious': *to make a person's nose swell*, an obsolete idiom. Finally, *HTOED* has two phrases expressing jealousy or envy: *sour grapes*, drawing on the fable-derived metaphor of dismissing something as undesirable when it cannot be attained, and *lucky you*, an acknowledgement of another's good fortune often tinged with envy, with *lucky me* functioning as its ironic counterpart (see *OED*).

A comparison with corpora of modern usage shows that the OED-listed senses of these items are not uniformly preserved. The older, rivalry-based meanings of *emulate* and the figurative use of *worm* ('to insinuate itself', of jealousy or envy, see *OED*) are only marginally or no longer attested in contemporary corpora, whereas the evaluative and affective uses of *envy, jealousy*, and the idiomatic expressions *sour grapes, lucky you* and *lucky me* remain well represented. The corpus evidence is provided below.

Invidious and *jaundiced* remain current but have shifted towards evaluative, often academic or journalistic registers, typically describing attitudes rather than emotions (e.g. 'an invidious comparison' (cf. 'Biblical Passages About VP Debate - Blogcritics Politics', 2012, *COCA*); 'a jaundiced view' (cf. Richmond, E. [1993]: *Love of My Heart, BNC*)).

Emulate has largely lost its older sense of rivalry or envy and now denotes positive imitation, while *envy* and *jealousy* themselves have become the dominant, general-purpose terms for the affective domain. This development is reflected in contemporary usage, as illustrated in the following examples:

(1) 'Teaching is as much art as it is science [. . .] There is no one, easy way to teach all kids. There is no system that will work for all students and can be easily emulated by all teachers.' ('A Superwoman for Kenya, but America – Blogs – Chicago Sun-Times', 2012, *COCA*)

(2) 'I let envy and jealousy get the best of me, but . . . I learned my lesson.' ('90210, Blue Naomi', 2011, *TV Corpus*)

(3) 'I think this is just jealousy (.) of my years and years and years of success (.)' (*Spoken BNC 2014*)

Expressions such as *sour grapes* and *lucky you* remain productive, though the latter has developed a wider pragmatic range, often functioning as a lightly ironic or playful remark

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Table 3. Envy

OE (ca 400 – 1100)	ME (ca 1101 – 1500)	EModE (ca 1501 – 1700)	ModE (ca 1701 –)
FACT OR ACTION OF BEING ENVIOUS			
evest (Old English–1400)	*envy* (circa 1280)	*emulation* (1561–1771)	*grudgement* (1845)
	enviousty (about 1382)	*enviousness* (1561)	*sour grapeism* (1853)
	vie (circa 1400–50)	*envying* (1587)	*begrudgery* (1874)
	grudging (circa 1420)		*sour-grapiness* (1970)
	invy (circa 1440–1657)		
EMBLEM OF ENVY			
	serpent (circa 1374)		
FLARES/BURSTS OF ENVY			
	braid (circa 1450–1532)	*bluster* (circa 1616–65)	
ENVIOUS INDIVIDUAL			
		envier (1509)	
FACT OR CONDITION OF BEING ENVIABLE			
			enviableness (1833) *enviability* (about 1916)
OBJECT OF ENVY			
			envy (1836)
ADJECTIVES RELATING TO THE STATE OF BEING ENVIOUS			
sick (Old English)	*envious* (1340)	*emulous* (1633–55)	*sour-grapey* (1962)
	envying (about 1382)	*invidious* (1668)	
ADJECTIVES RELATING TO ENVIABILITY			
		envious (1590–1665)	
		enviable (1602)	
ADJECTIVES RELATING TO THE ABSENCE OF ENVY			
	unenvied (1390)	*envyless* (about 1628)	*unenvying* (1741)
		unenviable (1641)	*unjaundiced* (1775)
		unjealous (1649)	
		unenvious (1656)	
ADVERBS RELATING TO THE MANNER OF ACTING ENVIOUSLY			
		enviously (1596)	*enviably* (1823)
			envyingly (1861)
ADVERBS DENOTING THE MANNER OF NOT ACTING ENVIOUSLY			
			unenviedly (1738)
			unenviably (1854)
	envy (circa 1386)	*flame* (1548)	
	nithe (about 1400)	*grudge* (circa 1577–1661)	
	invy (1483–1605)	*malign* (1589–1706)	
		grudge a thought (about 1616)	

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rather than a marker of genuine envy. This is illustrated in the following example:

(4) 'My father had often urged me to try some of his marijuana, but I had never accepted, just as I had refused even to look at the cocaine that he kept in his dressing room.' 'Lucky you,' the senator said ruefully.' (Cornwell, B. [1990]: *Crackdown, BNC*)

2.2 *Jealousy-related terms*

In addition, *HTOED* comprises 36 terms for jealousy, attested across Middle, Early Modern and Modern English.

