

“Not Like Cain”: Marking Moral Boundaries through Vilification of the Other in 1 John 3:1–18¹

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This article explores the heuristic value of a linguistic model of Appraisal that has been informed by the complementary Bakhtinian notions of heteroglossia and dialogism for the interpretation of biblical text. The model is briefly described, which includes a discussion of how heteroglossia and dialogism help to shape the model. Finally, the model is deployed to analyze 1 John 3:1–18.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, systemic-functional linguistics, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, Bakhtin, heteroglossia, dialogism, intertextuality, linguistic criticism, appraisal, evaluation, values

Introduction

In Michael Holquist’s terms, I am an *extrinsic Bakhtinian*; that is, I am someone who is more interested in Bakhtin’s ideas than in the person or biography of Bakhtin.² I am a discourse analyst who works within the paradigm of Hallidayan Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL),³ yet, I find Bakhtin’s ideas about language and its function, about context, and about text to be quite consonant with SFL theory and of great heuristic value for interpretation. Thus, they are key ingredients in my own linguistic theorizing and modeling. In terms of theory, one of the ways I lean on Bakhtin is to help hone the “socio-” portion of SFL *sociolinguistics*. This is certainly not to suggest that SFL theory is lacking in

¹ This essay is an expanded form of a paper I read at the 2014 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in the Greek Language and Linguistics session.

² Michael Holquist, *Dialogism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 185–95.

³ For an overview of SFL, see M. A. K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic* (Baltimore, MD: University Park Press, 1978); M. A. K. Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, *Explorations in Language Study* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973). For an overview of SFL-based Critical Discourse Analysis, see Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2003); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

any fundamental way; in fact, it is quite robust. However, I do find that Bakhtin's ideas, particularly those of heteroglossia and dialogism, help to bring clearer definition to the social theory that stands at the heart of SFL, as well as greater heuristic value to my functional-linguistic model of appraisal theory.⁴ As will hopefully become clear below, one significant contribution Bakhtin makes to the model is a better way of recognizing and describing the task in which the biblical authors engaged themselves, namely the negotiation of values via dialogue with the other "voices" of heteroglossia that promote alternative value positions and points of view.

On this point, it will likely become apparent that the way I have appropriated Bakhtin's ideas is somewhat atypical in relation to how many other so-called extrinsic Bakhtinians in both biblical studies and sociolinguistics have done so. It has become commonplace for scholars to draw upon the notions of heteroglossia and dialogism as a means of "disrupting" this or that habitualized or "commonsense" reading of a text, so as to allow dialogic space for alternative voices to be heard.⁵ For example, many feminist scholars have pressed these ideas into service to raise the point that because "a multiplicity of voices and intensive interjoinings from a variety of positions inevitably shape all linguistic reality," no text is "monologically correct or in control; the plurality decenters the patriarchal control from any one person or group."⁶ Thus, in the words of Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz, "[Bakhtin's theory] proves that the monologic, self-proclaimed authoritative word of patriarchy excluding women at different levels is not conclusive, is not and can never be the last word."⁷

Although such appropriations of Bakhtin may have merit, my own utilization of heteroglossia and dialogism is not *necessarily* intended to challenge or to disrupt typical ("traditional?") readings of biblical texts (although these kinds of disruptions can and do happen when my model brings something to light that challenges the "received view" of this or that text). Rather, my interest lies in

⁴ See, for example, James D. Dvorak, "The Interpersonal Metafunction in 1 Corinthians 1–4: The Tenor of Toughness" (PhD diss., McMaster Divinity College, 2012), 24–25, 35, 40–42; James D. Dvorak, "Prodding with Prosody': Persuasion and Social Influence through the Lens of Appraisal Theory," *BAGL* 4 (2015): 85–120, esp. 92; and James D. Dvorak and Ryder Dale Walton, "Clause as Message: Theme, Topic, and Information Flow in Mark 2:1–12 and Jude," *BAGL* 3 (2014): 31–85, esp. 36.

