The Social Context and Message of Galatians in View of Paul's Evil Eye Warning (Gal. 3:1)

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Abstract

Paul explicitly appeals to the evil eye belief system in Galatians 3:1. He warns the addressees that they are victims of this malevolent influence upon themselves. The warning is delivered in the form of a accusation directed at those under whose influence the addressees have fallen, undermining the addressees' failure to perceive this force at work in their present "suffering" (vv. 1-5). The system is also apparent in 4:12-13, when Paul appeals to their earlier decision to trust him as a messenger of good rather than evil, when they decided not to "despise" him "or spit," although they had at first suspected him of bearing such a threat. Exploration of the system to which Paul appeals suggests many implications for the interpretation of Paul's letter. This study will evaluate the basic dynamics of the system from antiquity to present times, especially the fear of envy which drives it, and then consider the implications for interpretation, including Paul's beliefs and tactics, the identities of the addressees and those influencing them, the situation in Galatia, and the style and message of the letter.

Introduction

Paul accuses his Galatian addressees of having been evil eyed (ἐβάσκανεν), yet of having failed to realize this, even though they manifest the "suffering" results thereof (3:1, 4). The nature of the warning suggests that Paul believed that this approach would help him convince the addressees that things in Galatia were not as they had begun to appear, thereby undermining the influence of the messengers of this "other good news," and enabling them to return to running the course begun under his guidance.

While the implications of the system to which Paul appeals may have been clear and effective for the original audience, the lack of investigation of this system or the implications for the interpretation of Galatians since could be taken to suggest otherwise. That is not to say that noting Paul's appeal in Galatians 3:1 to the language of evil eye beliefs is a new insight. Commentators over the centuries have observed that Paul here employs the language of evil eye and envy. To

name a few examples, it is attested in Chrysostom ("envious eye");[1] Jerome ('injured as though someone had cast a spell on them');[2] Luther ("bewitched" by sorcery);[3] Calvin ("magical enchantment" "by the delusions of Satan");[4] Lightfoot ("fascinated");[5] Schlier (affected by magicians);[6] Bruce ("bewitch [originally by means of evil eye]");[7] and Betz.[8] It is to be expected that interpreters who worked prior to the historical-critical period of investigation have developed it within directions that generally failed to illuminate the original historical context, for example, by turning it indiscriminately to addressing the matters of their own contemporary situations from their viewpoint, such as Luther's railings against the Anabaptists.[9] Overall, even when the evil eye language is recognized, the dynamics of the system have been either unrealized or denied.[10] In the modern period the tendency has been to attribute it to rhetorical flourish, even when noting the

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[1] Chrysostom said this verse means "who has cast an envious eye on you?" and implies "that their previous conduct had excited jealousy, and that the present occurrence arose from the malignity of a demon, whose breath had blasted their prosperous estate." He understands this to mean that the Galatians have been looked upon by "the teachers of these doctrines…from envious motives," intending "to mutilate what existed." He recognizes that Paul's comment implies that the addressees possessed some good that was enviable, but sees those envying them only in negative terms, warning that "you must not suppose that the glance of the eye has any natural power to injure those who look upon it," but instead it is through this sense that riches are perceived jealously by depraved minds ("Homily on Galatians," *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* [ed. P. Schaff; vol. 13; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956] 24).

[2] Jerome's comments are confusing. On the one hand, Jerome says "it must not be interpreted in such a way as to make Paul legitimize the witchcraft that is popularly supposed to do harm," but on the other hand, he observes, "he has adopted a word from everyday speech. . . . In the same way as tender infants are said to be harmed by witchcraft, so too the Galatians, recently born in the faith of Christ and nourished with milk, not solid food, have been injured as though someone has cast a spell on them" (Jerome, "Galatians" 1.3.1; cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* [ed. M. J. Edwards; vol. 8; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999] 35.).

[3] *A Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979) 193-95.

[4] *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (transl. W. Pringle; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 79-80.

[5] *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Lynn, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1981 [1865]) 133-34.

[6] *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEK 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971 [1962]) 119.

[7] *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 148; he notes also "fascinate" as the possible meaning.

[8] *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 131, 225. Betz notes the connection with "magic" and "evil eye," and the reaction to Paul's illness in the realm of averting a demon, although he suggests the language is figurative.

[9] E.g., Luther, *Galatians*, 193.

[10] E.g., Bruce (*Galatians*, 148), disallows "envy as irrelevant," and concludes with the translation "hypnotized," because of the strangeness of this behavior after having been liberated seems to indicate a spell was put on them

original usage of βασκαίνω in evil eye terms, taking Paul's intention to be more figurative and for the purpose of negative characterization.[11] In addition, the recognition of this language has not been broadened to consider how this feature of the text impacts the larger questions of interpretation of the entire letter, bearing on Paul's perception of the situation that has provoked its writing, and the purpose and message itself.

However, since the work of Jerome H. Neyrey (in 1988),[12] and John H. Elliott (1990),[13] consideration of this dynamic has begun to occupy a larger place in some commentaries.[14] In particular, Elliott's explicit development of 4:13-14 within the scope of this cultural dynamic, and connection with the evil eye language introduced in 3:1—although present in Bauer's Lexicon for all to see, as noted by Elliott himself—is a major advance, indicating a more comprehensive appeal to this motif within the overall argument of the letter.[15] Yet on the down side, application of this has sometimes still failed to lead to the recognition that this is rhetoric, that is, it is interested speech for persuasive intentions, and should not be taken at face value as offering an accurate portrait of "the influencers" (i.e., those whose

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[11] In spite also of Delling (*TDNT* 1.594-95): "not merely an exaggerated metaphor"; note e.g., E. D. W. Burton (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921] 143-44: "doubtless used tropically with the meaning 'lead astray'. . . . 'to pervert,' 'to confuse the mind'"; H. N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 111; Betz, *Galatians*, 131; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas, Texas: Word, 1990) 100; S. K. Williams, *Galatians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997) 83.

[12] "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 72-100. Drawing from M. Douglas' work on witchcraft, Neyrey pursues this line rather than the evil eye, although he also notes this phenomenon, and they are associated to be sure.

[13] "Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17 (1990) 262-73.

[14] J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Black's NTC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993) 151-52; B. Witherington (*Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 200-4), gives this dynamic more attention; however, he takes the evil eye in terms of sorcery, and still concludes that it should be taken as polemical and metaphorical. Moreover, on 203, he demonizes the influencers and thinks greed is the issue: "wanting all the plaudits in Jerusalem for themselves." See variously G. W. Hanson, *Galatians* (NTCS 9; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 77-78; F. J. Matera, *Galatians* (SPS 9; Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier/ Liturgical Press, 1992) 111-12; P. F. Esler, *Galatians*, (NTR; London and New York: Routledge, 1998) 219; B. W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 150-57. J. L. Martyn, (*Galatians* [AB 33A; New York, et al.: Doubleday, 1997] 282-83), does not note these articles, but does discuss that this falls within "the vocabulary of magic. . . casting a spell." He takes the spell to indicate the influencers are "virtual magicians," because the Galatians, "[g]iven Gentile aversion to circumcision. . . long to come under the Law." He takes "listening appreciatively to the Teacher's gospel" to be indicative of "leaving the realm of faith for that of superstition."

[15] Cf. Elliott, "Galatians," 263. Note that the case of ἐκπτύω in 4:14 is listed under βασκαίνω. Note also Schlier, *TDNT* 2.448-49.

influence upon the addressees Paul in this letter resists), so as to demonize them.[16] Moreover, as I will show, for the interpreter of Galatians there are many more implications that follow from recognition of this dynamic at work in the text than have been considered to date.

In 4:12-20 Paul refers to the initial reception by the Galatians, when he had first proclaimed the good news among them. Paul notes that although suffering a "weakness of the flesh" of some kind (he merely tells us it was ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς), and that, however much his being in this state may have "tempted [πειρασμόν]" them (to behave otherwise), they did not ultimately allow it to cause them to "despise [ἐξουθενήσατε/ ἐξουθενεω]" him or "spit [ἐξεπτύσατε/ ἐκπτυω]."[17] They took the opposite course, and instead "received [ἐδέξασθέ]" him like they would "an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" himself (4:13-14).

The deeply suggestive cultural dynamics of an evil eye belief in this passage, wherein Paul seeks to explain the irony of the present reversal of trust between then and now, and him and the influencers, is a topic to be explored more fully. But here I want to note Elliott's argument that this may have been in part concealed by the usual translations, which, for example, fail to bring out clearly that it is precisely the condition of his—or their own[18]—flesh as ἀσθένειαν

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[16] Consideration of the importance of labeling those influencing the addressees, including examination of the interpretive limitations created by many of the prevailing solutions, are discussed at length in M. D. Nanos, "The Intra-Jewish Context of Galatians: Identifying the Players and Situation Implied in Paul's Letter of Ironic Rebuke" (Ph.D. Diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000) [on evil eye issues see now my *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) esp. 184-91, 279-80]; idem., "The Inter- and Intra-Jewish Political Contexts of Paul and the Galatians," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation* (ed. R. A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000).

[17] Elliott, "Galatians," 263. Schlier (*TDNT* 2.448-49), observes that "It is not used here [Gal. 4:14] in the metaphorical sense of 'to expose, ' 'to despise,' 'to reject' etc., but quite literally in the sense of the ancient gesture of spitting out as a defence against sickness and other demonic threats." Against this view see Goddard and Cummins, "Ill or Ill-Treated." They make the case that spitting was often done for reasons other than evil eye protection, and that many metaphorical examples exist. This is so, of course, but Paul has moved the language into the evil eye belief system in 3:1-5. The return to this theme in chapter 4 marks his return to occasional speech, and as will be discussed, there are many indications beyond this word that Paul is working in this semantic field here.