HTOED comprises 16 nouns related to 'jealousy', ranging from *jealousness, heart-burning* and *yellowness*, to *horn sickness, green-eyed monster* and *sibling rivalry*. Among these, *heart-burning* stands out as a metaphorical expression, used to denote '[a]n angry and embittered state of mind, felt but not openly expressed; rankling jealousy, resentment, or discontent' (*OED*). *Yellowness* again reflects the colour traditionally associated with jealousy, long regarded as indicative of bodily disease or poor health, and subsequently transferred to the emotional domain. The term has fallen out of use in contemporary English (see *OED*). *Horn-sickness* may be classified as a slightly humorous term for metaphorical condition, employing the conceptual frame of bodily disorder to characterize an emotional disturbance. Rather than denoting an actual illness, it figuratively encodes jealousy as a destabilizing or afflictive state (see *OED*). According to *OED*, it has also become obsolete. *Green-eyed monster* is a widely established metaphorical expression that entered broader English usage through Shakespeare's *Othello*, where it functions as a synonym for jealousy; see:

(5) a1616 O beware iealousie. It is the greene eyd monster.
W. Shakespeare, Othello (1622) iii. iii. 170 (*OED*)

Sibling rivalry is a comparatively recent jealousy-related term, denoting '[r]ivalry arising from jealousy between siblings; an instance or example of this' (*OED*). The expression has been attested in English since 1930 (see *OED*).

Two nouns referring to jealous individuals are *yellowhammer* and *player-hater*. Of these, *yellowhammer* originally denoted a species of bird characterized by its yellow plumage, and was later extended as a slang term for '[a] jealous husband' (*OED*). This figurative use has since fallen out of modern English (see *OED*). *Player-hater*, originating in African-American slang and denoting '[a] person who is jealous of the success of others' (*OED*), is the most recent jealousy-related term in the present dataset. According to *OED*, it has been attested since 1993. Further jealousy-related subfields include *yellow* as a colour associated with jealousy, and with *crime passionnel*, a French-derived term denoting a crime motivated by jealousy, as in:

(6) 1993 As he put the phone down, he wondered if killing a lawyer could ever be excused as a crime passionnel.
P. Mayle, Hotel Pastis ii. 24 (*OED*)

HTOED records eight adjectives synonymous with 'jealous', ranging from early formations such as *jealous* itself to colour-based or figurative extensions like *yellow* and *green-eyed*, the latter popularized by Shakespeare (see *OED*). Historical variants such as *indling* and *zelotyping* further illustrate the nuances in the lexical expression of jealousy.

HTOED also records two adverbs relating to the manner of acting jealously. The earlier term, *asquint* (1413), is used of 'various mental attitudes, of which averted, oblique, sidelong, or furtive glances' (*OED*). The later form *jealously* (1718) refers to actions characterized by jealousy in its modern senses, notably 'watchful care for preservation; with apprehension of rivalry, or (esp[ecially]) of loss or damage'(*OED*).

There are also verbs relating to the action of making someone jealous, such as such as *heart-burn* in its causative sense 'to make jealous, envious, or resentful' (*OED*), and *enjealousy*, 'to plunge into or provoke to jealousy' (*OED*). One verb is related to the state of being jealous: *to wear yellow hose* (also attested in variant forms such as *to wear yellow shoes*) is an allusive idiom drawing on yellow as the colour traditionally associated with jealousy. Examples from *OED* are:

(7) about 1600 Fie, fie, vpon these yellow hose ... haue wee thus long bin your wiues, and do you now mistrust vs?
T. Deloney, Thomas of Reading (1612) ii. sig. A4v

(8) 1858 Well, the filly's cut you out, Rita: won in a canter, you see! You've got to wear the yellow shoes, and all your own fault.
H. Aïdé, Rita vol. II. i. 7

Two verbs further denote acts of regarding someone with jealousy. These include *heart-burn*, meaning 'to regard or treat with jealous hatred' (*OED*), and *jalouse*, used to mean 'to regard with jealousy' (*OED*) or, in a related sense (1881), 'to begrudge jealously' (*OED*).