⁵ See Holquist, *Dialogism*, 189 for a discussion of extrinsic Bakhtinians' penchant for appropriating Bakhtin for purposes such as these. See in this issue Charles M. Rix, "Who Is Watching the Children: Ethics of Responsibility in Genesis 4:1–16"; see also Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, SBLSS 38 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 27–65.

⁶ Green, *Bakhtin*, 58.

⁷ Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz, "Bakhtin, Discourse, and Feminist Ethics," *Critical Studies* 1 (1989): 121–39 (quoted in Green, *Bakhtin*, 59).

using them in conjunction with linguistic appraisal theory as a means of investigating how the biblical writers attempted to disrupt their intended readers' "common sense" interpretations of their world and the values and ideologies at play therein. How did the writers engage alternative ideologies and value positions that were, as Althusser puts it, hailing and presumably subjecting their audiences?⁸ How did they stake out theological/ideological boundaries and their attendant moral norms? More specifically, I am interested in the linguistics of persuasion and social influence, in the language the writers used to position their readers to adopt certain value positions and to eschew others. Bakhtin's complementary notions of heteroglossia and dialogism, paired with my linguistic model of appraisal, enables me to analyze how and the extent to which the biblical writers expand or contract—if not completely silence—dialogue with these alternative ideological stances and their attendant values.

In this exploratory article, I would like to offer a brief explanation of why Bakhtin's notions are so important to my style of theorizing. Following that, I will sketch briefly the portion of my model that most directly puts these notions to use in discourse analysis. I will then share a number of insights regarding 1 John 3:1–18 that result from the application of the model to that text. I hope to accomplish two purposes with this article. First, I want to demonstrate from a linguistic point of view how the writer of 1 John used a number of linguistic features to vilify Cain and, thereby, clearly marked out moral boundaries in order to resocialize at least some number of the intended readers.⁹ Second, I hope to prompt a conversation among biblical scholars about the heuristic value of linguistic criticism and the usefulness of Bakhtinian thought in biblical studies.

SFL and Bakhtin in Dialogue

The bedrock tenet of the SFL paradigm is its characterization of language as *social semiotic*.¹⁰ In short, this is SFL's name for the deployment of language to make and exchange meaning, where *making meaning* refers to achieving or attempting to achieve some *social action* in a given context of situation.¹¹ This

⁸ See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Essays on Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1984), 44–51. See also J. R. Martin, "Reading Positions/Positioning Readers," *Prospect* 10 (1995): 27–37.

⁹ A formative work for me on the topic of moral boundaries is Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

¹⁰ See Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 108–26.

¹¹ See Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology* (1986; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 9, where he states this in colloquial terms: "Language . . . takes on the nuance of a verb, 'to language' (this is the sociolinguistic perspective) To

involves simultaneously enacting three semantic functions every time language is put to use. First is the ideational function (also known as *experiential* or *presentational* function).¹² This refers to the function of language to make the meanings involved in representing one's experience in terms of "what's going on, including who's doing what to whom, where, when, why and how, and the logical relation of one going-on to another."¹³ Second is the interpersonal function (also known as the *orientational* function).¹⁴ This refers to the function of language to make the meanings involved in enacting and organizing social relations among the participants, mapping these relations through linguistic realizations of the participants' attitudes toward and engagement with their own and others' value positions and ideological stances.¹⁵ Third is the textual function (also known as the *organizational* function).¹⁶ This refers to the function of language to make the meanings necessary for the simultaneous organization of both ideational and interpersonal meanings into cohesive text that coheres with or makes sense in the context of situation of its utterance.¹⁷

Bakhtin and SFL intersect with one another in significant ways in each of these semantic functions, but here I will focus on how they do so with regard to the interpersonal function. Like Halliday and other SFL theoreticians and practitioners, Bakhtin also believed that discursive meaning or the "expressive aspect" of language in a given context was essentially *social*. A major point of emphasis in his argument that the *utterance* (as opposed to the sentence) is the "*real unit of speech communication*" is that the "rich arsenal of language tools" comprising the *system* of language—lexical, morphological, and syntactic tools—"are absolutely neutral with respect to any particular real evaluation It is only a language tool for the *possible* expression of *an emotionally evaluative attitude toward reality*."¹⁸ For Bakhtin, then, language does not become *meaningful discourse*—that is, it does not acquire *expressivity*—until it becomes

language is to mean; to language is what a speaker/writer and/or hearer/reader can do. To language is a social activity, a form of social interaction much like buying and selling, marrying and bearing children, or ruling and being ruled."