[18] T. W. Martin ("Whose Flesh? What Temptation? [Galatians 4.13-14]," *JSNT* 74 [1999] 65-91), argues that the referent is not Paul but the Galatian addressees; however, no substantial change in the function of this statement results. Because he follows A. J. Goddard and S. A. Cummins ("Ill or Ill-Treated? Conflict and Persecution as the Context of Paul's Original Ministry in Galatia [Galatians 4.12-20]," *JSNT* 52 [1993] 93-126), Martin does not consider the weakness theme in terms that would occur to one within an evil eye system; as will be discussed, a weakness, whether illness or other manifestations of weakness that are possibly in view, and whether it is Paul or

(weak/ill) that would have normally provided cause for them to suspect him of being a possessor of the evil eye. But their decision not to protect themselves from an evil eye threat is far from obvious when ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε is rendered by translators as though essentially repeating two undifferentiated and general words somewhat redundantly: "scorn nor despise." While this language may be taken metaphorically or differently if standing alone, in the context of the evil eye imagery to which Paul has moved the language in this letter, these words are used in a way that is widely attested in such contexts to specifically refer to reactions to a feared agent of the evil eye: they are despised, and for protection from them, one will spit.

The point then is, in spite of the fact that Paul's fleshly condition when he was present—or their own—gave them pause, tempting them to suspect him, neither did they conclude to "despise" him as though a dangerous possessor of the evil eye, perhaps a victim himself now filled with this malevolent force, nor did they protect themselves by way of one of the almost universal expressions when confronted by this threat: they did not "spit." This they were indeed "tempted" to do, yet they concluded otherwise, in fact the opposite, receiving him instead as though an agent of good will.

Thus appeal to the evil eye belief system is at the center of Paul's most pointed rebuke (3:1-5), and that around which his friendship appeal turns (4:12-20). Paul apparently believed it provided a meaningful explanation for the situation of the addressees, one that they could plausibly project onto the motives and actions of the influencers. His approach suggests that the addressees' experiences were those that would normally raise suspicion of such a force at work among themselves, that they have been experiencing a new level of good fortune, yet at the same time a new kind of suffering (3:4-5). Such a development would provoke the question: whose "gaze" upon their good has led to this harm? However, it is most important for the interpreter to observe that Paul's delivery of this news in ironic rebuke indicates that Paul believes the addressees had not themselves considered an envious "gaze" to be the cause of their present dilemma; rather, Paul is the one who raises this concern, blaming the influencers specifically. Of course this need not mean that Paul rightly judged the influencers, that is, that the motives of the influencers were envious, or their actions driven thereby. Whether it was actually the case that the addressees had been "overlooked" or not is another matter.

Since no one is above some level of self-interest, it is of course fairly easy to undermine the influence of those of whom one disapproves by appealing to this fault. Motives are difficult to judge,

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the addressees suffering the weakness, would have provoked a concern that they have or would be susceptible to being "eyed," either causing the condition, or because of it.

and Paul's accusation need not mean that it is the driving motive for them. As a matter of fact, since the addressees have failed to perceive this on the part of the influencers before Paul's letter, trusting them wholeheartedly to have their own interests in mind instead,[19] it is possible that Paul's polemical accusation of an evil eye action is mistaken. What is important for the later interpreter of Paul is the window that is opened for re-imagining the situation which results from taking into account this dynamic cultural clue. This includes re-evaluation of the identities and actions of all of the players: the addresses, the influencers, and Paul. It also provides occasion to reconsider the writing and reading conventions at work for the author and addressees. And of course, it calls for re-examination of the interpretations of the letter that have since then prevailed.

Modeling the evil eye belief system, especially the dynamics of envy

The Evil Eye Belief System
We will consider only a few pertinent aspects of the many interesting and significant features of this system, especially the dynamics of envy that animate it. Evil eye represents an ancient and wide-spread belief attested throughout the circum-Mediterranean and beyond, for example, among Celtic people,[20] and it is still alive to this day in many of these same areas.[21] It is found in Biblical, rabbinic, and Christian writings.[22] Protective devices bear witness to its presence in all strata

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[19] This trust is generally implied in most treatments, although the implications for the positive aspects of the identity and actions of the influencers are not noted. Even Troy Martin works from the assumption that the addressees have trusted the influencers' message, although he takes the implications of this very differently ("Apostasy to Paganism: The Rhetorical Stasis of the Galatian Controversy," *JBL* 114:3 [1995] 437-61").

[20] S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (vol. 1: "The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule"; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). The Celtic people did and still do exhibit this belief system, for example, in modern Ireland and Scotland.

[21] J. M. Roberts ("Belief in the Evil Eye in World Perspective," in *The Evil Eye* [ed. C. Maloney; New York: Columbia University Press, 1976] 223-78), utilizes a survey of 186 world cultures done by Murdock and White, with modifications, in search of regions of evil eye belief. Almost all fall within the category circum-Mediterranean. G. P. Murdock (*Theories of Illness: A World Survey* [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980] 39-40, 46-50), notes the strength of the tendency of this belief as the causation of illness in the region including the Afroasiatic, Indo-European and Macro-Sudanic linguistic phyla at 98%, and attestation among 88% of the societies in the region. See the map in C. Maloney, "Introduction," in *Evil Eye*, (ed. Maloney) xii-xiii.

Concerning the antiquity of this system, archaeologists have discovered possible evidence of this belief in stylized hands as amulets in mural paintings at Catal Hüyük in south-central Anatolia (about 15 miles south-east of Iconium [now Konya], not far from Lystra and Derbe) dated back to around 6000 b.c.e. (J. Mellaart, "The beginnings of Mural Painting," *Archaeology* 15:1 [1962] 11).

[22] See esp. those referred to in J. Elliott, "Galatians"; R. Ulmer, *The Evil Eye in the Bible and in Rabbinic Literature* (Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House, 1994).

of society.[23] Moreover, it is still widely attested among Jewish, Muslim and Christian people in Europe and the Middle East, and within ethnic communities which have retained their group identities after emigrating from there to the Americas.[24]

The system offers a view into the agonistic (competitive) interaction of cultures which have been shaped by the values of honor and shame, with a limited good valuation of available resources.[25] Various features of this competitive system as it is perceived today by natives, ethnographers, psychologists, and folklorists vary little from the descriptions of ancient informers such as Aristotle or Plutarch, a near contemporary of Paul, Church Fathers such as Basil, or Francis Bacon of the Renaissance period.[26] The views of many students of this phenomenon are articulated by the Blums, whose extensive work was done in Greece, when they declare that "one may conclude that present evil eye beliefs have survived without important changes over several thousands of years."[27]

The evil eye is known under many labels, for example, among Greeks as *buskania*, *vascania* and *matiazma*.[28] Italians call the eye *mal'*

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[23] J. Russell, ("The Evil Eye in Early Byzantine Society: Archaeological Evidence from Anemurium in Isauria," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32:3 [1982] 544-45), makes it a point to note that concern with protective measures are found among the leaders of society as well as the common people. For example, pictures of Phthonos being ravaged by creatures appear on gems and inscriptions seeking to protect the donors of mosaics from an envious glance are common: "Let envy keep away from the excellence of the Mosaic" (on 544 he notes that parallels to those he is investigating in Anemurium are found from Cheikh Fouede in Egypt to Serdjillah in Syria, and one epigram found in Asia Minor "claims that the excellence of the bath itself will cancel Phthonos' power").

[24] E.g., several essays in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney).

[25] Cf. A. W. Gouldner, *Enter Plato: Classical Greece and the Origins of Social Theory* (New York and London: Basic Books, 1965); P. Walcot, *Envy and the Greeks: A study of human behaviour* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1978). For application to the New Testament period see B. J. Malina (*The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* [rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993] 28-62); for Mediterranean cultures in general see J. Pitt-Rivers ("Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* [ed. J. G. Peristiany; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966] 19-77, esp. 21-24, 72); and G. M. Foster, "The Anatomy of Envy: A Study in Symbolic Behavior," *Current Anthropology* 13:2 [1972] 165-202); for psychological evaluations see H. Schoeck (*Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* [Indianapolis: LibertyPress, 1970]).

[26] "Homily 11. Concerning Envy" in *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works* (transl. M. M. Wagner; "The Fathers of the Church. A New Translation"; vol. 9; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1950) 463-74; Francis Bacon, "IX. Of Envy," in *The Essays Or, Counsels, Civil and Moral of Francis Bacon* (London and New York: The Chesterfield Society, 1890) 66-72.

[27] R. and E. Blum, *The Dangerous Hour: The Lore of Crisis and Mystery in Rural Greece* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970) 310.