In corpora of present-day English, only a small subset of these jealousy-related nouns and expressions remains in active use, while many of the historically attested items have become obsolete or survive only as literary or humorous archaisms. *Green-eyed monster* continues to function as a recognizable, though stylistically marked, allusion to Shakespeare, typically appearing in playful, literary, or self-consciously dramatic contexts, as in:

(9) 'What? Wow, you're jealous. Not jealous. Cora, the green-eyed monster.' (*Alleluia! The Devil's Carnival* [2016], *Movie Corpus*)

Sibling rivalry has developed into a fully conventionalized psychological and sociological term and is now one of the most productive jealousy-related nouns in this semantic field, as in:

(10) 'Tammy: Really? I thought you had a one-sided sibling rivalry with Richard since birth.' (*Guiding Light* [2003], *Soap Corpus*)

(11) 'Get it? Let me try. Uh, snookums, I used to have sibling rivalry with the kids in my foster homes, okay?' (*Shameless* [2019], *COCA*)

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By contrast, items such as *heart-burning, yellowness, horn sickness*, and *yellowhammer* have almost disappeared from modern usage, as reflected in the corpora studied, their metaphorical mappings no longer transparent to contemporary speakers. More recent formations like *player-hater* retain currency primarily in colloquial, culturally specific registers and have undergone semantic broadening, often referring to general negativity or antagonism rather than jealousy alone. Examples include:

(12) 'Sir. Sir. Can you please . . . ? What a player-hater. You're hating on me, buddy.' (*The Even Stevens Movie* [2003], *COCA*)

(13) 'What's that? – You're a player-hater. What, you think I'm jealous?.' (*Fastlane* [2003], *TV Corpus*)

Colour-based expressions such as *green-eyed* remain familiar but are largely restricted to fixed phrases, most often in the aforementioned expression *green-eyed monster*, while *yellow* as an index of jealousy seems to have lost its earlier symbolic force, according to the contextual usages revealed by the corpora under analysis. French-derived *crime passionnel* persists in legal, journalistic and literary discourse, though typically as a marked, foreignizing expression.

(14) 'She may have been killed earlier in the evening. Judging by her clothing. I believe she's from a good family. Her murder would seem to be a misadventure of a crime passionnel.' (Shields, J. [2001]: *The Fig Eater: A Novel, COCA*)

Overall, in the corpora consulted, the modern lexicon of jealousy is dominated by the core terms *jealousy, jealous, envy* and *envious*, with most historical variants either obsolete or confined to highly specific stylistic niches.

2.3 Envy-related terms

Furthermore, *HTOED* comprises 47 terms for envy, attested across Old, Middle, Early Modern and Modern English.

The envy-related vocabulary in *HTOED* displays a particularly rich interplay of metaphor, emotion and social evaluation. *HTOED* records a number of synonyms and near-synonyms of 'envy', ranging from *evest, enviousty* and *grudging* to *emulation* and *sour-grapiness*. Of these, *evest* and *enviousty* have become disused in present-day English (see *OED*). According to *OED, grudging* originally denoted 'murmuring, grumbling, complaint' before it developed its transferred meanings of 'reluctant or unwilling action' and 'the cherishing of ill-will, resentment, or envy'. Several further nouns belong to additional envy-related subfields. Examples include *braid* and *bluster*, both obsolete terms referring to flares or bursts of envy, as well as the metaphorical animal term *serpent*, used as 'a symbol of envy, jealousy, malice, or wiliness' (*OED*). One noun, *envier*, denotes an 'envious individual', while *enviableness* and *enviability* represent the subcategory 'fact or condition of being enviable'. The noun *envy* has also been attested in *OED* since 1836 in the sense 'object of envy':

(15) 1836 Duchess la Vallière ... The envy of the beauty and the birth Of Europe's court.
E. Bulwer-Lytton, Duchess de la Vallière iii. ii (*OED*)

HTOED also documents several adjectives relating to the state of being envious, beginning with *sick* (Old English, used of strong emotions including envy) and *envious* (1340). Early derivatives such as *envying* (about 1382) and later formations like *emulous* (1633–55), *invidious* (1668) and *sour-grapey* (1962) illustrate the breadth of envy-related description. Additional subcategories include adjectives relating to enviability, notably *envious* and *enviable*. Several negated forms, including *envyless, unjealous, unenvious* and *unenvying*, relate to the absence of envy. A small set of adverbs is also recorded with the meaning 'enviously': *enviously* itself, as well as, *enviably* and *envyingly*. Two additional adverbs express the absence of envy: *unenviedly* and *unenviably*.