¹² Jay L. Lemke, *Textual Politics*, Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 1995), 40–41.

¹³ J. R. Martin and Peter R. R. White, *Language of Evaluation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 7.

¹⁴ Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 40–41.

¹⁵ See Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, Explorations in Language Study (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 66; Dvorak, "Prodding with Prosody," 91–93.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Dvorak and Walton, "Clause as Message," 33.

¹⁸ M. M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986), 84–85 (italics added).

a “concrete utterance” through being deployed for social purposes.¹⁹ In this way, the notion of *utterance* bridges the linguistic and the social; it is, in Halliday’s terms, *social action in linguistic form*.²⁰

For this reason, utterances are implicitly *dialogical* in that they are “performed” against the backdrop of others’ utterances. Bakhtin rightly says,

Actual social life and historical becoming create within [a language] a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological belief systems . . . [within which] are elements of language filled with various semantic and axiological content.²¹

What he refers to here as “bounded verbal-ideological belief systems” he later calls the “social languages of heteroglossia,” which he further defines as follows:

All the languages of *heteroglossia* . . . are *specific points of view on the world*, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific worldviews, *each characterized by its own objects, meanings, and values*. As such *they may all be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another, and be interrelated dialogically*.²²

These social voices of heteroglossia correspond to what SFL theorists and practitioners refer to as *discourse formations*. Lemke cogently makes this connection:

These are the persistent habits of speaking and acting, characteristic of some social group, through which it constructs its worldview: its beliefs, opinions, and values. It is through discourse formations that we construct the very objects of our reality, from electrons to persons, from words to “discourse formations.” We necessarily do so from some social point of view, with some cultural system of beliefs and assumptions, and some system of values, interests and biases. We do this *not* as individuals alone, but *as members of communities*, and however we do it, whatever discourse formations we deploy to make sense of the world, *our* formations always have systematic sociological relations to *their* formations. We speak with the voices of our communities, and to the extent that we have individual voices, we fashion these out of the social voices already available to us,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰ See Halliday, *Explorations*, 72–102.

²¹ M. M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), 281.

²² Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 291–92 (italics added).

appropriating the words of others to speak a word of our own.²³

When one considers all of this, it becomes apparent that when interpreting any given text, one must be attentive both to (a) the text's construal/construction of the "the way the world is" by means of its ideational/representational meanings and (b) the way it construes/constructs relations with other texts by means of its interpersonal/orientational meanings.²⁴

Presuppositions and Model

Several implications flow from this perspective that impinge on the linguistic model to be used. First, all discourses/texts are *stanced* in some way. Both their content and their intended effects "have been shaped by the socially rooted self-interests of their producers"²⁵ (note that "self-interest" may refer to group and/or institutional interests and not only those of an individual person²⁶), even to the point that the language user's lexical and grammatical choices—and even the choice of compositional mode—is constrained by and reflects their *evaluative attitudes* toward the subjects of their text.²⁷

Second, the key purveyor of ideology and its structures is *evaluation*.²⁸ This is "the expression of [a] speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking [or writing] about."²⁹ Although it is admittedly overly simplistic to put it this way, generally speaking, when a language user wants her or his audience to take up certain value positions, she or he will appraise those values positively; if, on the other hand, the language user wants her or his audience to reject certain value positions, she or he will appraise those values negatively. Here one must pay special attention to the language of AFFECT (+/- emotions), JUDGMENT

²³ Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 24–25 (some italics added).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁵ John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship New Testament Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 51; cf. Michael Stubbs, "A Matter of Prolonged Fieldwork: Notes Towards a Modal Grammar of English," *Applied Linguistics* 7 (1987): 1.

²⁶ Consider Bakhtin's notion of "authoritative discourse" (Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 342–44). See also Holquist, *Dialogism*, 52–53, where he refers to this notion with the term "official discourse." When considering biblical discourse, one must also bear in mind the group-oriented rather than individual-oriented society in which the texts were produced. See Malina, *Christian Origins*, 37–44.

