
**REPRESENTATION OF JEALOUSY AND INNOCENCE IN *OTHELLO*, *CYMBELINE*
AND *THE WINTER'S TALE* BY W. SHAKESPEARE**

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to explore the nature and extent of the emotion of jealousy in *Othello*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* with regard to the main male characters: Othello, Posthumus and Leontes. In addition, another aim would be to determine how much the development of the plot hinges on this emotion and by what means these three characters became jealous or to paraphrase Iago - some people are born jealous. Namely, for Iago “They are not ever jealous for the cause, /But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster/ Begot upon itself, born on itself. (Act III, scene 4, lines 2355-57) Although virtuous and innocent, the female characters in the three plays, Desdemona, Imogen and Hermione, all suffer to various degrees at the hands of their jealous husbands and undergo difficult misfortunes. Another aim that this paper has is to determine how far the extent of jealousy has contributed to the outcome of these plays. Shakespeare has explored the emotion of jealousy and the state of innocence perhaps due to the fact that they are recurrent patterns in human relationships. In fact, jealousy is so common that it is also present in children, in adults and even in social animals. However, due to physical and evolutionary reasons, the trigger for the occurrence of jealousy differs in men and women. Men are particularly jealous if the sexual infidelity of a woman is questioned. Women, on the other hand, become easily jealous if their males' emotional infidelity is under doubt. A study published in 2016, found that heterosexual men compared to heterosexual women are more likely to be upset by sexual infidelity (54% vs. 35%). The same study also found that heterosexual men are less likely to be upset by emotional infidelity compared to heterosexual women (46% vs 65%). It is specifically sexual infidelity affecting heterosexual men that Shakespeare has explored in *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*. Modern psychology associates jealousy with low self-esteem, low self-confidence and depression. In some cases, jealousy, particularly male's, has led to the so called crimes of passion. With regard to male's sexual jealousy very often the suspected subject is innocent. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that the inborn nature of the male is suspicious in itself and is characterized by mistrust and suspicious thoughts. Robert Bringle, posited in the early 90's that there are two types of jealousy: the described above, called suspicious jealousy, which is chronic and neurotic due to inner turmoil, and the reactive jealousy. The latter is described as springing as a result of a concrete and real threat, for example, you see the advances that a male makes towards your girlfriend or wife, and the overt partner's flirtatious behavior. To sum up, another aim of the paper would be to determine whether the male characters in these are overwhelmed by suspicious jealousy or by reactive jealousy.

Keywords: male jealousy, suspicion, mistrust, female virtuousness and innocence

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to fully understand the meaning of jealousy, one has to contrast it with the emotion that it most resembles and that is envy. Some books even go as far as to use these two different emotions interchangeably. The main difference between the two emotions is that envy involves two persons, whereas jealousy involves at least three. Envy involves a feeling about something that we lack and that is possessed by another person and that we also wish to possess. On the other hand, jealousy involves feeling about something or someone that we have or that we would like to have, but that we are afraid of losing it to another person.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPAL MALE CHARACTERS

The causes for the jealousy of Othello, Posthumus and Leontes seem trivial and are of similar nature. In the case of Othello, Iago persuades Othello that his wife Desdemona has slept with Cassio. As a proof, Iago says that he saw Cassio wipe his beard with the handkerchief that Othello gave to Desdemona. In fact, the handkerchief is lost and Iago's wife Emilia picked it up and gave it to her husband. When Iago tells Othello that he has seen the handkerchief in Cassio's hands, Othello forsakes his former love in an instant, goes berserk and immediately wants to kill her for her “adultery”:

O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
 To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
 For 'tis of aspics' tongues! (Act III, scene 3, 2127-2135)

When Iago says to Othello that he should be content, Othello exclaims: “O, blood, blood, blood!” (Act III, Scene, line 2137)

In the case of Othello, his jealousy makes him not only homicidal but mad. From the beginning Iago suspects that Othello has slept with his wife, and wants not only to make him jealous but mad. Iago says:

And nothing can or shall content my soul
 Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife,
 Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb—
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too—
 Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me.
 For making him egregiously an ass
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. (Act II, Scene 1, lines 1099-1112)

When Iago says to Othello that Desdemona has slept with Cassio, Othello repeats the word handkerchief several times and falls in a trance. Iago joyfully says: “Work on, /My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;/And many worthy and chaste dames even thus, / All guiltless, meet reproach” (Act IV, scene 2,2463-65).

