



YAHWEH'S BREAST: INTERPRETING HAGGAI'S TEMPLE THROUGH MELANIE KLEIN'S PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION THEORY

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO KLEIN'S PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION THEORY

When Melanie Klein wrote during 1946–1960 the articles that would be collected in the volume *Envy and Gratitude*, she was responding to the growing popularity of Freud's theoretical "switch." While Freud previously argued that a pleasure principle resided at the core of all actions and behaviours, he later recognized that on a deeper level, organisms were more motivated by a "fear" of death. Melanie Klein did much to expand an understanding of this "fear" as a driving motivation in the formation of identity. She argued that all organisms project and internalize their experiences based on fears of annihilation. Through this process of dis/engagement, projection and internalization, organisms establish their identities through the creation of object relations, where "objects" may be physical or ideal. In this way, she was able to synthesize notions of pleasure and pain but make them less primary than Freud was wont to do. While she did not reject Oedipal theory entirely, she emphasized more the role of individual experiences rather than desire in the formation of relationships. In offering a new theory on defense mechanisms, she argued that individuals develop identities through object relations, the affects and effects of which are either internalized or externalized according to whether anxiety over death is heightened or decreased. She argued further that "mechanisms," such as those of defense, should be understood as abstract and generalized descriptions of an unconscious "phantasy," which is itself the mental content of the mechanism.¹ In this sense, phantasy reflects the idealized self, a product of internalized and projected experiences, that is both the

¹ Cf. H. Segal, "Introduction," in M. Klein, *Envy and Gratitude, and other works, 1946–1963* (New York: Vintage Digital, 2011).

mobilization for and the product of projective identification. Anxiety, therefore, does not always occur on a conscious level. It could also be found affecting the unconscious and motivating there the formation of object-relations. It is through projective identification, reflecting both conscious and unconscious motivations, that individuals establish relationships and mechanisms of defense. Object-relations theory has become a fundamental component to modern psychoanalytic theory, and has provided a theoretical basis for even more recent theories on linguistic structures and meaning systems. Klein's theory on projective identification clarifies the importance of identification through relationships. By identifying objects and establishing relationships with them through processes centered on the individual ego—that is, what is good or bad for *me*—individuals establish patterns of relationship and mechanisms of defense from the subject's perspective. Should those relationships become influential on a collective level, the meaning that defines them must somehow transcend the individual subject. This 'transcendent' meaning is preserved within a shared object, which becomes, for the sake of the group's identity, the foundational object-relation for the group.

CONNECTING KLEIN'S THEORY TO HAGGAI

To date, the symbolic value of the Jerusalem temple as expressed in Haggai is inadequately understood. Scholarly pursuit of the prophet's perspective on the restitution of the cult too often restricts the generally accepted meaning of the temple as a literary symbol.² In fact, most studies of the Persian-Period province of Judah have focused primarily on the centrality and perceived importance of the Jerusalem cult and its priesthood.³ Yet while the existence and function of both are unquestionably important for the temple, to focus there is to miss Haggai's interpretation of the temple as a shared object, the purpose for which was to preserve the remnant community from social-political irrelevance—in other words, the dissolution of the community. Upon its arrival in Yehud from Babylonia, both geographic and political locations

² E. Assis, for example, concludes that in Haggai the sole purpose of building the temple was "to give glory to God and to make His name great" ("The Temple in the Book of Haggai," *JHS* 8, Article 19 [2008], 9). J. Kessler, for additional example, argues that for Haggai the temple was an important symbol for the life and faith of the Yehudean community—a symbol expressed in a way that emphasized the role of the prophetic office (cf. *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007], 275–279).

³ This point has been argued at length in J. W. Cataldo, *A Theocratic Yehud? Issues of Government in Yehud* (LHBOTS, 498; London: T & T Clark, 2009).

representing two different cultural contexts,⁴ the community was faced with a choice: either allow its members to assimilate into preexisting systems and institutions, as Haggai attests was happening (which can be inferred from Hag 1:3–4), or legitimate and institutionalize the boundaries of its identity within a new cultural context (an option to which the “purification” of Joshua in Zech 3:1–10 attests). The former option resulted ultimately in the irrelevance of the community’s collective identity. The latter option was something new, something utopian, as it required a revision of the social–political normative (as the coronation in Zech 6:9–14 would require).

