

Introduction



This chapter engages with the dialogue that has developed among scholars and throughout history on the phenomenon of the evil eye, giving an account of the evil eye as it has been observed globally in order to provide context for the investigation undertaken in this study. In addition, it aims to give an account of preventative measures designed to protect individuals from the evil eye and ways of casting the evil eye away from an individual. I therefore analyse the Greek Orthodox Church's views in this regard, since Eastern Orthodoxy is my main focus in relation to the phenomenon of the evil eye. Finally, the chapter explores current views of the evil eye in contemporary Greek society. However, before embarking on the analysis of the evil eye it is vital to establish the language that I use to express the phenomenon. Therefore, what follows is a general explanation of the phenomenon as it has been observed in the Greek tradition.

The evil eye (*Vaskania*, *Βασκανία*) is an enduring phenomenon which survives even into the twenty-first century, as science gains more and more credence among non-Westernised societies, and more specifically within Greek culture. In the century of rationality and at a time when there is a deep-seated desire to explain and explore everything, the phenomenon of the evil eye remains alive in Greek society; it is a phenomenon that fails to find an explanation and still remains as part of the folk religion in most individuals' consciousnesses. Campbell (1964) and Du Boulay (1974) both assert that the presence of the evil eye in societies is generally attributed to Satan. Such a definition reflects the Greek tradition and the way that the majority of Greeks operate. However, it would be rather naïve to take this position at face value without any further analysis and exploration. The definitions given by Campbell and Du Boulay lack gravitas and fail to capture the spirit of contemporary Greek society. One of the major characteristics of the evil eye is that the individual on whom it has been cast is demoralised and lacks social and personal worth. Even though Du

Boulay focuses on a link between societal belief in the evil eye and Satan, a more recent study conducted by Wazana (2007) separates the phenomenon from satanic manifestations, arguing that the evil eye is a human vice and sin. In other words, Du Boulay and Wazana humanise the phenomenon, stating that the evil eye is the manifestation of Satan within human beings and that it is nurtured by their destructive impulses (Thanatos). Even though destructive impulses seek integration with life impulses (Eros), Blum and Blum (1970) point out that the evil eye cannot be seen separately from its epiphenomenological folk tradition. They insist that the evil eye is strongly related to psychological and physical illnesses; it would therefore not be ethical to examine the epiphenomenology of the evil eye without investigating the true meaning of the phenomenon as it exists within the deeper level of individuals' consciousnesses. Consciousness is not just trans-generationally and transhistorically configured; it is also a reflection of the society that fosters it. I therefore see the phenomenon within the cultural context of Greek Orthodox tradition.

Even within the current scientific era, Greek society has maintained a strong superstitious and religious culture, the antecedents of which predate Jesus. The Greek Orthodox Church's teachings have been strongly criticised by postmodern Western scientific and religious societies as primitive. However, the answer to these critics is that the teaching by both Eastern and Western churches on the subject of the evil eye has been socially learned, and this is a process which has been transferred from generation to generation (Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976; Elliot 1991, 1992). Greek Orthodox scholars argue that criticism of a particular culture requires a thorough understanding and investigation of its values, goals and purpose of existence; otherwise it is a critique without validity (Ware 1996; Cunningham 2002). It is only through a deep understanding of the ethnographic and anthropological elements of a culture that scholars can achieve cultural validity (Summer 1906). In addition, Rohrbaugh (2006) points out that even though it is commonly accepted that there are cultural differences between East and West, Western societies tend to underestimate these differences when they encounter the phenomenon of the evil eye. Such a limited view does not allow biblical scholars, for instance, to identify and understand evidence from the Bible which is not included in its Westernised interpretations. This attitude leads to a misunderstanding of the tradition of Eastern Christianity. On this point, it is important to mention that Eastern Orthodoxy portrays Satan and evil powers as real beings, who can cause severe problems and significant mental health issues to individuals. On the other hand, Western societies approach Satan and his powers metaphorically. Satan is portrayed in a symbolic form as an internal vice, which can be triggered by specific events in one's life and lead to behaviours

harmful to oneself or others; part of this vice is the evil eye (Russell 1986). This major difference in the interpretation of Satan has created a misunderstanding between West and East, and to an extent hinders the progression of our understanding of the evil eye. Western societies believe that Eastern societies are underdeveloped in response to the treatment and understanding of evil and satanic presence, while Eastern societies believe that Western beliefs and traditions are impersonal and that satanic powers are real; in order to be spiritually healed, people need to be treated appropriately, whether by mental health professionals or purely by clergy (Page 1995; Pilch 2000).

Keeping in mind a general understanding of the evil eye and how it is broadly viewed by Western and Eastern societies, and before the particular analysis of the evil eye within the context of the Greek Orthodox community of Corfu – the geographic area where my ethnographic study took place, and the significance of which is explained in the next chapter – it is important to explore the commonly accepted link between the evil eye and superstition.

SUPERSTITION AND SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

Superstition appears to have been present in societies since the earliest years of humanity. Superstitious beliefs have been passed from generation to generation, and it is asserted that they have reached their latest form in connection with religious beliefs about the evil eye. Rituals related to superstition have both positive and negative influences on a person's well-being and religiosity, or their practice of religion (Matute 1995). One of the scholars who has investigated the links between superstition and behaviour is Neil (1980), who maintains that superstitious beliefs affect an individual's behaviour and determine their psychological and social status. Neil, as well as Matute (1995), despite investigating superstition and its basic functionality, fail to approach the phenomenon from its existential elements, which can affect the individual's worldview. These scholars reveal that in societies where there is fear, superstitious beliefs have a positive effect as they appear to decrease the high levels of individual anxiety stemming from the fear of the supernatural. They go further and state that the supernatural is closely related to the severe anxiety which stems from the individual's fear of uncertainty, and therefore that superstition gives them an illusory sense of control over the situation. However, they do not pay attention to individuals' narratives about the evil eye, but rather focus on a generalised view of superstition. To remedy this omission, the present study pays direct attention to individuals' reactions in order to investigate whether the evil eye is in fact a superstitious belief in individuals' consciousnesses.

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the fear of the unknown within the field of superstition is most directly related to demonology, which is arguably the bridge between superstition and witchcraft. Demonology is the interest that individuals exhibit in understanding the rituals by which they can summon and control demons – in our case, the evil eye. Jahoda (1969) suggests that fear of the unknown and witchcraft exist simultaneously and that they are often considered to be the same phenomenon; this has been observed since the beginning of human history. Jahoda adds that superstition can be observed in three major fields: religious, personal (esoteric) and cultural. However, he is interested in the objective understanding of the phenomenon of superstition, and does not demonstrate any interest in its subjective manifestation, upon which the current study focuses. On the other hand, superstitious beliefs such as the evil eye cannot be taken separately from the society in which they are manifested, and most importantly, without paying attention to specific cultural elements. Consequently, superstition is defined in this book as a cultural belief formed in pre-scientific civilisations to minimise fear of the unknown, and mostly to control the future.

Sharmer (1998) adds that superstition is not only about controlling the future, but rather is about dealing with misfortune while at the same time building hope into the individual's life. Sharmer's addition to the understanding of superstition helps to build a picture of superstition that is related not only to the fear of the unknown but also to misfortune. Consequently, Sharmer argues that the evil eye appears in individuals' consciousnesses when their existence is threatened through unknown future events. I broadly agree with Sharmer, but I take a more anthropological approach when examining the effects of the unknown in the individual's consciousness and understanding of their existence.

In this more thorough examination of superstition, Sharmer (1998) asserts that superstitious beliefs are injected into society to ward off misfortune and the evil eye and eventually bring good luck, hope and happiness. However, Vyse (2000) and Zusne and Jones (1989) suggest that superstitious beliefs are influenced by society, demographics and emotional instability and are not simply concerned with bringing about happiness. It appears that Sharmer's understanding of superstition fails to reflect societal and existential exigencies. What follows therefore aims to investigate the nature of the evil eye's existence in contemporary Greek society, examining its societal and cultural elements in order to challenge Sharmer's assumption that it is simply concerned with bringing hope to individuals.

I therefore suggest that the evil eye is the projection of individuals' emotions onto superstitious beliefs: emotions such as fear, happiness and rage are externalised in order to avoid looking inwards at one's own consciousness

and understanding of self. Saenko (2005), in his study on superstition, makes a pioneering connection between superstition and individuals' internal fear of being in touch with their difficult feelings, triggered by the unknown. However, Saenko does not pay attention to subjective difficult feelings and truth as triggered by the evil eye, nor the manner in which the phenomenon interacts with a society at large, something that the current study aims to investigate. In fact, Saenko is interested in the cognitive understanding of the phenomenon of superstition and the development of coping strategies based on such understanding. The behavioural aspects, which are significant for the purpose of this chapter, comprise the rituals performed by individuals to defend against misfortune and the evil eye. On the other hand, Žeželj et al. (2017), investigating Saenko's views on superstitious aspects of behaviour, argue that individuals develop certain linguistic and symbolic data associated with objects or behaviours which are believed to bring misfortune. Concurrently, this book is interested in the investigation of the Christian Orthodox linguistic and symbolic data that interact with the belief of the evil eye, since no precedent exists in the literature for an examination of religious language in regard to the phenomenon (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005; Skinner 1938, 1948, 1953; Bandura 1963, 1977).

It is also important to mention at this point that positive psychologists argue that behaviourism is a historical discipline in psychology and therefore that illusion of control through learned behavioural mechanisms should not be considered a valid or, in fact, reliable approach to superstition and the evil eye (Cervone et al. 2006; Murphy 2009; Carver and Scheier 2001; Rogoff 2011). They also point out that human beings have inherited an intrinsic motivation that awakens a psychological need for control in situations of ambiguity and doubt, something that is strongly connected to the current research on the evil eye. Whitson and Galinsky (2008) show that an individual's psychological need for control is strongly correlated with superstitious beliefs. In their experiment to prove such a hypothesis, their participants performed superstitious rituals when they had no control of a situation. In addition, they started to see images and believe in events or phenomena that were not real. Whitson and Galinsky's participants also developed anxieties and phobias if the superstitious rituals were not performed. Most of them developed a strong religious belief as a way of achieving certainty in their everyday life through the church's rituals and beliefs (Case et al. 2004). However, the literature reveals that despite societal progress, advanced superstitious beliefs are nevertheless resilient phenomena that manifest in different societies and cultures around the world (Newport and Strausberg 2001). Gallup and Newport (1991) link religiosity and superstition, and define religiosity as religious practices and

attendances. Thus, in their study, they reveal the positive correlation between superstition and religiosity, whereby individuals with high religiosity or spirituality also have strong superstitious beliefs. Ross and Joshi (1992) extend Gallup and Newport's findings, revealing that individuals who have undergone some sort of trauma find comfort in religious beliefs in their attempt to comprehend their reality and control their future; therefore, the maintenance of superstitious beliefs does not originate by chance, but is rather a last-ditch attempt to control the future and deal with their current pain. Influenced by these studies, this chapter pays particular attention to the Greek Orthodox tradition in its investigation of the evil eye. Indeed, this book as a whole presents a pioneering study in which for the first time the evil eye is considered under the umbrella of Greek Orthodox tradition.

Up to the present point, this chapter has examined superstitious beliefs as they have been observed by various scholars. According to these accounts, it is obvious that there has been a strong correlation between the development of superstitious beliefs and times of ambiguity and fear regarding the future. Such fear triggers an innate human characteristic: to control or eliminate anything that threatens the existing status quo. Superstition and the evil eye have therefore been strongly related to cognitive elements that attempt to give illusory control to individuals and to develop hope, which would enable them to counteract their anxieties regarding the unknown. As mentioned in this section, superstitious beliefs can be related to religious beliefs and rituals; further analysis of the relationship between folk-religious and religious beliefs follows in the next section.

