



Envy, Jealousy and Evil Eye:

A Comparative Study of Pashtun Tribal and Mexican Peasant Cultures*

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This study focuses on human emotions, specifically envy, jealousy, and the related belief in the evil eye. These emotional states are explored across two different cultures: Pashtun culture in Pakistan and rural Mexican culture, which share similar norms and practices (Gohar, 2018). In the present comparative ethnography, the authors interviewed people in different villages of Swat Valley in Pakistan and contrast their findings with the concepts of envy, jealousy, and evil eye in Mexican culture as highlighted in the previous studies. The findings reveal that envy and jealousy are inherent in both the cultures, and evil eye is treated as a manifestation of them in both. These results have implications for creating awareness about how envy, jealousy, and evil eye interact in different cultural communities.

Keywords: culture, emotion, envy, evil eye, Pashtun tribal and Mexican peasant Cultures.

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Introduction

Emotions have a pivotal force in human life and emerge as a result of myriad factors. However, jealousy and envy are emotional states that can be associated with specific patterns of experience. Many past researchers (e.g., Belk 2011; Parrott & Smith 1993) agree that envy and jealousy emerge from distinct causes and experiences, but other established research (i.e., Barker 1987; Foster 1972a) also draws distinctions between them. The differences between these emotional states can be comprehended once they are reliably well-defined.

Envy is based in the realization that one lacks another person's superior qualities. These typically refer to achievements, possessions, or social rank. Envious persons may experience various related emotions, such as resentment, feelings of inferiority, and ill-will towards envied people. These lead envious persons to nothing but absolute disappointment and failure (Belk 2011). Since envy can have a pernicious impact on one's socio-cognitive life, many researchers have tried to gain in-depth understandings of it in various social contexts (Parrott 1991; Parrott & Smith 1993; Smith 1991). Such studies provide a solid background to our understanding of envy, and emotion generally, in relation to life satisfaction, social justice, self-presentation, and self-evaluation.

In contrast, jealousy fundamentally emanates in the context of relationships. Parrott and Smith (1993) state that "jealousy occurs when a person fears a losing an important relationship with another person to a rival" (Smith 1993: 906). Unlike envy, jealousy's numerous side-affects include anxiety, suspiciousness, fear of loss, anger about betrayal, and so forth (Parrott 1991). Thus, jealousy has a much greater potential to impact one's life destructively.

Envy and jealousy are not only complex human emotions, but their manifestations are also culturally specific (Ramachandran and Jalal 2017). Some cultures are direct (English culture) and some are indirect (Pakistani culture). Therefore, envy and jealousy can also vary according to the nature of cultures where they occur. The previous studies (Parrott 1991; Parrott & Smith 1993) have explored both emotional states in direct cultures, but their expression in indirect cultures like Pakistan, and in Pashtun culture in particular, have gone largely understudied.

Envy and jealousy give rise in indirect cultures to the concept of "evil eye." In Pashtun culture, evil eye is known as *nazar*, which means to look at someone with acute jealousy. It is also a cultural belief that can harm someone's property, wealth, and physical appearance. Elworthy (1895: 43) states that "the evil eye is commonly associated with envy and conveyed by a look, touch, or verbal expression of envy or by excessive admiration and praise without blessing." In Pashtun culture, evil eye is

also associated with envy. It is considered a sort of ill omen and people largely rely on religious practices to repel it. Most Pashtun people wear an amulet (called a *taweez*, made of black thread and leather) around their necks to protect against the bad effects of evil eye. Additionally, some people affix a *taweez* on their newly constructed houses and new automobiles. Evil eye is warded off with various practices in different cultures and here we will consider the concept (including its relation to those underlying emotions of envy and jealousy) and technologies of control comparatively.

Envy and Jealousy in Pashtun-Majority Villages

Our initial ethnographic fieldwork was done in Pir Kalalai, Arkot, Shawar, Bar Thana, and Gwalarai Beha, all villages in the Swat district. The Pashtun tribal people live in a remote but densely populated mountain valley of Swat, situated in present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan (previously known as the Northwest Frontier Province). They are famous for their self-reliance, code of honour, and a tribal warrior mentality (Khayyam et al. 2018). Families depend solely on their male relatives, and tribal groups stand in shifting relationships of hostility and friendship depending on circumstances. The men of each tribe must be wary and always ready to defend themselves against the aggressive encroachments of their neighbours. In this closed and aggressive world, lineage loyalty, blood feuds, and self-help are the main instruments for maintaining order with a minimum of rational bureaucracy, in line with the traditional values of *wali*, the Pashtun code of honour, hospitality, refuge, and revenge (Caroe 1965; Barth 1965; Ahmad 1962; Khan 2016; Niaz 2017; Khayyam et al. 2018).