²⁷ Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," 84.

²⁸ Dvorak, "Interpersonal Metafunction," 3.

²⁹ Susan Hunston and Geoff Thompson, *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*, Oxford Linguistics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

(+/- appraisal of behavior/character), and APPRECIATION (+/- appraisals of aesthetics).³⁰

Third, taking up stance is ultimately concerned with creating and maintaining community around a set(s) of shared values.³¹ “Values” are those *emotionally anchored* qualities and directions in life that people are *expected to embody in their behavior*.³² Thus, *stance-taking lies at the very heart of marking moral boundaries*. Writers’ evaluations and appraisals have the effect of naturalizing specific reading positions or specific actions and thereby create a *textual or discursive axiology*.³³ In very Althusserian fashion, writers engage in “hailing” their intended readers and prompting them to accept or to reject certain value positions as if the acceptance or rejection of those value positions is the only “natural” course of action.³⁴

In addition to positive or negative attitudinal appraisals, writers can attempt to position readers by the way they respond to other voices of heteroglossia. Here, they tap into the linguistic resources of ENGAGEMENT. These resources enable a person to engage other voices in dialogue, presenting themselves as, to a greater or lesser extent, standing with or standing opposed to these voices, as neutral, or as not yet having adopted a posture toward them.³⁵ If language users allow semiotic space for dialogue, they may either expand or contract that dialogic space, a distinction that “turns on the degree to which an utterance . . . actively makes allowances for alternative positions and voices (dialogic expansion), or, alternatively, acts to challenge, fend off or restrict the scope of such (dialogic contraction).”³⁶

Perhaps two examples will aid making these abstract notions a bit more concrete. Consider first an example from Gal. 3:1: Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν (*O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?*).³⁷ Here, *foolish* directly inscribes a negative judgment of the readers, indicating that they do not have the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad. *Who has bewitched you?* betokens the same negative judgment in that the question

³⁰ See Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 50–108; Dvorak, “Prodding with Prosody,” 85–120.

³¹ Dvorak, “Prodding with Prosody,” 91.

³² John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, “Introduction,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (1993; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), xv; Malina, *Christian Origins*, 112.

³³ See Andrew Goatly, *Critical Reading and Writing* (London: Routledge, 2000), 147–60; Martin, “Reading Positions/Positioning Readers,” 27–37.

³⁴ See Althusser, “Ideology,” 44–51.

³⁵ Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 93.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

assumes the readers, indeed, had been bewitched (ἐβάσκανεν: *bewitched, deceived*), which is proof of their incapacity to make appropriate decisions regarding values. Moreover, the open-ended nature of the question creates dialogic space for the possibility that the Galatians had succumbed to the evil eye and, therefore, had been deceived into aligning with the evil forces of Satan or of his minions.³⁸ This kind of expansion is called Consideration, because a point of view is entertained or taken up for consideration.

The second example is from Rom. 1:22: φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν (*Although claiming to be wise, they were made into fools*). The participle φάσκοντες (*claiming*) portrays the readers as having boldly claimed to be wise, which may be taken in this context as a form of boasting or priding oneself³⁹ and, therefore, as negative.⁴⁰ However, Paul's claim that they had actually become fools or foolish inscribes his negative judgment of them, which he goes on to support in the text that follows. The concessive use of the participle⁴¹ introduces the view that "they" claim to be and thus are wise, but this point of view is immediately supplanted and replaced with Paul's counter proposition that "they" have actually become foolish. This kind of dialogic contraction is referred to as Disclamation by counter.

The Model Applied to 1 John 3:1–18

In spite of having only a sketch of just a portion of the model of appraisal, in the interest of space, I turn my attention to 1 John 3:1–18. Obviously, I cannot discuss every detail in the text that the model reveals, but hopefully the features I have chosen to highlight will shed light on how the author goes about marking moral boundaries.

Ideational and textual analyses show that the language of kinship

³⁸ On the "evil eye" reference in this text, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *Paul in Other Words* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 181–206, esp. 203–6.