To reiterate, scholarly focus has too often been on the physical temple itself rather than upon Haggai’s prescriptive view of the temple as fulfilling the collective function of identity preservation.⁵ This focus continues to result in a prevailing uncertainty regarding the synergetic relationship between the symbolism of the Jerusalem temple and an idealization of collective identity expressed in Haggai.⁶

In that regard, Melanie Klein’s theory on projective identification provides greater clarity in understanding this synergetic relationship.⁷ In particular, this theory reveals, as this article will show, that Haggai’s idealized collective identity was a response to a persecutory anxiety of “irrelevance,” in the sense that the community will cease to be recognizable as a distinct group, thus a type of ideological death, because the symbolic value of the Jerusalem temple would lose its constructive force. Scholarly tendency has often been to interpret the temple, as it is portrayed in Haggai, as directly correlative with successful economic

⁴ As studies of Lithuanian refugees (cf. L. Baskauskas, “The Lithuanian Refugee Experience and Grief,” *International Migration Review* 15 [1981], 276–291; R.G. Krisciunas, “The Emigrant Experience: The Decision of Lithuanian Refugees to Emigrate, 1945–1950,” in *Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* <http://www.lituanus.org/1983_2/83_2_03.htm>), among others, have shown us, the cultural identity between groups who emigrate and return and those who remain in the land develop on different trajectories. The differences grow exponentially starker with each consecutive generation that grows up before “returning.”

⁵ Cf. C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (ABD, 25B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), xli; J. Kessler, “Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1.1–15,” *JSOT* 27 (2002), 243–256; M.J. Boda, “Messengers of Hope in Haggai-Malachi,” *JSOT* 32 (2007), 113–131.

⁶ P. Ackroyd makes a similar observation even in 1968 (see *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968], 162–63).

⁷ Her theory on projective identification is explained at length in M. Klein, *Envy and Gratitude, and Other Works, 1946–1963* (New York: Vintage Digital, 2011).

production, depending upon passages such as Hag 2:15–19.⁸ The correlation is there to an extent, but the physical reality of the temple and successful economic production are not ends in themselves for Haggai. They are symbolic of a larger issue: the preservation of the community against, to borrow from Klein, “persecutory anxiety,” or the threat of annihilation. This “threat” for a collective refers *not*—although it can include—to physical destruction but to the loss of an identity that is culturally significant and verifiable.⁹ In Haggai, the symbolic meaning of the temple is found primarily in what the prophet views as the necessary function of stability within the remnant’s identity. Consequently, the presence of Yahweh becomes a reality only when the temple is linked to the existence of the remnant community as an internally and externally recognizable community. Thus, the temple for Haggai represents a shared object, or “collective ego,” upon which the collective identity of the community is based. Moreover, this collective ego mediates between the community’s good and bad experiences.¹⁰

In Klein’s psychoanalytic theory, the ego is part of the psychic apparatus that mediates between the internal drives or motivations of the id and the demands of the social and physical environment.¹¹ We may consider the *collective* ego in these terms as well if we accept that group cohesion is preserved *as long as* individuals maintain among themselves the primacy of a shared object. This collective ego, to be clear, functions as an instrument that mediates between

⁸ Cf. J. Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, trans. D.L. Smith-Christopher (JSOTsup, 151; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992), 92; C.E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTsup, 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 304–305; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 335–336; Kessler, *Book of Haggai*, 236–238; Assis, “The Temple in the Book of Haggai,” 6; B. Glazier-McDonald, “Haggai,” in C.A. Newsom, and S.H. Ringe (eds.), *Women’s Bible Commentary, Expanded Edition With Apocrypha* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 243–244.

⁹ Cf. Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 2, 4, 34.

¹⁰ This proposal goes beyond those that argue Haggai is primarily or solely concerned that the presence of Yahweh be recognized by the community (cf. Assis, “The Temple in the Book of Haggai,” 9; Kessler, *Book of Haggai*, 252). It identifies Haggai’s primary concern as being for a stabilized community identity and that Haggai’s perception of Yahweh was framed by an idealized vision of collective identity. This proposal that Haggai’s vision of the community was highly idealized finds agreement with Ackroyd (cf. *Exile and Restoration*, 163).

¹¹ Also note that object-relations theory, of which Klein was a practitioner, helped shift theoretical interest away from the notion of an ego in need of a cure and onto the agency of the individual repeating instinctual patterns. While according to Freud the ego was fractured and in need of repair, Klein viewed the ego as an instinctual mechanism, present at birth, through which good and bad objects were identified and relationships within them categorized.

the internal motivations or drives of the group as a social organism and the demands of a corresponding social physical environment. This primacy must transcend for the duration of the group the individual ego.¹² In other words, the shared object takes on the responsibility of integrating the experiences of the community and categorizing them in a fashion that effectively integrates good and bad experiences within the collective worldview.¹³ By integrating bad experiences in this way, *in a stabilizing manner*, the collective ego, symbolized by the shared object, reduces persecutory anxiety for the group and for the individual.¹⁴

According to Klein, the “breast” represents on both symbolic and real levels the foundational object-relation wherein the ego learns the art of differentiation between good and bad experiences.¹⁵ This is an act that demands awareness of not only separation but also distinction between “good” and “bad” as concepts that are internally consistent. In that sense, the Jerusalem temple *for Haggai*, like the breast for Klein, represents the primary stage in identity formation. As the object-relation that is foundational to the identity of the remnant community, the temple preserves the collective identity of the community by functioning as the physical point of connection between Yahweh and the people. For Haggai, then, a perceived lack of concern for the temple on the part of the community threatens annihilation of the very identity of the community. To put it in other terms, an increasing anxiety triggered by the possible irrelevance of the community itself motivates Haggai’s concern regarding the temple’s absence. As we will make clear in the following discussion, this concern may be alleviated, according to the prophet, if the community preserves the temple as the primary, shared object—that is, the “breast,” in the foundational object-relation of the community’s identity formation.¹⁶ All the while, Haggai’s vision of