RELIGION AND FOLK RELIGION

In the attempt to further examine the phenomenon of the evil eye, it is important at this stage to investigate folk-religious beliefs and their relationship with religious beliefs and rituals. This section illustrates the relationship between the evil eye as a folk-religious belief within a social context and the religious rituals relating to the evil eye. The first pertinent reference comes from Herbermann, who in 1912 introduced to his field the different forms that folk beliefs can take. He states that there are various folk beliefs which refer to inappropriate worship of the transcendent God: namely divination, idolatry and the occult. He explains that inappropriate worship of God commences when external factors are incorporated into the worship; then, idolatry commences, especially when it is suggested that certain objects are considered divine. When believers seek to acquire knowledge about upcoming events in their lives through religious rituals,

this is considered divination. Rituals that appear to be supernatural are those which, through the use of black or white magic, cause good or evil outcomes in an individual's life. Within this school of thought, the evil eye is a form of divination upon which rituals are followed in order to interfere with one's reality and to manipulate it.

Folk religions have therefore existed within religious realms from the very earliest ages of humanity. This is witnessed in the Bible, where people attribute power to phenomena such as curses and blessings. Many individuals in the Scriptures clearly recognise that great power follows curses, and they experience fear regarding these curses. In the New Testament, assurance was given that there would be no other curses for the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3). In the history of Christianity, there has been no clear differentiation between religion and witchcraft: Christian doctrine has not been clear on what is religion and what is folk-religious belief, miracle or magic (Darmanin 1999). Therefore, one can conclude that superstition can be manifested in religious practices and rituals. However, it is still not clear whether folk-religious beliefs are positively correlated with religion(s) and religiosity. Further exploration is needed in order to better understand the difference between the two.

In the centuries following the writings of the New Testament, and especially during the Middle Ages, believers attributed unexplained phenomena either to God or to evil powers; their comprehension of the world was thus an amalgamation of Christian and folk-religious beliefs. During this period, the major teachings of Christianity became influential, and simultaneously reinforced belief in folk religions and rituals. During these dark times, negative philosophy portrayed God as a persecutor, cruel but also benevolent. The polarised medieval image of God gave rise to folk-religious beliefs about the wrath of God, which were maintained by some dedicated Christians for many years, up until contemporary times. Many of these beliefs upheld the idea that the suffering in the world is caused by satanic powers (Bornstein and Miller 2009). The era that followed the Middle Ages was characterised conversely by individuals' greater focus on science and an immense interest in explaining the secrets of the universe. Nevertheless, the view that folk-religious and religious beliefs could not be seen as separate persisted in the Enlightenment period. Parish and Naphy (2003) suggest that during the Enlightenment period, Christians believed that any other religion outside the Christian doctrines was nothing but folk religion and was therefore heretical. Individuals therefore developed certain fears attached to difference and the other.

In the twenty-first century, with its focus on religious freedom, it has become obvious that what is religion for one person is folk religion for another.

However, it seems at this time that many religions have adopted some form of folk-religious belief. Darmanin (1999) argues that Protestants consider the devotion paid by some Christians to saints and icons to be folk religion, or even sometimes heretical practices; some religious people consider the Aborigines' religious rituals to be folk beliefs. In order to understand the multifaceted nature of folk beliefs, an exploration of their origin is necessary. Folk beliefs take so many forms because they are strongly influenced by their social construction and the cultures in which they manifest. However, such a complex phenomenon as folk beliefs cannot be analysed and witnessed simply by focusing on social-construction theories and culture. Buhrmann and Zaugg (1981), after many observations and studies in social-construction theories, argue that it is not only social construction which feeds folk beliefs, but also the individual's internal fear of the unknown. Their proposal is an invitation to see the phenomenon from a more esoteric view than a mere social-constructivist approach affords. Unfortunately, Buhrmann and Zaugg maintain the premise that religious beliefs prolong and feed the fear of the unknown, which draws attention to folk religions and the supernatural. Even though there is a link between religion and folk beliefs, there are also fundamental differences. Religion is strongly related to morality, while folk-religious beliefs are not. In addition, folk beliefs appear in times of fear and doubt, whereas religion is a continuous practice and can be observed in different expressions of life and emotions (Malinowski 1954). Therefore, religion reinforces belief and trust in God, which in fact is not overpowered by events stemming from bad luck. Hood, Hill and Spilka (2009) suggest that religion is a social construct arising from society and culture; this is in contrast to folk-religious beliefs, as it is often not known why a person develops such beliefs.

Up until now, there has been no clear distinction between folk religion and religion(s) (Hood, Hill and Spika 2009). Some religious leaders and adherents would argue that there are indeed fundamental differences; however, others can argue that there are in fact fundamental similarities as well. If neither necessarily links with the other, it is easy to state that there is no link between the two. However, this might be a naïve conclusion, as religion(s) and folk religions can have fundamental similarities. Folk religions have been related to individuals' attempts at controlling their fear of the unknown. Folk beliefs are a phenomenon, observable in many aspects of life, whereby an individual attempts to exert control over things that upset their psychical equilibrium. Folk beliefs give the individual a sense of power or control, but what is that control? Lefcourt (1982) argues that an individual's awareness in regard to the level of control they have over a situation is called the locus of control. The internal belief through which they

develop a sense that they can manipulate external events to produce positive or negative results is called the internal locus of control. On the other hand, the belief that a person's fate is shaped by forces beyond the human realm is the external locus of control. Neuropsychologists argue that there is a correlation between the locus of control and folk beliefs: in situations where control has been lost, human beings tend to create an illusion of control through folk-religious beliefs (Tobacyk, Nagot and Miller 1987).

Humans' fear of the unknown and their need for control originate in an internal desire to be in charge of every aspect of life. For this reason, people usually practise different rituals in order to gain an illusory sense of control over events. One can therefore conclude that evil eye rituals are in fact related to an illusory sense of control over the unknown effect of the phenomenon in someone's psyche. Such a conclusion has not attracted much scholarly attention, and the current study views its further investigation as vital, as it could provide significant insight into human functioning regarding the evil eye. However, psychological ethnographers argue that individuals become omnipotent and even exhibit narcissistic traits in order to control the unknown and manipulate external events that cause them distress due to the individual's primary anxiety (Segal 1982; Rachman 1997). Psychologists believe that the infant lives in a stage of megalomania and formulates the fiction of omnipotence – in other words, the illusion of control. The function of omnipotence is crucial for the child to survive the anxiety and threat of the unknown. The child therefore develops this megalomania, thinking that when they cry, they control the external environment with the result that their needs are gratified; the carer reacts to the infant and attempts to satisfy their needs. If the child does not develop sufficient strength of ego to sustain the frustration of the unknown, and does not develop a mediator between reality and fantasy, then the illusion of control takes a more sophisticated form in adulthood through folk beliefs and a boundary-less and bodiless self (Ferenczi 1963; Rachman 1997). Therefore, it is believed that adults develop neurotic omnipotence as a relic of their old illusion of control, which might now take the form of evil eye. Through this later illusion of control, it has been argued, the individual seeks reparation for the early trauma of losing their function of omnipotence in combination with the not 'good enough' mother (Ferenczi and Rank 1986; Winnicott 1965, 1971; Phillips 2008). This book – influenced by the above psychological theory – investigates adults' views of the evil eye with the aim of better understanding how these relate to the effects of childhood megalomania and boundary-less self. So far, psychological ethnographers have not investigated the phenomenon of the evil eye in terms of the effects that it might have on adults' bodiless selves and childhood megalomania under the umbrella of a particular religious system of beliefs.

Folk beliefs can therefore be observed across different aspects of someone's life. Most of the time, these beliefs can be linked with religious beliefs; however, this is not necessarily the case. The primary trigger for folk beliefs is the fear of the 'other' and the unknown, and they therefore give individuals hope and a false sense of control. At times in an individual's consciousness, the evil eye is a form of folk-religious belief. Although the evil eye is the primary focus of this study, it has not yet been explored; thus, the following section is an attempt to summarise global manifestations of the evil eye, before the focus of the chapters settles upon the geographical area of Corfu.

GLOBAL MANIFESTATION OF THE EVIL EYE

The ways in which the evil eye manifests globally are another important aspect of the current argumentation, as they provide the context for the research that underpins the following chapters. They underscore the importance of revisiting the phenomenon and exploring it with regard to the individual's existential anxiety and personhood. The various global manifestations highlight the deep roots that the phenomenon has in humanity's consciousness and the ways in which it can affect individuals' well-being. Finally, exploring the global manifestations of the evil eye in advance of a microscopic investigation of the phenomenon in the selected geographic area allows the reader to comprehend the phenomenon in different cultures, while at the same time inviting further investigation and evaluation of the differences and similarities of the phenomenon as a cultural construct.

Herzfeld (1981) argues that the phenomenon of the evil eye should be examined on the basic assumption that it is a cultural phenomenon, and therefore that it is imperative to investigate its cultural elements. This suggestion shapes the methodology underpinning my research, which examines the phenomenon holistically and with a multidisciplinary approach within the specific cultural context of the Greek Orthodox tradition. However, an opposite view to Herzfeld's argues that a complex phenomenon such as the evil eye cannot be examined simply according to ethnographic facts; that would be naïve and would cause scientific confusion (Beidelman 1970; Ardener 1970). Such a close-minded approach has meant that the phenomenon of the evil eye has sometimes simply been linked with witchcraft in some cultures. The specific symptom of misfortune, which is closely linked to the evil eye, is attached to a specific social dysfunction, with the result that the phenomenon cannot be examined in isolation from its society or its hermeneutics (Crick 1976). Therefore, numerous cultures believe in the evil eye, especially pagan and tribal communities.

Tribal communities bring to the forefront another element of the evil eye: envy. The tribal communities of the Baharvand and the Basseri believe that *nazare*, which is related to the evil eye, is closely linked to envy. Many studies in Africa have observed and examined the evil eye, and suggest that belief in this phenomenon has significant similarities worldwide. Thus, Amanolahi (2007) suggests that in almost all African societies, the evil eye is mostly associated with jealousy and envy, and that it can be cast either consciously or unconsciously. Due to the social dynamic within social micro- and macrocosms, some people are more predisposed to casting the evil eye on others (Westermarck 1926, Evans-Pritchard 1937; Ullmann 1978; Edwards 1971; Foster 1972; Spooner 1976; Dundes 1981). However, it is commonly agreed that globally, the core element of the evil eye is envy.

In Latin America today, and more specifically in the Mayan tradition, there is an argument that the evil eye is closely related to witchcraft or black magic. The Mayans' understanding of the evil eye is closely related to the fear of calamity connected with envy. However, Mayan folk tradition adds that it is the community's belief system that can bring harm (mental or physical) to individuals, and introduces the idea of '*k'oqob'al*, a *K'iche'*: 'someone is making you sick'. Nonetheless, the notion that 'someone is making you sick' does not explain the phenomenon well enough, as many unexplored aspects of that statement require further investigation. It does show, however, that Mayans associate sickness – such as *k'oqob'al*, which comes from the '*mal de ojo*' (evil eye) – with magic. It also suggests that the *mal de ojo* can be caused by a person's 'overlook' (Maloney 1976).