³⁹ Louw and Nida (33.218): "to speak about something with certainty – to declare, to assert." Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 44: "φάσκειν . . . means the boastful, ardent assertion."

⁴⁰ On boasting/priding oneself/self-aggrandizement/striving for personal honor in the Greco-Roman world and in the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, see Michael Wojciechowski, "Paul and Plutarch on Boasting," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 99–109; David A. deSilva, "Let the One Who Claims Honor Establish that Claim in the Lord': Honor Discourse in the Corinthians Correspondence," *BTB* 28 (1998): 61–74.

⁴¹ Note that the participle may also be read as causal: *because they claimed to be wise, they became foolish*.

dominates this segment of text.⁴² There is a consistent use and repetition of kinship terminology (i.e., terms from Louw and Nida domain 10 such as πατήρ [*father*], τέκνον [*child*], παιδίον [*child/servant*], υἱός [*son*], σπέρμα [*offspring*], and particularly ἀδελφός [*brother/brother and sister*]) and other lexicogrammatical details that link progeny with progenitor, such as the use of γεννάω (*I give birth*) and the repetitive use of the genitive of source/relationship (e.g., τοῦ θεοῦ [*of God*], τοῦ διαβόλου [*of the devil*], τοῦ πονηροῦ [*of the evil one*]). Moreover, the social value of “like father, like children” (vv. 7–10) and the appeal to tradition (cf. v. 11), two very important aspects of family-centeredness,⁴³ are foregrounded in this text. Also quite prevalent is the language of moral and ethical behavior (Louw and Nida domain 88; cf. also Louw and Nida domain 41), indicating that, at this stage in the argument, morality/ethics in the family of God is quite important to the writer.

Interpersonally speaking, the processes of *loving* and *doing justice* are contrasted with and opposed to the processes of *hating* and *not doing justice*; *doing sin* and *not doing sin* are also contrasted and opposed to one another. Although *loving* and *doing justice* are primarily ideational (i.e., processes that represent experiences), they betoken or indirectly realize a *positive* attitudinal appraisal because, culturally (or at least in the subculture of the group of Jesus followers), love (i.e., group attachment) and justice (i.e., reciprocity) are cardinal values for which one ought to strive.⁴⁴ By contrast, *hating*, *not doing justice*, and *doing sin* betoken a *negative* attitudinal appraisal. These appraisals are accomplished in part through the participant structure in this segment of text. Notice that in vv. 4–10, with the exception of “you” and “he/that one” at v. 5, the only *specific* Actors are God and the devil. Otherwise, the roles of Actor are filled every other time by indefinite categories of people (i.e., “[every]one who . . .” [πᾶς ὅ], etc.). By structuring participants and processes in this way, the writer connects *loving*, *doing justice*, and *not doing sin* to God and his progeny, thereby portraying them as positive behaviors to be emulated (t, +judg: prop).⁴⁵ Similarly,

⁴² On kinship, see David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 157–239; Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

⁴³ See Mark McVann, “Family-Centeredness,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 76–77; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity*, 187.

⁴⁴ On the topic of ideational meanings functioning as tokens of interpersonal meanings, see Dvorak, “Interpersonal Metafunction,” 74, 106; Martin and White, *Language of Evaluation*, 61–68. On love and justice, see Bruce J. Malina, “Love,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 127–30; and Bruce J. Malina, “Patronage,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 151–55.

⁴⁵ The notation “t, +judg: prop” means “token of positive judgment with regard to propriety.”

the writer connects *hating*, *not doing justice*, and *doing sin* with the devil/evil one, thereby portraying them as negative behaviors to be avoided (t, -judg: prop). Essentially, up through v. 10, the writer expresses his ideological/theological stance by creating a rather dualistic, black-and-white “rubric” that he and the readers can use to determine what kinds of behavior are “in bounds” and what kinds are “out of bounds.” This is how, linguistically speaking, the writer has drawn and promoted a moral boundary.

