John Dryden’s *The Conquest of Granada*:
The Green-Eyed Monster Reconsidered

Mohammed Rawashdeh

Department of English, Yarmouk University, Jordan

Received on Feb 2, 2007  Accepted on Dec 3, 2007

Abstract

This paper demonstrates that John Dryden in *The Conquest of Granada* treats jealousy in men from the modern psychoanalytical perspective. When other playwrights of his period conceive man’s jealousy, in their plays, as a selfish sexual passion, Dryden views it more of socio-cultural and political influences. In other words, he does not narrowly confine jealousy to heterosexual love, nor does he bind it to man’s instinctual urge to protect his object of love, as his contemporaries do; rather, he encourages his audience to look beyond the heterosexual relationships to understand jealousy and its different manifestations within the heterosexual couple. In *The Conquest of Granada*, he suggests that jealousy in men has to do more with man’s relationship with other men as well as political and economic forces than with heterosexual love and its implications.

Moreover, he does not neglect, or relegate to oblivion, those who view jealousy in a positive way; he allows them to present their argument freely and without being ridiculed. Then he rationally and gradually dissuades them from their convictions. Other playwrights of Restoration and eighteenth century (such as Davenant in *The Siege of Rhodes*, Etherege in *The Man of Mode*, Wicherley in *The Country Wife*, and Congreve in *The Way of the World*) inextricably bind jealousy to romantic love and present it as an intrinsic passion that is at odd with civilization. So jealous men, these plays suggest, are not to be listened to but always to be railed on and reprimanded. Contrary to this attitude, Dryden holds we have to listen to their viewpoint and to rationally disclose to them the potential evils of jealousy.

Keywords: Restoration, drama, heroic, Dryden, Granada, jealousy, East, West.
The traditional definition of sexual jealousy reduces it to possessive love or the fear of losing the object of one’s love. Related to this is the notion that jealousy springs from selfishness, that it is more the love of self than the love of another that causes jealousy to appear. On the whole, the traditional explanation limits the causes of jealousy to true or excessive love—the greater the jealousy, many people believe, the greater the love. The French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650) defined sexual jealousy as “a kind of fear, related to a desire to preserve a possession” and his fellow citizen Michel Montaigne (1553-1592), before him, had limited its causes to “sex,” maintaining that sex is the source of jealousy.\(^1\) To the masses, sexual jealousy has always been associated with excessive love and the desire of the jealous mate to preserve his/her love partner. David Buss, an advocate of jealousy, points out that “Women and men typically interpret a partner’s jealousy as a sign of the depth of their love, a partner’s absence of jealousy as lack of love.”\(^2\) Anne Maguire airs her doubts regarding this narrow perspective from which jealousy has been interpreted stating that “It seems superficially that jealousy is simply a possessiveness or vanity.” She insists that jealousy is difficult to define. It is, according to her, “the least known of all human passions” and therefore is still “an enigma” to us.\(^3\)

Modern psychology, however, does not approve of Maguire’s conclusion (that jealousy is an enigma) and opens new horizons for a more satisfactory understanding of this passion since it takes, in many cases, complex manifestations before which the traditional approach stands diminished. Some psychologists, like Ralph Hupka, view jealousy as a “social construction,” that is to say, jealousy is strongly associated with the constituents of our social life: one’s honor, social status, position, masculinity (for men), femininity (for women), …etc. Within these restraints, if any of the above cornerstones of our social edifice is in danger of being impaired, jealousy is stirred as a spontaneous and inevitable reaction. A second view, championed by the psychiatrist Dinesh Bhugra, states that jealousy is the product of capitalism. Jealousy, according to this view, is aroused if it is feared that any of our property, including the ones we love, could be lost. From this capitalist point of view, honor, fame, position, masculinity, and femininity become elements in the individual’s social assets. The third explanation attributes jealousy to defects in the character of the jealous person (such as low self-esteem) whereas the fourth one assumes the existence of a failure—“malfunction”—in the mind of the jealous person; this malfunction could be caused by stress, failure, anger, disappointment, or even physical injuries.\(^4\)

Since psychology was considerably well-established by the turn of the 20th century, we are not bringing the genie out of the lamp when we say that late 19th-century and 20th-century fiction deals with jealousy as a complex passion—a reaction to social, political and economic strains rather than a merely romantic passion. We are not bringing the genie out of the lamp because in its representation of jealous men, such fiction incorporates the findings of psychological and social studies with regard to
the causes and manifestations of jealousy. But what is remarkable is that Dryden, in *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71), almost two centuries earlier and when psychology was still in its infancy, suggests the same complexity presented by the psychological research of our modern time, thus distinguishing himself from his English contemporaries.