Similarities to the Mayan view on the evil eye can be seen in Eastern traditions, and more specifically in Muslim Turks. Turks believe in *nazar*, which can be interpreted as 'gaze'. *Nazar* is strongly related to the evil eye. The Ottomans believed that the evil eye was fuelled by individuals' fear of dying – a fear which implies that an individual can die from a gaze, but also can suffer from severe illness as a result before dying. However, Turks believe that the cause of harm through another's gaze (positive or negative) is unconscious; the idea is that *nazar* strikes when no one is waiting for it, and the phenomenon is therefore associated with the fear of the unknown (Berger 1977, 2011; Dundes 1981). In addition to Muslim traditions, Wazana (2007) investigates the phenomenon within the Jewish tradition, arguing that the evil eye appears many times in rabbinic literature. The Jewish tradition adopts the same view as that of the Muslim Turkish and Mayan traditions: that the evil eye is a strong societal belief, which can severely affect a person's health or even an inanimate object. Jewish ideas differ, however, from those of the Greeks in regard to the evil eye's manifestations; Jews are not cognitively concerned about the effects of the evil eye on themselves but

rather with the development of defences with which to protect themselves from the evil eye. The evil eye appears in Jewish texts, as for example: ‘the census is controlled by the evil eye; and it happened in the days of David’ (2 Sam. 24:1–10) (Rashi on Exod. 30:12; Rashi on Num. 24:2; Num. 22:41, 23:28, 24:2).

Similarly, in the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, the evil eye is associated with *buda* (Finneran 2003). According to the Ethiopian tradition, *buda* is related to madness and causes people to be cast out, and this stems from a powerful evil eye. Roberts (1976) explores the Ethiopian tradition further by examining the galvanising energy of *buda*. He states that *buda* is fuelled by envy and therefore that it is through *buda* that individuals can cast the evil eye; *buda* is caused by and can cause serious damage or mental illness only when individuals are madly envious of material things or qualities that they do not possess. Vecchiato (1994) focuses on times and moments when individuals are more vulnerable to the evil eye, such as during mealtimes, emotional periods and the period of crop raising.

While Ethiopians link the evil eye with *buda*, Arabs associate it with ‘*ayn*’. According to Arabic tradition, the evil eye is known as *ayn* and consists of two different elements, which can be taken as different types of the evil eye. These elements find similarities in the Greek Orthodox typology of the evil eye (*matiasma*, *vaskania*) (Abu-Rabia 2005; Vecchiato 1994; Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976). The two types identified in Arabic tradition are the ‘*insiya*’ and the ‘*jinniyah*’. The first refers to the human kind, and the second to jinns in an apparent similarity to the Greek *vaskania*. On the other hand, Bedouins oppose the typology offered by the Arabs, and are more interested in classifying the evil eye according to its power. They classify it according to three different categories based on the power that it emits or the power possessed by the envious person who casts it. The three categories are unconscious, hereditary or conscious. In the first category, an individual who admires an object or another human being can cast the evil eye without actually wanting to. In the second category, the individual is aware of their power to cast the evil eye, as they have inherited that power. Therefore, their presence in a group of people signifies a bad omen. The last category, which is seen in the Bedouin tradition as the most dangerous, is when someone suddenly appears in a person’s path and casts the evil eye. This third category is also linked with magic (Briggs 2002; Edwards 1971). There are also some similar beliefs to the Jewish and Turkish traditions which come from the Gaelic islands; here, the phenomenon is approached more religiously, and the evil eye is not seen as anything other than a look cast over Jesus’ property (Black 2007). Such an approach suggests that human beings are Jesus’ property and are controlled by him; it is therefore Jesus

who allows the phenomenon to affect his people, perhaps to punish or teach them.

Similar beliefs about the misfortune that accompanies the evil eye come from the East. As we observe in the Bedouins' belief system, folk beliefs strongly associate misfortune with the evil eye. Bedouins believe that the evil eye is a fatal force that can ruin individuals' lives and even cause death. During his fieldwork, Abu-Rabia (2005) came to an understanding that the evil eye is like a sharp beam of light, which can be seen, felt and activated by individuals' fear of possession and by their strong religious beliefs. On the other hand, Finneran (2003) focuses not on individuals' experiences of the evil eye but on its manifestation within ecology. He argues therefore that the evil eye can be blamed for social and environmental disaster. Finneran agrees with Abu-Rabia that in the Bedouin tradition the evil eye is strongly correlated with jealousy and envy, which can be conveyed through a 'strange gaze'.

Another, slightly more philosophical view of the evil eye comes from the Balkans. Albanians base their belief about the evil eye on their philosophical understanding of limited good, or in more general terms, in limited earthly resources (Peterson-Bidoshi 2006; Foster 1972). They believe that there is a finite amount of good resources available to them, and that therefore those who gain more of these resources do so at the expense of others losing them. Albanians believe that the evil eye is part of the equation of liquid (life) and dryness (death), which stems from the Sephardic Jewish tradition (Levy and Levy 2002). Hence, Albanian people believe that the evil eye can dry life out through the power of the envious glance. The evil eye dries up an individual's body fluids, causing them to feel either physically or psychologically drained. Draining can also be observed in the animal kingdom; animals such as cows, llamas and camels try to protect their young by spitting on them; and there are also animals which spit at humans when they look at them. Romanian tradition adds that envy is not the primary fuel of the evil eye; looking at, praising or admiring someone is enough to put an individual in danger of having the evil eye cast upon them (Onians 1988; Garrison and Arensberg 1976; Dundes 1992b). Romanians take a more physiognomical approach to the evil eye and its power, which complements the Albanian view. They believe that those with green eyes are prone to cast the evil eye, while those with brown eyes might not have such power. It seems that green eyes are fairly rare in Romania; this is thus a preconception and superstition about something that is out of the ordinary. In addition, there exist folk beliefs according to which those with joined eyebrows are able to cause fatalities through the evil eye. It is also believed that the evil eye is not intentional, and that it can be caused even by those with good intentions (Arensberg 1965; Onians 1988; Peterson-Bidoshi 2006).

Parallels to the dualistic take on the evil eye in Albania can be found in the Islamic tradition. Al-Ashqar (2003), in an attempt to investigate the phenomenon of the evil eye in Muslim tradition, focuses on the Koran. Therefore, a close investigation of this text forms part of Al-Ashqar's research. His particular attention to Al-Hijr (chapter 15), verses 26–27 resulted in the statement that Muslims believe in a parallel universe where evil spirits and angels coexist in opposition. They believe that jinns are forms of spiritual entities that function as human beings and exist in the human world; they cannot be seen, even though they can see the human world and interact with it. In the Islamic tradition, it is argued that the evil eye absorbs energy not from the eye of the person but from the spirit (*nafs*), which works through the individual's eye, and that jinns are responsible for this (Abu-Lughod 1988; Abu-Rabia 2005; Abu-Saad 2002).

It appears that the evil eye has received global attention throughout history. The phenomenon declares its presence in many cultures, exhibiting similarities in beliefs and rituals, but also fundamental differences. The fact that the evil eye appears to be very present in the modern era signifies its importance, but also how deeply it is embedded in individuals' consciousnesses. However, to be able to comprehend the development of the evil eye through the years, it is paramount to understand its history. Therefore, the section that follows investigates the phenomenon in antiquity.

THE EVIL EYE IN ANCIENT GREECE

It is important to consider at the outset the origins of the evil eye, as this will assist comprehension of the phenomenon's development in later years and its manifestation in individuals' lives. The evil eye is not just a phenomenon that has been developed in contemporary urban societies; rather, its presence can be observed across history, with the first reference to the evil eye occurring in antiquity. At the same time, the long history of the phenomenon not only signifies its importance, but also how deeply it is rooted in individuals' consciousnesses and the collective unconscious.

One of the first references to the evil eye has been noted by Dickie (1991) in his studies of classical Greeks such as Herodotus and Socrates, who undoubtedly believed in the power of eyesight or overlook as a source of harm. In their writings, there was an immense negative power attached to the phenomenon, which was reputedly able to destroy people and cities. Dickie also suggests that the classical Greeks had certain beliefs with regard to the powers of the eyes, and that these beliefs originated in Egypt, and more precisely in Ptah the Opener. Ptah was recognised as the father of all

gods and human beings, and he gave birth to all gods through his eye. This meant that emanations coming from the eye were the most potent (Massey 2012). One should be afraid of the Opener's wrath, as he is able to see and destroy. However, Epictetus (2012) does not agree with the physical attributes of the evil eye, suggesting instead that eyesight is the source that gives flow to the *pneuma*. Epictetus maintains that *pneuma* is transmitted from an object or a living creature to the brain and back again through the eyes. There is a certain flow of energy between objects and *pneuma* which interconnects all people. Epictetus develops this theory about *pneuma* further, contending that it cannot be considered in isolation from the evil eye, as at times the evil eye is its vehicle for communication from inanimate objects to animate ones and vice versa. However, he debates the reasons for the existence of the evil eye in the arena of *pneuma* and thereby links *pneuma* with the power of the evil eye, which can affect a person's mental health. Democritus follows Epictetus' understanding of the evil eye, but he is mostly preoccupied with (and in fact, is one of the first to introduce) the notion that the evil eye must have different levels of effect on individuals; he adds that the evil eye has different levels of transferring energy among creatures (Cartledge 2011). Plutarch, however, takes a different approach to the above scholars, suggesting that eyes produce the most effluxes, which can be projected in the form of a fiery beam (ibid.). Here, Plutarch introduces the notion that would later be known as noetic science, the power of mind; and in this book, eyes have been approached as a phenomenon which emits energy and activates a chain of events that might affect another individual or an object.

Following the classical Greeks and their attempts to explain the evil eye brings only confusion, because they approached the phenomenon differently to those in the present scientific world, focusing their attention on individual subjectivity instead of trying to understand it from a universal standpoint. They understood the phenomenon as part of a person's being and existence, and this led to different explanations and manifestations being assigned to the evil eye to those that we witness today. Such different schools of thought signify the complexity of the phenomenon of the evil eye, but also show that it has different functions. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that common manifestations are observed which can be described universally as envy and pride (Crick 1976; Berger 2011; Murguia et al. 2003). The evil eye was linked to religion, which then allowed it to be applied only to mortals in classical Greek antiquity. Gods and goddesses were governed by different rules to those of mortals, and therefore even though they could be affected by the evil eye, they also controlled it. There is a significant reference in Homer's *Iliad* (2003), where he describes Athena's eyes: 'terribly her eyes shone' (1.172). Here, Athena has been assigned the power of a gaze that can

cause death, and in fact is seen to be wielding it. This passage is one of the first references in which the evil eye is attributed godly characteristics and assigned to the goddess of wisdom and diplomacy. According to Aeschylus, deities applied the evil eye to cause pain to humans, to punish or teach them. Aeschylus writes in *Agamemnon*: ‘struck from afar from any God’s jealous eye’ (1994: 947). Even though these two references from the Greek Classics describe gods using their eyes to punish or cause misfortune to humans, it could be presumptuous to assign this to the evil eye; however, we cannot ignore the fact that for the first time, we are confronted with the power of the eye to strike from afar. It also introduces us to the fundamental anxiety that if the gods were jealous, they could inflict misfortune and torture on humans through the power of the eye; the punishment, therefore, can strike at any time and from afar, leaving human beings in the absolute darkness of the unknown.