I will mention here one other significant linguistic feature the writer uses to naturalize the stance he wants the readers to adopt, namely the dominant use of relational clauses. There are two basic modes of relation expressed by relational clauses: attributive and identifying.⁴⁶ As the name suggests, attributive relational clauses are those that attribute some quality or characteristic to some entity (“A is an attribute of X”). For example, ἐκεῖνος ἄγνός ἐστιν (*that one is holy*, v. 3) is attributive, attributing as it does the quality “pure/holy” to “he/that one.” By contrast, αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία κτλ. (*this is the message . . .*, v. 11) is an identifying clause (“A is the identity of X”) because it identifies “this” as “the message which you have heard from the beginning.” From an interpersonal vantage point, what is important is that these kinds of assertions not only express ATTITUDE (i.e., positive or negative emotions, judgments, or appreciations), but they are essentially *undialogized*. In Bakhtinian terms, they have a *monoglossing* effect in that they do not merely contract dialogue with alternative points of view, they completely ignore any other alternative voice and, as a result, inhibit dialogue. Bakhtin calls this sort of language use “official language,” language that is used to privilege a specific ideology/theology and its attendant value positions simply by not recognizing otherness.⁴⁷

The writer employs this strategy in a significant way in 3:1–10. Here, he uses the pattern [πᾶς] ὁ [μὴ]+ participle (e.g., πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων [3:6]) combined with positive and negative appraisal to draw a clear distinction between those who are in bounds and those who are out of bounds (see Table 1).⁴⁸

Table 1. Relational clause structure and appraisal as boundary marker

⁴⁶ M. A. K. Halliday and Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 263. One problem with this nomenclature is the potential confusion it may cause with the grammatical structures known as attribution and predication that occur at word group level; see Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., BLG 2 (London: Continuum, 1999), 116, 118.

⁴⁷ See Holquist, *Dialogism*, 53.

⁴⁸ See James D. Dvorak, “Edwin Judge, Wayne Meeks, and Social-Scientific Criticism,” in *Pillars in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *Prevailing Methods After 1980*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams (Eugene: OR, Wipf and Stock, 2016), 195–98.

Positive	Negative
πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην (<i>Everyone doing justice</i> [2:29])	πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (<i>Everyone doing sin</i> [3:4])
πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην (<i>Everyone having this hope</i> [3:3])	πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων (<i>Everyone sinning</i> [3:6b])
πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων (<i>Everyone remaining in him</i> [3:6a])	ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (<i>The one doing sin</i> [3:8])
ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην (<i>Everyone doing justice</i> [3:7])	πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην (<i>Everyone not doing justice</i> [3:10])
πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (<i>Everyone born of God</i> [3:9])	ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν (<i>The one not loving brother/sister</i> [3:10])

Socially, the effect of these monoglossic relational clauses is a portrayal of life as “dichotomous”⁴⁹ as though the boundaries between good and bad, just and unjust are both clearly marked and solid. Standards for stereotyping and categorizing people as “children of God” or as “children of the devil” are set up on the basis of believers’ behavior or action towards their fellow believers.⁵⁰ The value position that is naturalized is that of acting kindly toward and caring for one’s fellow believer, for if one does not do so, they would have demonstrated that they are a child of the devil and not a child of God.

Verse 11 begins the appeal to tradition that I mentioned earlier (*This is the message you heard from the beginning*), and it is formulated with the intensive identifying relational clause I used previously as an illustration. The traditional material of the message to which the writer appeals (the ἵνα initiates a content clause)⁵¹ is ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, *we ought to/should love one another*.⁵² The projective attitude of the verb ἀγαπῶμεν, grammaticalized by the subjunctive mood, modulates the process of loving; that is, it places the action of the proposal at a point along a cline between the two endpoints of “do love” to “do not love.”⁵³

⁴⁹ See Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 69.

⁵⁰ See Judith Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, New Testament Theology, ed. J. D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51–58.

⁵¹ On content clauses, see Porter, *Idioms*, 237–38.

⁵² It also includes the intertextual reference to the Cain and Abel narrative, which I will discuss in more detail below.

⁵³ On modulation, see Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, Kazuhiro Teruya, and Marvin Lam, *Key Terms in Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Key Terms Series (London: Continuum, 2010), 145–46.