Swat and Mexico may be separated by vast distances, but the two places share some vital characteristics that relate to the way envy and jealousy is experienced and expressed. In Swat, people are assumed to be equal and active agents separately responsible for their destinies with the possibility of free choice and agency (Bojorquez 2018). Moreover, the individual is believed to be motivated by competitive desire or ambition. This same mindset exists in a somewhat mitigated state in Mexican society due to the different ways by which success is measured. While wealth is the common measure of status, the poor artist can feel superior to the vulgarian bourgeoisie (middle class), the poor intellectual can despise the narrow-minded banker, and the working-class mechanic can look down on soft-handed suburbanites (Croucher et al. 2012).

Despite differences in wealth and status, every Pashtun can claim to be worthy of respect by all other tribesmen due to his membership in the collective and holding shared fundamental values and a common cultural heritage. It is not

uncommon for poor and rich, the landless and landowners, to mix and mingle with an absence of disrespect. This contrasts dramatically with more caste-conscious and stratified societies like India, where lower caste people tend to avert their eyes, speak obsequiously in a special register, and bow down to their superiors (Ullah et al. 2018). According to Smith and Kim (2007), in a social formation of Pashtu type, anyone on the “losing” side must struggle with considerable envy and jealousy. This is because, given the notion that everyone could and should succeed, lack of success cannot be justified by inferiority. Envy and jealousy are predictable emotional reactions to such a blow to the ego (Khan 2016; Niaz 2017; Khayyam et al. 2018). In short, Pashtun men imagine themselves as a “possessive individual,” that is, they are free and distinct agents who strive to maximize their benefits in competition with equals (Berenstein 2018).

In Swati society it may be difficult to impossible to change one’s lifestyle, but there is much less segregation and differentiation based on wealth and status compared to Mexican society. Most of the valley dwellers look, dress and act remarkably alike and interact with characteristic simplicity and honesty (Chien 2009). The majority strongly believe that respect is only to be gained by living up to the cultural ideal of the courageous, generous warrior. As the proverb goes, “The Pukhtun are like rain-sown wheat. They all came up at the same time. They are alike.” (Van 2017).

Even so, status differences due to family circumstances are recognized. Some people are born into the landowning Khan clans, but a substantial number are born into landless low-status families—barbers, carpenters, herdsmen, serfs and other helots (an intermediate status between slaves and citizens). Unlike a caste society where the social ladder is sacralized (Dumont 1970; Van 2017), the lower orders in Swat do not just accept their fate with equanimity. Even the poorest peasant hopes to someday rise to the top or raise their status. One landless labourer put it this way, “The landlord sits upon the necks of the poor. God grant that I may become a landlord!” And occasionally there are cases where this has happened, either because the client was granted land as a reward for heroism in battle or, more recently, with money earned from work in Dubai or elsewhere in the Gulf (Mercille 2014; Van 2017).

Any passive acceptance of authority as sacred and inborn is foreign not only to local cultural ideals but also to the Muslim faith, which emphasizes the moral equivalence of all members of the faith. It also has little traction in the democratic Pakistani state, which asserts the formal parity of all its citizens as voters and provides “a strong inducement to expect a comparable equality across the board” (Walcot 1978: 64). As the ideals of reformist Islam have been brought into Swat by missionaries and the state has an increasing influence on village life, the equalizing

premises of the local ideology have been correspondingly amplified. The belief that subordination is not divinely ordained and eternal, but artificial and changeable, supports a sense that the superiority of others is illegitimate. Consequently, it has become more and more difficult for Swatis who have, for whatever reason, lost their status and led to violence undertaken to challenge the dominance of the khans (Khan 2016; Khayyam et al 2018).