Reviewing the literature, it is revealed that in Greek mythology the evil eye is strongly linked to the story of Narcissus, whose name has been used by scientists to describe a mental health disorder – the narcissistic personality disorder, as outlined in the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* (APA 2013; Calimach 2001; Conrad 2012). According to Greek mythology, Narcissus was a young man who was so handsome that in the end he became fascinated by himself, falling in love with his own reflection and pining away to death, leaving behind only a flower (Conrad 2012). This is one of the earliest stories that surfaces when investigating the evil eye in ancient Greece. Following the case of Narcissus, the classical Greeks believed that overlook or fascination could cause a person to undergo misfortune or petrification. In other words, overlook or fascination could steal an individual’s cognitive capacity to think and therefore exist. The classical Greeks believed that the evil eye could be cast not only by one individual onto another, but also by an individual onto their own self. However, the condition in which the evil eye is activated is one in which anger or envy exists in a person’s psyche. These feelings have historically been attributed to fear and danger and have therefore been thought to cause misfortune to people. Narcissus’ story, however, highlights for the first time another element of evil eye by suggesting that fascination is activated when there is a hunger for possessing; those who are highly praised by others or by themselves are more likely to experience the evil eye. Similarly, Eutelidas caused a fatal illness to himself by admiring his golden hair and face in his reflection in a stream; the case of Eutelidas is considered one of the first references to the evil eye (fascination) and its association with fatal illness and disease caused to oneself. Theoclitus also gives an account of fascination through the story of Damaetas, who fell in love with his own beauty and reflection. The interesting aspect of this

story is that he was aware of the fascination, and in order to prevent any disease or misfortune he would spit on his chest three times; by doing so, he believed he was preventing fascination. The reason that he spat three times on his chest is still unknown, but what is clear from his reaction, other than the specific interest that ancient Greeks had in the power of numbers, is that even in ancient Greece there were certain rituals deployed in order to prevent fascination. There is also another interpretation of the evil eye in Greek mythology in addition to the one introduced by Narcissus. While Narcissus represents the evil eye through admiration, one of the most famous gorgons in Greek mythology explains the phenomenon through a broken heart, which was turned into stone and in its turn produced anger and envy. The term gorgon (*Γοργώ*) can be used to explain how anxiety provokes the power of the evil eye that gorgons could cast; the word derives from the Greek word *Γοργώ*, which means dreadful (Wilk 2000) and the reference is to the gorgon Medusa, who could turn people into stone through her gaze alone.

The evil eye emerged not only in Greek mythology but also in the works of great classicists such as Aristotle, Agamemnon, Plutarch and others. Plutarch, in his *Morals and Symposia*, makes reference to the evil eye in his interaction with his friend Soclarus during a supper in the Mertius Fiorus. He asserts that those who are under the influence of fascination are talking as if they are not themselves. Further analysis of such a statement brings to the forefront the dissociative attitudes that a sufferer of the evil eye might exhibit. Plutarch indicates here that those who have been cast with the evil eye have lost touch with reality; this is another reference signifying that the evil eye can affect someone's mental health. The description of these situations declares the presence of the evil eye and the way it affects an individual's well-being. As Plutarch states, those affected by the evil eye have no control over their actions and speech (Plutarch, 2012, 2013). Another account of the phenomenon is given by Heliodorus (1997) when Calasaris' daughter suddenly becomes severely ill. When she is asked what the matter is, she replies that she has been exposed and therefore seen by people, suggesting that the evil eye has been drawn upon her because she has been seen by others. Calasaris' case introduces the hypothesis that the evil eye can cause illness or bring 'madness' to someone. Calasaris' daughter also gives a rich description of the evil eye, asserting that malign influences affect the air that someone breathes. This poisonous air penetrates the eyes and therefore takes the royal path to the individual's psyche. After such an intrusion, the individual carries the noxious elements of envy within themselves. Heliodorus, however, for the first time links the evil eye with love, as in the case of Narcissus, and not with envy or admiration. He continues this

thought by stating that such love is affected by envy and attracts malevolent love, even though the initial aim was to define the person in the physical world by providing love and portals such as ‘mirrors’ in order to be seen via their eye’s reflection.

In his research on mental illness, Cartledge (2003) proposes that illness in Greek regions can be caused in individuals who have been praised or admired, supporting the theories about the evil eye and illness caused by admiration. The cause of this illness is the benevolent admiration of others, which is linked to the evil eye. From this, it has been concluded that the evil eye should be seen as having other links to mental illness than envy or menace, and I give credence to this idea. The belief system which links the evil eye to different causes of mental illness is explored throughout this book. Cartledge maintains that envy and pride constitute the fundamental elements of the evil eye and proposes that in ancient Greece, people lived with the fear of the evil eye, a condition that led them to rule their lives based on the concept of hubris. Hubris was strongly linked with arrogance and pride; it was a disrespectful act towards the gods, who would then unleash their wrath upon individuals to teach them a lesson. Hubris was therefore the cause of a person being overlooked by the gods, something which then caused them to enter the world of ghosts or the hallucinatory world (Cartledge 2003). The ancient Greeks feared the evil eye because of the illness that it could cause in others or themselves. Through hubris, one can see that there is a strong link between mental illness and reality. The Greeks were afraid of hubris because of their fear of not being in touch with their reality and themselves. However, it is not clear from the ancient Greek texts what caused the dissociation and delusional state that individuals experienced when possessed with the evil eye.

Reference has been made to the evil eye in antiquity and the effect that it had on the everyday life of Greeks. It is important to understand the phenomenon and its influence on the lives of individuals; thus, the next section gives an account of the evil eye and what might fuel it, according to current literature.

The classical Greeks through their writings clearly identified the importance of the eye and the ability to see the other. They also argued that the evil eye was not just concerned with envy and jealousy, but also with love and the innate need that humans have to be seen. The evil eye therefore becomes something more than envy; it becomes love, and at times broken love. The classical Greeks also attributed the power of the evil eye to gods and goddesses, associating it with divine powers. The paradox therefore arises of how all good gods and goddesses can have malicious attitudes

towards humans as expressed through the evil eye. When engaging with the phenomenon of the evil eye and the Classics, one can observe that the evil eye fosters good and bad at the same time. This is the fundamental belief of dualism; thus, particular attention should be paid to the relationship between the evil eye and dualistic beliefs. Such an approach informs my research, which attempts to investigate the phenomenon of the evil eye by analysing the ways that its characteristics are manifested and coexist in one body, as in what follows.

DUALISM AND THE EVIL EYE

Paramount in Greek folklore and tradition is the belief that both good and bad influences can be part of an individual's psychical reality. Based on social-constructionist theory and alchemical beliefs, human beings try to find order in a capricious, chaotic and limited world. The mysterious forces of nature can only be faced, and in fact controlled (or at least that is what is believed), by mystical societal structures. Social morality itself is thus now subject to good and evil; the battle between good and evil cannot be perceived in Corfiot tradition in any other way than as the battle between survival and extinction, which is one of the core beliefs of Greek folklore (Russell 1998; Plato 2003). Soon after Plato introduced the theory of dualism of mind, Greek thought began to take the form of pairs of polarised concepts, often in conflict; the forces of cold and heat, God and evil, wet and dry, and so on (Plutarch 2002). This section aims to negotiate the relationship between dualism and the evil eye.

The theory of dualism of mind introduces humanity to the idea that the earth is limited in its resources. Thus, if human beings lose control of their impulses and inhibitions, they are confronted with the danger of exhausting the earth's goods. Plato (2003) proposed the notion that envious impulses could be fuelled by greed, which could lead to death. The idea of limited resources later creates tension among societies; this tension appears to cease with the development of the psychical defence reaction formation. This is because people develop gratitude as a means of surviving the evil eye and the death instinct that drives the actions that will exhaust the earth's resources. Thus, envy has become associated with gratitude. However, gratitude related to fear of the evil eye can cause mental illness, because the individual lives in constant fear that the increase of one's happiness comes at the expense of someone else's misery; therefore, calamities are caused to them both (Dundes 1992a; Walcot 1978). Greek Orthodoxy was influenced

by platonic dualism when it proclaimed the teaching that those who have two of something should give one away. Only then does envy not take a malevolent form, and the chances of the privileged person being overlooked are reduced (Walcot 1978).

Dundes (1992a) was influenced by dualism, and the theories that subsequently followed that way of thinking were attempts to analyse the evil eye in that context. Dundes is particularly interested in the theory of 'wet and dry' and tries to apply it in his understanding of the phenomenon of the evil eye, especially during the Hellenistic period and the conceptualisation of the phenomenon. Dundes (1992a) and Onians (1988) point out that the Hellenists viewed the evil eye as a form of 'dry'; they state that the evil eye exhausts the fluids of the land, or the vital fluids necessary for the existence of human beings. Onians also indicates that headaches are a minor symptom that one can experience due to lack of vital fluids; he believes that they are caused when the brain's fluids are dried up. He expands his theory, stating that the dryness is caused by overlook (positive or negative), which activates the evil eye. Dundes, in agreement with Onians, suggests that the limited resources of the earth have an impact on the fluids of humans. The evil eye thus drains individuals' fluids, which are fundamental for life. Greek historical thinking, which might have affected Greek Orthodox teaching, held that cremation hastens the process of drying and goes against the natural process by which it occurs. It violates and prematurely liberates the soul, and this is one of the reasons why Greek Orthodoxy does not accept cremation; it is also one reason behind the particular interest in the phenomenon (Dundes 1992b).

Following an exploration of antiquity in relation to the evil eye and the platonic theory of dualism, we have been confronted with different ideas about the evil eye and what triggers it. In addition, this section demonstrated that the evil eye is a phenomenon which supports a dualistic belief that the threat of extinction looms if the battle between good and bad does not develop into a dialogue and ultimately lead to peaceful coexistence. Such thinking led this research to investigate whether the manifestation of the evil eye perpetuates an internal fear of 'death' in individuals' psyches. However, nothing has been mentioned so far as to how the evil eye is manifested in the broader geographical area of the Mediterranean, and more specifically in Greece, and how the phenomenon is related to Orthodoxy and Greek society. This is the aim of the following section. In addition, the next section examines the ways in which the evil eye is manifested in individuals' everyday lives. Such understanding facilitates a negotiation of the importance of the phenomenon in regard to its influence over humanity.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE EVIL EYE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE GREEK ORTHODOX FAITH

This section aims to give a brief introduction to the relationship between Greek Orthodox faith and the evil eye in the wider area of the Mediterranean. In the Mediterranean context, Jones (1951) suggested that belief in the evil eye evolves in people's consciousness, giving rise to the fear that some people possess eyes from which just a glance can cause calamities or even death. However, Jones' argument was met with scepticism and received a lot of criticism. Even though some scholars agreed with Jones' proposal that belief in the evil eye is a universal phenomenon, others argued against this view, stating that belief in the evil eye is culturally constructed, and that even though it is a transcultural phenomenon, its identity is formed by the society in which it takes place (Bohigian 1997b; Roberts 1976). Marchese (2001) disagrees with Roberts' (1976) argument that the evil eye is not universal. I agree with Marchese in supporting the hypothesis that the evil eye might appear in most cultures globally, but also concur with Roberts that its functionality and purpose cannot be seen as universal, and that the specific cultural context in which the evil eye manifests needs to be examined in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In order to understand the phenomenon we might therefore need to investigate it through its origin in the Mediterranean regions, where it endures even in present times (Murdock 1962; Galt 1982).