Given that the writer has just claimed that those not loving their brothers and sisters are children of the devil, the modal value of ἀγαπῶμεν is rather high. Thus, I have added “ought” or “should” to the English gloss to communicate this more clearly, as well as to foreground the fact that the writer has put forward a value position. From a Bakhtinian perspective, modulations of this kind are implicitly dialogic due to their contingent nature, being based as it is on the writer’s subjective point of view, which is but one of a number of possible points of view. That said, the writer does not leave the space for dialogue open for long; in fact, immediately in v. 12 he draws on an important intertextual thematic formation, the Cain and Abel narrative, both to contract the dialogue and to take up a clear stance.⁵⁴

In regards to the interpersonal or orientational semantics of this text, the cluster of clauses that make up v. 12 packs an impressively powerful ideological punch.⁵⁵

<p>¹² οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάριν τίνας ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.</p>	<p>¹² <i>Not like Cain, who was from the evil [one] and slayed his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, but those of his brother were righteous.</i></p>
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In light of Bakhtin’s notions of heteroglossia and dialogism and the system of ENGAGEMENT described above, it is important to investigate the stance the writer takes up and puts forward with reference to the Cain and Abel narrative and to ask how that stance contributes to the overall interpersonal/orientational semantics and ideology of the text in which it appears. Lemke provides a model that allows an interpreter to describe the possible intertextual relationships that a writer might construct between a referencing text and a referenced text. The two fundamental options are (1) a relationship of OPPOSITION and (2) a relationship of ALLIANCE. The latter has three sub-options for more delicate readings. Descriptions of all of the options are presented in Table 2.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ On Cain as a negative exemplar, see N. Calvert-Koyzis, “Ancestors,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997), 42.

⁵⁵ On intertextuality, see Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 281; Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue and Novel,” in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 34–61; Lemke, *Textual Politics*, 23–25; Holquist, *Dialogism*, 81–85; Lemke, “Semantics and Social Values,” 37–50.

⁵⁶ See Jay L. Lemke, “Intertextuality and Text Semantics,” in *Discourse in Society: Systemic Functional Perspectives; Meaning and Choice in Language: Studies for Michael*

Table 2. Heteroglossic relations of OPPOSITION and ALLIANCE

Metadiscursive Relationship	Description
(1) OPPOSITION	the writer construes a relationship in which the referencing text and referenced text have opposing value judgments with regard to the common discursive subject
(2) ALLIANCE	the writer construes a relationship in which the referencing text and the referenced text at some point and in some way share a common value judgment with regard to the common discursive subject
(a) ALLIANCE: AFFILIATION	the writer construes a relationship in which the referencing text and the referenced text are basically in agreement but where that agreement is only implied and not explicit
(b) ALLIANCE: COMPLEMENT	the writer construes a relationship in which the referencing text and referenced text remain disjointed, maintaining distinct points of view, but that can both be acceptable as long as they are not mixed
(c) ALLIANCE: DIALECTIC	the writer construes a relationship in which the referencing text and the referenced text account for and/or provide a framework for comparing or relating alternative versions of the other

Using Lemke's model, I have classified this intertextual reference as being ALLIED with the value of *loving one another*. More delicately, because the Cain and Abel narrative is introduced for the purpose of negative comparison, that is, as an example of what *not* to be like (note οὐ καθὼς [v. 12]), it is best to interpret it as realizing ALLIANCE: DIALECTIC. Interestingly, in the Genesis account, after Cain murdered his brother, received word of his punishment, and expressed

his fear that others would try to kill him, God graciously put a mark on Cain "so that no one who came upon him would kill him" (Gen. 4:15 [NRSV]). However, over time the tradition was modified such that Cain gradually became known as "the archetypal sinner and the one who instructed others in sin."⁵⁷ This is the image of Cain that the writer of 1 John appears to import into his text. Wielding the full power of that image, the writer presents Cain as the villain *par excellence*—the incarnation of the devil himself—which he is then able to use to vilify anyone who does not love brother or sister.