Among the elites in Swat there are also differences. Some khans are naturally more forceful, more intelligent, more generous and hospitable, more ambitious and more courageous than their supposed co-equals. These men are praised as “real Pashtun,” who live up to the cultural ideals of manhood (Gohar 2018). Pre-existing social distinctions also pertain: Some elites are wealthier, some have better political alliances, and others have more well-known ancestries. But no matter how many social advantages any one of them may possess, they still cannot claim superiority over less well-off but equally ambitious neighbors. The “real Pashtun” landlord, presiding in his guest house over supplicants and surrounded by armed guards, is a culture hero for his fellow tribesmen, rich and poor. There is no need for this man to seek legitimation of authority beyond his own character, strength, and charisma. As Fredrik Barth (1985: 175) observed among the Pashtun, “It is the fact of effective control and dominance, not its formal confirmation or justification that is reliably pursued.”

As Croucher et al. (2012) have concluded, both Swat and Mexico are democratic in ideology as well as being highly competitive societies. They do not accept distinctions as sacred or legitimate but assume that people are responsible for themselves. These characteristics make envy or jealousy a common reaction to the loss of confidence that results from failure. Since there are few alternative routes to success in Swat and given the perceived equality of all members of the society, those who lose out must conclude that they are somehow deficient in character compared to the cultural ideal. As Miceli and Caste Franchi (2007: 463) put it, “The deserving advantaged make our demerits appear more salient, distressing, and threatening for our self-esteem.” Subsequently, it can be expected that feelings of envy or jealousy would be stronger in Swat than in Mexico where there are many routes to success and differing values for determining one’s social worth. Besides that, in Mexican society, those who seem successful on the outside are not automatically in an enviable position since they might be morally corrupt or lead unhappy lives. But it is very different in Swat: Someone who is looked up to is the person who best embodies Pashtun values (Lu et. al. 2017; Gohar 2018).

The willingness to shift alliances due to envy or jealousy is particularly notable among close patrilineal relatives. According to Khan (1958: 46), “The Pashtun have

not succeeded in being an extraordinary nation because there is a dictator in each home who would burn his own house rather than see his brother rule it.” The life histories of Swati big men are full of tales of patrilineal cousins at war with one another, brothers fighting with brothers, and sons turning against their fathers. Opposing one’s closest male relatives may dangerously weaken the protective patrilineage, but it also sets up a desirable historical circumstance: Unforgiving envy/jealousy against close enemies results in a sort of political balance, albeit a somewhat unstable one. When Swat did have a central ruler, a non-tribal religious figure entitled the Wali (the ‘friend’ of God),¹ his authority had been approved by Swati khans who employed this ruler to lead their struggles against British encroachment into the Valley (Abbas 2018). Using a member of a saintly family to inspire and coordinate defence against external threats was common in the region, as it is in similar social formations (Gohar 2018). This strategy reflects the unwillingness of khans to obey other khans. As outsiders to the game of competition and claimants to a higher spiritual authority, saints could be followed into battle without any dishonour. After the struggle was over, these temporary leaders would usually be returned to their subordinate positions as mediators and judges in local disputes (Khan 2016; Ullah et al 2018; Abbas 2018).

Still, after the British left, the Wali family managed to retain political authority in the Valley largely because the Pashtun were unable to band together and resist them effectively. Various oppositional movements took shape among strong ancestry groups, but their revolts were thwarted by rival khans, each of whom had their own ambitions, resented the claims of their equals, and refused to unite or agree on a strategy of resistance. People were also willing to sacrifice their own liberty to encourage the Wali to interfere against their opponents. The Swat ruler shrewdly played upon these local enmities, allying with weaker factions and opposing the stronger, thereby keeping potential opposition movement’s weak (Barth 1985; Wadud 1962; Abbas 2018). Widespread envy has therefore been a crucial factor in the Swati political system, serving to maintain relative equality among the Pashtun, but also making it difficult for them to resist authority when it manifests among them. Domination through the manipulation of jealous factions was typical in the pre-modern Middle East and other societies commonly (albeit mistakenly) thought of as absolutist dominations (Khan 2016). The historical pattern of Swati politics points to the high level of envy in Pashtun society (Khan 2016).

1 The Wali was deposed when Swat was integrated into the Pakistani State in 1977, but his family has remained politically powerful.

