

Jealous Murderers as Reflected in Shakespeare's *Othello*: A Psychoanalytic Study

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Abstract

This analysis describes the main characters' jealous murder and their id, ego and super ego. It tries to describe the moral teachings of the drama. Desdemona was killed by her own husband, Othello, because of jealousy. He received Iago's report that Desdemona had an affair with Cassio. Iago made issues that Desdemona had an affair with Cassio because he felt jealous that Cassio was promoted to be a lieutenant. Iago asked Roderigo to kill Cassio but failed. Roderigo was killed by Iago, to omit the traces.

Sigmund Freud's theory of id, ego, and super ego will be used in analyzing the problems. The subject of this analysis is drama *Othello*, and the object of this analysis is a psychoanalytic study with its id, ego and super ego.

The research findings are : jealous murders that had been done by Othello and Iago. Othello's is murdering his own beautiful wife, Desdemona, without further checking. To omit the trace, Iago killed Roderigo, the person that he asked to kill Casio; It is Iago 's id. Othello's ego is when he received news from Iago's wife, Emilia. She told the truth to Othello that Iago was the person who asked her to steal Desdemona's handkerchief. Othello felt that he had made mistakes and the he punished Iago by stabbing him. Othello's super ego is his feeling regret after receiving news from Iago's wife, Emilia. The moral teachings of the drama are (1) people should screen news they received, and (2) people should avoid of being jealous.

Key words: *Othello*, psychoanalytic study, jealous murder, handkerchief.

A. Background

Jealousy can cause brutal murders, and other bad deed. Receiving news without further checking may cause unexpected result. Jealousy and being hate cause someone create someone make a revenge. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, Iago creates a revenge against General Othello because He feels jealous of promoting Casio to be a lieutenant. Iago accuses Casio having love affair to Desdemona, Othello's wife. Iago reported news to General Othello. Othello killed his wife brutally without thinking further.

The researcher analyzes Shakespeare's *Othello* with some reasons. First, Shakespeare is a famous author. His name has been written in *Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Second, drama *Othello* has been filmed.

A. Theoretical Frame Work

The total personality as conceived by Freud in Hall (1954: 22-32) consists of three major systems. These are called the *id*, *ego*, and the *superego*. In the mentally healthy person these three systems form a unified and harmonious organization. ...The sole function of the *id* is to provide for the immediate discharge of quantities of excitation (energy or tension) that are released in the organism by internal or external stimulation. The *id* is the primary source of psychic energy and the seat of the instincts. The *id* does not change with the passage of time; it cannot be modified by experience because it is not in contact with the external world...

The *ego* may be thought of as a complex organization of psychological processes that acts as an intermediary between the *id* and the external world. In addition to the processes that serve reality, there is an *ego* function that resembles the primary process of the *id*. However, this *ego* process differs from the primary process because it distinguishes between phantasy and reality, which is not the case with the primary process.

The third major institution of personality, the *super-ego*, is the moral or judicial branch personality. It represents the ideal rather than the real, and it strives for perfection rather than for reality or pleasure. The *superego* is the person's moral code. It develops out of the *ego* as a consequence of the child's assimilation of his parents' standards regarding what is good and virtuous and what is bad and sinful. (Freud, 1979: 22-37).

Makaryk (1993: 163) stated that Psychoanalysis, a clinical and interpretive science founded by Sigmund Freud (1886-1939), offers a genetic theory of the evolution of the human mind as "psychic apparatus." Central to Freud's theory is his concept of the unconscious mind, in which the body and the sexual history of the human subject persist in all productions of the conscious mind. For Freud the concept of sexuality is not one of mere biology or genial urge but is rather the complex of bodily mental desire which manifests itself in earliest infancy as well as adult life.

According to Maslow in Hall and Lindzey (1985:212) "We often countervalue greatness: We surely love and admire all the persons who have incarnated the true, the good, the beautiful, the just, the perfect, the ultimately successful. And yet they also make us uneasy, anxious, confused, perhaps a little jealous or envious, a little inferior, clumsy".

Karen Horney in Hall and Lindzey (1985:189) stated that conflict is inevitable in human life, but people with basic anxiety and hostility cannot tolerate it and develop neurotic ways of trying to deal with it: they develop an idealized self-image, they search for glory, they evolve neurotic should, they externalize what is unacceptable, and they acquire neurotic pride and self-hate. All these lead to alienation from the self.