¹² Even Freud, the champion of the individual ego, proposed this in his 1921 study, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. See also R. D. Hinshelwood’s discussion of the group ideal and the primary task of groups qua individuals (“Ideology and Identity: A Psychoanalytic Investigation of a Social Phenomenon,” *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 14.2 [2009], 140–141).

¹³ This same process of mobilization will also produce forms of collective representation such as nationalism (cf. R. Friedland, “Religious Nationalism and the Problem of Collective Representation,” *Annual Reviews in Sociology* 27 [2001], 125).

¹⁴ This tendency to avoid distress, according to Hinshelwood (“Ideology and Identity,” cf. pp. 144–145, see also 133–135), is what gives rise to the preservation of the ideological ideas that operate at the core of a group’s identity.

¹⁵ Cf. Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 2, 5.

¹⁶ Based on Hag 2:11–14, Ackroyd asserts that the occasion for the oracle to rebuild was a priestly *tora* (*Exile and Restoration*, 167). The prophet’s concern, he concludes, had less to do with any political

this object-relation and the identity constructed upon it remain idealized in direct response to the imminent threat of social irrelevance.

IDEALIZATION AS A DEFENSIVE MECHANISM

Idealization is used as a defence against persecutory anxiety and its corollary.¹⁷ As a defensive mechanism, idealization may effectively stave off persecutory anxieties of annihilation if it has been linked effectively to a community's primary shared object.¹⁸ Idealization, as Klein argues, is the corollary of persecutory anxiety that "springs from the power of the instinctual desires which aim at unlimited gratification and therefore create the picture of an inexhaustible and always bountiful breast—an ideal breast."¹⁹ In other words, the shared object, upon which the identity of the community is symbolically based, makes idealization, as a force for social cohesion, accessible to the whole of the community.²⁰ For Haggai, the "always bountiful breast" means more than bountiful provision in surplus production. Should that prospect be the prophet's solitary goal, there would have been no reason for his expressed concern over the unbuilt temple despite the people's "paneled" houses (Hag 1:4)—such houses suggest that at least some from among his audience were doing well economically. As Klein argues, the breast, as the primary object in the individual's object-relation, provides a basis upon which identity is built by categorizing experiences as good or bad and forming a corollary relationship between those experiences and the persecuting anxiety of annihilation.²¹ Likewise, the temple, which is meaningful for the collective over the individual, is interpreted by Haggai as the primary object in the formation of the remnant community's collective identity as a "restored" community in response to the community's possible dissolution. Haggai's idealization of collective identity offers a defensive mechanism against the threat of irrelevance related to the *identity* of a community, and not merely

motivation and more with a concern for the "spiritual" wellbeing of the community. It was that "wellbeing" that the prophet viewed to be the basis for the community's "new" identity (see *ibid.*, 166–170). His conclusion shares fundamental points with the one being made in this article. However, his argument stops at "spiritual wellbeing" as being the primary motivation for the prophet's concern. It is difficult to maintain that the prophet's concern focused mainly on spiritual wellbeing and not on immanent social-political or social-psychological concerns (the latter which are still typically motivated by the former).

¹⁷ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 46.

¹⁸ See again Hinshelwood, "Ideology and Identity," 144–145.

¹⁹ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 7.

²⁰ For further reference, as Friedland ("Religious Nationalism," 125) notes, a shared object may be a public good, desire (such as that of survival), hope, agenda, or faith in a set of values or ideals.

²¹ Cf. Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 64.

the livelihood of the individuals. According to the text, the people were integrating themselves into the functioning social-political environment, which if the prophet's concern was for individual livelihood his concern would have been mitigated. Yet this integration threatened the need or stability of a specific, desired collective identity—one centered on the prophet's vision of a restored society in which the Jerusalem temple functioned as the primary shared object (cf. Hag 2:10–14).²² Individual assimilation into preexisting cultural groups threatened the livelihood of Haggai's idealized community.

Shared objects—and here we are referring only to those that are foundational to a collective identity—take on for a group the force of a collective will that enforces obedience among group members.²³ To be clear, this “force” may take the form of active enforcement, such as what Thomas Hobbes argued in *Leviathan*, or a subconscious, even “moral,” motivation, such as is identified in Harry Triandis's “collectivist culture.”²⁴ Along these lines, Jean-Philippe Platteau points out that moral norms are internalized rules within a collective that are followed for the sake of the group even if they conflict with the immediate or direct interests of the individual agent.²⁵ For Haggai, the force of collective will is not distinctly one of the two possibilities introduced. Haggai instead seems to view collective will as both an active enforcement *and* a moral (religious) obligation. This can be seen in his argument that in the absence of the temple, material surplus production will cease; thus, there is a physical threat. It can also be seen in his employment of the religious tradition and obligation to Yahweh. Whereas the former invokes as its method of enforcement a fear of physical annihilation, the latter appeals to the cognitive stability of group affiliation and loyalty as a moral obligation.