Land and Honor: Envy and Jealousy in Swat and Mexico

Another indirect way to measure the degree of envy in a society is to consider the person toward whom feelings of envy are directed and the reasons for it. In Swati society envy is directed primarily at one's close neighbours and patrilineal relatives (Khan 2016). This seems to bear out Hesiod's famous quote, "Potter is furious with potter and craftsman with craftsman, and the beggar is jealous ... of beggar and singer of singer" (Walcot 1978: 9). Socrates too stated that "by a universal and dependable law the nearer any two things resemble each other, the fuller do they become of envy, trouble, and hate" (quoted in *ibid*: 29). The reasoning is that people who are similar in station and status compete in a zero-sum game for access to "insufficient quantities of the good things in life" (Foster 1972a: 169). One man's gain is another's loss especially when envy and hate prevail among equals (Foster 1972b).

The problem with this approach is that envy varies according to the nature of the competition. The potter, the craftsman, the beggar and the singer are alike in that they compete with their equals for the clients who will purchase their goods and services. In Swat the competition is over limited goods such as land and honor. Inheritance of land is patrilineal so one's neighbours tend to be close kinsmen (blood relation/relative), brothers, half-brothers and patrilineal cousins. All these relationships are tense, but that with the patrilineal first cousin (father's brother's son) is particularly so. In fact, the term of reference for this kin relation, *tarbur*, means "enemy." This enmity results from the limited productivity of the land, which, unlike capitalized commodities or craft production or investment in livestock, cannot improve one's lot beyond a certain point. Even increased labor does not lead to a substantially increased yield in the local farm economy. While a potter can look for buyers out of town, change the style of his product, cut costs, or aim for a luxury market, and a beggar can move to a different area, try a new pitch, and pray for a wealthy donor, the Swati farmer can never move away from his competitors, never change his methods of farming, never increase his production without directly appropriating a neighbour's property (Khan 2016; Khayyam et al. 2018; Bailey 2018). And there is yet another reason for the prevalence of envy in Swat. Like the small-scale localized lineage-based social formations in the Mediterranean region where social and spatial mobility is minimal and natural resources limited, the Pashtun value personal honor above all. According to Aristotle, "Men who love honour are more jealous than those who do not love honour" (quoted in Walcot 1978: 18). Of course, the competitive quest for honor can be seen as a symbolic and secondary extension of the primary rivalry over land.

Foster (1965, 1972b) asserted that the idea of “limited good,” based in land shortage, is a universal intellectual orientation among peasants, providing them with a roadmap for all behavior, not just in the economic domain. Thus, Mexican villagers believe there is a limited quantity of parental love, friendship, luck, blood, and many other things that are elsewhere seen as infinite or renewable (Khayyam et al. 2018). A Serbian saying puts this value orientation starkly: “The sun has to set for someone, so it can rise for someone else” (Irfan et al. 2018).

Within societies exhibiting the “limited good” mentality, common interactions such as asking for favours, offering compliments, expressing gratitude, or admitting reliance on another are avoided since they are understood as an admission of the superiority of others. According to Foster, envy is universal in this type of social formation since anyone’s gain—in *anything*—is understood to be another’s loss (Bailey 2018). To a degree, the “fiesta complex” is a way to level difference, by obliging those who are thought to have surplus to redistribute their wealth. Honor is also calculated to be a limited good, competed for by co-equal rivals, each of whom strives to humiliate the other (Mercille 2014; Bailey 2018). Thus, a smile is an insult that must be answered. Because of this attitude, Foster claims that peasant families carefully hide their emotions, eat behind high walls, and avoid standing out in any way for fear of exciting the dangerous envy of others in their village or region.

Foster’s model seems to hold remarkably well in Swat. People there refuse to believe that their blood will regenerate and do not donate to hospital blood banks except for very close relatives. They also do not believe that friendship can be extended to include many people (Khayyam et al. 2018). As in Mexico, a person is expected to have only one loyal friend who is generous, yet always suspected of disloyalty. A parent’s love is also considered limited, and parents in Swat openly say that they love some of their children more than others. Whenever anyone achieves success, it arouses envy, anxiety, and anger, even though the achievement might be a venture beyond the village boundaries. Like Mexican peasants, Swati villagers never give compliments or express gratitude for gifts. Instead, any gift—no matter what it is—is always criticized. Neither will the Pashtun ever ask for favors or show reliance on anyone. As a local saying Foster (1965) cited goes: “The Pukhtun would rather steal than beg.” It is also indicative that in Swat, the words for “please,” “excuse me” and “thank you” are unknown, or at least unused. Instead, most statements are made in the imperative. Men rarely display emotion; showing stolid endurance is *de rigueur*. As in rural Mexico, the first thing constructed in Swati houses are the walls, so what goes on inside is completely hidden. While there is no fiesta complex in Swat, an equivalent leveling mechanism is the periodic redistribution of land, called *wesh*, between lineage segments that negates any possibility of centralization