In the case of Posthumus, in Cymbeline, the cause for his jealousy also seems trivial. Posthumus marries the daughter of king Cymbeline. They exchange jewelry to mark the marriage. Posthumus gives Imogen a bracelet, and Imogen gives Posthumus a ring. Since king Cymbeline doesn't regard Posthumus worthy of being his daughter's husband, Posthumus is exiled to Italy. After Posthumus praises Imogen for her chastity, Iachimo approaches and proposes a bet. If he seduces Imogen he will get Posthumus' ring, if not he will have to pay Posthumus and fight him in a duel. Iachimo goes to Britain and tries to seduce Imogen but fails miserably. He doesn't give up though, and hides in Imogen's chamber so that, while she is asleep, he remembers the objects in the room, he steals her bracelet and notices her mole underneath her breast. He returns to Italy, and provides the “evidence” that he has “ta'en the treasure of her honour” (Act II, Scene 2, lines 964-65) to Posthumus. Like Iago with regard to Othello, Iachimo intends that the evidence will make Posthumus mad. After he takes the bracelet he says: “Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly, / As strongly as the conscience does within, /To the madding of her lord.” (Act II, scene 2, lines 958-960) When Posthumus learns about the bracelet and about her mole from Iachimo, he is enraged and, like Othello, wants to kill her: “O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal! /I will go there and do't, i' the court, before/Her father. I'll do something—” (Act II, Scene 4. 1361-1363). Like Othello, Posthumus wants revenge:

O, vengeance, vengeance!
 Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd
 And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
 A pudency so rosy the sweet view on't
 Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her
 As chaste as unsunn'd snow. O, all the devils! (Act II, Scene 5, lines 1379-1384)

In order to have her killed, Posthumus writes a letter to Pisanio, who is his servant as well as Imogen's, to kill her for her “adultery”.

Compared to Othello's and Posthumus' cases where both an intermediary and an object serving as “proof” are involved, in the case of king Leontes his jealousy is engendered solely by his suspicious imagination. Namely after his old friend, King Polixenes of Bohemia has visited his kingdom and remained there for nine months, the latter expresses his intention to return to Bohemia in order to see his son. Leontes tries to persuade Polixenes to stay longer but fails. Since he is unsuccessful, he urges his wife Hermione to try to persuade Polixenes to remain as his guest. Hermione accepts her husband's request, and after three short discourses, she persuades Polixenes to stay. The short time that took Hermione to persuade Polixenes to remain sows the seeds of doubt in Leontes's mind that his wife, Hermione and Polixenes are lovers. Leontes says:

You have mistook, my lady,
 Polixenes for Leontes: O thou thing!

Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,
 Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,
 Should a like language use to all degrees
 And mannerly distinguishment leave out
 Betwixt the prince and beggar: I have said
 She's an adulteress; I have said with whom:
 More, she's a traitor and Camillo is
 A federary with her, and one that knows
 What she should shame to know herself
 But with her most vile principal, that she's
 A bed-swerver, even as bad as those
 That vulgars give bold'st titles, ay, and privy
 To this their late escape. (Act II, scene 1, lines 698-712)

As in the case of Othello and Posthumus, Leontes is also on the verge of becoming mad. After he sentences Hermione to prison and calls his own child a bastard, he is told by the oracle of Delphos that his wife is chaste and that the baby is his and that he is a tyrant. Paulina summarizes his former behavior with the following words: "Thy tyranny/Together working with thy jealousies, /Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle/For girls of nine, O, think what they have done/And then run mad indeed, stark mad! for all/Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it." (Act III, scene 2, lines 1414-1419)

In Othello, a tragedy, the main character tells Iago to kill his wife's supposed lover. Similarly, in The Winter's Tale, Leontes plots unsuccessfully to murder Polixenes for his alleged affair with his wife. In Cymbeline the situation is different as Posthumus pardons Iachimo after he has repented. Like Othello who in Act V murders Desdemona and like Posthumus who orders the unsuccessful murder of Imogen, Leontes out of suspicious jealousy also wants to punish Hermione and kill Polixenes. He says:

No; if I mistake
 In those foundations which I build upon,
 The centre is not big enough to bear
 A school-boy's top. Away with her! to prison!
 He who shall speak for her is afar off guilty
 But that he speaks. (Act II, scene 1, lines 719-724)

Leontes sends Camilo to murder Polixenes, but Camilo warns Polixenes about the plot and they both escape to Bohemia. Like in the cases of Othello and Posthumus, Leontes cries for revenge:

Fie, fie! no thought of him:
 The thought of my revenges that way
 Recoil upon me: in himself too mighty,
 And in his parties, his alliance; let him be
 Until a time may serve: for present vengeance,
 Take it on her. Camillo and Polixenes
 Laugh at me, make their pastime at my sorrow:
 They should not laugh if I could reach them, nor
 Shall she within my power. (Act II, scene 3, lines 947-955)

As previously discussed, one can conclude that the suspicious jealousy of Othello, Posthumus and Leontes leads to revenge. Othello utters: "Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!" (Act III, scene 3, line 2132), Posthumus utters: "O, vengeance, vengeance!" (Act II, scene 5, line 1379), and Leontes utters: "for present vengeance, /Take it on her." (Act II, scene 3, line 951) After finally Leontes learns that he has falsely accused Hermione of adultery, he admits his mistake, his wrongful vengeance and begs for pardon: "I'll reconcile me to Polixenes, /New woo my queen, recall the good Camillo, /Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy;/For, being transported by my jealousies /To bloody thoughts and to revenge" (Act III, scene 2, lines 1387-1391). In addition, since Hermione is pregnant, Leontes starts to suspect that the child is Polixenes': "A callat/Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband/And now baits me! This brat is none of mine;/It is the issue of Polixenes:/Hence with it, and together with the dam/Commit them to the fire!" (Act II, scene 3, lines 1042-1047) Since he falsely believes that son is a bastard, in addition to Polixenes and Hermione, Leontes also wants to punish his son:

My child? away with't! Even thou, that hast
 A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence
 And see it instantly consumed with fire;
 Even thou and none but thou. Take it up straight:

Within this hour bring me word 'tis done,
And by good testimony, or I'll seize thy life,
With what thou else call'st thine. If thou refuse
And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;
The bastard brains with these my proper hands
Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire. (Act II, scene 3, lines 1093-1102)

Since in the cases of Othello, Posthumus and Leontes the causes and proofs for their jealousy are so trivial, such as Iago's machinations and a handkerchief, a bracelet and awareness of a mole under the breast of the woman, and mere suspiciousness about some alleged affinity due to persuasion ability and due to the fact that the three characters want to punish their wives and exact vengeance, one can deduce that these characters are obsessed with, what Robert Bringle describes as, suspicious jealousy. Bringle describes suspicious jealousy as chronic, neurotic and due to inner turmoil. Shakespeare in *Othello* might have shed light on this time of jealousy through the mouth of Iago. Iago says: They are not ever jealous for the cause, /But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster/ Begot upon itself, born on itself (Act III, scene 4, lines 2355-57). An additional proof that their jealousy is not the second type of jealousy described by Bringle, namely reactive jealousy, is the fact that none of the three characters has seen a real or concrete threat.

John Donne also distinguishes two types of jealousy. In one of his marriage sermons he writes:

Where there is... a spirit of uncleanness, there will necessarily be... a spirit of jealousy.... [but when] jealousy is a care and not a suspicion, God is not ashamed to protest of himself that he is a jealous God... And God presents it as a curse, when he says, My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and no more angry; that is, I will leave thee to thy self, and take no more care of thee. Jealousy that implies care, and honour, and counsel, and tenderness, is rooted in God, for God is a jealous God, and his servants are jealous servants, as S. Paul professes of himself, I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. But jealousy that implies diffidence and suspicion, and accusation, is rooted in the Devil.

The first type of jealousy according to John Donne is characterized by care, honour, counsel and tenderness and Donne calls it godly jealousy. The second type of jealousy that Donne describes, according to him is rooted in the Devil. It is characterized by suspicion and accusation, exactly the types of jealousy Othello, Posthumus and Leontes display.