In *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71), Dryden furnishes a more complex explanation for jealousy in men: that jealousy results from a culmination of social, economic, or political insecurity, rather than simply from selfish and obsessive love. The force of any of the above factors, of course, varies from one man to another, depending on his individual interests and circumstances. By giving voice to a more nuanced view of jealousy, Dryden initiates a more convincing discourse on the subject than do his fellow playwrights whose presentations of this passion are based on suppressing such voices.

The fact that Boabdelin, the jealous character in Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71) and the focus of this study, is an Easterner and not a Westerner should not have a significant weight in this respect. On the one hand, it is agreed upon among psychologists that jealousy is a universal phenomenon; as Karen Durbin points out, “Serious anthropologists and sociologists reiterate that, however various and liberal the sexual attitudes of different peoples, sexual jealousy appears to be constant.” On the other hand, Western writers do show jealousy driving Western men mad or pushing them to imprison their women in their homes. Orlando in Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1516), Alibius, the jealous doctor, in Thomas Middleton’s and William Rowley’s *The Changeling* (1621), Corvino in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* (1605), Mr. Pinchwife in William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675) and Ernest Linwood in Lee Hentz’s *Ernest Linwood* (1856) are just a few examples of jealousy-stricken Western men. But it should be noted here that Eastern jealousy sometimes is depicted in Western literature as more violent and irrational than Western jealousy. For instance, Othello, the Moor in Shakespeare’s *Othello* (1604), unjustly kills his beloved and so does Osman, the Arab king of Jerusalem, in Aaron Hill’s *Zara* (1735). Because this study focuses on the complexity of jealousy rather than on its degrees of vehemence, Dryden’s Boabdelin, who actually is not an extremist in this respect, can be viewed as an archetype of jealous men in general.

Since Boabdelin’s jealousy starts to surface with the appearance of a rival, Almanzor, in his love for Almahide, his jealousy might mistakenly be viewed as a romantic one, especially when he says, “Ah Jealousie, how cruel is thy sting!” as he finds himself compelled to call back his rival to Granada. But a comprehensive look at the concomitant incidents and circumstances in which this jealousy is generated and heightened clearly reveals that his jealousy is an outcome of political and social anxieties. One might ask what Boabdelin’s jealousy has to do with the political situation in Granada or with Boabdelin’s deteriorating social relationships. To answer this
question, it is important to know, on the one hand, the demographic and ethnic structure of Granada at that time and the tremendous pressure the Spaniards put on Boabdell, and on the other hand, how the lack of real social bonds between Boabdell and the men around him, including his brother, thrusts him into a state of bitter loneliness released in outbursts of jealousy.

Perhaps it is useful at this point to provide a quick summary of the play. Granada is besieged by the Spaniards, and its king, Boabdell, is under great pressure from enemies without as well as his people within the walls of the city. His people are busy with the factious conflicts, particularly between the two major tribes (the Abencerrages and the Zegrays), forgetting their common enemy, as Boabdell reminds them. They likewise grow exceedingly impatient with the shortage in provisions and the lack of security. Almanzor, the one man army, is an outsider brought to Granada by Prince Abdalla, the King’s brother, to save the falling city from total collapse. By his unmatched courage, Almanzor succeeds in bringing the two major tribes under control and succeeds in winning the first battle against the Spaniards. To Boabdell’s chagrin, Almanzor vehemently falls in love with Almahide who happens to be Boabdell’s fiancée, and he insists on having her in marriage as reward for his services to the city. Stunned by Almanzor’s bold demand, Boabdell banishes him and thus weakens his city and ignites the tribal conflict again, for the Zegrays side with Almanzor against the King while the Abencerrages side with the King because Almahide is an Abencerrage. Prince Abdalla, at the instigation of the Zegrays and with the help of Almanzor, dethrones his brother, although temporarily. A conflict that arises between Almanzor and Abdalla leads Almanzor to shift his support to Boabdell and to help him restore his throne, this time for the sake of Almahide who meanwhile has become the wife of Boabdell. Boabdell’s irrational jealousy (irrational because Almahide remains faithful to him to the last moment) and his abandonment of his wife in a very critical situation compel her eventually to abandon him. The Spaniards storm the city, Boabdell is killed, Almanzor discovers that he was born a Christian, and Almahide converts to Christianity after she is impressed by the generosity and integrity of the King and Queen of Spain. The play ends with a promise from Almahide to the Spanish Queen to consent to Almanzor’s proposal after the year of her widowhood comes to its end.