HTOED further lists several verbs under the subfield 'be envious'. One of the earliest, *nithe* (about 1400), denotes the intransitive act of feeling envy (see *OED*). Later figurative uses such as *flame* (1548) describe a person as burning with envy. The verb *grudge* (circa 1577–1661) appears both transitively ('to envy someone') and intransitively ('to be envious') (*OED*), with the related obsolete expression *to grudge a thought* (about 1616) meaning 'to think an envious thought' (*OED*), as in:

(16) about 1616 So perish they, That grudge one thought against your Maiesty.
W. Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part 1 (1623) iii. i. 180 (*OED*)

The verb *envy* (circa 1386) is used transitively in the sense 'to feel displeasure or ill will at another person's happiness' (*OED*), a usage continued by its later variant *invy* (1483–1605). The obsolete verb *malign* (1589–1706) likewise appears transitively, meaning '[t]o regard with envy' or 'to begrudge' (*OED*), offering an additional lexical option for expressing envious hostility. Taken together, these verbs illustrate how envy is conceptualized both as an internal emotional process and as an outwardly directed evaluative stance.

In the corpora consulted, only a small proportion of the historically attested envy-related vocabulary remains productive, while many earlier formations survive, if at all, as literary archaisms or opaque lexical relics. The core noun *envy* continues to dominate modern usage, both in its abstract sense ('the feeling of envy') and in its extended sense 'object of envy', which remains attested in contemporary corpora in evaluative or hyperbolic contexts, as in:

(17) 'All the regulations in the world do not stop the person who has a criminal mentality. And you would be a criminal if you intend to poison your neighbor. Free enterprise, by non-criminal minds, has gotten us to where we are the envy of the World, as they keep coming and coming, legally and otherwise. And I know criminals are everywhere.' ('Why Are We Going Broke?' [Blog, 2012], *COCA*)

(18) 'Since its debut this year, Study the Great Nation has become the most downloaded app on Apple's digital storefront in China, with the state news media saying it has more than 100 million registered users - a reach that would be the envy of any new app's creators.' ('In China, an App About Xi Is Literally Becoming Impossible to Ignore' [*The New York Times*, 2019], *COCA*)

By contrast, earlier synonyms such as *evest, enviousty, invy, grudging* (in its older sense) and *emulation* (in its now-obsolete

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meaning 'envy') have disappeared from present-day usage, with no attestations in the sources consulted beyond historical quotations or metalinguistic commentary. Similarly, metaphorical or figurative nouns such as *braid, bluster* (in the sense 'burst of envy') and *serpent* as an emblem of envy no longer appear with their earlier envy-related meanings.

Adjectival formations show a comparable pattern. The core adjective *envious* remains the primary descriptor of the emotional state, while historically attested variants such as *envying, emulous, invidious* (in its older sense 'full of envy', see *OED*) and *sour grapey* are either obsolete or restricted to highly marked stylistic niches (see *OED*). Negated forms such as *unenvious* and *unenviable* persist, though with meanings that have shifted towards general evaluation rather than literal absence of envy; *unenviable*, for instance, is now predominantly used to describe an undesirable situation rather than a person free of envy, as in:

(19) 'Yet, Helena did initially try to escape her unenviable secret-mistress destiny, for we all know only too well how those sad concubines fare once their looks fade and their daddies grow bored: they build you some flimsy mud hut in a faraway suburb or, worse still, on some hill in a far flung neighborhood where you go to seed, wracked, wrecked, and bitter, your wretched bastards crawling in the dust;' ('Beautiful Helena's Misfortune' [*New England Review*, 2018], *COCA*)

Adverbial forms likewise show strong lexical concentration: *enviously* remains current, whereas *envyingly, enviably, unenviedly* and *unenviably* occur only sporadically and typically in formulaic or evaluative constructions. Examples are:

(20) 'Jake had a small boat, with inboard engine, and he would take us all out fishing below the sheer red, ragged Berwickshire cliffs. I was always allowed, at some stage of the adventure, to steer the boat; clinging to the rudder handle in an agony of excitement. Jake also had a share in a larger, sea-going vessel, which we used to visit in the harbour, examining enviously the neat bunks and tiny galley.' (Sandison, B. [1990]: *Tales of the Loch, BNC*)

(21) 'Do I look young? Impossibly, enviably young?' (*The Carrie Diaries* [2013], *TV Corpus*)

(22) 'I get up at sunrise and go down to the dock to check out the fauna-the parrotfish, the snappers, maybe a barracuda or, most recently, a fair-sized octopus. [...] In the evening, after watching the sun set, I have my white wine and grill some local grouper or mahi-mahi. All this may sound unenviably solitary, but do not imagine that I am alone.' ('Keeping Company' [*Smithsonian*, 2018], *COCA*)

The verbal domain is even more restricted. Historically attested verbs such as *nithe, flame* ('burn with envy', see *OED*), *malign* ('to regard with envy', see *OED*) and *grudge a thought* appear to have disappeared entirely from contemporary corpora. The verb *envy* remains the only productive lexical verb denoting the act of feeling envy, while *grudge* has undergone semantic narrowing and now primarily expresses resentment rather than envy, as in:

(23) 'I envy people who can just go travelling' (Spoken BNC 2014)

(24) 'I've seen Hearts players in trouble for like (.) going to Nando's for tea (.) you know? they went out for dinner oh you got beat at the weekend you should be training (.) you don't grudge a guy having his dinner you know?' (Spoken BNC 2014)

Overall, the contemporary lexicon of envy is characterized by a high degree of lexical concentration around the core items *envy, envious, envy* (verb) and *enviously*, with most historical variants either obsolete or semantically reanalysed. This pattern contrasts with the diachronic richness documented in *HTOED* and underscores the extent to which the modern expression of envy relies on a small, semantically stable set of lexical items.

3. Conclusion

Overall, the 95 jealousy- and envy-related terms documented in *HTOED* illustrate the remarkable semantic breadth and diachronic depth with which English has conceptualized these two closely connected emotions. The taxonomy reveals not only the structural distinction between jealousy and envy, but also the considerable overlap in their metaphorical, physiological and evaluative framing. Across nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, the lexicon draws on colour symbolism, bodily affliction, interpersonal rivalry and moral judgement, as well as on figurative extensions involving animals, heat, vision and insinuation. Many of the terms – particularly those rooted in humour, bodily disorder, or colour imagery – have fallen out of use, yet they preserve earlier cultural models of emotional experience that shaped English conceptualizations for centuries. At the same time, more recent formations such as *player hater, sibling rivalry* or *sour-grapiness* demonstrate the continued productivity of the field and its responsiveness to social change.

When viewed from the perspective of present-day English, however, the historical richness of the jealousy- and envy-related lexicon stands in striking contrast to the comparatively narrow set of forms that remain active today. Contemporary corpora show a strong concentration around a small number of core items – *jealousy, jealous, envy, envious* and the verb *envy* – while most earlier synonyms, metaphorical extensions and expressive variants have either disappeared or survive only as literary allusions, humorous archaisms or culturally marked expressions. Colour-based terms such as *green-eyed* persist primarily in fixed phrases, while yellow-based jealousy metaphors have lost their symbolic force. Likewise, historically attested envy-verbs such as *nithe, malign* or *flame* have vanished from modern usage, and even semantically flexible items like *grudge* have undergone narrowing, shifting away from envy toward general resentment. Only a few later innovations, such as *sibling rivalry* or *player hater*, retain currency, and even these are restricted to specific registers or discourse communities.

Taken together, the *HTOED* data and the contemporary corpus evidence show that jealousy and envy have long been encoded through a dynamic interplay of metaphor, social evaluation and embodied experience, but that present-day English relies on a far more streamlined lexical repertoire. The historical record thus offers a nuanced account of how English speakers have understood, negotiated and

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expressed these emotions over time, while modern usage reflects a process of lexical consolidation in which only the most semantically transparent and communicatively efficient forms have endured.

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