Through its role as a foundational shared object, the temple connects Yahweh's restorative plan to the community.²⁶ The

²² Kessler's assertion that the book of Haggai views the “community in Yehud as the legitimate successor of the pre-exilic Israelite community and heir to its traditions and institutions” (*Book of Haggai*, 264–265) similarly understands the implication of Haggai's rhetoric.

²³ Cf. H. Triandis, “Cross-Cultural Studies of Individualism and Collectivism,” *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1989* 37 (1990), 42.

²⁴ Triandis's understanding of “collectivist culture” (see, for example, *ibid.*) departs from pure neoclassical theory and maintains that people are motivated by concerns other than material self-interest.

²⁵ See J. Platteau, “Behind the Market Stage Where Real Societies Exist—Part II: The Role of Moral Norms,” *Journal of Development Studies* 30 (1994), 766. For further reference, see R. Ball's summary (in “Individualism, Collectivism, and Economic Development,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 573 [2001], 64–68).

²⁶ For further reference, see R.J. Coggins, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 12–13; D. Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London:

construction of the temple mirrors the “restoration” of the community. As a critical component in this synergy, the temple represents, what Klein would term, a “gratifying object.” Klein’s employment of that phrase refers to the object in an object-relation that is associated with the positive forces of attraction (and so also preservation).²⁷ The “breast,” for example, that provides milk is a gratifying object because it alleviates in the infant the persecutory fears of annihilation. For Haggai, the temple fulfills a similar function for the remnant community. By connecting Yahweh’s planned restoration to the identity of the community, Haggai envisions preservation of the remnant identity from irrelevance. To put it differently, the physical construction of the temple out of a previous state of annihilation symbolizes the “restoration” of a collective identity—an identity that, as Haggai implies, had previously been made irrelevant through the process of exile. It is important to note again that it is not only the absence of the physical temple that heightens persecutory fear, for the prophet, but so do also possible object-relations that lure the people toward basing their identities in individual successes or in alternative social communities (cf. Hag 1:2–6).

THE CONSTRUCTIVE VALUE OF THE TEMPLE IN HAGGAI'S OBJECT-RELATION

According to Klein, object-relations are molded by “an interaction between internal and external objects and situations,” which are interpreted as good or bad experiences based on their perceived or real benefit or threat to the individual or group.²⁸ In turn, individuals and groups perceive of themselves, rather, they recognize the definitive qualities, or “uniquenesses,” of their own identities, in relation to something distinctly different.²⁹ Moreover, it is the individual’s or group’s relationship to the foundational object within her identity that provides the paradigmatic pattern for subsequent object-relations.³⁰ With that in mind, one cannot escape that Haggai’s proffered perception of the object-relation between the temple and the community is not the continuation of a traditional identity. It is something new, something ideal, for which the rebuilt temple is the paradigmatic shared object. While it appeals in some ways to traditions of the past, its intent is the construction of a framework for a new mobilized identity. The restoration that is called for in Haggai-Zech 1–8 is based upon this

Equinox Publishing, 2005), 106.

²⁷ For more on the role of the gratifying object, see Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 63.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁹ Cf. T. Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 135.

³⁰ As argued by Klein in *Envy and Gratitude*, 2.

fundamental object-relation.³¹ Likewise, the call-and-response of Hag 1:12–13, which addresses the formation of a new collective identity, describes the prophet's idealized response as a necessary preliminary step leading to the rebuilding of the temple, and thus the formation of a shared object for the community that has made a public declaration of itself.³²

Haggai describes that in the wake of economic hardship, the community's fear of annihilation is heightened. "You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes" (Hag 1:6). It is at what seems to be for the prophet the height of anxiety that he delivers his message as a constructivist call. That is, the prophet articulates a new collective identity, one that depends not on preexisting systems and relations but is built entirely upon the goodwill (and bountiful provision) of Yahweh. The prophet's connection of the remnant with the exodus tradition (2:5) and his argument that Yahweh's blessing comes only through a "restored" relation refer at once to the "birth" of an Israelite people and a re-articulation of that (traditional) identity as the full expression of the remnant community.