The tribal society Boabdell belongs to causes him tremendous anxiety and prevents him from exercising real power over his subjects. Because he exists within a tribal state, Boabdell is not a direct or an actual ruler of the city. The members of the Zegrays and Abencerrages (the two major tribes in Granada) receive their orders from their chiefs, Zulema and Abelmelch, respectively, rather than from the supposed ruler of the country, Boabdell. Thus, for Boabdell’s word to be honored among his subjects, it must be conveyed through the chiefs of the major tribes, or at least endorsed by them. Should they fail to give their seal of approval, Boabdell finds himself opposed by powerful men. His dysfunctional position becomes conspicuous.
when he fails to separate the two conflicting tribes (the Zegrys and the Abencerrages) simply because his command is not upheld by the chiefs of the two tribes. To better understand the power of tribes in relation to Eastern states, we need to examine the nature of these tribes.

Usually, the members of the same tribe draw their lineage back to one of the great-grandfathers and thus are related by blood. However, sometimes the larger entity includes other groups or smaller tribes whose unity is based on mutual interests and maintained by pledges of allegiance to one another. In the play, we are dealing with such collectivities; when the Zegrys and Abencerrages challenge each other, the messenger tells Boabdil that “On each side their Allies and Friends appear.” 7 What is important about this type of collectivity is that it carries its ethnic entity along with its political identity. Tribes in their different formations, according to Ira Lapidus, compete with the state for power, allegiance to the tribe being stronger than it is to the state even though “the authority of rulers was based on religious charisma.” 8 Using Georges de Scudéry’s *Almahide* (1660-63) as his source of information about Granada, Dryden takes the perspective that real power in Granada, which is depicted as a strictly tribal community, lies in the hands of the tribal leaders, not in those of its king, Boabdil. Referring to the alliance between the Zegrys and the Spaniards, which takes place after Boabdil is restored to the throne, Anne Barbeau points out, “Party loyalty thus replaces loyalty to the king among the Zegrys.” 9

The competition for power between the two tribes develops into a physical clash shortly after King Boabdil announces that in the near future Abenamar, the old Abencerrago, will be his father-in-law. The tribes foresee the outcome of this announcement as such: the Abencerrages, who are originally from Cordova, and their allies will move into a favored position with the King, and the Zegrys, who are of Eastern origin, will lose their privileges even though they outnumber their rivals. Consequently, the Abencerrages confidently boast that they are superior in race to their rivals, something that outrages the Zegrys and compels them to resort to arms to protect their interests and status. The King tries to unravel the ethnic conflict by asserting that “From equal stems their blood both houses draw”, but, as it turns out, it is in vain to solve such a conflict this way. 10

Thus, when the interests of these large conglomerations collide, they engage in fights that not only weaken the tribes themselves, but also the state as a whole. In such a tribal community the authority of the ruler becomes hostage to the desires of the major tribes. That is to say, Boabdil’s authority is forfeited to Zulema and Abdelmelech, the chiefs of the two major tribes, through whom he governs the Zegrys and the Abencerrages and the Granadans in general. The political insecurity that Boabdil suffers from is reflected in the rhetoric he uses to stop the two factions from indulging in a bloody fight:

*On your Allegiance, I command you stay;*
Who passes here, through me must take his way.
My life's the Ithmos; through this narrow line
You first must cut, before those Sea's can joyn.\textsuperscript{11}

To maintain the fragile stability of his country, Boabdelin seems to beg rather than
to command in this situation. As he is aware that his word will not be honored since it
is not channeled through Zulema and Abdelmelech, he physically tries to force the
separation by standing in between the “two fierce factions” and using his body as a
barrier between the factions, who will not be separated by his spoken command.\textsuperscript{12}
When he realizes that his command and physical intervention are futile and the two
factions are about to engage in a bloody fight, he does beg them to cease their
animosity: “Lay down your Arms; and let me beg you cease / Your Enmities”,
Boabdelin addresses his subjects in humiliation.\textsuperscript{13}

The transformation of a joyful, pompous king, flushed with victory after winning
the latest battle against the Spaniards, into a worried and humbled one, belittled by his
own people, is reflected in Boabdelin's changing attitude toward his beloved Almahide,
the daughter of Abenamar, the old Abencerrago. Defying the “Pow’rs of Spain” in the
recent battle, he proudly announces that he reigns in the “Triumphs of soft Peace”.\textsuperscript{14}
This peace will consequently lead to the celebration of his marriage “With pomp and
Sports”.\textsuperscript{15} The victory, though not a crucial one, raises his spirits and encourages him
to declare his love for Almahide and his intention to cultivate this love. In other words,
Boabdelin’s political stability has a strong and direct impact on his relationship with his
beloved. He is now prepared to take this love a step further by asking Almahide’s
hand in marriage from her father. But after his people defy him and he feels the
humiliation of their disobedience, he admits that he has forgotten Almahide:

\begin{quote}
My Mistris gently chides the fault I made:
But tedious business has my love delay’d;
Business, which dares the joyes of Kings invade.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

At this point, his weakened position in his state only leads Boabdelin to neglect
his beloved. As the play goes on and his position weakens still farther, he will continue
his progression from victory and joyful love, through anxiety and neglect, to defeat and
jealousy.

One source of the anxiety comes from the tribal rivalry within Granada; the other
comes from beyond the city’s walls. Boabdelin’s intention to make the night “sacred to
[their] love and peace” when “war and tumult cease” shows the direct and strong
impact of this war on his love for Almahide.\textsuperscript{17} In fact, the danger posed by the
Spaniards has not yet been eradicated, only temporarily curbed. Shortly after the
clash between the two major tribes is brought under control, the Duke of Arcos, one of
the Spanish leaders, comes with a powerful message to Boabdelin: “The Monarchs of
Castile and Arragon / Have sent [him] to demand this Town.”\textsuperscript{18} On receiving a
negative response, he warns Boabdilin to “prepare / For all the last extremities of war”, thus contributing to Boabdilin’s political insecurity.  

Furthermore, the complicated political situation generates a rival to Boabdilin. His inability to enforce peace between the two factions paves the way for Almanzor, an outsider, to outshine him. Bold enough, Almanzor draws a line between the two factions with his sword and vows to kill whoever dares to cross the line, successfully separating the two factions. What Boabdilin could not do by offering to die, Almanzor does by killing a Zegry who defies his command, thus proving himself worthier than the King in the eyes of his people. This bravura display of courage and authority pushes Boabdilin into even a more embarrassing corner. Almanzor indeed replaces Boabdilin, giving him a lesson in kingship and admonishing him that subjects do not regard pleas from a monarch as kingly, stating that “A Beggar speaks too softly to be heard.”  

Appealing to the law of nature— we might even say the law of the jungle— Almanzor in effect, if not in name, dethrones Boabdilin and confidently claims kingship for himself: “I brought that Succour which thou ought’st to bring, / And so, in Nature, am thy Subjects King.” Almanzor here highlights Boabdilin’s weakness, which he tries to conceal with a mask of power and confidence. In other words, Almanzor becomes Boabdilin’s superego, reminding him of what he lacks; the rival presents Boabdilin with the image of kinglyness that he can never live up to. Boabdilin’s ego collapses completely when he tells the Duke of Arcos to take Almanzor’s statement— “We will not give one stone from out these walls”— as his official response to the demand of the Spanish kings. In so doing, he puts his destiny in Almanzor’s hands and forfeits his authority to him, acknowledging, indirectly, Almanzor’s superiority and recognizing that he, though king in name, is under his guardianship. Henceforth, “Boabdilin and the royalty of Granada” become, as Arthur Kirsch remarks, “at his disposal.”  