[28] F. T. Elworthy (*The Evil Eye: An Account of the Ancient and Widespread Superstition* [London: John Murray, 1895] 147-48), suggests that the origin of the name "mask" is from a corruption of the older Greek baska, which accounts for the use of masks as amulets.

occhio (Tuscany) and *jettatora* (south) and those who "cast [*jetta*] it" *jettatore*. Among Jewish people the Yiddish expression is '*eyne hore*'; in the talmudic literature it is *eyn ha-ra*, "the eye of evil" (also *'ayin ra'ah*, "evil eye") and *'ayin tsarah*, "narrow eye," which are in contrast to *'ayin tovah*, "good eye").[29] A sampling of other translated names includes "the Salty Eye" (Persian), "the Bad Eye," "the Wounding Eye," "the Look"; and verbal forms include "to overlook," "to eye," and "to eye-strike.[30]

  The evil eye (note singular, not eyes) is believed to threaten persons and things upon which it falls.[31] This destructive gaze, intentional or not, is feared to harm especially *health* (even to the point of death), *productivity* (the means of livelihood, e.g., farm animals, pottery), and *fortune* (any good that may occur, especially if it comes suddenly or noticeably, bringing prestige or profit). Children and beautiful things or people (especially women, doubly so pregnant ones), and those engaged in rites of passage (birth, marriage, conversion) are considered most vulnerable. These are of course processes in which social comparison, which gives rise to envy, is hardly avoidable. The relevance to the Galatian situation is obvious on many levels, not least that the tension involves social identity in terms of a rite of passage, and that the author regards the addressees as vulnerable children whose good fortune has been threatened, which for him is indicated by their suffering of social marginalization. For example, the addressees' condition is considered by Paul to be the result of the social influence of the influencers' leveling rhetoric and their strategies to induce compliance: the resultant *pathos* (3:4) being variously described by Paul as their being "unsettled" (1:7; 5:10),

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[29] Ulmer, *Evil Eye*, 4-5; note that Hebrew *'ayin*, "eye, sight, look" refers also to anything resembling an eye such as a hole, ring, or genitalia (5). The narrow eye has special reference to stinginess, while the good or generous eye to generosity. Sadly, one of the names for the evil eye in German is *Judenblick*, "the Jew's eye."

[30] E.g., various essays in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney); and in *The Evil Eye: A Folklore Casebook* (ed. A. Dundes; New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1981); B. Spooner, "The Evil Eye in the Middle East" in *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations* (ed. M. Douglas; London, et al: Tavistock Publications, 1970) 311-19. In addition, E. A. W. Budge (*Amulets and Talismans* [New York: University Books, 1978] 363), adds the following: "In Germany it is called *übel ougen* or *böse Blick*; in Holland, *booze blik*; in Poland, *zte oko*. . . in Sardinia, *ogu malu*; in Corsica, *innochiatura*; in Spain, *mal de ojo*; in France, *mauvais oeil* or *mauvais regard*; in Norway, *skjoertunge*; in Denmark, *et ondt öje*. . . in Ireland, *droch-shuil*, *bad eye*, *ill eye*; in Scotland, *ill Ee*. In Syria it was, and still is, called *'aina bîshâ*; in Persia, *aghashi*; in Armenia, *paterak*. . . in Hungary, *szemverés*; in China, *ok ngan* or *ok, sihi* (cf. Seligmann, *Die Zauberkraft des Auges*, Hamburg, 1922).

[31] See A. Dundes ("Wet and Dry, the Evil Eye: An Essay in Indo-European and Semitic Worldview," in *Evil Eye* [ed. Dundes] 278-86), for interesting speculations on this as linked with phallos or vulva as liquid seeking, and many other such topics throughout this article. Note that plural eyes is occasionally attested in some other cultures.

"excluded" (4:17), "hindered" and "persuaded" (5:7-8), "subverted" (5:12), and "compelled" (6:12-13).

The eye expresses the innermost darkening effect of evil, and is particularly linked, even linguistically, with envy, and associated also with, for example, stinginess. The natural opposite is often taken to be generosity, the "single eye."[32] It is thus important to protect oneself from the damaging effects of this gaze at all times, and, when any symptoms develop such as ill health (of persons or animals), or other misfortunes (especially if a loss of that recently gained), the results are immediately suspected to be a product of an evil eye. This suspicion will then be tested, and if confirmed, measures will be initiated to identify the implicated party, and to restore and protect the effected person(s) or item(s), and sometimes to retaliate.

It should be noted that envy, the fear of which is the actual engine of the system, is taken to be a pained response on the part of the gazer, not one that is premeditated or intentional. In other words, the dread of this look was not confined to being eyed in an ostensibly nasty way, it is not generally concerned with the expression of magic or sorcery. Of course, it can be generated in this way too. But that is not the usual dynamic of this system. In fact, it includes as well the suspicion of the seemingly loving eye or doting glance.[33] In other words, its casting is generally feared by the gazee without necessarily attributing any intention on the part of the gazee to do so, when envy is provoked, and it is a threat with which the gazee is concerned even when they are receiving admiration or praise.

The process and participants may be simply set out as follows. An evil eye action involves a *gazer* (actual or suspected) who is feared to have the evil eye, an envious response to a *gazee*, a person fearing the effects of the eye upon themselves or their possessions, or a *gazee detector*.[34] The detector is someone who suspects the gaze may be leveled at some other person or thing within their sphere of responsibility (like a child, animal, or thing), such as is the case in the letter to the Galatians for Paul with regard to his "children." The gazee detector thus functions in the role of patron and protector. The gazee or gazee detector moves to protect the threatened person(s) or item(s) in advance of or during any attack, for example, by displaying a sign, or gesturing in a manner believed to offer protection, such as cursing or spitting (the elements of *gazee protection*). If however, the person or thing suffers damage, the gazee or gazee detector will seek to restore or repair the affected person or item, and perhaps exact

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[32] H. J. Cadbury, "The Single Eye," *HTR* 47:2 (1954) 69-74.

[33] Spooner, "Middle East," 313.

[34] V. Garrison and C. M. Arensberg ("The Evil Eye: Envy or Risk of Seizure? Paranoia or Patronal Dependency?" in *Evil Eye* [ed. Maloney] 292), for introduction of labels gazer and gazee; I have added the category gazee detector.

revenge upon the gazer as well. We should pull apart these features and consider some of the dynamics more closely and how they impact the interpretive possibilities for Galatians. But first we will consider more specifically the engine of the evil that is transferred through the eye, that is, envy and its cousins.

Evil Eye and Envy
In Greek culture, among others, the association of the evil eye with envy is apparent at the linguistic level, explicitly articulated, and implicit in many ways throughout the literary and material remains.[35] To begin with, the combination of *ophthalmos* ("eye") or *baskainos* ("evil eyer") and paronyms with *phthonos* ("envy") and *phthoneros* ("envious") are ready evidence.[36] This connection is also evident if one turns to consideration of the Latin terms, from which the English word envy derives. In fact, as J. Elliott succinctly puts it, in Latin, "the Greek terms *baskaino*, *baskanon*, *baskanos*, and *baskania* are taken over directly (f for b, c for k etc.) and latinized as *fascino*, *fascinus*, *fascinator*, and *fascinatio*. Thus 'to fascinate' is actually to injure with the Evil Eye."[37] Interestingly, *fascinum* also means penis as the averter of the evil eye, and phallic symbols are widely attested for protection.[38] The Latin word for envy is in fact *invidia*, a composite of the prefix *in* ("against") and *videre* (to see/look) thus "to envy" literally meaning "to look-against" or "to look-over" someone or something.[39]

The connection between envy and the eye is traced by Plutarch in the seventh question in "Table Talk" (*Moralia* 8.5.7). In 8.5.7.1/680

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[35] It is also found inscribed on protective devices. E.g., on one side of an ancient copper amulet from Smyrna Solomon pursues demons and will "drive away all evil from him who wears it," and on the other side the word above the eye which is shown being attacked refers to the glance of the φθονεροι, the envious (Russell, "Byzantine Society," 541-42). Note also *Test. of Solomon* 18.39: "I cast the evil eye on every man. But the much-suffering eye, when inscribed, thwarts me" (on the suffering eye and seal of Solomon, see E. R. Goodenough [*Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (12 volumes; New York: Pantheon Books, 1953-65) 2.238-41], and vol. 3, figs. 1049, and 1065-66, for synagogue ceiling tiles from Dura).

[36] Elliott, "Galatians," 264, notes the following examples: Sir. 14:10 (*ophthalmos poneros phthoneros*); Tob. 4:7, 16 (*phthonesto sou ho ophthalmos*); Test. Is. 3:3 (*phthoneros kai baskanos*); Philo *De Cher.* 33; *De Mut.* 112; *De Somn.* 1.107; *De Vit. Mos.* 1.246; *De Virt.* 170; *In Flacc.* 29.

[37] Elliott, "Galatians," 264.

[38] G. Róheim ("The Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* [ed. Dundes] 217-18), notes that in Latin *fascinum* is used for both evil eye and penis as averter of the evil eye, and thus is on the triumphal chariot of the emperor. He also observes that the inscription in Pompeii with the red stone phallos *Hic Habitat Felicitas* does not mean here lives a prostitute named Felicitas as thought, but "'here dwells happiness' with the phallos to avert the evil eye" (218).

[39] Elliott, "Galatians," 264; H. Schoeck ("The Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* [ed. Dundes] 194), also provides evidence of this linguistic connection in German (*der böse Blick* is often called *verneiden*, a dialectic form of *neiden*, "to envy") and other languages.

Plutarch brings up the fact that intellectuals of his time questioned this popular belief system of evil eye, but he then explains how this works and why it should be respected. One of the lines his argument takes is a universal characteristic of the evil eye belief system, namely, that the illness (ἀσθενείᾳ) of children is attributed to it, and in particular this is because it is effective in "*influencing and impairing their susceptible, vulnerable constitutions*" (emphasis added). Plutarch then explains (in 8.5.7.2-3/681) how the evil eye works through envy (φθόνος), which contaminates the body with evil, and when their glance falls on someone it will "then assail that person as if with poisoned arrows." His idea that envy is a kind of charge that is in the air from eye to eye is repeated in various ways throughout history.[40]

When objections are raised to the association of the eye with envy, since it is feared among friends and of a father toward a new baby, or even of one's self, Plutarch responds that when one is envious by nature it will be "natural for him to cast his gaze oftener on those near and dear to him and consequently to hurt them more than he does others" (8.5.7.4-5/682). In another work Plutarch relates the need for brothers to do everything possible to avoid being envious of one another, and failing this they should try to discharge the evil eye outside the family on "suitable objects for envy and jealousy (*Moralia* ["On Brotherly Love"] 6.485).