Anna Freud in Lesser and Pope (2011:63-66) viewed many of the behavioral manifestation previously considered by Freud to be direct expressions of instincts as serving defensive functions; for example, anger could now be seen as a defense against anxiety. Defenses are unconscious

and thought to originate in certain psychosexual developmental phases. Efforts directed at modifying defenses created anxiety and are often "resisted" by the individual. Resistance operates unconsciously. Defenses can be adaptive when they serve.....The mature super ego flexibility reduces pressures on the ego, there by making it possible for the ego to consider a greater range of options in attempting to resolve intrapsychic and interpersonal conflict. People who have mastered the developmental tasks to the *oral, anal, phallic, genital phallic,* and *genital* stages of development tend to experience anxiety in more transient ways, to employ healthier ego defenses, and to become less dysfunctional in the face of perceived psychological danger. Certain anxieties are linked to the different psychosexual stages of development: oral (*autonomic anxiety*); anal (*fear of loss of object*); phallic (*fear of loss of the love object*); genital (*castration anxiety*); and latency (*during latency children may selectively experience anxiety associated with any or all of the earlier stages of psychosexual development*). .

B. The plot of the drama

The plot of *Othello* tells about the jealousy of Iago and Othello. Iago felt jealous because Othello promoted Casio to be a lieutenant. Iago felt that Casio was the same grade with him. Iago hated on Othello and Casio. He planned to destroy both Othello and Cassio by involving many people like Brabantio, Emillia, and Redorigo. Iago destroyed Othello by telling him that Cassio had an affair with Desdemona, Othello's wife.

Iago asked Emillia to steal Desdemona's handkerchief that was a symbol of Othello's love and faith. As Desdemona's servant, Emillia was easy to steal Desdemona's handkerchief. Iago put it in Cassio's room and made him easy to find it. At first, Emillia refused Iago to steal Desdemona's handkerchief because Emillia was faithful as a friend to Desdemona. At last, Emillia obeyed Iago because he was her husband.

The Moors were Muslim people who live in the northern coast of Africa, an area of the Europeans called Barbary. Othello was accepted into Venice society because he was a brave soldier. Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona, was the princess of noble who had bright skin and beautiful face. Othello and Desdemona were from different cultures but they loved each other.

Iago destroyed Othello by telling Brabantio that Othello used magic in marrying Desdemona. It was Iago's provocation to Desdemona's father to hate Othello. Brabantio, Desdemona's father was unhappy why Desdemona loved Othello. Brabantio thought that Othello applied a magic to get his daughter. It can be seen in this following quotation below:

O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her, For I'll refer me to all things of sense, If she in chains of magic were not bound, Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy, So opposite to marriage....
(Shakespeare, 1992 : 12)

The quotation shows that Brabantio thought that Othello used a magic to make his daughter fall in love with Othello.

C. DISCUSSION

Analyzing Shakespeare's *Othello*, the writer wants to describe the characters' characterization related to their action. The readers can see the behavior of the characters based on What they do. Here are their characterization:

1. Othello's characterizations

a. Jealousy

Othello felt jealous after being told by Iago that Desdemona had an affair with Cassio. Othello told Iago that he wanted to kill Desdemona. Othello asked Iago how the best way to murder Desdemona was. He also decided to kill Cassio. Iago told Othello that he was ready to kill Cassio. Iago suggested Othello to kill Desdemona on her bed.

According to Reaske 1996:18) Jealousy is a final corollary kind of motive. Jealousy operates as one of the most particular and strongest motives in all dramas. *Othello* is the most example of a drama in which the central character is motivated to act on his jealousy. Jealousy sometimes is defined as human envy. All of the action in *Othello* relates with jealousy especially jealousy of the main character Othello, Iago and Roderigo.

Othello is jealous to Cassio. Iago is a liar. He says to Othello that Cassio has an affair with his wife Desdemona. Jealousy of Othello can affect to his words. He can mention some words which show his feeling such as whore, monster, blood, death and damnation. (Shakespeare, 1992 : 78-98). Next Othello feels jealous, he thinks to revenge and kills Cassio.

b. Carelessness

Carelessness is lacking or marked by a lack of care (Vianna,1981:160). Othello was a careless because he did not think deeply on the words given by others, especially Iago. Othello belived Iago' words that Desdemona had affair with Cassio. After that Othello wanted to murder Desdemona on her bed. Actually, Desdemona asked her husband to kill her tomorrow, but Othello refused. Here is the evidence:

Desdemona : kill me tomorrow; let me live tonight!

Othello : Nay, if you strive—

Desdemona : but half an hour!

Othello : being done, there is no pause

Desdemona : but while I say one prayer!

Othello : it too late

(Shakespeare, 1992 :109)

c. Bravery or courage

Courage or bravery; quality that enables a person to control fear in the face in face of danger, pain, misfortune, etc. (Hornby, 1963 :222). According to Maslow in Hall and Lindzy (1985:209), they are as inherent in human being as are the basic needs, and when they are not fulfilled, the person may fall prey to metapathologies, such as

boredom, discouragement, humorlessness, alienation, selfishness, hatred, loss of zest, despair.