or surplus accumulation. All these aspects resonate with Foster's description of an envy-prone peasant culture based on the cognitive model of limited good (Foster 1965, 1972b; Gravel and Arboleya 2015; Alam and Amin 2018).

Both Mexican peasants and Pashtun tribesmen share a strong concept of shame and honor, especially when it comes to their women. The Mexican peasant will retaliate to any real or imagined affront to his manhood—especially a sexual offence. The Pashtun follow the code of Badal—revenge—for any perceived sexual insult. Playing the game of honor in both societies revolves around one-upmanship. The Pashtun will always return a slap for a pinch. Slight insults are likely to lead to mounting violence and finally to a blood dispute as each man seeks to challenge the honor of another and thereby raise his own. Honor in both societies is therefore conceptualized as a scarce good in which one's gain is another's loss. If this were the case, it would mean that Aristotle's interpretation is incorrect, since the beggar, by definition, has no honor to maintain, and yet is deeply concerned with protecting the limited good of his donations (Khayyam et al. 2018). So he would be as disposed to envy and anger as the Pashtun or Mexican peasant. But this misses the crucial relationship of honor to personal identity and recognition within honor-shame societies, broadly conceptualized, where the pursuit of respect is the highest ideal, while the loss of honour is a fate worse than death. For self-proclaimed warriors like the Pashtun, and equally, for the macho Mexican peasant, dishonor is not equivalent to the beggar's loss of access to donors. It is a withdrawal of acknowledgement that destroys identity itself. Put in another way, a beggar who is given no charity is indeed needy, as is the potter who cannot sell his wares or the capitalist who goes bankrupt, but in Swat and in Mexico a man without honor is disgraced, not a man at all. Therefore, even the slightest insults must be answered, or one's dishonor will be publicly established, with all the humiliation and isolation that entails. This fear of shaming is the root of the value placed on revenge and explains the prevalence of self-destructive acts of violence in both societies (Foster 1965, 1972b; Gravel and Arboleya 2015; Alam and Amin 2018; Hellman 2018).

Because the domain at stake is so important (more important than life itself), and because an increase in one's honor is seen to reduce the honor of others, envy and anger toward those who are honored is likely to be infectious. This simple equation is made more complex by the lineage structure of Swat. In Mexico, honor is a personal matter, while in Swat, one's honor is entwined with the deeds of ancestors and close patrilineal families. In this equation, one man's dishonorable behavior shames his whole ancestry. So, while one may wish one's *tarbur* ill, his disgrace would taint one's own reputation as well. As a result, the Pashtun is left in an awkward position, affected by his envy of relatives more successful in the game

of honor, while also sharing at least partially in their prestige. Pashtun men are therefore keen to demonstrate their own bravery in competition with their close relatives to bring honor to themselves and their families. This may partially account for their willingness to enter militaristic raids against external enemies, where glory can be won at the expense of outsiders, transcending the zero-sum rivalry among themselves. Indeed, the Pashtun are the main source of manpower for continued warfare in Kashmir and have been the most loyal soldiers for the Taliban. The pursuit of glory, not an Islamic virtue, may be the driving motivation for the young men joining these struggles (Ahmad 1962; Bojorquez et al 2018).

Since the lower orders of serfs, carpenters, and the like do not possess honor, it can be assumed that they do not experience strong feelings of envy and anger like the khans. However, given that they may come into land or enough wealth to provide hospitality and refuge, as well as maintain the *purdah* (seclusion) of their womenfolk, it is possible, if unlikely, for them to become honorable men in society. This ideal is also conceivable thanks to the influence of the Muslim faith. The recent revolts in Swat, then, are not simply a demand for equity in resources; instead, they are a declaration of the right to be identified as men of honor, since it is honor, above all, that is valued by everyone living in this social formation, whether they presently have it or not. This makes Swat is a good example of an envy society, as described by Foster (1972a).