At this point, Boabdilin’s feelings towards Almanzor are ambivalent; Almanzor’s boldness has shown him his inferiority and added to his insecurity as king, but it has simultaneously added to his military might in the eyes of his foes.

Boabdilin feels that he is alone in the arena, suffering all types of pressures and challenges. He has no real friend to support him, not even the servant or courtier to whom another king might disclose his fears and worries. The bonds between him and the men around him (Zegrys and Abencerrages) are frail because they are based on personal and tribal interests, not on a preeminent loyalty to nation or crown, much less to the king personally. For instance, even though Abdelmelech is one of Boabdilin’s most powerful and closest allies, he turns against Boabdilin when he decides to punish Almanzor. Almanzor has supported the Abencerrages, Abdelmelech’s faction, against the Zegrys, and thus support for the tribe trumps loyalty to the king.

The King’s loneliness is not exclusive to the larger social sphere but extends to the familial one. Boabdilin, like Shakespeare’s Richard II, unwisely breaks the domestic ties with all the people around him. Richard II’s desire to be an absolute king
leads him to unjustly banish his cousin Henry, the Duke of Herford, and Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk and to receive with joy the news that his decision has shortened the life of his uncle, Henry's father. But Richard II's glory does not last long; his selfishness compels many lords to join Henry when he returns to ask for his inheritance after the death of his father, and Richard II's flatterers abandon him when they feel that his opponents are more powerful. Boabdelin's selfishness leads him almost to the same feeling of loneliness and abandonment. Abdalla, his brother, is not supportive; he is "blind," as he describes himself, to his brother's sufferings and to the hardships of the Granadans, apparently for not being given any real authority. Abdalla, as Geoffrey Marshall remarks, "knows rationally what is right and yet acts according to his appetites." 

Dryden emphasizes the cold relationship between the two brothers from the very beginning, for Abdalla does not show any interest in solving the conflict between the Zegrys and Abencerrages, and he intervenes only to "Defer this noble Strangers [Almanzor's] punishment," warning his brother and anticipating his end, like John of Gaunt in Richard II (1595), "Or your rash orders you will soon repent." 

Anne Barbeau points out that "Throughout the play Abdalla appears consciously to choose deception." Undoubtedly, the standpoint of Abdalla in this particular incident adds to the insecurity of Boabdelin. The rhetoric he uses shows that he holds but scant regard for his brother and great regard for Almanzor, especially after Almanzor forces the two tribes to lay down their arms: "How much of virtue lies in one great Soul / Whose single force can multitudes control!", Abdalla says to Almanzor while embracing him for his brave achievement, before his brother's very eyes.

Boabdelin's fault is that he tries to steer everything for his own benefit, neglecting even that of his own brother. Abdalla, for his part, does not volunteer to help his brother or show solidarity in times of hardship. Eventually, this fragile bond between the two brothers is shattered when Abdalla's attraction to Lyndaraxa leads him to dethrone his brother to satisfy his beloved's ambition, to be called queen. The alienation between the two brothers culminates not only in eliciting Boabdelin's jealousy but also in relegating him to the realms of melancholy. Thus, in the midst of these devastating conditions (clashes between the two major tribes, the bloody attempt to dethrone Boabdelin and the war against the Spaniards), an overwhelming jealousy begins to grow. It is likewise safe to say that Dryden's excessive use of violence on the stage serves to show the great pressures that bear down on Boabdelin and the outpouring of his jealousy that results from them. And, in any case, as Cecil Deane points out, for Dryden, violence was "an essential feature of the heroic play." 