It can therefore be said that Haggai's articulated idealization of the temple as a "good object" is a projective identification. This projective identification is constructive in that it is part of the initial process of identity formation. As Klein has shown, this type of projection is driven by responses to affective forces—of production or otherwise—in the surrounding social-political environment.³³ In Haggai, the prophet responds to growing anxiety over the looming irrelevance of the remnant community's

³¹ As Meyers & Meyers (*Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, xlv) point out, Haggai, along with Zechariah, deal with the reorganization of national life and institutions in the "restoration period." Similarly, P. Redditt ("Themes in Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi," *Int* 61.2 [2007], 184) argues that Haggai and Zech 1–8 "predict the restitution of Judah and Israel and the reestablishment of the pre-exilic institutions of the temple in Jerusalem and the monarchy in Judah." In addition, A. R. Petterson ("The Shape of the Davidic Hope Across the Book of the Twelve," *JSOT* 35 [2010]: 225–246) argues that the hope of Davidic restoration is a theme that unites, in fact, the entire Book of the Twelve.

³² Kessler's conclusion (*Book of Haggai*, 262–265) that Haggai was intentional in "covering over" any differences that may have existed among the people in the province is partly correct but fails to account for why such a revision was necessary. According to him, Haggai's intentional "inclusivity" was done for two reasons: (1) the prophet was interested in showing the success of his words and presented a social-religious portrait in which all people who heard responded appropriately, and (2) that the prophet wanted to portray that the Jerusalem temple took a more "world-wide," central role.

³³ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 2, 6, 22, 56, 64, 71, 144.

collective identity. The community had returned (1:1). The temple remained unbuilt (1:2). Perhaps more importantly, individuals who were part of the community were looking outside the community for avenues through which to engage forces of production (cf. 2:18–19). And that, for the prophet, was the equivalent of death. It was a fear of this “death,” or irrelevance, that framed Haggai’s vision of the temple as a shared object capable of mediating between good and bad experiences. For as Klein argued, projection of good and bad experiences is driven by an individual’s, or collective’s, “death instinct.”³⁴ As the shared object, the temple, as Haggai idealized it, mediated between good and bad experiences, categorizing them in a fashion that maintained the stability of the remnant’s collective identity.³⁵ Was, for example, the economy in decline? That, according to the prophet, was due not merely to the lack of a temple but to the lack of a clearly identified community whose identity was based on the presence and authority of Yahweh.

Thus, as a shared object, the Jerusalem temple provides for Haggai a defense against irrelevance (cf. 2:6–9), where irrelevance in the social-political sphere results in the loss of collective identity.³⁶ To be sure, this loss, or “annihilation,” is not a physical loss of individuals but of the shared object and its attendant identity. Within that sense, the temple symbolized Haggai’s idealized vision of a collective identity based in the authority of Yahweh rather than in any preexisting social-political authority in Yehud. It is in part for that reason that both the religious and political authorities, Joshua and Zerubbabel, respectively (cf. Hag 2:2), are included in the audience of Haggai’s message. In this case, the prophet identified the distributed relations of authority not in preexisting social-political institutions and systems but in the people’s relationship to Yahweh, a relationship that was mediated through the temple (cf. Hag 1:12; 2:2). This proposal is consistent with the general prophetic view regarding postexilic restoration: that a “restored” Israel would be (re)constituted out of a remnant

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁵ Kessler’s suggestion (cf. *Book of Haggai*, 262) that the returnees constituted an “elite charter group” implies that the distribution of power in Yehud was balanced toward the external community of Judeans in Babylonia. Yet in making that argument, and by removing the force of identity-threatening conflicts as consequences to struggles over power distribution, he cannot help but reduce the threat to the community’s identity to being primarily an issue of religious fidelity. Thus, he writes, for example, “In 1:1–11, Haggai has two objectives: (1) the rehabilitation of the cult site to be a fitting dwelling place for Yahweh, and (2) the restoration of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. The changes he advocates ... can be accomplished within the framework of the existing social and political structure, and not imply major upheavals” (*ibid.*, 270).

³⁶ Compare with Assis, “The Temple in the Book of Haggai,” 10.

(cf. Jer 23:3–4; Ezek 11:14–21; Zech 8:6–8). Moreover, Haggai's inclusion together with Zech 1–8 as part of a temple-building, dedication text makes this point all the more poignant in that the construction of the temple necessitates the simultaneous existence of a remnant community defined in direct relation to it.³⁷

Haggai articulates a new collective identity, but one, to be sure, that depends not on preexisting systems of relations but is built instead entirely upon the goodwill of Yahweh. The prophet's connection of the remnant with the exodus tradition, together with his argument that Yahweh's blessing comes only with a "restored" relationship, refer at once to the "birth" of an Israelite people and a re-articulation of that identity. It can be said more fundamentally, and in terms more akin to Klein's vocabulary, that the idealization of the "good object" of the temple is a projective identification that is driven by the innate, or instinctual, impulses of attraction and repulsion. These impulses lie at the base of an organism's (in this case, the remnant community) general framework for, or attitude toward, engaging the surrounding world—impulses upon which inter- and intra-personal relationships are formed and mechanisms of defense created.³⁸ Moreover, these impulses can be identified by, as Klein puts it, the ego's³⁹ libidinal need to express itself either, or sometimes both, through the projection or introjection of experiences that result in either pleasure (resulting in forces of attraction) or pain (resulting in forces of repulsion). For the collective, these experiences are largely assimilated into identity according to whether they create or ease the anxiety that is