In the Mediterranean region, people appear to believe that an evil eye sufferer can only be treated by what is known as folk medicine or by a healer (Herzfeld 1981). A healer is either a priest, or anyone who has experience and can apply different rituals based on the evil eye's severity. However, this view has been characterised as historical and without statistical reliability; therefore, Wing (1998) suggests that more research should be done in regard to the evil eye and biomedical treatment, as it appears that folk healers are engaging in medieval methods which may be risky for the sufferer. Wing's view, however, does not pay respect to the ethnographic characteristics that the evil eye might adopt; he is looking instead to categorise or quantify the phenomenon. For this reason, due to the mental health aspect, which is subordinated to the evil eye, and also given its ethnographic validity, it would be appropriate to place the healing process of the evil eye within the ethnomedicinal field. Recent research by Seremetakis (2009) supports the notion that even though biomedicine influences almost all urban societies, Greece appears to resist this influence; therefore, Greeks still seek treatment from folk healers in relation to the evil eye. On her trips in Greek villages,

Seremetakis observed evil eye exorcism via the telephone. The sufferer has quick and easy access to the healer through modern information technology. Seremetakis argues that the evil eye is not just universal, but rather is also adjusted to the cultural circumstances which have enabled the phenomenon to survive. She therefore invites us to engage with the evil eye as an archaic phenomenon which not only declares its presence in the current time, but also interacts with technological matters and affects individuals' mental health.

One of the most prominent things that keeps individuals' interest in the evil eye alive in the Mediterranean is the introduction of the phenomenon into pop culture. Divination and the evil eye appear to be a point of interest for the Mediterranean media and in Mediterranean literature. Jones (1951) gives a historical overview of the phenomenon and how it was transferred across different areas. He also talks about the effect that Mediterranean people have on other cultures and mentions that immigrants brought with them their belief in the evil eye, which has slowly impinged on their new social contexts. It is important at this point to focus on Christian Orthodox religious beliefs and how they are related to the evil eye, as this is the focus of the current study.

It has been observed that the Church has a strong relationship with the practices and beliefs associated with the evil eye (Hardie 1981). Furthermore, while Kingdon et al. (2002) proposes that churches within the Eastern tradition consider the belief to be superstitious, she also notes that there is incongruence between the doctrinal teachings of the Church and everyday practices. Therefore, on the one hand the official Church does not engage with the phenomenon, despite the fact that it might recognise it; on the other hand, there are rituals and charms that priests engage with in order to cast out the evil eye from believers. In addition, Kingdon makes the observation that monotheistic religions such as Christianity and Islam engage with the phenomenon of the evil eye in their everyday existence without any attempt to suppress it, and therefore create certain behavioural attitudes towards it, which become implanted in individuals' consciousnesses. To strengthen this argument, it has been observed that everyday rituals – as performed by religious leaders – and the charms with which they are executed not only aim to resist and suppress the phenomenon but in fact reinforce its existence (Tripp-Reimer 1983). Up until recent times, Christianity has had a substantial place in the lives of Greek Orthodox people. Hence, many protective charms can be seen in homes; these consist of crucifixes, saints, pieces of saints' clothes and similar objects. One significant observation that can be made in the Greek Christian tradition regards the role of the Virgin Mary in protecting someone from the evil eye. Tripp-Reimer (ibid.) maintains

that the Virgin Mary in Christianity, and especially in the Greek Orthodox and Catholic traditions, has the ultimate power to protect someone from *matiasma* (giving the eye).

What makes the phenomenon psychologically and ethnographically important and interesting is the complexity of its diagnosis and treatment. Even though the rituals adopt prescribed and at times similar patterns, every healer, whether folk healer or priest, develops their own style and methods in order to identify and heal the evil eye (Appel 1976; Quave and Pieroni 2005). However, the commonalities come from the symbolism of the elements and materials used for the casting out of the evil eye. Appel (1976) proposes that in the Christian tradition, the number three plays a significant role as it represents the Holy Trinity, and water's purifying powers represent the first sacrament of exorcism, namely baptism. Once again, the wording used in the exorcism rituals may vary from caster to caster; however, there is a congruence between them since they all appeal to the Holy Trinity. Seremetakis (2009) highlights the incongruence between everyday life and the doctrinal Eastern Christian life, explaining that Eastern Christian priests go so far as to use and accept special prayers for protection in the case of demonic affliction that might be manifested in the form of the evil eye. Therefore, Seremetakis concludes that Greek Orthodox priests have designed and use their own rituals to exorcise the evil eye, calling sufferers victims of the evil eye. Such a major involvement of the Church in the evil eye facilitates a separation between the phenomenon and Westernised biomedical models of maladies, while at the same time it increases the manifestation of the evil eye in these societies.

In regard to the evil eye, there is some truth to the idea that the phenomenon finds supporters in the upper classes or among those who have stronger influence and a higher socio-economic status. However, such a view appears to be historical, and recent studies suggest that the evil eye may be observed across all social classes and educational backgrounds; therefore, the current study does not exclude any individual based on their sociocultural background (Appel 1976; Seremetakis 2009). Greek tradition contains many accounts across all educational backgrounds and social statuses which tell of misfortune due to the possession of the evil eye.

The evil eye is strongly connected with faith in modern Greece, and it is seeded into people's unconsciousness through faith, culture and tradition. Aquaro (2001) asserts that envy is present in every society and culture, as it is part of human nature; at the same time, it appears to be central to the fallen condition of humankind in Greek Orthodoxy. There is a belief in Greek Orthodoxy that there is no need to explain or investigate what is obvious (*ibid.*). However, envy is a dominant element of the evil eye,

which can cause death or illness, and envy appears to be the primal sin of human beings. While in Western societies there is a belief that original sin makes people guilty of sin, the Greek Orthodox Church holds that all human beings are subject to the curse of sin. We (human beings) feel guilty in trans-generational reality because of Adam's sin and his fall from the Garden of Eden. If envy is now the main sin of Adam and Eve and the one which caused their fall, then the whole understanding of Jesus' sacrifice and redemption is open to another interesting interpretation; that is, that Jesus Christ was sacrificed to save humanity from the same feeling of envy that led him to death. If this is the case, death, envy and the evil eye can be used interchangeably (*ibid.*). Theophilus of Antioch was one of the first Christians to suggest envy as the motivation of Satan in sending the serpent into the Garden of Eden (Russell 1981). St Basil the Great devoted a whole treatise to discussion of the phenomenon of the evil eye, envy and death.

It was later that the Greek Orthodox Church developed the Euchologion (*Ευχολόγιον*), which includes prayers against the evil eye. However, Canon 61 of the fifth Ecumenical Council forbade and designated as heretical everything that had been constructed by humans or used by humans in order to protect sufferers from the evil eye. This meant that the use of magic and amulets was forbidden (Ware 1993). The use of blue amulets, which is common among Greek Christians and in Eastern societies, fell into the same category of magical amulets and is therefore not accepted by the Greek Church, according to St John Chrysostom in Homily 8 of Canon 3:5–7. During the Byzantine era, a peacock or a peacock's feather afforded strong protection against the evil eye. It was said that peacocks had the divine power to cast away the overlook (Peabody 2001). Nowadays, Greek beliefs in the evil eye are an amalgamation of folk tales told throughout the nation's history. Such amalgamation causes confusion, as each region has different beliefs and rituals for protection.

The existence of belief in the evil eye in the Mediterranean region has been briefly discussed. The evil eye has been explored in relation to the Greek Orthodox tradition and how it can affect individuals in their everyday lives. At the same time, this section explored some Christian Fathers and the prayers that they used in order to treat the evil eye and its manifestation. According to Aquaro (2001), the evil eye is strongly linked to envy and jealousy, which in effect was the origin of the evil eye, as revealed in Genesis. Other Christian references, such as the Euchologion, have been discussed. What follows digs deeper into the Greek Orthodox tradition and its relationship with the evil eye.

THE GREEK ORTHODOX TRADITION AND THE PHENOMENON OF THE EVIL EYE

This section focuses on the Greek Orthodox Church's understanding of the phenomenon of evil eye. The Church officially recognises two types of the evil eye. The first type is *vaskania*. This refers to the jealousy and envy felt by some people for things they do not possess, such as beauty, youth and courage. The Church has many prayers for protection from *vaskania* and for offering a cure from it. The second type of the evil eye is *glossofayia* (those who constantly talk about others' happiness and possessions) or *koutsompolio* (those who have malevolent intentions when they talk about others). However, the Church prohibits believers from consulting those who practise folk rituals and witchcraft to cast out the evil eye, as this is outside the religious beliefs and rituals of the Church (Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976; Papademetriou 1974).

The Greek Orthodox Church did not initially accept the belief in the evil eye, as this goes against its main belief in the Divine. However, the silent prayers which clergy read during the Divine Liturgy clearly declare that the Church strongly believes in the power of the evil eye as a morbid corollary of envy. Dundes (1992a) maintains that in the Greek Church there is a secret rite – which is passed from generation to generation – with which adherents may perform a sort of exorcism of the evil eye. Charles (1991) adds that the rite of exorcism of the evil eye is not solely the purview of a priest, but may also be carried out by an old woman devoted to the Greek Church; this has, however, been declared heretical by the Church. Dundes (1992a) argues that Greeks have been influenced by those who believe in witchcraft and who think that old women possess the knowledge and experience required to perform such rituals, as well as the ability to interfere with a person's psychical life and cause calamities. Taking influence from Dundes' fieldwork on the evil eye and his observations of the rituals of casting it, my research is concerned with the determination of the different types of informants. The present study is therefore interested in revisiting Dundes' idea about those who can cast the evil eye and how they interact with each other.

There is a paradox, however, within the Greek Orthodox Church regarding the evil eye. On the one hand, the Church is sceptical and at times critical in regard to the phenomenon, but on the other hand, there are prayers to protect the faithful from it. At face value these may seem opposing beliefs, but further examination reveals that it is more a case of different approaches. The Church accepts the idea of the evil eye, but not the fact that a simple look can cause misfortune or even death; it accepts belief in

the evil eye under the umbrella of envy and demonic possession. However, St Nikodemos of Mount Athos, in his teaching, specifically mentions the two different types of *vaskania* and envy. Influenced by St Nikodemos, the Church holds the view that envious human beings, or even demonic powers, need mediation, which both humans and demons find through the use of the evil eye. In St Basil the Great's exorcism prayer there are particular descriptions of the evil eye as a representation of demonic powers, as in the words: 'Who shall bind you that dares envy to plot against His image'. The Greek Church does not believe that the evil eye can kill a person or cause any mental health problems; such a belief is instead a pagan one. However, the Church does believe that those who envy someone or something a great deal can cast the evil eye, which causes physical and mental harm.

It is worth mentioning the connection between one of the major Orthodox saints, namely St George, and belief in the evil eye and mental health (King Solomon 2008). According to Aquaro (2004), there is a strong connection between the fear of the evil eye and St George. St George is often represented on a horse, killing a dragon or a demon, but one might wonder about the connection between the saint and this creature. The answer lies in the story of King Solomon. Ankarloo and Clark (1999) reveal that King Solomon played a leading role in Hellenised Christian magic. In the apocryphal book of Solomon's Testament, the reader is exposed to the great powers that King Solomon possessed in order to exorcise satanic forces; this is where the evil eye belongs (King Solomon 2008). King Solomon gains power over the demons after an interview with them, upon which he builds his theory of demonology; it is only through knowing the demon that someone can gain control over it. According to King Solomon, Beelzeboul is the demon who is responsible for the evil eye, envy and death. He also suggests that there is another demon, who is called Envy; he is headless and has the ability to steal human beings' mental capacity by possessing them through their eyes. This is one of the first references in the Greek Orthodox tradition to suggest that the evil eye can cause mental disorders. However, the headless predicament appears to have a long history in Greek Orthodoxy. St George and King Solomon appear to have a strong connection with the headless demon, as they are both attributed powers against the demon Envy, the headless beast. Hence, they both became the protectors of those who had lost their mind (Ankarloo and Clark 1999; Aquaro 2004).