It must be stressed, however, that it is as a result of these pressures, which build up even before Almanzor reveals publicly his attraction to Almahide, that Boabdelin starts to suspect Almahide's virtue. After being dethroned by his brother, Boabdelin finds himself at very low ebb, having lost both his throne and his beloved. In this sorry state, his first thought is that Almahide, who by now has become his fiancée,
might have forsaken her virtue and yielded to the lust of his conquerors. It is obvious that the precarious situation in which he finds himself, not the actual existence of a rival, gives birth to his blind jealousy. Almahide’s father, Abenamar, is shocked by this unjustified suspicion and reminds him that his daughter is “in rules of Virtue bred!.”

He advises Boabdil to lay aside these evil thoughts and to “Think better of her.” Boabdil’s suspicion, however, does not spring from any secrets he knows regarding Almahide’s virtue, but from his low self-esteem and insecurity, the result of his being helpless and dethroned. He is here pathologically jealous, but in the absence of a rival, he is compelled to suppress his jealousy. Later, Almanzor’s declaration that he loves Almahide gives Boabdil a good reason to confirm his formerly unjustified suspicion. The unexpected appearance of a rival provides him with the opportunity to unleash his already smoldering but suppressed jealousy. The fact that this rival is Almanzor serves Boabdil in two ways: on the one hand, it frees him from his obligations to Almanzor for the great service of restoring him to his throne, so he is quick to announce that his patience “more then payes” his debt to Almanzor; on the other hand, it provides him with an excuse to punish the man who has exposed his weaknesses through his own valor and worthiness.

If we take jealousy in its broader sense (even though some critics such as Rosemary Lloyd insist on limiting it to sexual rivalry), Boabdil has been jealous of Almanzor since his arrival in Granada, i.e., prior to his becoming a rival for the love of Almahide. As a matter of fact, Boabdil’s jealousy began even before he knew Almanzor by name. Describing Almanzor’s first participation in the war against the Spaniards, Boabdil says to Abdelmelech,

> I mark’d him, when alone
> (Observ’d by all, himself observing none)
> He enter’d first; and with a graceful pride,
> His fiery Arab, dexterously did guide:

It is that prowess that Boabdil is first jealous of in Almanzor, the characteristic that he himself lacks and, undoubtedly makes him feel, in this respect, inferior to Almanzor, though he is king. Sometimes, as Anne Maguire maintains, jealousy “is deeply concealed behind admiration or love.” Boabdil hides his jealousy behind admiration in his first comments on his future rival.

Later, Almanzor’s public proposal to Almahide marks the birth of a deep-rooted jealousy, murderous in its intent. This formerly hidden jealousy explains what seems at first glance a not fully justified decision. “Go, let me hear my hated Rival’s dead” is King Boabdil’s order to his guards when Almahide refuses to be coerced into marriage with him. But when we take into consideration Boabdil’s mounting jealousy initially prompted by Almanzor’s first victory over the Spaniards and ending with his request to have Almahide as his wife, Boabdil’s decision to inflict the harshest punishment on Almanzor becomes comprehensible. Even after his
banishment, Almanzor remains the figure that reminds Boabdil of his helplessness. Losing the latest battle against the Spaniards, he pathetically remembers Almanzor and his triumphs. His frequent failures in defending his city pushes him to feel that heaven is working against him and siding with his rival: “as if Heav’n decreed / Almanzors valour should alone succeed.”

It is significant that Boabdil’s jealousy grows, in violence, as the political circumstances around him get more critical, compounding his insecurity. His first outburst of jealousy toward Almahide happens when she consents, albeit upon his request, to recall Almanzor to Granada. He accuses her of infidelity, taking her quick consent as proof of such:

You love, you love him; and that love reveal
By your too quick consent to his repeal.
My jealousie had but too just a ground;
And now you stab into my former wound.