³⁷ If, as Meyers & Meyers argue (*Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, lxviii.), the prophetic discourse of Haggai was offered for presentation at the time of the rededication of the temple in 515 BCE ("as part of a composite work with Zech 1–8"), the text, as both prophetic and dedicatory, supports the proposal that it was written to "bring about" a desired reality (i.e. restoration). Temple building accounts in the ANE usual follow a typical *quid pro quo* pattern (cf. Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 131; V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], passim.): human agents build the temple and as a "reward" the divine bestows blessing, often in the form of surplus. This "blessing" was directly correlative with the role and function of temples as storehouses (cf. L.S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*, *Biblical and Judaic Studies* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 24, 29–30; J.N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy At the Dawn of History* [New York: Routledge, 1992], 135; J. Schaper, "The Jerusalem Temple as an Instrument of the Achaemenid Fiscal Administration," *VT* 45 [1995], 539).

³⁸ Regarding such impulses, see Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 2, 6, 22, 56, 64, 71, 144.

³⁹ Or, "shared object." Again, note that we have identified a relative parallel in function between the individual ego and the collective ego, or shared object.

associated with the collective's "death instinct."⁴⁰ In the text of Haggai, the Jerusalem temple fulfills that function. It mediates between the "bad experiences" of displacement together with the community's disadvantaged position in Yehud and the "good experiences" associated with return and, for Haggai, the promise of restoration.

By associating the identity of the community with the divine power symbolized in the temple, the temple provides a material and a symbolic defense against the possible "annihilation" of the community's collective identity.⁴¹ To be clear, this annihilation refers to the sense that the shared object that draws individuals into a distinct group no longer functions in that capacity. The result is the loss of any distinct group identity.⁴² The temple symbolizes Haggai's idealized vision of a collective identity constructed in relation to the authority of Yahweh rather than that of any preexisting social-political authority in Yehud. Hence, and we must emphasize this again, both the political and religious authorities, Zerubbabel and Joshua, respectively (cf. Hag 2:2), are included with the audience of Haggai's message. In other words, the identity of the community must include the subservience of (possible) political authority, symbolized by Zerubbabel, to the expressed reality of Yahweh. The outward expression of the community, within Haggai's idealized vision, must clearly point to the prominence in Yehud of the authority of Yahweh.

In the absence of a temple, which is also the absence of a centralizing, shared object, the people had taken on "alternative" identities, incorporating themselves into a social-political environment in which a Yahwistic identity was neither authoritative nor necessary.⁴³ Zechariah, for example, describes such people as "shepherd-less sheep" (cf. Zech 10:2).⁴⁴ Within Haggai, this seems to generate an anxiety that was itself a result from a failure to effectively synthesize dangers that threaten the shared object, or temple, and that threaten correspondingly the identity of the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴¹ In this sense, Assis's position (cf. "The Temple in the Book of Haggai," 10) that Haggai's major problem was not the moral path of the people but their loss of national and religious identity, while it makes an unjustified link between Yahweh and God in the universal and absolute sense, is on the right track.

⁴² According to Hinshelwood ("Ideology and Identity," 133), it is also possible for groups to continue in existence while suffering under the loss of a centralizing, and so moralizing, symbol. His term for this is "destructive group." A destructive group, as he describes it, appears to maintain its identity primarily through a gross homogenization of its agent members.

⁴³ Contra Kessler (see again *Book of Haggai*, 270), who argues that the social-political environment facilitated the formation of the community's monotheistic identity.

⁴⁴ See also Petterson, "The Shape of the Davidic Hope," 237.

remnant. It is clear that in Haggai the promised benefit of the rebuilt temple was a corresponding lifestyle that was not threatened by any economic oscillations in surplus production.⁴⁵

THE INFLUENCE OF “DEPRESSIVE ANXIETY” UPON THE SHARED OBJECT

Klein's assertion that depressive anxiety is the “synthesis between destructive impulses and feelings of love towards one object,” and that it is closely bound up with guilt and the desire to make reparation to the “injured” loved object,⁴⁶ may help clarify somewhat Haggai's frustration with the people's reluctance regarding the temple by how it identifies the negative. That is, there is no expressed desire on the part of the people to make reparation with Yahweh—which would have been necessary following the “punishment” of the exile, including a corresponding expression of guilt—through the medium of the temple. Rejection of the temple, as Haggai interprets the people's reluctance, which is simultaneously a rejection of a social-political reality dependent upon the acknowledged authority of Yahweh in the province, results in economic hardship (cf. Hag 1:9–10).⁴⁷ This “emptying” of the temple of its “source of satisfaction” is an urge, in Klein's terms, that results from greed.⁴⁸ Greed, according to her, is a desire-response stimulated by fear, which preserves for the individual a source of pleasure or satisfaction.⁴⁹ In that sense, one may interpret Haggai's condemnation of the people as “emptying” the temple of its symbolic power by finding material satisfaction, ephemeral at best, according to the prophet, elsewhere in acts of “greed.” These “acts,” according to the prophet, were satisfied in sources other than the temple and a corresponding relationship with Yahweh.