Greek Orthodox tradition and beliefs are therefore strongly correlated with the evil eye. Schmemmann (1974) maintains that Satan was sufficiently wise and divine to know God well enough to decide to go against him. Therefore, he and other angels opposed God and became the perverted version of the angelic order. Satan was not created evil but chose to be

so. This belief is linked to the theory of dualism regarding good and evil. Potentially, all human beings are predetermined to be good or bad, and can therefore cast the evil eye onto others out of envy; all human beings can be envious, but the story of Satan provides another version of the evil eye, one which introduces the idea of free will. Human beings have free will, which enables them to oppose good by entering the ranks of evil. Through the evil eye, satanic powers aim to prevent human beings from working towards heavenly goals; demons do not want people to enter the place from which they have fallen. According to Papademetriou (1974) and Cunningham (2002), the evil eye can take the form of demonic possession as a method of preventing someone from being in a relationship with God. The Greek Orthodox Church thus acknowledges and accepts that the evil eye is strongly linked with demonic influences.

Ware (1996), a highly respected Orthodox theologian, asserts that Satan is not just an idea to be played with, but is a real being; he is among us and can be experienced through emotions and behaviours. Such a belief is shared by the Greek Orthodox Church, and it maintains the idea that anyone can be possessed by demons at any point. Ware extends his argument, stating that the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13) identifies Satan as a real being: 'but deliver us from the evil one'. The end of that prayer indicates that human beings need protection from this 'evil one'. Elliot (1992) argues that even Jesus made a reference to the evil eye; he therefore maintains that belief in the evil eye was an aspect of Jesus' Hebrew culture. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talked about the negative effects that possession of material goods could cause to an individual's well-being. This negative effect is caused by the overlook of others; Jesus therefore proclaimed that it is better to look for heavenly riches than earthly ones. Papanikolas (2002) attempts to interpret this particular aspect of Jesus' teachings, arguing that individuals become envious of those who have more material goods. Envy can cause people to cast the evil eye. Papanikolas develops his thinking further, stating that the evil eye weakens a person's body and soul (the person's existential core) as it acts from within both. Nicholson (1999), however, argues that the evil eye can cause people to become mentally ill, have accidents, suffer from bad luck, be possessed by demons or even die, but we need to be careful associating it with an individual's soul. On the other hand, Moss and Cappannari (1976) contradict Nicholson by suggesting that the eyes are a window to the soul, which expose the inner world and spirituality of a person to demonic influences. It is through the eye that demons find their way into a person's body and cause suffering and pain to their spirit (Papanikolas 2002; Moss and Cappannari 1976). Furthermore, the evil eye can be witnessed within Greek Orthodox tradition, which is deeply rooted in the Orthodox faith. It is still believed that

people can be so jealous of others that they can cause harm to each other, allowing demonic powers to find a host within their spiritual world and cause harm through their eyes (Nicholson 1999; Papanikolas 2002).

According to Greek customs and tradition, there is a strong belief that some folk forces, commonly known as the evil eye, can rule a Christian's life. Campion and Bhugra (1997) argue that these forces are strongly linked to fear, if not terror, and are transmitted from older to younger generations. These forces are documented clearly in the prayer books used by the Greek Orthodox Church.

In our exploration of the Greek Orthodox tradition and the evil eye, and as we came to understand the actuality of the evil eye in the believer's life, it became vital that we uncover manifestations of the evil eye in the Bible – one of the most significant documents in Christianity – to further our attempt to understand the phenomenon. In this section, the evil eye has been analysed and approached in relation to its perception within the Greek Orthodox Church and tradition; this subchapter has given an introduction to the religious beliefs into which the research will dive in order to investigate the phenomenon. Little, however, has been mentioned in regards to the symptomatology of the evil eye within the Greek Orthodox tradition, or the rituals that exist to protect someone from the evil eye's symptomatology, or in fact to cast it out. For this reason, the following section discusses the symptomatology as observed in Greek Orthodox tradition and the rituals used to protect someone from this symptomatology.

THE SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF THE EVIL EYE AND PROTECTIVE RITUALS

The phenomenon of the evil eye is activated by the individual's need to possess what they do not have; such a desire can emit negative energy which can cause harm or damage to both animate and inanimate objects and subjects (Parrot and Smith 1993). Lazarus (2006), in his summary of coping strategies for dealing with stress stemming from folk beliefs, adds that an envious person – or to be more precise, an envious person's eye – can cause harm to object(s) or to other people who are in a more privileged position (such as being richer, happier or more successful) than they are. This section therefore gives a thorough account of the symptomatology that individuals experience when they are possessed or cast under the evil eye. What follows also gives an account of the rituals most frequently used to cast evil eye out from someone as observed in the literature.

Based on their fieldwork in Greece, the anthropologists Stegemann and Stegemann (1995) assert that although Greece is in a privileged geographical location, it is also cursed because its resources are scarce. Therefore, Greeks believe that social constructs such as culture, economy and technology fuel the phenomenon of the evil eye, which affects the richness of the soil. Levine and Campbell (1995) extend this argument by suggesting that social classification regarding a person's socio-economic status is a dualist construct, which supports the theory of limited resources. Hence, social classes appear to empower the phenomenon of the evil eye not only between classes but also among members of the same social class, based on belief in the cosmic balance, which originated in dualism, the theory of opposition and the alchemical basic theory of material balance. It is thus believed that when resources are imbalanced, disaster(s) can happen, and this can also take the form of mental illness or damage through the evil eye (Elliot 1992). People in Greece have been living with the anxiety and fear that the improvement of one person's social condition might be at the expense of another's. Therefore, Greeks have been causing harm to their own well-being, living with a constantly suspicious state of mind which causes friction in human relationships. Concurrently, a state of mind that fuels envy empowers the phenomenon of the evil eye (Elliot 1992).

According to the Greek Orthodox Church tradition, as seen in a study by Dionisopoulos-Mass (1976), those who suffer from the evil eye (*matiastei, ματιαστέι*) experience headaches, lethargy, nausea, a lack of appetite, or dizziness. It is important here to revisit Dionisopoulos-Mass's summary of evil eye manifestations, which divides the everyday manifestations of the phenomenon into two categories: the *matiasma* (*μάτιασμα*) and the *vaskania* (*Βασκανία*). *Matiasma* happens in everyday life and can be caused by anyone; the term is derived from the word 'eye' (*'mati'*), which is strongly linked to the evil eye (ibid.). *Vaskania*, on the other hand, means the tendency to kill by casting the evil eye onto someone. Of these two types of evil eye, *vaskania* is the more dangerous and can inflict spiritual suffering or even death. The symptoms associated with the evil eye have been described as psychosomatic; the most common somatic symptoms are headache, organ pain (mostly in the area of the stomach), eye ache (which results in an inability to see clearly), joint ache and tiredness. The less commonly reported somatic symptoms are vomiting, anorexia, tremors, asthma and paralysis. The psychological symptoms that are linked to the presence of the evil eye have been reported as anxiety, obsession, insomnia, persecutory fantasies, anger and hate, envy, pathological doubt, depression, extreme fear, hyperactivity and aggression (Campion and Bhugra 1997; Pfeifer 1994).

Following Blum and Blum (1970), it would be remiss to talk about the phenomenon of the evil eye without paying attention to the rituals deployed to cast it out from a sufferer. This section takes a wider view of the rituals for protection adopted globally in order to highlight similarities and variances. One of the most significant rituals comes from the Arbereshe culture, which states that individuals affected by the evil eye need to believe in order to be cured (Galt 1982). Arbereshe people introduce the element of belief into the healing process. They counterbalance belief in the evil eye with belief in goodness; they maintain that it is only through the sufferer's will to believe in the healing ritual that the healing process is actually activated. According to Migliore (1997), Arbereshe culture is the same as Greek culture in suggesting that religion plays an important role in the ritual of exorcising the evil eye. Papanikolas (2002) proposes that demonic powers find pathway through human jealousy in order to manifest themselves in our spiritual world. It is only through belief in the greater power of saints, Jesus, God or the Holy Spirit that the evil eye can be cast out of a person's body, and the transition from being possessed to being a healthy and spiritual individual facilitated (Quave and Pieroni 2005).

After his fieldwork in Mesopotamia, Thomsen (1992) revealed that in order to protect their babies from the evil eye, parents repeatedly spat on them, mumbling, '*Sj nu-i fie de deochiu!*' ('Let it not be a cause of casting the evil eye'). Mesopotamians also called their babies ugly as a way to protect them from fascination (ibid.). According to Mesopotamian and Greek tradition, it is commonly believed that babies have magical powers and are able to understand and spot the evil eye. Therefore, when they sense the evil eye, they start crying or become uneasy. Mesopotamians are very protective of their children, knowing that their purity and spirituality attract the evil eye; there is a strong positive correlation between spirituality and religiosity on the one hand and satanic phenomena and manifestations on the other. Albanians, conversely, ground their rituals against the evil eye in nature. They maintain that cows possessed with evil give bloodied milk, and they therefore spit on their children to protect them from the evil eye (Arensberg 1965; Garrison and Conrad 1976).

Another ritual related to the evil eye comes from Serbia, where mothers often wear a red thread on their middle finger during pregnancy in order to protect their baby from being possessed by the evil eye later on (Murgoci 1923). An alternative version of this ritual can be found in Macedonia, where individuals wear red and white threads around their necks or wrists. Similar beliefs can be found in China, where the colour red symbolises good luck (Simmons and Schindler 2003). Another tradition, similar to the Greek one, comes from Bangladesh, where for the first nine days after a

baby's birth the mother stays at home to protect her child from the 'eyes' (one can also draw similarities to the Gaelic islanders' belief in the spiritual number nine and its power against fascination). The baby must not leave the house until the women have created charms with words from the Koran for protection against the evil eye. Most commonly, though, mothers place a black dot on their baby's forehead, which represents the '*kujul*' (the ultimate protection) (Lawn et al. 2004; Marsh et al. 2002; Winch et al. 2005). In traditional Anatolian folklore, mothers try to keep their neonates away from any strangers' view, believing that babies are subject to spiritual attack from evil through the possession of the evil eye until they adjust to their worldly reality, which takes place within ninety days. In most cultures, mothers argue that the evil eye can cause mental illness in later life.

In his extensive fieldwork in one of the Scottish Gaelic regions of Italian villages, Wirt (1982) discovered that old women who could exorcise the evil eye were producing oral charms while tying a red thread in a cross. Residents of villages in southern Italy believe that the red thread in a cross protects individuals and households from the evil eye and witchcraft. Wirt argues that the evil eye is strongly correlated with witchcraft in people's consciousness. However, it is argued that the unconscious belief in witchcraft makes individuals more vulnerable to the evil eye (Murgoci 1923; Wirt 1982). In addition to that belief, residents from southern Italy have developed a specific interest in numerology and its healing energy, which may be deployed against the evil eye. To be more precise, the spiritual numbers of three and nine (the trinity multiplied by itself) are powerful numbers against the evil eye; they therefore incorporate these numbers into their lives (Black 2007). However, the most complicated amulet against the evil eye to incorporate healing numbers comes from Pennsylvania. The number of the ingredients used for these protective amulets should be three, as this represents the spiritual number in numerology and the Holy Trinity. The ingredients can be garlic bulbs, salt and pepper grains, spring and autumn wheat, incense, bread crumbs or a child's caul (Gifford 1960).