What is envy, and what arouses its force?

The Nature of Envy

A full study of the development of the concept of envy among the Greeks is obviously beyond the scope of this article, filling the primary literature, and already investigated at length. But it is important to indicate the major lines relevant for this study. As noted above, the close to sometimes indistinguishable relationship between envy and the evil eye is to be noted in the very words themselves. In describing the dynamics of shame as taking place, like honor, in the court of public reputation, Aristotle quotes this proverb (*Rhet.* 2.6.18 [*LCL*]): Shame is in the eyes."

Aristotle defined envy in a way that has continued to express the essence of the concept, and which is full of significance for the task of investigating the social dynamics that have precipitated Paul's letter, as well as consideration of the dynamics of his response. Aristotle

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[40] M. W. Dickie ("Heliodorus and Plutarch on the Evil Eye," *Classical Philology* 86:1 [1991] 18, 26), contends that Plutarch devised his own explanation of the evil eye overall, though inspired by Democritus, but in this case that Plutarch drew his understanding of the effect through the movement of the eyes from pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata* 887a22-27. Later Heliodorus wrote: "When anyone looks at what is excellent with envious eye he fills the surrounding atmosphere with a pernicious quality and transmits his own envenomed exhalations into whatever is nearest him" (*Aethiopica* 3.7-9; Dickie, "Heliodorus," argues that Heliodorus drew his material from Plutarch).

noted in particular the social proximity of the person who envies or who is envied (*Rhet.* 2.10.1-2; emphasis added):

> envy is a kind of *pain at the sight of good fortune* in regard to the goods mentioned; in the case *of those like themselves*; and not for the sake of a man getting anything, but because of others possessing it. For those men will be envious who have, or seem to have, *others 'like' them*. I mean like in birth, relationship, age, moral habit, reputation, and possessions.

Envy is not generally expressed when the social status is widely different, or toward one who has ascribed status or goods: one does not envy "people and things far inferior or superior to him," for example, "those who live near the pillars of Hercules" (straits of Gibraltar);[41] rather, "*the people and things which one envies are on the same footing*" (2.10.5 emphasis added).[42] Thus the saying that "potter envies potter," for "men strive for honour with those who are competitors, or rivals in love, in short, with those who aim at the same things, they are bound to feel most envious of these"(2.10.6).[43] Moreover, Aristotle observes that envy is manifest among friends and even kin, for "they envy those who are near them in time, place, age, and reputation" (2.10.5).[44]

Thus envy is comparative. The pain does not necessarily indicate that the one who envies does not possess the good, or even that they wish to. Rather, it is the distress towards another if they should have or gain it, regardless of one's own possession of the good or not. To envy is to begrudge.

Throughout Aristotle's treatment of envy he emphasizes the similarity of the people, and that envy is excited when honor or goods among near equals are perceived to now manifest *a change of fortune* so that they are "slightly superior or slightly inferior" (2.10.4): "envy is indeed a disturbing pain and directed against good fortune, but not that of one who does not deserve it [this is rather indignation/ νεμεσᾶν], *but of one who is our equal and like*" (2.9.3 emphasis

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[41] So also Plutarch, *Moralia* 7.6/538 [LCL 405], cited earlier.

[42] Josephus, *Contra Apion* 2.123, observes similarly (since envy and jealousy are different) for why Judeans neither hate nor are jealous [ζηλοτυπίαν] of the Greeks, because of geographical distance. And Herodotus echoes here when he observes that the prosperity of a citizen does not generate the kind of envy of a foreigner that it does for a citizen, for it is the equals or near equals, people of similar status, who envy each other (237.2-3; cf. 3, 38, 3; 18, 3, and 315; 7, 236, 1).

[43] Stobaeus, *Works and Days* 25-26, similarly notes: "potter strives with potter, craftsman with craftsman, beggar with beggar, and singer with singer."

[44] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.8 [LCL 168], describes envy as "a kind of pain, not, however at a friend's misfortune, nor at an enemy's good fortune, but the envious are those only who are annoyed at their friends' successes."

added).[45] Hence the dynamics behind the arousal of envy among near equals (2.10.2 emphasis added):

> And those will be envious who possess *all but one of these advantages*; that is why those who attempt great things and succeed are envious, because they think that every one is trying to deprive them of their own.... those who wish to be distinguished in anything are envious in regard to it.

Aristotle follows his definition of good fortune, which "consists in the acquisition or possession of either all, or the most, or the most important of those goods of which fortune is the cause," with this clarification: "Fortune is also a cause of those goods which are beyond calculation; for instance, a man's brothers are all ugly, while he is handsome; they did not see the treasure, while he found it...." (*Rhet.* 1.5.17/1362a).

Two other observations that have a bearing upon our investigation are the "Johnny-come-lately" aspects of envy: "those who have succeeded with difficulty or have failed envy those whose success has been rapid," and when success or possessions are a reproach to themselves, they are envious for not obtaining the same advantage as those near or like them (2.10.7-8). It is not ascribed good that is so much envied, but acquired good, especially if suddenly gained, and usually among those of similar status and expectations within their ascribed station.

According to Plutarch, envy is the opposite of friendship and goodwill, which are instead "the wish for one's neighbour's prosperity" (*Moralia* ["On Envy and Hate"] 7.1/536). He observes: "to attract envy all that is required is apparent prosperity" (7.2/537), and "it is for good fortune that men are envied," in other words, it is not the result of a just judgment, "for no one is unjust in being fortunate" (7.5/537). Even the degrees of envy are so measured: "for enviers eye more jealously those who enjoy a reputation for goodness, feeling that they possess the greatest blessing, virtue" (7.7/538). Moreover, envy is difficult to thwart, since it "increases with the apparent progress of the envied in virtue," and this is so "even if they receive some benefit from the fortunate…envying them for both the intention and the power," unless it is "supreme and resplendent good fortune," which "often extinguishes envy," for example, "Alexander or Cyrus when they had prevailed and become masters of the world" (7.6-7/537-38). Indeed, what sets men apart from animals in terms of envy is how they are "affected by glory or disgrace, things by which envy is most

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[45] Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.52/209, similarly observes: "Now people are especially jealous [*invident*=envious] of their equals, or of those once beneath them, when they feel themselves left behind and fret at the others' upward flight."

exasperated" (7.4/537). This sentiment is echoed widely among the Greeks: they were enormously concerned with honor. Xenophon's description of the Athenians is quintessential: "Athenians excel all others not so much in singing or in stature or in strength, as in love of honour (φιλοτιμία), which is the strongest incentive to deeds of honour and renown" (*Memorabilia* 3.3.13). The other side of this is expressed by Epicharmus: "It is obvious, that a man who is not envied is of no account."[46]

It is clear from the above brief survey that the contest (agonistic) system of honor and shame was closely connected with the pervasive presence of envy throughout Greek culture. And this is surely a logical connection, since honor is the sense of or claim to a person or group's self-worth within the context of the public recognition thereof. It must be observed, for it is by nature a public concern of comparative nature; so too are the processes which stimulate envy. In other words, these social tensions go hand-in-hand with the dyadic construction of identity which characterized this period.

In a conceptual world in which the resources are limited, there can be only one winner. In this "limited good" or "zero-sum" system all others must necessarily lose in view of another's gain.[47] One's satisfaction with their status is directly tied to that of the other, and either increases or decreases with the relative success or failure. In this system one can get ahead either by "raising themselves absolutely and leaving the other man behind," or by "maintaining their own absolute position and cutting the other man down"; conversely, one can fall either "by moving down while the man above has not changed his absolute position," or one can fall "*relative to him,* even when their own absolute position remains the same or improves if his happens to improve still more."[48]

Public acknowledgement involves seeing another's fortunes, but it also makes one vulnerable to the power of their response to what they see, and when it threatens their own comparative stature, to their envious glance. The incremental good that another gains is hurtful, which is precisely the nature of envy. Thus Josephus tells of John's response to Josephus' prosperity and popularity: "he was in no

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[46] Cited by Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 43. So also Plutarch, *Moralia* 7.5/537, "This explains why when Themistocles was still a youth he said that he was doing nothing remarkable, as he was not yet envied." Yet Plutarch also notes that while one will say that they "hate a good many people, there is no one that they will say they envy," and also, "men deny that they envy…cloaking and denying their envy…implying that among the disorders of the soul it is alone unmentionable" (7.5/537).

[47] G. M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," *American Anthropologist* 67:2 (1965) 293-315.

[48] Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 56.

good humour; and believing that my success involved his own ruin, gave way to immoderate envy (φθόνον)."[49]

While the one who senses the loss may be pained, the one who is envied may relish the acknowledgment of their gain to which this witnesses. Yet, at the same time, almost in contradiction, the danger of this position is openly recognized, not only from humans who express the envy, but even from the gods. The negative side of this honor contest system is also clear in the observation of Aeschylus: "'for few there be among men in whom it is inborn to admire without envy a friend's good fortune. For the venom of malevolence settles upon the heart and doubles the burthen [sic] of him afflicted of that plague: he is himself weighed down by his own calamity, and repines at sight of another's prosperity'" (*Agamemnon* 832-37 [LCL 146]).