The three main characters all exhibit openly suspicion about their wife's infidelity. Iago who himself is suspiciously jealous about Othello and wants revenge, stating "For that I do suspect the lusty Moor/Hath leap'd into my seat" (Act II, scene 1, line 1096) describes Othello in the following manner: "He hath a person and a smooth dispose/To be suspected, framed to make women false." (Act I, scene 3, lines 754-55) After Posthumus hears the description of Imogen's room by Iachimo he is reluctant to believe, but after he is shown the bracelet he starts to suspect that Iachimo has slept with Imogen. Finally, after Iachimo asks Posthumus that he has seen the mole under her breast and asks Posthumus whether he remembers that stain, his suspicion comes to the fore, as he says "it doth confirm/Another stain, as big a hell can hold,1350/Were there no more but it. (Act II, scene 4, lines 1349-51) In the case of Leontes, after he realizes his mistake and he confesses that he has been wrongly suspicious of his wife: "What! look upon my brother: both your pardons, That e'er I put between your holy looks/My ill suspicion" (Act V, scene 3, lines 3465-67)

In addition to being suspiciously jealous, the three main characters also display another trait of this type of jealousy as outlined by John Donne, namely accusation. In front of Iago, Othello accuses Desdemona of being a whore and a devil: "Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her! / Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw, /To furnish me with some swift means of death/For the fair devil" Act III, scene 3, lines 2167-2170). In front of Iachimo and Philario, Posthumus also accuses Imogen of being a whore: "No, he hath enjoyed her: /The cognizance of her incontinency/ Is this: she hath bought the name of whore/ thus dearly." (Act II, scene 4, lines 1331-34) Finally, in front of the lords, Leontes accuses Hermione of being an adulteress: "These shrugs, these hums and ha's, /When you have said 'she's goodly,' come between/Ere you can say 'she's honest:' but be 't known, /From him that has most cause to grieve it should be, /She's an adulteress" (Act II, scene 1, lines 689-693).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPAL FEMALE CHARACTERS

The three main female characters who are the object of jealousy and punishment, display exactly the other type of jealousy that John Donne describes, namely godly jealousy characterized by care, honour or in other words respect, counsel and tenderness.

When Othello complains that he has a headache, Desdemona shows her care: "I am very sorry that you are not well" (Act III, scene 3, lines 1995) and respect:

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse

Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking. (Act III, scene 4, lines 2195-2199)

As opposed to Othello, Desdemona's love is pure and full of respect. Even though Othello strikes her and calls her several times a whore and a devil, Desdemona states that despite everything that she went through she will not stop loving Othello:

Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did.
And ever will—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. (Act IV, scene 2, lines 2920-2930)

In *Cymbeline*, after Posthumus is exiled to Rome, Imogen also displays her godly jealous love for him full of respect: "I am in heaven for him; or ere I could/ Give him that parting kiss which I had set/ Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father/And like the tyrannous breathing of the north/Shakes all our buds from growing." (Act I, scene 3, lines 309-313)

When Iachimo comes from Rome, Imogen immediately shows care about the health of Posthumus:

Imogen. Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?
Iachimo. Well, madam.
Imogen. Is he disposed to mirth? I hope he is.
Iachimo. Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there
So merry and so gamesome: he is call'd
The Briton reveller.
Imogen. When he was here,
He did incline to sadness, and oft-times
Not knowing why. (Act I, scene 6, lines 669-677)

Imogen cares so much for Posthumus, that when Cloten, disguised as Posthumus Cloten is killed, she falls on his body thinking that it is Posthumus's: "This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O! /Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood, /That we the horrider may seem to those/Which chance to find us: O, my lord, my lord! [Falls on the body] (Act IV, scene 2, lines 2733-36)

Hermione's sole mistake is the fact that she convinced Polixenes to remain in Sicily. When she is accused by her husband of adultery, she affirms her innocence:

If powers divine
Behold our human actions, as they do,
I doubt not then but innocence shall make
False accusation blush and tyranny
Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know,
Who least will seem to do so, my past life
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,
As I am now unhappy. (Act III, scene 2, lines 1240-47)

4. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, one can say that in the three plays, although *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* as romances have a happy ending, Shakespeare has gain shown his acumen and his understanding of human nature and psychology and has used the most common and perhaps the most dangerous type of jealousy, namely male's suspicious jealousy. In the cases of Othello, Posthumus, Leontes but also in Iago's case, jealousy leads to revenge and either murder as in the case of Othello or punishment ordered by Posthumus and Leontes. In addition, as previously discussed, the jealous Othello, Posthumus and Leontes are on the brink of madness due to their exaggerated suspicious nature. The female characters, on the other hand, are presented as innocent and long-suffering without any hint of culpability, but rather as, caring, respectful and full of tenderness. One can also conclude that Shakespeare has chosen three

extremely virtuous, innocent and caring wives in order to emphasize how insidious and outright dangerous and revengeful suspicious jealousy can turn out to be. I believe that the lesson that we learn about suspicious jealousy from these three plays is still relevant today and can serve as a sort of instruction in our modern world with regard to male-female relationships.

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