Mexican peasants live in a closed world of competitive individuals struggling to best one another in an environment where resources are limited and the success of one is seen to entail the failure of others (Bojorquez et al 2018). Foster (1965) argues that the material shortage of “the good things of life” provides a “reasoning orientation for the world that is at the root of universal envy, but this tells us very little about what types of societies are most prone to envy, and, equally important, which are not.” Scarcity alone could lead, as Foster himself admits, to a more communal social order where envy is minimized rather than exaggerated. This was the situation in ancient Sparta (Greece), where a conscious policy of communism obliged citizens to share women and land, eat communally, and make their children wards of the state, removing all forms of distinction, rivalry, and any potential for envy. Such efforts seem an attempt to emulate simple hunting-and-gathering societies where status differences are minor and sharing is normal, conditions under which envy is minimalized (Foster 1965; Woodburn 1998; Bojorquez et al 2018).

The causes of variation in the cultural economy of envy have hardly been exhausted. Foster studied a peasant community in Mexico that must deal with landlords, government officials, police, and the military. In this context, the villagers live by a closed, inwardly turned philosophy, trying to avoid appearing superior for

fear of bringing attention to themselves. The families are nuclear families, hostilities are personal rather than structural, and loyalties are to the household alone. There is minimal social interaction and hospitality is meagre. The axiom for living is basically “mind your own business.” Unsurprisingly, the Mexican villager avoids all forms of leadership. His hope is to hide and not assert himself. Men stand out only briefly when they are obliged to redistribute their wealth by sponsoring a fiesta for the community (Foster 1965; 1972b; Gravel and Arboleya 2015; Alam and Amin 2018; Hellman 2018).

In contrast, Pashtun tribal society has a functioning lineage system. Tribesmen do not accept the authority of any external power, and the way envy expresses itself among them is different from the way it is expressed among Foster’s Mexican peasants. They laboriously seek glory for themselves and their descendants and, unlike the Mexican villagers, continually strive to be recognized as leaders. Instead of providing fiestas for the entire village, men in Swat spend whatever surplus they accumulate on lavish hospitality for allies and guests, as well as on feeding and clothing an armed retinue (often made up of refugees from disputes and other outlaws) who will fight alongside them, gaining honor for themselves by offering support to an ambitious big man (Gravel and Martinez 2015; Khayyam et al. 2018).

While Mexican peasants try to avoid the envy of neighbors, the Pashtun wish to incite envy, following the warrior ethic in a tribal world where aggressive self-presentation is the rule (Gravel and Martinez 2015). This striking difference arises because Mexicans live in a world where their power is minimal except within the family. Outsiders, policemen, politicians, landlords might interfere in the rural Mexican’s life, regardless of his opinion of them. The Pashtun, in contrast, is independent within a tribal structure that provides society with ordered relationships of enmity and alliance. Pashtuns greatly value autonomy, but are reliant on lineage friends, while despising the clients of landlords and servants of the state. (Gravel and Martinez 2015; Hellman 2018).

In sum, within the competitive agricultural environment of Swat, where land is limited, alternative modes of achievement absent, and honor cherished as the highest form of personal value, envy or jealousy and anger arise naturally and swiftly when one’s status is threatened. The alternative, to blame oneself for one’s inferiority, is frowned upon in a world where apparent confidence, aggressive self-assertion, and pride are necessary for survival.

Evil Eye

Another convincing if indirect indication of the prevalence of envy in both societies (and others) is the evil eye, called *mal ojo* by Mexicans and *nazar* by the Pashtun. The evil eye belief is also widespread in peasant and tribal societies throughout the Mediterranean world, including Greece (Walcot 1978), where the word *baskainein* (evil eye) is derived directly from the word for envy (*baskania*). It also exists in North Africa, the Middle East, Northern India, and across Europe (Roberts 1976). Belief in evil eye is quite ancient. There are references to it in Sumerian records dating from 4000 BC (Langdon 1981). The evil eye is generally thought to be a destructive power originating, usually involuntarily, from the look of an envious person. Compliments are signs of the evil eye, since praise is an expression of admiration, which can lead to feelings of envy. Appealing to the name of God averts this danger, but the best strategy seems to be avoiding praise altogether – as in Mexico and Swat. Boasting also is dangerous, since God or the gods envy those who are too prosperous and successful. Thus, it is always best to attribute any good fortune to a higher power. This, too, is characteristic of Swat and Mexican societies (Khalifa et al. 2011; Rassool 2018).