This characteristic is attributed to the gods too, whom the Greeks feared for envy, and the association with the eye is implicit when not explicit. Dodds summarily states: "Certainly divine and human φθόνος have much in common, e.g., both work through the Evil Eye."[50]

The comprehensive work of H. Schoeck sets the standard for modern studies of envy. The opening statement to his treatment is remarkable close to that which has just been traced among the ancient cultures: "Envy is the drive which lies at the core of man's life as a social being, and which occurs as soon as two individuals become capable of *mutual comparison*."[51] Over and over Schoeck emphasizes many of the same dynamics we have seen operating in the cultures of envy and evil eye beliefs of an earlier time. First, the stress is upon social proximity, that is, envy is usually aroused and directed toward those with whom one understands oneself to compete, and less often when the subject and object are removed, whether by, for example, time, distance, status, or goods, from the likelihood of imaging oneself actually in the other's place. A concern to assuage the perception of self-inferiority among one's peers is clearly implied. The view of F. Bacon rings loud and clear:

> near kinsfolk, and fellows in office, and those that have been bred together, are more apt to envy their equals when they are raised; for it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes, and pointeth at them, and cometh oftener into their remembrance, and incurreth likewise more into the note of others.[52]

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[49] *Life* 25/122; cf. *Life* 38/189; *War* 1.8/67; *Ant*. 2.10, 254-55; 13.5/288.

[50] E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, et al: University of California Press, 1951) 62 n 108; see also 29-31, 41, 44.

[51] Schoeck, *Envy*, 3 (emphasis added). Schoeck draws especially on the definition provided by William L. Davidson ("Envy and Emulation," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* [ed. J. Hastings; vol. 5; New York and Edinburgh: Scribner/Clark, 1912; cf. Schoeck, *Envy*, 20-21).

[52] Bacon, "Envy," 68.

Secondly, envy involves a conviction that the one envied has some good, some prosperity that is somehow to blame for the lack the subject feels, although they may themselves have the good in view, or even not care to have it exactly. This prosperity the subject begrudges and thus seeks to damage or deny; conversely the object seeks to avoid or protect themselves from the consequences thereof. Envy is concomitant with contexts in which comparison is salient, putting or keeping the other in their (inferior) place.

Similarly, Foster considers envy in competitive terms by way of his work on the concept of limited good/zero-sum societies or situations. This situation, while present in all groups to some degree—there can be only one winner in a game or political race or other defined position—was a cultural norm on a much broader scale in the period under investigation. In such groups "it is the *relative* difference that triggers the latent envy always present, and this difference may be produced by both rising and falling fortunes of people in the same group."[53] Foster thus concludes: "Limited Good, i.e., insufficient quantities of the good things in life (whether defined as more food or more high honors), therefore seems to me to underlie a great deal of and possibly all envy."[54]

While the evil eye is often associated with malicious intentions, Schoeck and others also note that it is not volition but affliction or misfortune that makes one a suspect of evil eye.[55] (Note that this is precisely how Gal. 4:13 is framed!). So too Bacon observed: deformed persons and others suffering want, including recent calamity, are considered envious, "for he that cannot possibly mend his own case, will do what he can to impair another's."[56] And this observation is made by Freud as well.[57]

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[53] Foster, "Anatomy of Envy, 169.

[54] Foster, "Anatomy of Envy, 169. Interestingly enough, when he comes to the topic of evil eye cultures of today, even though he defines envy differently than the historical orientation I have pursued herein, he yet observes similarly that this provides an institutional recognition of envy: "evil eye is the most wide-spread of cultural definitions of situations in which envy is present, and where its harmful effects must be guarded against. Although children are the prime targets of the 'eye,' other valued property such as animals and crops may be damaged." (174).

[55] H. Schoeck, "The Evil Eye: Forms and Dynamics of a Universal Superstition," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Dundes) 195.

[56] Bacon, "Envy," 67.

[57] "One of the most uncanny and most universal forms of superstition is the *fear of the evil eye*. Apparently, man always knew the source of that fear. Whoever possesses something *precious yet frail*, fears the *envy* of others. He projects onto them the envy he himself would feel in their place. Such sentiments are betrayed by glances, even if we suppress their verbal expression. And if anyone is *too different* from other people, especially because of *unpleasant physical marks*, he is thought to harbor unusually strong envy and the ability to translate that envy into malevolent action" (emphasis

Third, although less common, envy may extend beyond one's peer group. Yet here envying down is more common than envying up. Why? This seems to be because the ones above, for example, with ascribed status of a higher order, regard themselves as superior. Someone or group moving up toward their station naturally threatens, all the more so in a limited good culture.[58] On the other hand, as Aristotle and other voices on envy already noted have observed, one is not inclined to envy those who are above already.[59] They are out of reach, the good already acquired or achieved at an earlier time. If they are scoundrels, then indignation might be expected, but still this is not envy. A similar dynamic is described by social identity theorists: the negative evaluation of the group which perceives itself to have higher status intensifies as the threat of status proximity with the perceived lower status group increases.[60]

Fourth, envy is provoked when fortunes change, especially suddenly. Like the ancients, Schoeck also observes that most threatened is "everything that is *vital yet incomplete*—in the *process of becoming*; everything that is beautiful or precious yet easily harmed, animate and inanimate alike, can attract the envious look."[61] Thus those involved in rites of passage are targets. Their passing is in public view for all to see and "appreciate," or envy.

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added; from *Das Unheimlich* [The Uncanny], cited by Schoeck, "Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* [ed. Dundes] 195).

[58] A similar dynamic is described by social identity theorists. M. A. Hogg and D. Abrams (*Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* [London and New York: Routledge, 1988] 57-62), explain some dynamics of what they call the "social competition" model of intergroup interaction. When the comparison between groups is subjectively perceived to be insecure, especially when legitimacy or stability of the status hierarchy is threatened, social competition follows. School children accept their subordinate situation normally, and the teacher's position commands respect. But if they cease to accept this relationship, then the teacher will seek to reassert their authority as appropriate. Once the "legitimacy of status relations is challenged by a subordinate group, the superior group closes its ranks to defend its position" (58). "The high-status group reacts to the stability of its position by expressing bias on consensually valued dimensions while rejecting the legitimacy of acquiring status on dimensions on which the low-status group is attempting to gain positive distinctiveness" (60). The negative evaluation of the group which perceives itself to have higher status intensifies as the threat of status proximity with the perceived lower status group increases.

[59] Note e.g., Bacon, "Envy," 69: "unworthy persons are most envied at their first coming in," which is extended to rising suddenly, but those of "noble blood are less envied in their rising; for it seemeth but right done to their birth."

[60] "When groups agree about each other's status there is little pressure to alter the status quo. If at the end of the season a football team is at the bottom of its league, there can be little doubt that it deserves to be there. Members of such a team are unlikely to compare their team with those at the top of the league. In such a situation the players are faced with a potentially *negative* social identity, relative to those in the top teams" (Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 54).

[61] Schoeck, "Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Dundes) 196.

Finally, these views on the system of evil eye beliefs and the relationship with envy are also expressed in the analyses of many anthropologists involved in field work. Richard and Eva Blum offer this explanation of the social dynamics:

> The evil eye symbolizes the intensity of community interaction; it indicates that each person is under observation by others. Everyone is measured from moment to moment and regarded with admiration or envy, with approbation or censure. Implicit awareness of the consequences of the opinions and actions of others towards oneself emerges in the evil eye concept which attributes one's own health and welfare to the judgments made and feelings held about one by others. Community-wide interdependency and sensitivity to the feelings of others is demonstrated.
>
> There is evidence for the very considerable importance attached to interpersonal relations and the interplay of pride and envy as a source of disaster. The feelings of humans towards one another are understood as a source of illness, disability, anxiety, injury, and death. . . . Good fortune is a dangerous blessing and its enjoyment, for the most part visibly through its flaunting, is an invitation to destruction. Those who have or achieve that which is valued (having a child, getting married, enjoying the sexual favours of another, acquiring property or reputation), must expect the congratulations of their neighbours to be but a mask for jealousy. Success is the forbidden fruit: to taste it is to know joy at the certain risk of alienating oneself from one's fellows.[62]

Many anthropologists conclude that the evil eye belief system is based upon a communal understanding of the dynamics of envy, and intimately connected with social control. In such communities people are uneasy when admired by others. The suspicion is that the admirer is hiding a destructive wish nurtured by envy or jealousy.[63] This is but another testimony to Maloney's summary observation that evil eye in all cultures involves envy in some way.[64] There is overall agreement that the evil eye functions largely with respect to social control, reinforcing norms, discouraging the exceeding of socially ascribed roles, and encouraging the golden mean: it is the great leveler.[65] Envy "is particularly elaborated as a concept related to the evil eye when the rivalries occur between peers within a single segment where peers may rightfully expect equal distribution of good things."[66]

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[62] Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, 221.
[63] Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, 258.
[64] Maloney, "Introduction," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) vii-viii.
[65] R. Dionisopoulos-Mass, "The Evil Eye and Bewitchment in a Peasant Village," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 42-62; J. M. Teitelbaum, "The Leer and the Loom—Social Controls on Handloom Weavers," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 63-75; B. Spooner, "Anthropology and the Evil Eye," in, *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 282.
[66] Garrison and Arensberg, "Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 323-34.

In summary, Garrison and Arensberg speak for many observers of these cultures in concluding, "the psychodynamics of envy appears to be homologous in structure and process with the social processes of patronage and with the symbolic structure and process of the evil eye."[67]

It is important to note that while envy (φθόνος) expresses a broad field of experience, it is nevertheless a precise term that is not synonymous with, for example, jealousy/emulation (ζῆλος) or covetousness (ἐπιθυμία).[68] Aristotle explained the difference between envy and jealousy thus: emulation (ζῆλος) is the pain not due to another who naturally resembles us possessing the goods which are possible for us to obtain, but for our not possessing them. He thus "fits himself to obtain such goods." But envy is "to prevent his neighbor possessing them" (*Rhet.* 2.11.l/1388a). Emulation is often then virtuous, assuming that one has properly ascertained the right to the possession. It involves striving to preserve the goods one has, which others think them worthy of, so that "Honours obtained by ancestors, kinsfolk, intimates, nation, or city make men emulous in regard to such honours" (2.11.2-3/1288b).