The bravery of Othello was seen by people in Venice. By his bravery Othello could get his high position in army. Desdemona loved him because he was strong and had a high position. The Duke of Venice admitted Othello's bravery and sent him to Cyprus to fall down a Turkish invasion. The Duke agreed that he loved Desdemona. The Duke said: " adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well" (Shakespeare, 1992: 23).

d. Anger

Horney in Hall and Lindzey (1985: 158) stated that Basic Anxiety is always accompanied by basic hostility, a derivative of anger , which is the predisposition to anticipate harm from others and thus to distrust them. Together, anxiety and hostility lead people to believe that they must always be on guard to protect their security.

Othello could not stop his anger after Emillia told him that the person who asked her to steal Desdemona's handkerchief was Iago. Othello stabbed Iago. Emillia was faithful to Desdemona .Emillia helped Desdemona when Othello suspected her that Desdemona had affair with Cassio. Here is the evidence:

Othello : You have seen nothing then?
Emillia : nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.
Othello : you have seen Cassio and she together
Emillia : Never, my lord.
Othello : nor send you out o' the way?
Emillia : Never!

(Shakespeare, 1992:30-31)

The *id* of Othello is murdering his own beautiful wife, Desdemona, based on his jealousy. Othello is a careless person because he is too easy to believe other person's news without being thought deeply.

Othello's *ego* is when he is conscious that murdering his own wife without further consideration is wrong. Stabbing Iago as a punishment becomes the sign that he had made big mistakes by murdering his own wife without any approval.

Othello's *super-ego* is when Emillia and Cassio telling the truth. Othello admitted that murdering his own faithful and beautiful wife is big mistakes . Othello asks forgiveness by killing himself.

2. Iago's characterization

To know Iago's behavior the writer wants to give the actions which are done by him related with other characters like: Othello, Cassio, Emillia, and Roderigo. Here are Iago's characterization:

a. cunning

Cunning is clever at deceiving or quality of being cunning (Hornby,1973:238) Atkinson, Morten, and Sue in Prockaska and Norcross (2003: 440) stated that Stage 3, resistance and immersion is characterized by an appreciating stance toward oneself and one own minority group, conflict between empathy for other minority group and culture –centrism, and depreciating attitude toward the dominant culture.

Iago used his cunning to destroy Othello, Cassio, and Roderigo. Starting from being jealous of promoting Cassio to be a lieutenant, Iago started to apply his cunning. Iago used different race between Othello and Desdemona. He ordered Roderigo, who loved Desdemona to make provocation to Brabantio that Othello used magic in marrying Desdemona. Iago asked Roderigo to murder Cassio, his rival in getting position. See the evidence :

Iago : sir, has's rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may stroke t you-
provoke him that he may; for even out of that will Icause these of cyprus
to mutiny , whose qualification shall come into true taste again but by
the displanting of Cassio.....

Rod: I will do this, if you can bring to any opportunity(Shakespeare, 1992: 36)

This is the *id* of Iago. His cunning is used to destroy many people based on jealousy. His *ego* is receiving punishment from Othello. His *super-ego* is he is fail to murder Cassio.

b. Hypocrite

In Hornby (1995:893) hypocrite is a person who pretends to have standards or opinion which he or she does not have, or to be what he or she is not. Iago is a hypocrite man. He is only pretending to be obedient.

“In following him, I follow but my self
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty.
Bur seeming so, for my peculiar end”
(Shakespeare, 1992:5)

Based on the quotation, it shows that Iago is only pretending to be obedient to Othello as his leader but his goal to take down Othello. Iago uses Redorigo to help his action. Iago knows that Roderigo feels jealous to Othello because Othello succeed to get Desdemona as his wife.

D. MORAL VALUES

After analyzing Shakespeare's *Othello*, the writer gets moral values that can be applied in the readers' life. There are negative and positive moral values:

1. Positive Moral Values

- a. People should be aware of the news given by others.
People should screen news from other people. There are some people who want to

destroy others by many ways. For example : Iago destroyed Othello by lying .

b. Jealousy and being cunning may destroy others.

Being jealous in property may cause crimes but being jealous in meditating to God is good. Being cunning tears good-friendship. It becomes unfair because of having no confidence.

E. CONCLUSION

Getting the essence of analyzing Shakespeare's *Othello* , the writer wants give conclusion to make the readers easy in getting the main problem.

1. The *Id* of Othello can be seen when he murders his wife, Desdemona. Desdemona was murdered on the bed. Desdemona asked Othello to postpone the murder for tomorrow but Othello did not allow her.
2. Othello's *ego* is when he stabbed Iago, for his lying. Emilia told Othello that Iago asked her to steal Desdemona's handkerchief. It was not true that Desdemona had an affair with Cassio.
3. Othello's *super-ego* happened when he killed himself for showing that he made big mistakes. He thought that it was useless to stay in the world.
4. Othello's characterizations are: bravery, careless, and easy to get angry.
5. Iago's characterizations are: cunning, liar, being a hypocrite man.

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