In Central Europe, however, and more precisely in the Bukowina area of Poland, people tend to use rituals to create protective shields from the evil eye. Midwives here put up a red tassel, nailing it over the front door of the house where the newborn is to live. It is suggested that this keeps envious eyes away and shields the house from the evil eye (Thomsen 1992). Thomsen also observes that needles and red thread on the threshold are employed to protect a household from negative energy in general. Similarly, in Macedonia, twisted white and red threads are put onto a silver knife at the door to protect households and their members from the 'eye'. However, Murgoci (1923) clarifies that red and white threads in combination with a

silver knife are not for protection against the evil eye specifically, but against any evil spirits. Another belief about the evil eye comes from the East, specifically from the Ottoman tradition, and supports the Eastern Christian belief regarding the phenomenon. Belief about the evil eye is strongly integrated into Turks' everyday lives and is associated with the negative influences of demonic spirits. They also believe that in order to be protected from the evil eye's powers, the use of blue amulets is necessary. They therefore suggest that people should wear something blue at all times, rather than red and white threads (Bettez 1995; Siebers 1983). In the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, people believe even today that praising someone can attract envy, and therefore that the *nazar* (evil eye) is cast. Ottoman tradition dictates that if a person praises someone else, they should also clearly state that they mean no harm. Therefore, most times they should repeat the word '*masallah*' ('may God protect you from the gaze') (Berger 2011; Rolleston et al. 1961). This defuses the negative influence that such admiration might cause to the praised individual and soothes the negative effect that the evil eye can have upon that person. Religious leaders play a significant role in protection against the evil eye in Muslim-Ottoman regions. People usually seek out religious leaders for protection and healing from the evil eye, who then pray for those who are suffering from it (Özden 1987; Yalin 1998). Yalin (1998) argues that those suffering from this condition turn to spiritual or religious healers rather than consulting the medical professions. In doing so they feel better understood and not dismissed, as Yalin and Özden suggest.

Another ritual used against the evil eye, common among Balkan villagers, is *kurşun dökme*: the pouring of water, ideally holy water, over the heads of those who suffer from the phenomenon. Such a ritual finds parallels in the Yugoslavs' *baba* (an old woman who is experienced and skilled in casting out the evil eye from a sufferer). The ritual that she follows involves putting charcoal into water while repeating prayers. If she cannot create a prayer, then she says the Lord's Prayer. She then pours the water on the sufferer's head (Bettez 1995; Berger 1997).

In Mehedinti, on the other hand, the person who can cast out the evil eye uses bread instead of charcoal, especially after the sacraments, as in Yugoslavia. The priest thus throws a crumb of bread, representing the body of Christ after the sacrament, into a glass of water. If the crumb stays on the surface, it is an indication that the sufferer will get better soon. If the crumb goes to the bottom, the sufferer no longer belongs to the world and the priest starts the death lament (Berger 2011; Reiter 1981). This tradition parallels the ritual followed by the *baba* in the Balkans. The healer puts two pieces of charcoal (life and death) into a bowl of water. If the piece representing life goes to the bottom, the sufferer will die soon, while if it stays on the

top, the sufferer will be healed (Murgoci 1923; Dundes 1981). Berger (1977) also points out that in Mehedinti tradition, the wax ritual is also followed. The religious or spiritual healers warm up candles and then rapidly cool the wax. The wax then takes the human form. If the head is upwards, it is an indication that the evil eye is not fatal. If the head looks downwards, however, the person is about to die.

The above examples give significant information about the rituals of protection against the evil eye, and in doing so facilitate a better understanding of the phenomenon as it is observed in the field later on. More precisely, these examples give the reader a better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon while at the same time providing an introduction for what follows in this book. The specific topics which have been analysed up to this point give an overview of the phenomenon of the evil eye as it has been observed in different geographical areas, and inform the research and its quest to link the phenomenon with the Greek Orthodox tradition – something that is actually rare in the existing literature. This provides context for the later sections, which will consider the evil eye in the geographical area of Corfu. The following section therefore engages with the Orthodox tradition even further in relation to the phenomenon of evil eye, making its primary focus the Greek Orthodox traditions and practices around protective rituals.

PROTECTIVE RITUALS FROM EVIL EYE IN THE GREEK TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Greek tradition has developed many ways to protect individuals from the evil eye, such as spitting in the presence of those who possess it, or wearing protective amulets in the form of blue eyes, phalluses, and clothes of blue or red colour (Papanikolas 2002). The ritual that old women can follow includes olive oil and a small glass of water; the woman dips her index finger in the oil and then creates the sign of the cross on the forehead of the possessed individual, before dropping one drop of olive oil in the water. This process is repeated three times, moving on to the cheeks and then the chin of the possessed person. If the person is possessed by the evil eye, the oil drops take the form of an eye. Then the old woman starts saying prayers – which are kept secret – enabling the concentrated oil to be dispersed (Charles 1991). The Greek Church follows Jesus in his works against the power of the evil eye in his ministry. In the early years of the Greek Church, the prayers of exorcism against the evil eye were performed only by experienced and designated priests and exorcists. It is only recently that it has become acceptable for any

priest to perform exorcism due to the order of his Ecclesiastical authority (Church of Greece 1999). These different means of protection against the evil eye appear to invoke the Latin phrase *similia similibus* ('like dissolves like' or 'likes are cured by likes'), which is the basic rule of witchcraft.

Based on Greek customs, parents pin blue eye amulets on their babies' clothes in order to protect them from the evil eye. Dinonisopoulos-Mass (1976) suggests that babies have the ability to cast away those who have the evil eye; when newborns sense someone with the intention of doing harm through the evil eye, they become uneasy or bite their mother during breastfeeding. It is common to see people on the streets secretly spitting as a way of protecting themselves or their loved ones from the evil eye, or making sexual gestures towards those who possess the evil eye (that is, touching their genitals).

Even today the belief persists in Greece that red and white threads around individuals' wrists are sufficient to protect them from the evil eye (Murgoci 1923; Zaubardiagnose and Schwarze 1992). According to Eastern Christian tradition, red represents blood, and more specifically Jesus' sacrificial blood. Red also represents the blood on the door that protected the Jews from the angel of death in the tenth plague. Based on Greek tradition, the blue beads are known as 'preventing stones', or stones that can prevent misfortune. In ancient Greece, blue was the colour used to prevent miscarriages (Zoysa et al. 1998). The colour has subsequently been used to prevent misfortune and the evil eye (Peabody 2006). However, during the pagan years, blue was attributed the power to counterbalance the dark phase of the moon. Thus, it was believed that blue shielded a person's body from the power of black magic, and therefore misfortune could not be caused to that person (*ibid.*).

The phenomenon endures as a powerful folk belief in Greece, and no one likes to talk about it or its manifestations, so as to protect themselves from it. It remains unspoken, and only within the Church can it be named and therefore treated. The Church recognises a wooden cross as a protective amulet against the evil eye. However, the wood should be taken from the trees of recognised monasteries or convents (Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976). Children cannot wear a cross until the day they are baptised; the Church suggests that a small icon, blessed by a priest, would be the appropriate way to protect unbaptised children from demonic powers. Finally, the Church proposes that drinking holy water (*ayiasmos*, *αγιασμός*) from the Epiphany celebration of the blessing of the waters can protect people from satanic manifestations. In addition, regular practice of the faith, confession and receiving Holy Communion are the best means to garner protection from the evil eye (*ibid.*). Due to the divergent historical influences, people from different Greek districts adopt different rituals to protect themselves from the evil eye.

The Church maintains that the first defence against demonic powers and the evil eye is the sacrament of baptism. Through baptism, the baby receives the first ritual of exorcism. This belief can also be found in works of fiction. Dante Alighieri, in his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy*, placed dead, unbaptised children in the first level of Hell, in front of Hell's gate. Through baptism, the baby is immersed in water, which symbolises life, as water is the major element of life and no one can survive without it. Water also symbolises fluidity and passage from death into life, and therefore symbolises purification and rebirth. The oil of chrism used during baptism brings healing and enlightenment, which introduces the baby to a full Christian and sacramental life (Schmemmann 1974).

According to Greek Orthodox beliefs, Jesus is the incomparable exorcist. It is His name that priests use to cast demons out of human bodies and to empower themselves when facing demonic powers. Only under Jesus' name can the process of spiritual healing be accomplished (Papademetriou 1974). In terms of the *vaskania*, which is the worst type of evil eye, the Typikon suggests that the exorcist should start the procedure with the blessing, followed by Trisagion prayers; next, the exorcist says Psalms 142, 22, 26, 67 and 50, and then follows the hymn of the Canon of Supplication to our Lord Jesus Christ. Part of the healing ritual is the blessing of the oil, which is later used in exorcism. Finally, three prayers of exorcism by St Basil the Great and four prayers of St John Chrysostom are said to complete the ritual. However, according to the Typikon, the oil used in exorcism is blessed and given to the possessed person after the exorcism of the evil eye, as protection for the rest of their life. There is a tradition, especially in northern parts of Greece, which dictates that the oil used in the first exorcism of the evil eye is buried with the individual when they pass away (Dundes 1992b).

In Greek society individuals consult their priest rather than their doctor for spiritual issues (Peterson-Bidoshi 2006; Thomas 1971). The Greek Church approaches the phenomenon of the evil eye in its mild and moderate form in the simplest but most powerful way, namely the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Those who are possessed with the evil eye have only to prepare themselves to receive Holy Communion. The Holy Eucharist is the oldest liturgy in Greek Orthodoxy; it cannot be taught but is rather experienced (Schmemmann 1997). Its origin goes back to the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples, where he gave clear instructions about the way to offer bread and wine as his flesh and blood in his memory. The Holy Eucharist is one of the most important liturgies due to the fact that the congregation and the clergy are united in the name of the same God. Through the Holy Eucharist the cosmic balance is restored by the celebration of both dead and living powers; it is the perfect integration of these polarised forces (Scotland

1989). The Holy Eucharist is offered through three different rituals of the Divine Liturgy: the liturgy of St John Chrysostom, the liturgy of St Basil the Great and the liturgy of St James. The first two saints and their teachings are used for exorcisms in severe cases of possession by the evil eye, as mentioned above. Holy Communion is therefore considered the most powerful way to protect against the evil eye (Schmemmann 1997).

Some contemporary views regarding rituals against the evil eye come from different societies. In Lucanian societies, religious leaders pray three times and read prayers against the sufferer's evil eye. These leaders say that they pray three times while holding a cross or a saint's icon, as the number three symbolises the Holy Trinity and its power over Satan and his demons. Three is also a spiritual number in numerology, linked with healing power and purification. It is also argued that the prayers can be adjusted according to the sufferer's symptomatology. If the symptoms are persistent, the sufferer can only seek another's help after nine days have elapsed since the first exorcism; nine is three multiplied by itself (Bettez 1995).

Following this discussion on the evil eye and its symptomatology, it is important to examine whether the phenomenon has any connection to an individual's mental health. Such an investigation allows us to emphasise the connection that the phenomenon might have with the individuals' suffering. It also highlights the current research's interest in examining the connection not only between the evil eye and mental health, but also between both phenomena and Christian Orthodox tradition and beliefs. Therefore, the exploration of the evil eye and the protective rituals has paved the way for the question of whether the evil eye can in fact cause mental illnesses. However, before we explore such a correlation, we must understand the functioning of the mental health system in Greece. This is the main focus of what follows.

THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM IN MODERN GREECE AND THE CORRELATION WITH THE EVIL EYE

The mental health system in Greece is still at a premature stage, and unfortunately it is developing very slowly. Mental illness carries stigma, and it is commonly accepted that Greeks do not speak about this topic, as it is something they are ashamed of and feel the need to keep secret (Douzenis 2007). After researching the Greek mental health system, Douzenis found that most of the time, individuals with mental health issues are forced to leave their homes and go into hospitals or asylums where they are compelled to rest in bed; at times they are restrained and receive hot and cold showers, among other things. Hartocollis (1966) recognises that the problems facing

the mental health system in Greece emerge from folk beliefs, which are linked to primitive religious beliefs. Secrecy here becomes the catalyst for the deterioration of someone's mental health, something in which the current research is interested as well. However, I tend to see a further connection between the secrecy around mental health and the secrecy regarding suffering from the evil eye – a phenomenon which is discussed in the following pages.

In addition to the negative beliefs attached to mental illness, Bouhoutsos and Roe (1984) revealed that 98 per cent of mental health services are run by the Greek state-operated health service. They also point out that these services, which are run by the Greek government, provide only pharmacological intervention, stigmatising the individual who is then defined by the mental illness label assigned to them by doctors. The shame that is attached to seeking support for mental illness is so great that it can cause social isolation. Karastergiou et al. (2005) argue that mental health services have been centralised in the major urban centres, so that for those who live in villages or on islands it is almost impossible to obtain access to any mental health treatment unless they travel to city centres.

However, Law 1397 of 1983 introduced a starting point for reformation of the mental health system in Greece. The second event that contributed to this reformation and increased public awareness of the problem was Regulation 815/84, which was proposed by the European Economic Community (EEC) (Bellali and Kalafati 2006). Nevertheless, Karastergiou et al. (2005) believe that the most important event that positively affected mental health awareness in Greece was the investigation of the Greek mental health system by the British press in 1989. In that year, British journalists exposed unacceptable conditions at the lunatic asylum of Leros (Zissi and Barry 1997). This resulted in international outrage and forced the Greek government to start a campaign to change the mental health system. Subsequently, the Greek Orthodox Church became involved in the governmental reformation of the mental health system. However, although the government continues to seek reform, this campaign has since been abandoned by the Church (Avgoustidis 2001). As Madianos et al. (2000) show, the campaign involves the decentralisation of mental health centres. Long-term care in asylums is no longer offered, and new ways to treat those with mental health issues are being investigated. However, the pace of change in the system is so slow that the literature that has been published in regard to Greek mental health is unreliable (Marci 2001; Bellali and Kalafati 2006).

One might have already concluded that there is very little contemporary research into mental health in Greece. In my attempt to develop a better

understanding of mental health, I was confronted with the difficult task of identifying any reliable source that might link mental health deterioration to the phenomenon of the evil eye in the Greek context. Therefore, I used universal literature in order to support my conjecture that mental illness is strongly linked to the evil eye. Even though some psychiatrists deny the evil eye's existence and concurrently the effect that it has on a person's mental health, the phenomenon recurs in psychiatric literature (Pereira et al. 1995). Priests of the Greek Orthodox Church, who are recognised as spiritual leaders and faith healers, quite often link the evil eye and demons to an individual's mental state or to mental disorders (Younis 2000).

Bayer and Shunaigat (2002) argue that those whose mental health is affected by belief in the evil eye tend to be from a low socio-economic background and are mostly unemployed males. This suggestion was supported by Dein et al. (2008) and Olusesi (2008), who argue that belief in the evil eye is reinforced by people from low socio-educational backgrounds. With regard to gender difference, there is currently debate as to whether males or females are more affected by the evil eye. Weatherhead and Daiches (2010) propose that there is a strong correlation between an individual's states of anxiety, distress and spiritual suffering. A person's mental health is therefore correlated with their link to God (Al-Krenawi and Graham 1999; Mohammad et al. 2014). Khalifa and Hardie (2005) make the link between the evil eye and demonic possession, and point out that these can both cause mental illness. They also suggest that individuals can experience a form of possession by evil spirits that is generated through overlook (Khalifa et al. 2011; Dein 1997). However, Dein et al. (2008) oppose this theory, suggesting that those suffering from the evil eye cannot be possessed by spirits because fascination is the human ability to cause harm through a malevolent stare; they regard the evil eye as a form of spirit possession.

Psychiatrists in the West today rarely acknowledge folk beliefs, and neither discuss them in terms of spiritual diagnosis nor explain mental disorders as manifestations of religious constructs. This means that they fail to understand the contribution of the evil eye to mental illness, while at the same time undermining the therapeutic value of folk belief to a person's well-being (Fabrega 2000). They also fail to understand the individual as a whole, as human beings are not purely networks of neurons and connections but are also spiritual beings. Fabrega (2000) maintains that because psychiatrists fail to see the individual as a spiritual being, they fail to come up with long-lasting treatment, leaving sufferers feeling disrespected. Cinnirella and Loewenthal (1999) maintain that sufferers do not trust their doctors and are less likely to share their spiritual suffering and symptoms with them. That mistrust, they add, comes from the fact that doctors appear to be ignorant

of the religious aspects of their afflictions, and sufferers are afraid that they will be judged and misdiagnosed (Loewenthal 1995; Loewenthal et al. 2001). It was only recently that the American Psychiatric Association recognised religious belief as an important factor in mental health, adding these beliefs to the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual V* (DSM-V) in 2013. This addition signifies the importance of the cultural dimension of human disorders.

There is a strong link between religion-related disorders and dissociative symptomatology. Pereira et al. (1995) argue that such dissociations are manifested through various negative behaviours, which can be taken as psychotic symptoms. However, those who believe in the evil eye and possession experience bodily and mental dissociations. These dissociations exhibit symptomatology including somatisation, interpersonal conflict and sociocultural sanctions. The World Health Organization (2018) recognises possession and the symptoms that believers might attribute to the evil eye in the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-11, 6B63). The DSM-V (2013) recognises these in section 300.15. However, further research is required to identify the diagnostic criteria of the dissociative trance disorder which is strongly linked to the existence of the evil eye. Habimana and Masse (2000) argue that belief in the evil eye and its symptomatology is strongly correlated to personality disorder. It is also argued that the manifestations of the malevolent glance through the evil eye should be taken as cultural control of the individual bordering on general paranoia (Di Stasi 1981; Domash 1983; Machovec 1976; Madianos 1999; Stephenson 1979). Greek Orthodox priests argue that they have certain criteria with which they may diagnose a person's paranoia regarding possession of the evil eye; they then treat the condition with special readings from prayer books and with amulets and charms. The criteria are empirically defined and so differ according to each individual.

Hussein (1991), who comes from the Islamic tradition, maintains that faith healers use diagnostic names to describe anger, dissociation, envy or extremely painful mental states, while at the same time attributing these symptoms to the evil eye. It is believed that future mental illness can be caused by *göz değmesi*, *kötü göz* or *göze gelme* (names for the evil eye) in a person's life at their time of entering the earthly world (Özyazıcıoğlu and Polat 2004; Özkan and Khorshid 1995; Zoysa et al. 1998).

Khalifa et al. (2011), in contrast to Bayer and Shunaigat (2002), argue that female Muslims in Britain are more likely to believe in black magic and the evil eye, which in turn affects their mental health. El-Islam (1995) suggests that most of those who believe that the evil eye can cause physical and mental harm also exhibit psychiatric symptomatology. However, Appel (1976) suggests that individuals in southern Italy believe that the evil eye

can cause spirit possession, as sufferers act as if powerful negative forces are controlling them.

Migliore (1997), in his study on the evil eye in Arbëreshë, Albania and southern Italy, discovered that spiritual healers can identify twenty-one symptoms caused by the evil eye, including mastitis, infections, nosebleed, dermatitis, hepatitis and abdominal pain (De Martino 2000). Peterson-Bidoshi (2006), in her fieldwork studying the *dordolec* in Albania (the neighbouring country to Corfu), points out that according to Albanian tradition, the evil eye can cause sudden damage to property or cause serious spiritual harm to an individual, and that this can manifest as mental health issues. In southern Italy, which is also close to Corfu, it is argued that those who suffer from the evil eye can exhibit specific symptomatology, such as headaches, depression, tiredness, insomnia and hypochondria (Argyle and Cook 1976; Herzfeld 1981). Similar symptoms are described in the Arabic Middle Eastern regions. ‘*Ayn*’ (evil eye) can cause symptoms such as drowsiness, dropping of eyelids, exhaustion, cramps and delusions (Patai 1976; Khan 1986; Marçais 1960). In Bedouin tradition, on the other hand, the evil eye is related to sex. It can thus cause sterility, a reduction of sexual activity, menstruation difficulties and problems in pregnancy (Levi 1987; Thomas 1971). Hussain (2002), similarly to Pieroni and Quave (2005), argues that in Asia, as in the Middle East, it is commonly accepted that the evil eye can cause mild-to-severe mental health issues, which are manifested through physical symptoms. Thus, sufferers who are possessed by evil spirits can develop depression and hallucinations which cause dissociation between their spirit and body (Al-Krenawi et al. 2000). In the Balkans, and more specifically in Romania, people share the same symptomatology that exists in southern Italy and among the Bedouins, but here, the evil eye can also cause digestive problems, severe depression and delusions if the spirit possesses the individual for a long time. In extreme cases, the evil eye can cause petrification and death (Murgoci 1923). Louis (1951) linked the evil eye to the wet and dry theory and stated that it can cause eating disorders as it dries up the individual from within.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has given an outline of what the evil eye is, according to Greek tradition and in relation to the Greek Orthodox Church. It has provided a general introduction to the evil eye and its links with envy and ‘death’, while also presenting the inner journey that the evil eye can facilitate in the quest of the self. Such a connection gives rise to many questions that appear to be fundamental to our understanding of the phenomenon and its

influence on mental health. What does the evil eye mean to people today? Why is it so important and how is it linked with mental health? Why do psychiatrists tend to ignore its manifestations when assessing a person's mental health? Envy and the evil eye carry humanity beyond the boundaries of morality, beyond right and wrong, to the world of duality and survival versus destruction. We also know now that even this morality is arbitrary, because different cultures have different definitions of morality. However (and for the purposes of this chapter), envy, or the evil eye, is not a moral issue. An envious person cannot be punished for being envious; and, on the other hand, envy cannot be perceived as positive in any society.

To this extent, human beings can be protected from the evil eye only when they develop a spiritual way of living, which results in a relationship with God. Without this relationship there is a constant fear of death; the constant anxiety of being eliminated. This book tries to give answers to these questions and to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon of the evil eye. It focuses on the spiritual way of living that might deliver a person from suffering mental illness.

One of the persuasive elements of this study is that it promotes a multidisciplinary approach to the circuitous phenomenon of the evil eye and its relationship to the Greek Orthodox faith in the Corfu region. Many researchers have tried to explore this topic. However, there is a significant lacuna vis-à-vis the role of religion and mental health with regard to the phenomenon, not least in the Greek Orthodox faith. Despite the fact that many scholars have examined the phenomenon of the evil eye in different cultures, no one has yet examined it in the context of Greek Orthodoxy. The lack of such an examination might suggest that the subject is of no interest. However, this chapter argues that the evil eye is still a very vivid phenomenon, and one that has preoccupied many scholars from different disciplines for over a century. As such, it is a phenomenon that still requires further exploration.

Orthodoxy is the dominant religion among the Greek population, and as such, language can be a barrier preventing a researcher from thoroughly examining the phenomenon, since meaning might be lost in translation. As a researcher, I have the privilege of being Greek, which means that I have the advantage of understanding the language. At this point, it is important to give an account of who I am as a researcher and what has influenced me. Therefore, the following chapter engages with the methodological approach that I adopted, with the characteristics of the field, and also with my narrative, in order for the reader to build a picture of the research as a whole and the researcher's biases.