The following definitions of envy and jealousy apply to the world of Paul and his addressees.[69] Emulative jealousy is the generally positive interest in possessing and holding on to what one regards as their own, what they believe they have a right to, while envy is a negative interest. Envy is manifested when one seeks to prevent another from obtaining some good, or begrudges the occasion of this good fortune. Envy may be expressed regardless of whether the one experiencing it has the good themselves or not, or even when they may not care to have it.[70] The characteristics may be summarized as follows.

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[67] Garrison and Arensberg, "Evil Eye," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 325; see also Roberts, "World Perspective," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Maloney) 261. Some similarities with the tensions observed in witchcraft beliefs are traceable in the discussion of M. Douglas ("Introduction: Thirty Years after *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*," in *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations* [ed. M. Douglas] xiii-xxxviii, esp. xvii, xxx).

[68] Biblical covetousness is an intense, wish-filled desire that may manifest itself in various actions, good or bad, depending upon the intentions of the one in whom the desire burns and the object of the affection. Such desires are proscribed when they take forms such as envy and jealousy, nurtured in the absence of faith in God's provision (cf. Abot 4:1: "Who is rich? He who delights in his share"; Phil. 4:5-13), and neglect of his commandments (Prov. 6:20-25).

[69] For good discussion of history of terms see Schoeck (*Envy*, 17-23).

[70] Contra Foster, "Anatomy of Envy," 168, who concludes that "envy stems from the desire to acquire something possessed by another person, while jealousy is rooted in the fear of losing something already possessed." The envious person may not want the thing, or they may already possess it; regardless, they are grieved when someone else obtains it.

There is sometimes a distinction made between kinds of envy just as there is among cases of the evil eye. Not all envy is understood to be malicious by some, and not

1. Envy is comparative in nature, aroused when events, objects or persons are taken to reflect negatively upon one's self or group.
2. Envy is usually provoked among those of social proximity, including aspects such as status which create expectations of equality of opportunity, when one either declines, or observes the other's advance.
3. When social inequality is a matter of, for example, ascribed status, it is more common for envy to be directed down than up, fearing that the advance of the other threatens themselves.
4. Envy is heightened by social changes which are by nature public, such as birth, rites of passage, harvest or production of goods; in general, with the processes of becoming, which are easily observed by friend and foe alike.
5. And envy is especially aggravated when changes in fortune are sudden or unexpected, even if the comparative fortune is only of a minor nature: if observable, it may be begrudged.

The dynamics of envy are articulated in the evil eye belief system so that the two systems are essentially inseparable. Important for this study is not just what each of these are, but how they work, especially among whom, and thus what their presence in Paul's Galatian warning implies about the players and situation.

Public recognition is integral to the gaining of honor, and is thus desirable; paradoxically, being seen makes ones vulnerable to the deleterious effects of the envious gaze, the begrudging of the other of the very fortune that is at the heart of the recognizable honor. Thus to expose oneself, or to be exposed, especially among those perceived to be social equals, provokes a corresponding concern to protect oneself. There are two sides to the suspicious reflex this involves; one, the need to protect oneself or others in their care from being affected where good fortune is recognizable; and the other, the tendency to attribute symptoms of harm, or declining fortunes, to an envious gaze, and thus to seek healing and future protection from the envious source.

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all casting of the evil eye is regarded as intended or the result of envy. And it should be noted that there are usages of βασκαινω which do not on the surface appear to be negative. To note one, Isocrates, while also using it elsewhere in the usual negative way as envious (*To Philip* 5.11), including in a context where the evil eye is driven by envy (φθονοσ; *Antidosis* 15.62), includes it in a list with admiration and imitation (*Panathenaicus* 12.155). This may mean that it could be confused in usage like today, or that it was sometimes (though it would appear very rarely) not taken so negatively, depending upon the context. The Sophist Hippias (*Anthologium* 3, 38, 32=Hippias DK B 16) notes two types of envy, a *just type* "envies the wicked being honoured and an *unjust phthonos* directed at the good" (cf. Walcot, *Envy*, 12-13). But Aristotle would describe this first type as indignation (νεμεσᾶν), cf. *Rhet*. 2.9. Walcot observes that it is the end to which envy is directed that determines whether it is good or bad in the Hesiod poem, *Works and Days* 195-201, but actually *zelos*=jealousy is in view.

Paul's accusation presupposes each of these aspects of this system at work; however, ironically, his rhetorical approach suggests that the addresses have not perceived their present predicament in these terms, even though his comments make it clear that they are intimately familiar with the system, and, in fact, had evaluated his own presence among them on the basis thereof (4:12-15). Paul appeals to the perception of some good fortune among the addressees that is worthy of envy, namely, the receipt of the Spirit and the working of miracles among them (3:5). At the same time, he attributes their experience of suffering—apparently social marginalization/shame (e.g., being unsettled, excluded, hindered, compelled; similar to that which Peter had feared suffering at Antioch, according to Paul)—to the influencers' response to this acquisition of good, which has provoked their envious gaze (3:1, 4).

Exegetical Implications

According to Paul the addressees have failed to attribute the current leveling effects being experienced among themselves to the forces of envy at work. He fears that instead they might even take this warning as evidence of hostility rather than maternal love. Even though he had been suspected originally by themselves of harboring harm, a protective concern that they have evidently not been provoked to consider with regard to those influencing themselves toward proselyte conversion now, they had concluded that he was a messenger of good, and had blessed him instead. Have they good reason to reverse their trust? Or have they been fooled by the seeming good of communal acceptance that seems available now? For they have thus failed to realize how it undermines the real good that their faith is founded upon, rendering meaningless the very death of Christ for themselves in the process. Paul is certain that they have been duped, that they have considered this step naively, foolishly, and that this letter will put them back on track (5:10).

It is interesting to note how the model syllogism (*enthymeme*), from which one elaborated a letter of ironic rebuke, suggests a rhetorical course along the lines taken in Galatians.[71] It proposes blaming some outside force or influence that must have possessed the addressees, such as an alcoholic stupor, for them to have considered

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[71] Cf. Nanos, "Intra-Jewish Context," 30-61 [see now *Irony of Galatians*, 32-61]; S. K. Stowers, "Social Typification and the Classification of Ancient Letters," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (eds. J. Neusner, P. Borgen, E. S. Frerichs, R. Horsley; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 83; idem, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986) 52-56.

such an inappropriate action. Consider the similarities between Galatians and Pseudo- Libanius's ironic type (Εἰρωνική) letter:

> I am greatly astonished at your sense of equity, that you have so quickly rushed from a well-ordered life to its opposite—for I hesitate to say to wickedness. It seems that you have contrived to make, not friends out of your enemies, but enemies out of your friends, for your action has shown itself to be unworthy of friends, but eminently worthy of your drunken behavior.[72]

Because they have been vulnerable to this envious glance, which has resulted in their "foolish" consideration of the influencers' "other message of good, which is not another," Paul deduces that the addressees' eyes are not where they should be. He attacks their naivete. By way of Socratic rebuke he observes that they must be upon the seeming good of the present age, which ostensibly offers what they seem to lack, when they should be upon the crucified one—note, not the resurrected Christ, but the one publicly portrayed in shame[73]—which may require suffering in the present age, but which course nevertheless offers the hope of righteousness for those who, while they wait, keep their eyes fixed upon him, and live appropriately (the message of chapters 5 and 6).

This contrast suggests that the tension involves an intra-communal affair set-out in Jewish terms regarding the question of what the time is.[74] Is it still the present age, when the longstanding norms for gentiles wishing to become the people of God still stand? Or is it the age to come, when representatives of the nations will worship alongside of Israel without becoming Israelites to do so? The later represents the truth of the gospel as Paul proclaims it; the former the position of the influencers' according to his perception of their "other message of good." Thus Paul's assessment that the Galatian addressees had been running well, but have now been "hindered," that is, persuaded by the influencers to move in a direction that, for themselves as believers in Christ, undermines the meaning of the death of Christ for themselves. Although the addressees have not realized that this was the logical result, Paul's letter seeks to make

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[72] *Epistolary Styles* [56] from A. J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988) 74-75.

[73] Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamations* 274: "Whenever we crucify the condemned, the most crowded roads are chosen, where the most people can see and moved by this terror. For penalties relate not so much to retribution as to their exemplary effect." This public display of shame (Philo calls it "show"; *Flaccus* 84-85) was designed to strike fear of deviance from the established norms. See discussion in J. H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998) 139-40.

[74] Cf. Nanos, "Paul and the Galatians," in *Paul and Politics*.

this contrast clear to them, so that they will conclude to take no other view than his own (cf. 5:7-10).

While it is not the goal of this paper to engage in detailed exegesis of Galatians based upon insights from this system, the following questions and comments begin to recognize some of the potential influence offered by attention to this belief system at work in the letter, and thus in the context of the author and addressees.[75] The line of questioning to be pursued is the following: What does reading Galatians as an evil eye warning imply about each of the following six broad areas of interest to the interpreter of Galatians? (Namely, about Paul, the influencers, the addressees, the situation, the letter, and the interpreter).