According to Klein, greed is offset by “love,” in which feelings of satisfaction deriving from the “good” object are internalized or projected upon the object itself.⁵⁰ Consequently, “love” is the posture or *framed* openness—to be fully open is to be at risk of annihilation—toward objects that defines the parameters of object-relations. For Haggai, this is nothing short of idealized

⁴⁵ This is a commonly-held interpretation. For reference, see Assis, “The Temple in the Book of Haggai,” 6; Boda, “Messengers of Hope,” 117; Redditt, “Themes in Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi,” 194; Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 159.

⁴⁶ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 34–35.

⁴⁷ See also Glazier-McDonald (“Haggai,” 244) who offers the same conclusion although from what seems an opposite perspective to my own, “Renewed prosperity could result only from a rebuilt Temple, the seat of Yahweh's life-giving, community-sustaining presence.”

⁴⁸ Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 254.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 95, 254.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 63–64.

religious-legal obedience.⁵¹ And so it is that the remnant community is identifiable by its collective response to the religious law intended to preserve the identity of the remnant community and the authority of Yahweh.

THE SHARED OBJECT AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD EXPERIENCES

Based on what has been said above, we can propose that for Haggai the “good experience” was generally identifiable as Yahweh’s material provision for the remnant community through the medium of the temple as a shared object.⁵² What for Haggai qualifies as a “good experience” is restricted to the object-relation that exists between the community and the temple. That relationship, according to the prophet, is that which will provide for and sustain the people *as the people of Yahweh*. Consequently, within the text of Haggai a “good experience” can be understood as that which distinguishes internally and externally the community as the social body through which a “national” restoration of Israel would occur.⁵³

Identity, then, in the sense with which we have been using it, is less a product or imprint in a final sense as much as it is an act of mobilization.⁵⁴ Mobilization, to be clear, is the act of orienting,

⁵¹ M. Jaffee alludes to this conclusion but doesn’t articulate it fully. See “One God, One Revelation, One People: On the Symbolic Structure of Elective Monotheism,” *JAR* 69, no. 4 (2001), 760.

⁵² Glazier-McDonald (see “Haggai,” 244) argues for a similar conclusion regarding the collective importance of the Jerusalem temple but emphasizes priestly influence, though Haggai was not a priest, on Haggai’s perception of the community’s sin and the people’s lack of well-being. Her argument assumes that the Yahwistic religious experience, as shaped by priests who had returned from Babylonia, was a dominant force or experience in which individuals engaged the dominant social-political normative. Note also Ackroyd, who states regarding Hag 2:7–9, “The consequences of the presence of God are made clear. The centrality of the Temple as his dwelling is absolute, for all nations bring as tribute their ‘precious things.’ In reality all this wealth belongs to him, but now he claims it as his own, and so it can be used as it properly should for the glorification of his dwelling. His presence will make possible that fullness of life, *šalom*, prosperity in the full sense of the word, which flows out from him (*Exile and Restoration*, 161–162).

⁵³ See also Kessler (*Book of Haggai*, 271–275), who argues that Haggai used religious and literary traditions to emphasize that the “postexilic community constituted a legitimate functional equivalent of the Israelite nation of tradition and history” (*ibid.*, 274).

⁵⁴ Note, for example, K. Cerulo (“Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 [1997]: 385–409), who reviews the recent shift in sociological studies from viewing the identity as a product to viewing it as a source of mobilization. Compare with J. Howard (“Social Psychology of Identities,” *Annual Reviews in Sociology* 26 [2000], 368–369), whose understanding of “social aspect,” as a

both individual and collective, around a shared object, of fulfilling the function of socially determined or assigned roles for the benefit of the collective (thus preserving the “good experience”), and of preserving boundaries between insider and outsider by expressing through actions the needs or desires of the community. Understood in this way, identity is both descriptive and constructive in nature. Haggai’s focus, to be sure, is on the constructive function of identity. His is an attempt through rhetoric and prophecy to help fashion an idealized community through which a utopian restoration could occur.⁵⁵ Because identities are linked to mobilization, they determine the parameters with which groups engage external individuals and groups. These parameters are further determined by the range of good and bad experiences that form the basis of the urges of attraction and repulsion toward different, secondary object-relations that help reconstruct the complexity of an established identity. In that regard, identities must be flexible enough to cope with the changes that occur in social contexts, lest the individual or collective suffers increased anxiety.⁵⁶ Increased anxiety, and this can be seen in Haggai, may be the result of a shifting “pace of change” for the social group when it stresses the group’s mechanism, rooted in the shared object, for effectively categorizing between good and bad experiences.⁵⁷ In Haggai, this occurred largely following the exilic events and the remnant community’s attempt to integrate itself within the social-political environment in Yehud. Change upends stability, or is often perceived to do so, which disrupts the categories a group may use to distribute, or categorize, its experiences. Consequently, change may be considered an external threat or danger by social groups and may increase the group’s sense of internal danger as it relates to the stability of its own self-identity.