Powerful men are often accused of having the evil eye (Kloppenborg 2018). For example, in Swat one well-connected khan was infamous (as well as despised and feared) for his propensity to destroy anything he admired. He was even said to have unintentionally killed his own son by his admiring glance. For the psychologically inclined, it is usual to assume that attributing the evil eye to superiors is a form of projection: the jealous imagine those whom they envy are even more envious. But the evil eye is also often credited to outcasts, strangers, lonely old women, poor people, and wandering beggars—in other words, to anyone who differs from the standard, and quite often to people who have every right to be envious. Furthermore, ordinary people may well have the evil eye without knowing it, discovering their power only when disaster befalls someone they envy. This may not necessarily arouse sorrow. Indeed, it can be an occasion for the secret rejoicing that one has brought down one's enemy with merely a glance and at no cost to oneself! (Khalifa et al. 2011; Rassool 2018).

Belief in evil eye symbolically recognizes envy as a strong and dangerous force while at the same time serving as a complementary mechanism (Rassool 2018). On one hand, anxiety about attracting evil eye leads the powerful to be modest, avoid flashy displays, offer donations, feed the poor, and provide other services to the community. On the other hand, the possibility of possessing evil eye gives the weak some hope of reacting to slights and bringing down the those in power,

thereby easing the “painful feelings of helplessness and hopelessness” (Miceli and Castelfranchi 2007: 456; Smith and Kim 2007). The effect of this illusion of power on a society as a whole needs to be explored further. We can assume that where evil eye is at work, inferiors are less subject to depression than they are where no revenge is possible, but if evil eye is one of the best indicators of envy-prone social formations, then what are we to make of the fact that it is unknown in East Asia and the Pacific? Nor does it exist in indigenous societies in America, Australia, or sub-Saharan Africa. It has not remained salient in the modern industrialized world except among the lower classes and recent immigrants (Kloppenborg 2018; Rassool 2018).

The reasons for this have been discussed by Garrison and Arensberg (1976) who argue that the evil eye does not appear in simple hunting and gathering societies where sharing is compulsory and individual possessions are few, which seems to minimize the chance of envious feelings forming. Instead, it is characteristic of intermediate stratified societies where the reach of the state is weak and bureaucratic control so unstable that people must rely on personal ties with strong individuals for protection against aggression. Belief in evil eye and fear of universal envy fades away when social formations become more complex, bureaucracy more efficient, the legal system more rational, redistribution becomes impersonal, and the economy expands. As this occurs, many of the other attitudes associated with evil eye also seem to recede (Rassool 2018).

Conclusion

This study describes how envy manifests itself in different forms and differs in intensity due to the complex dialectical relationship between social structure and local culture. The question remains, however, as to whether envy is indeed a universal emotion that only varies in degree and manner across cultures. In any case, it seems that envy, and especially the fear of envy, is *not* particularly characteristic of the stable, wealthy, and self-confident capitalist cultures of the world. However, it is important to remember that experience in Western societies is hardly universal, and envy is not limited to individuals but also arises between groups, nations, ethnicities, regions and religions.

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羨慕、忌妒及惡魔之眼： 普什圖族與墨西哥農村文化的比較研究

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本研究主要關注人類的情感，尤其是羨慕、忌妒與惡魔之眼的相關信仰，在兩個不同文化中的情形：在巴基斯坦普什圖文化及墨西哥的農村中，對之有相似的規範和實作（Gohar, 2018）。在這篇比較民族誌中，筆者訪問巴基斯坦斯瓦特河谷（Swat Valley）不同村莊的人們，並將調查發現與過去墨西哥研究中所突顯的羨慕、忌妒與惡魔之眼的概念進行比較。研究結果顯示，羨慕和忌妒都是兩者文化中所固有的，而惡魔之眼則被視為其表現。本研究結果有助於理解羨慕、忌妒與惡魔之眼如何在不同的文化社群中交互作用。

關鍵詞：文化，情感，羨慕，惡魔之眼，普什圖族與墨西哥農村文化