A. Paul

1. As a gazee protector, he sees those to whom he writes as children in his trust (cf. 4:10-20). Yet the protective actions he can take on their behalf would seem to be limited by his absence. He would be responsible not only to warn them of this threat, but to explain how it has happened. Most importantly—and intensified by the *nocebo* effect that such an accusation would have (i.e., the expectation of ill-health that the warning would create)[76]—he must tell them how they are to overcome its present effect; as well as how to protect themselves in the future so that they are not again harmed. He attributes their current predicament to looking for success, i.e., unequivocal social acceptance by the influencers as children of Abraham if they complete proselyte conversion (1:6, 10-11; 2:5, 11-14; 3:1-5, 8-9, 14, 26—4:9, 17, 21; 5:1-5, 7-15, 26; 6:8-9, 12-14, 17). Instead he calls for them to look to the ones who have suffered on their behalf—first, Christ publicly portrayed as crucified (3:1), and also Paul marked with the stigmata of Jesus (6:17), being persecuted because of his non-proselyte policy in view of the truth of the gospel of Christ (5:11)—signaling that they are already complete (3:6—4:9). Since he appeals to them to look to the crucified Christ and the persecuted Paul as their protector, it follows that:

2. His call to identify with himself is also a part of the solution offered (4:12). Thus Paul's call is not to any supposed "Law-free" identity as though he were now like a gentile, as the consensus suggests, but to share in his marginality for the principle of the truth for which they also now suffer. The Christ-believing coalition is called to stand together—despite some initial setbacks—for the conviction

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[75] See further Nanos, "Intra-Jewish Context," 167-76.

[76] The opposite of a placebo effect, a powerful self-fulfilling experience based on the expectation of good, is the nocebo effect, the expectation of harm. R. A. Hahn (*Sickness and Healing: An Anthropological Perspective* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995] 92-94), discusses the phenomena in both directions.

that gentiles as gentiles are equally children of Abraham in the midst of the present age, a position which claims legitimation by appeal to the meaning of the death of Christ.

3. Something about Paul during his earlier visit (4:12-15) had provoked their suspicions that he might represent an evil eye threat; what was it? Moreover, why had they concluded otherwise, to bless instead of curse him ("you did not despise me or spit")?

4. What does the fact that such a situation could now arise suggest about the earlier beliefs, behavior, teaching and interaction of Paul when among them? That is, while he taught them differently than do the influencers now (cf. 1:9), does not the fact that they can consider their current interest "alongside" of that which they learned from Paul suggest that they have not had the antithesis drawn for themselves as it is constructed now in this letter (1:6-16; 4:8-20; 5:7-12)? Was he a reformer working within the larger Jewish community, although now this letter makes it appear that he is a sectarian instead?

5. Why does Paul believe that this approach will be effective with the addressees now (5:10)? What might this tell us about Paul's thinking and methods? About his employment of rhetorical polemic?

6. And last but not least, what does the evidence of this belief system in the persuasive efforts of Paul tell us about Paul's belief in this system? If he did not believe in it, he would seem to stand among the minority of Jews, Greeks, or Romans of his time.[77] It might be of interest to note—ironically perhaps—that in Greece (and no doubt among others elsewhere) Orthodox believers, if questioned about their belief in the eye, will appeal to "St. Paul's belief in it" to substantiate the reality.[78]

B. Those influencing the addressees (the influencers).

1. Although the addressees have been shaped by the evil eye belief system, as indicated by their initial reaction to Paul, does not the naivete of the addressees in not having to date suspected the influencers of this gaze suggest the following about the influencers?:

   a. that they are not strangers to the addressees, i.e., outsiders, but rather indigenous to the Galatian situation? Indeed, envy is provoked most often by close associates; like a virus, it is a

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[77] In a similar vein, D. Noy observes that "in early Jewish literature the acceptance of the existence of the evil eye as fact precluded any theoretical explanation of this phenomenon and discussion of its origin" ("Evil Eye," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* [vol. 6; Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971] 997). However, one might take the opening skepticism which Plutarch seeks to answer as evidence of lack of acceptance among some Greek intellectuals (*Moralia* ["Table Talk"] 8.5.7.1/680).

[78] Cf. R. and E. Blum, *Health and Healing in Rural Greece: A Study of Three Communities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965) 141.

persistent concern among those of close proximity. Nevertheless, strangers always provoke heightened concern.[79] Thus it would seem probable that strangers would have been immediately suspect, as had been Paul.

    b. that they are not opponents of Paul? If they have been attacking the addressees' patron, would not the influencers' interests at least be suspected of containing harmful intent? The evidence among addressees themselves of suffering would presumably be cause for suspicion of the influencers before finding fault with themselves. It would seem probable that any opponents would be immediately suspected; that evaluation of this possible cause would hardly be overlooked.

2. Does not the fact that Paul appeals to the addressees' difference that is enviable in terms of their commitment to upholding the meaning of the death of Christ and their reception of the Spirit as indicative of their being children of Abraham while yet gentiles, suggest:

    a. that the influencers are themselves not shaped by a concern with the meaning of the death of Christ for themselves, i.e., that they are not Christ-believers? This is also suggested by Paul's accusation that they seek to avoid suffering from those to whom they answer on the basis of the cross of Christ (6:12), since they would not agree that his death had this meaning, i.e., of legitimating the addressees' identity claims in the name of Christ independent of completion of proselyte conversion.

    b. that the influencers may not express the evidence of the Spirit in the same manner as the addressees, or that they at least regard it as inappropriate for gentiles until they have completed proselyte conversion, presumably, like themselves? Does this not suggest that the influencers are more likely reacting to the introduction of something new on the part of the addressees, rather than introducing something new? And that this is what provokes Paul's rhetoric along the line of tradition versus revelation where legitimacy of this truth is concerned (1:10-16), indicating that they do not share the Christ-believing coalitions' conviction—that of Paul as well as the other apostles (1:17—2:21)—about the meaning of the death of this Jewish martyr for themselves? Of course, it should be noted that this need not indicate that they oppose the message of Christ, but only the implications thereof according to the addressees' claims.

    c. that the influencers are not representatives of the Jerusalem Christ-believing coalition? For the record we have indicates that

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[79] Blum and Blum, *Dangerous Hour*, 211-13; Spooner, "Middle East," in *Witchcraft* (ed. Douglas) 313.

all but a small group, which did not represent the consensus conclusion on this matter, would expect such expressions of the Spirit as now appropriate (Acts 15; Gal. 2:1-10), and since there is no evidence of or logic in imagining them to be envious of these gentiles for these things, especially in the distant region of Galatia.

3. Does not the accusation of envious designs suggest that the influencers have paid their dues to gain the identity that the addressees' claims and behavior implicitly appropriate—although inappropriately from the influencers' standpoint—thus indicating the close proximity of the influencers and addressees in status terms, so that:

   a. the influencers are most likely proselytes themselves? That is, that they consider themselves rivals, the influencers having themselves been gentiles who undertook this transformation? The Johnny-come-lately aspects of envy would indicate this conclusion, envy being provoked by those who have acquired good fortune, but not paid their dues from the perspective of the envier. And coming from the same or similar place is where expectations that lead to envious reactions are most often generated when one or the other advances, as this is feared to reflect negatively upon themselves. So too the continuing concern with advancement—at least it is that of which Paul accuses them (cf. 4:17; 6:12-13)— suggests the continued marginality experienced by those who are converts themselves.

   b. they are in some way involved in administration of the ritual process of proselyte conversion by which they are able to put the addressees in their place (1:6-7; 3:2-3; 4:17; 5:7-12; 6:12-13)? It is hard to imagine a more appropriate venue for envy to surface than within the context of the distinctions that ritual processes highlight and maintain among near equals, especially on the part of those who, thereby, have the right to consider themselves "more" advanced. Again, the concern with both putting the addressees in their place as well as gaining honor from them, along with the concern to prove themselves to those to whom they answer, make sense of this kind of role.

   c. they have similar desires and value the experiences of the addressees as though they consider them appropriate for themselves in view of their present identity? In other words, since they do not dismiss the experiences of the addressees—which are believed by the addressees' patron (Paul) to be indicative of the actions of the God of Abraham—as those of the insignificant other, but instead worthy of an envious response, does this not suggest a shared basis of identity, an intra- rather than sectarian or even inter-communal one?

C. The addressees.
1. Once notified of being victims of an evil eye:
   a. what would they regard themselves having gained that was enviable?
   b. how would they process this warning, that is, How would they read the letter? For example:
      1) would they not immediately look for a cause? A solution?
      2) what solution would they find in Paul's letter for reversing this effect?
      3) what policy for protection in the future?
   c. how would they react to the influencers?

2. What does this development suggest about:
   a. their prior relationship and understanding of Paul? Or about his teachings and lifestyle?
   b. their prior understanding of the benefits and risks of their faith in Christ? Or how these might change with receipt of the letter?
   c. the way that they have regarded the influencers and those to whom they answered, rather than suspecting them as they had even Paul?
   d. about their perception of the (sub)group to which they have joined themselves? About their "altered" concerns for identity on indisputable terms since Paul's departure?
3. Does not their implicit trust in the influencers' message of proselyte conversion without concern for their motives suggest that they understand themselves to have joined a Jewish group, albeit one that has not fully prepared them for disputable acceptance on the other—and most likely majority—group's terms? It seems that their acceptance of the policies of discrimination that they are suffering as appropriate indicates that they see themselves in need of negotiating the boundary from outgroup to ingroup, since it is available for themselves; even if the persistence of this particular boundary, and thus the need to negotiate its crossing, was an unrealized aspect of their social identity beforehand. That is, they have joined this (sub)group and believed its message of "completeness" apart from proselyte conversion, only to learn that this position does not represent the larger group's communal norms, with which they had believed they were in compliance, and now wish to observe. They seek to escape the marginality of being regarded now by the influencers, and those whom they represent, as merely liminals or guests, a situation that has only become apparent to themselves after they have incorporated the expectations of identity on terms that had led them to believe that they were fully aggregated already.