Additionally, there are at least five more features that contribute to the powerfully persuasive surge of negative prosody of this intertextual reference to Cain:

1. It begins with negative polarity grammaticalized by the negator οὐ (*not*) and this negator occurs at the head of the clause (i.e., it is "fronted").
2. Only Cain is named (reference to Abel is relegated merely to "his brother"); this shines the spotlight directly upon Cain and his actions.
3. Cain is defined as being "of the evil one" and, therefore, scores less than favorably on the "kinship rubric" the writer created in 3:1–10.
4. Cain is said to have "slayed/slaughtered" (ἔσφαξεν) his brother, a process that betokens a high degree of negative judgment (and one on which the writer will build in the next clause complex).
5. Cain's deeds are appraised as having been "evil" (πονηρά)

The writer obviously vilifies Cain. This kind of character assassination is intended to evoke/provoke in the readers a negative attitude toward the mistreatment and murder of their brothers and sisters, which would be the opposite of loving them as they were encouraged to do in v. 11.

The writer extends the macabre theme in vss. 13–15, and in a very significant move connects loving one's brothers and sisters *with life* (+ judgment), but connects hating one's brothers and sisters *with the world* (– judgment), *with death* (– judgment), and, most significantly *with murder* (ἀνθρωποκτόνος) (– judgment). Verses 15 and 16 are chockablock with negative attitude. Moreover, there are back-to-back monoglossic, categorical statements: *The one not loving remains in death* (14b) and *Everyone hating their brothers and sisters is a murderer* (v. 15). Then, so as to draw a very broad, unavoidable moral boundary—contracting any dialogic space that might possibly still be open—the writer brings the Cain exemplum to bear on the lives of the readers: *And you know that every murderer does not have eternal life remaining in them*

⁵⁷ N. Calvert-Koyzis, "Ancestors," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997), 42.

(v. 15b). The words *and you know* have a very powerful “common-sensing” effect; by purporting to tell the assumed readers what they already know, the writer supports and perpetuates the core values and ideological/theological position of the group of Jesus followers.⁵⁸

Verse 16 replaces the negative illustration of Cain with a positive exemplum and its application that serve to illustrate positive behavior. Here, too, we find the theme of death, although this time, because reference is made to Jesus dying willingly (ἔθηκεν; cf. LN 23.113), the process is imbued with positive judgment. In fact this kind of behavior is encouraged: *we ought* (ὀφείλομεν) *to die willingly for our brothers and sisters* (v. 16). “Dying willingly” is then relexicalized (redefined) for the believer in terms of meeting the physical needs of fellow believers: *Whoever has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need but withholds compassion from them, how does the love of God remain/abide in them?* (v. 17). This final question is somewhat ambiguous. Most likely it means something like “How does the love of God remain/abide in the person with the need?” though semiotic space is left open to read it “How does the love of God remain/abide in the person withholding compassion?” In either case, the one withholding compassion is appraised negatively.

The final verse of this text serves as a summary of the writer’s intended social action and bookends verse 11: *Children, we ought not love with word or speech, but [we are to love] in deed and truth* (v. 18). As in verse 11, the process of loving is modulated via the subjunctive mood (hence, *ought*), thus opening space for dialogue about it, but this is contracted immediately in the second clause with the counter proposition asserting the need to love with action.

Concluding Summary and Call for Dialogue

The author makes two moves in this text, and the second move has two parts. The first move, made in 3:1–7, is to establish the kinship boundaries of the two “families,” the family of God and the family of the devil, and to portray them as at odds with each other. The second move, made in 3:8–18, is to establish what kind of behavior is proper for those belonging to the family of God. This second move is accomplished with dual exempla: the first and most powerful is intensely negative, vilifying Cain to mark the moral boundary in terms of what not to do (vv. 8–15); the second, which praises behavior that emulates Jesus’ willingness to die for his family, is positive (vv. 16). The “real world application” for believers is to demonstrate love for brothers and sisters with action—willingly sacrificing

⁵⁸ See Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Routledge, 2015), 106–8 and 164–65.

one's possessions for the betterment of the other.

As mentioned at the outset of this project, it is my hope that what I have presented has piqued enough interest among others that further dialogue will ensue about linguistic criticism and the value of Bakhtin's linguistic philosophies. Indeed, I invite and even solicit constructive feedback.

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