Haggai’s vision of the temple as a shared object fulfilling this role expects that the remnant-temple object-relation would become the authoritative paradigm for social-political authority. Because restoration depends upon the legitimated existence, internally and externally, of the remnant as something distinct from the productive forces already at work within the province, its collective

prescription for social action parallels Cerulo’s definition of mobilization.

⁵⁵ M. Smith’s description of “defensive structuring” (see *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament*, 2nd, corr. ed. [London: SCM, 1987], 69), for example, on the part of the remnant community is consistent with identity as a source of mobilization. In that sense, mobilization can be a defense against the external threat of irrelevance.

⁵⁶ As Howard notes in “Social Psychology of Identities,” 367.

⁵⁷ Group identity must be internally capable of dealing with external conflict while providing support for the group’s member (cf. A.A. Stein, “Conflict and Cohesion: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 20 [1976], 165, cited in H. Tajfel, “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 33, no. 1 [1982], 2).

identity is inextricably linked to the authority of Yahweh.⁵⁸ Haggai's interpretation of the temple is as simultaneously a symbolic representation of Yahweh's presence in Yehud *and* the externalized, and also physical, representation of the prophet's idealized vision of the remnant's collective identity. The "power" of the temple's physical presence insures for the prophet the stability of the remnant's identity, and so also the stability of a redirected surplus production, one that is redirected to the benefit of the community.⁵⁹ The connection between power and presence is confirmed in the temple's role, historical and intended or imagined, as the symbolic mediation of the relations of production, reproduction, and distribution of religious goods. These relations tend to reproduce the relations of force or power between groups.⁶⁰ Thus, there exists in Haggai an inseparable relation between identity, authority, and surplus production.⁶¹

Klein argues that anxiety is enhanced or produced initially by a need for adaptation, or the ability to integrate bad experiences into one's worldview in such a way as to consider such experiences as non-threatening.⁶² Sometimes this entails projection of a bad experience upon an "other," while at other times it may entail internalizing a good experience in a defensive fashion gained from a primary object-relation.⁶³ Haggai's response, which contrasts with the one taken by Ezra-Nehemiah, was the latter; the temple was the gateway through which the benefits of a relationship with Yahweh were mediated. Klein's theory helps clarify that Haggai's emphasis upon the temple may be due less to any unverifiable, collective

⁵⁸ The presence, and so irrefutable authority, of Yahweh directly correlates, Ackroyd argues (in *Exile and Restoration*, 160), with blessing, which is a removal of impurity, and the possibly effusive presence of holiness.

⁵⁹ In a general sense, authority over the environment upon which social-political interaction and relations depend preserves the stability of a community's identity (cf. R.B. Hall, "Moral Authority as a Power Resource," *International Organization* 51 [1997], 2364; see also E. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], 44).

⁶⁰ Cf. P. Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," *Comparative Social Research* 13 (1991), 31.

⁶¹ Ackroyd comments (see Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 156.) that according to Haggai the entire land of Yehud was sacred because Yahweh dwelled there. The centrality of the Jerusalem temple does not, he maintains, restrict the glory and sacredness of Yahweh to a narrow locality but to the whole land. Yahweh dwells in Jerusalem because he dwells in the midst of his people. This observation is consistent with a direct (ideological) correlation between identity, authority, and surplus production. In other words, in the case of Haggai, emphasis upon the ideals of sacredness and the divine authority of Yahweh, presumably, was thought to preempt any material claims to authority.

⁶² Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 94.

⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 95–96.

reluctance or “sapiential reasoning” regarding the social-economic situation,⁶⁴ and more to the prophet’s growing fear that a collective identity based on the authority of Yahweh and the Jerusalem temple was quickly becoming irrelevant.⁶⁵ Should that threat come true, the prophet’s idealized restoration and its corresponding monotheistic community would never come to pass.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Kessler (“Building the Second Temple,” 249) argues that the community used “sapiential reasoning” to conclude that its circumstances constituted sufficient grounds for putting off reconstruction of the temple. For further discussion regarding the “reluctance” of the people, see for example, Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, xli.

⁶⁵ In this sense, Ackroyd is on the right track when he identifies the tension between the people’s “paneled houses” of Hag 1:4 and the “desolation” (*brb*; see 1:9) of the land and temple (see *Exile and Restoration*, 155–156)

⁶⁶ Ackroyd, again, comes close to this conclusion when he writes (*ibid.*, 156–167), “[I]n the Haggai context, the failure to rebuild is much more than a matter of reconstruction of a building. It is the reordering of a Temple so that it is a fit place for worship. Rebuilding is therefore linked to the condition of the people for the service of God.”

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