D. The situation.
1. Before the letter? Does it not imply an intra-communal situation?
2. When the letter is read? Does it not surprise the addressees?
3. After the letter? Does it not alter the communal relationships if accepted?

E. The letter.
1. What reading conventions were in place for the original addressees with regard to such a warning and appeal? How would they expect it to unfold? How did the author seem to expect them to understand and respond to this message?
2. On the one hand, what rhetorical category(s) would best express an evil eye warning? Would it be constructed according to the genres of classical rhetoric? Or if it merely plays a role within one of these approaches, how would it be expected to function?
3. On the other hand, what does recognition of the epistolary style for this letter as ironic rebuke contribute to the way that Paul's evil eye accusation may exemplify aspects of the syllogism developed for such letters? As noted, the handbooks indicate that such letters attack the inappropriate effect upon the addressees of extraneous forces, such as alcohol, which have made them act in a way that is not otherwise characteristic of themselves. To this effect is attributed their current foolishness and naivete. So too here Paul warns them that their situation indicates a malevolent force at work, that of the evil eye of envy. Might not this meaning also be indicated, e.g., in Paul's accusations of the influencers as ταράσσοντες, variously translated as "unsettling," "troubling, "agitating," "disturbing," or "intimidating." Note for example the usage of Herodotus, when Solon is taken to be slighting Croesus, he warns him not to exalt them because the gods are always "envious [φθονερόν] and troubling [ταραχῶδες]" to humans (Herodotus 1.32.1; my translation). Dodds associates envy with ταράσσειν, and he says it is "regularly used of supernatural interference."[80] This kind of implication may also account for Paul's apparent switch from accusing a group of influencers to the singular accusation of 5:10.[81] Perhaps he is here referring to the evil eye, which is singular. Perhaps while Paul accuses the influencers as a group, he only has in view one person as having eyed them (note also singular of 3:1:

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[80] *Greeks and the Irrational*, 51 n. 3; cf. Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 289; Plato, *Laws* 865E.
[81] In 5:10 Paul refers to a singular person ("whoever he is [ὅστις ἐὰν ᾖ]") "unsettling/troubling [ταράσσων]" the addressees, where a group of people has been implicitly or explicitly in view otherwise, and in the following phrase in 5:12 ("the ones unsettling/ subverting you [οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς]"; cf. 1:7: "some who unsettle you [τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταράσσοντες ὑμᾶς]"; 4:17). See Nanos, "The Intra-Jewish Context," 167-72.

τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν). Or perhaps he sees their group response in singular terms with respect to the affects singularly expressed toward the addressees, which for Paul are indicated in that they have been eyed.

4. Might Paul's ridiculing style coupled with his failure to praise or extol the virtues of the addressees, and even his leaving open-ended the outcome in Antioch (rather than reporting a victory, if that had been the case)—curious characteristics of Galatians often noted as such—reflect the sensibilities of one who is engaged in the articulation of an evil eye warning, that is, the purposeful intention to avoid bringing attention to the good fortune of themselves or Paul? In the light of evil eye beliefs, might not even his insulting style indicate a protective concern toward his children?[82]

F. The interpreter of Galatians.

1. How should we re-read the letter now? Especially how should we account for the polemical aspects of Paul's evaluations of the influencers and situation—for example, the vilification of motives and methods—so that we might make a more disinterested effort at historical and cultural interpretation? To date interpreters have tended to paint the influencers only by way of Paul's polemical brush. And this can be intensified by recognition of evil eye language, for example, by considering them to have intentionally sought to harm the addressees with their glance, as though sorcerers. But I suggest that such a portrait should be undermined by recognition of the nature of such polemic instead, as well as by taking account of the dynamics of the belief system, which rely upon the fear of an envious reflexive response, rather than an intentional move to harm. Should we not make an effort to imagine the influencers on their own terms, so that, while allowing for normal human and group self-interest, they might be taken to express motives other than envy or self-glorification? For example, can their actions not be understood as expressions of concern to maintain the norms that have served the community well for many generations, and that are understood to represent God's ways as prescribed in Scripture for dealing with developments that seem to threaten the interests of everyone, not only themselves, but even the addressees and wider pagan community? Are these not the concerns of benevolent social control agents as well? Might not the influencers be genuinely interested in helping the addressees resolve their dissonance, relating to them even at a perhaps empathetic level?

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[82] Cf. E. S. McCartney, "Praise and Dispraise in Folklore," in *Evil Eye* (ed. Dundes) 9-38.

2. Are there other terms and phrases that might have been colored by this semantic domain that have been heretofore overlooked? Besides the already considered βασκαινω (to evil eye), ἐκπτυω (to spit), and φθόνος (envy), might not other language also take on another shade of meaning if interpreted within an evil eye semantic domain? For example, Paul's usage of ταράσσω (unsettle) appears to be a good candidate for such reconsideration.
3. Along the same line, might not Paul's behavior and style, not to mention that of the addressees, appear differently in this light? In addition to the already noted demeaning and insulting style, as well as the lack of praise or gloating, might not, e.g., Paul's curse wish upon the influencers be indicative of a belief attested later among some rabbis, i.e., that an evil eyer may be cursed, and that this curse may vitiate the power of the gaze?[83]
4. How might this approach illuminate Paul's understanding of the role of Christ's suffering in the drama of the gospel story and its announcement? In this case it is interesting to note that the theme of suffering according to the prevailing powers of this "evil" age in the context of remembrance of and hope for God's deliverance is a core Jewish value shared by other Jewish groups. While emphasis upon Jesus was unique to this Jewish coalition, the concepts of threat and protection were not. How then does Paul's message resonate with other Jewish approaches to the evil eye belief system?
5. In addition to provoking questions about the meaning of the message contained in this letter, how does seeing this belief system employed effect our broader view of Paul, his beliefs, his methods, and his messages? Of the nature of his converts and communities and their social location?

Toward a Conclusion

While obviously not the only way to read Paul's letter, the dynamics of Paul's evil eye accusation should challenge our reading, and our imagining of the situation and players by which its exigence and message are shaped. The context for a development such as Paul relies upon to make his accusation salient seems to be an intra- rather than inter-communal one (i.e., "within" a community rather than "between" communities as is usually posited). Specifically, it seems to require an intra-Jewish context in which Jewish proselyte identity is more desirable than that attained to date by the addressees on the grounds of Paul's gospel alone, offering the prize of honor and access

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[83] Cursing and other aggressive acts against the eye are commonly noted. E.g., Ulmer (*Evil Eye*, 150), mentions the Hasidic custom in Jerusalem of cursing, noted in *Avodat Ha-Qodesh* [Tsiporen Shamir 12]).

to resources that they do not have. Yet at the same time it relies upon an appeal to some good fortune that they do have but that is enviable as inappropriate for themselves in their current station, according to the prevailing communal norms, by those who have paid their dues according to those terms. At least such envy must be a believable response, able to be correlated with what the addressees can re-imagine about the influencers, whom they have instead trusted to date as helpful guides, although the interpreter should remain suspicious as to whether such envious motives were the case or not.

Paul likewise appeals to some suffering that has been taken—mistakenly so according to Paul—by the addressees to be the result of appropriate measures of social control, now that they have become aware that their expectations for communal identity were shaped by ideas that do not concur with those whom they accept as legitimate representatives of the traditional majority norms. They have heretofore accepted this suffering as properly putting them in their place according to their standing in ritual identity terms; that is, they have internalized as appropriate to themselves the experience of being shamed for taking a place that they do not yet have the right to assume. They have accepted the marginality of liminal status until they have completed the course that will ensure aggregate status in indisputable communal terms, norms which can appeal to Scripture and tradition for their foundation.

But Paul undermines that conclusion on the part of the addressees. He calls this suffering persecution for the good that they have received miraculously by God. For him it is "unsettling," "subversion," "hindering," "excluding," "compelling," and "self-serving," those things of which he accuses the influencers throughout the letter (cf. 1:7; 4:17; 5:7-12; 6:12-13). He attributes it to the envious motives of those whom they have trusted (3:1). Instead he proposes that they have shamed the addressees not for their benefit, but for the influencers' own: "they want to gain honor for themselves at your expense" (6:12-13).

The accusation of envious designs on the part of the other, i.e., the influencers, seems to come from those of one representing a subordinate group which must suffer the pain of falling out of step with the majority norms, but one who recommends taking the course that social identity theorists classify as "social creativity." When the boundary cannot be negotiated by way of "social mobility"—that is, making the changes necessary to gain acceptance by the majority (which, it should be noted, is Paul's view of the option, but it is not that of the influencers, who offer just such a solution through proselyte conversion)—the social creativity strategies "render the social

identity of the subordinate group relatively more positive."[84] Paul holds that the age to come has dawned in the midst of the present "evil" age, and legitimates this position by appeal to the witness of the Spirit among the nations. The marginalized group thus "creatively" finds in this claim to difference a salient point of superiority.

Such an approach may have proven effective for the immediate and enormous threat Paul apparently perceived, but it has proven to be one that, unfortunately, became concretized in later generations into the very spirit of supersessionism that still plagues the relationship between these siblings. Must the good fortune of the one still necessitate loss for the other, or vice-a-versa? Are not the core values of these groups the same, and their motives, so that the difference falls squarely upon their difference of opinion on the meaning of the death of Jesus?

It seems that the interpreter who considers the semantics of an evil eye accusation in the midst of Paul's approach to the Galatian crisis will have to face the powerful social dynamics that are implied in the text. Perhaps the interpreter can provide a cross-cultural hermeneutic that holds some promise for advancing mutual respect, instead of contributing to the harm that has resulted all to often from continuing, out of touch with both the belief system and situational context, the rhetoric of vilification.

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[84] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 28.