“This sudden change,” which Almahide “do[es] not understand” comes as a result of the worsening political conditions inside and outside the walls of Granada. Thus, “Jealousy becomes” as Rosemary Lloyd defines it “a metaphor for all the forces of chaos” since what pushes him to ask Almahide to call back Almanzor is not a suspicion that he tries to confirm, but rather the frequent losses at the hands of the Spaniards and the increasing rage of his people due to severe food shortages. The third messenger displays how critical the situation is within the walls of Granada when he says to Boabdil, “This Minute if you grant not their desire [to call back Almanzor] / They’ll seize your Person, and your Palace Fire.” His brother Abdalla and Ozmyn have already joined the camp of the Spaniards and his life is under serious threat. It is, in fact, this overwhelming situation that transforms him into a jealous husband. His frustration at being unable to protect and provide for his people, along with his failure to win a single battle against the Spaniards, finds an outlet in jealous outbursts directed at his wife, who becomes the focus for his anger and anxiety. The psychological torment he suffers is reflected in his contradictory demands on Almahide, for he wants her to send for Almanzor and simultaneously to deny his request on the supposition that what he has asked for is unjust and that her refusal would have shown that she has “lov’d [him] more then [sic] to obey.” Almahide reminds him that she willingly agreed to be his wife rather than Almanzor’s, and this willingness should be an ample proof that she is faithful to him. Boabdil then apologizes to his wife, conceding her point saying “If I have been suspicious or unkind, / Forgive me; many cares distract my mind.” This statement reveals that his jealousy has no basis in fear of losing Almahide, the object of his love. This jealousy is simply a mask to conceal the actual fear, the fear not only of losing his throne, but also of being physically vanquished.Attributing his jealousy to the many cares that distract his mind.
leaves no doubt that Dryden is conscious of the vital role that the political and social factors play in eliciting jealousy in men.

Even his second jealous tirade directed at Almahide, prompted by her giving Almanzor her scarf, is superficially due to Almahide’s behavior and more fundamentally due to his political insecurity. Othello’s hysterical demand for his handkerchief, in Shakespeare’s Othello (1604), might be, to some extent, justified, for Iago has told him that he did “See Cassio wipe his beard with [it]”, and Desdemona is unable to give a convincing explanation for its disappearance.41 In Ben Jonson’s Volpone (1606), Corvino’s outrage at his wife Celia, who throws down her handkerchief to the mountebank, who in his turn kisses it passionately, can also be justified because she does it playfully, though publicly, thinking that her husband does not see her.42 But Almahide presents Almanzor with her scarf in public and in deference to his request for a token of gratitude for his expected effort in defending Granada, reminding him, to avoid suspicion or accusation, that she does so for the sake of her husband. Since she has given Almanzor her scarf in public and for her husband’s sake, Almahide views it as nothing more than a “toy.” Nonetheless, for Boabdelin, it becomes the peg on which he hangs his jealousy and by which he justifies his outburst, which is in actuality nothing more than a venting of his strong residual anger. He is angry at himself because of his inability to realize the image of a true king and to maintain any solid domestic bonds. He is angry at his people because they remind him of his weakness when they place all their trust and hopes in Almanzor.

Torn between his urgent need for his rival’s aid and his jealousy, the tortured Boabdelin presents a pathetic figure. His pains rapidly increase as he proves unable to live up to the expectations of both his wife and his people. His attempts to defend Granada are destined to fail, while success is always on the side of his rival. At one point, Boabdelin wishes that he were in his rival’s place, so that he could enjoy the admiration of the people and of Almahide as well as the valor that has earned it:

I’me forc’d to stoop to one I fear and hate.
Disgrac’d, distrest, in exile, and alone,
He is greater then [sic] a Monarch on his Throne.
Without a Realm a Royalty he gains;
Kings are the Subjects over whom he Raigns.43

As Lloyd points out, “once jealousy has been aroused, the crystallization process becomes a source . . . of torment.”44 Interestingly enough, after each outburst of jealousy, Boabdelin engages in profound self-abasement, and thus marriage, for him, becomes the “curse of love” that renders him continuously apprehensive and sad.45 The anxiety produced by the coexistence of love and insecurity becomes unbearable; loneliness and melancholy become his constant companions. His wife
tries to comfort him, but he spurns her attempt, demanding that she “let [him] walk alone.”

The overwhelming pressure endured by Boabdelin causes symptoms nigh on hysteria. His comments about Almanzor are more of hallucinations than conscious words and his outbursts at Almahide, though misdirected, are nothing more than hysterical attacks through which Boabdelin seeks to avenge his injured pride. As Freud maintains in “The Psychic Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomenon” (1895), an injured person, incapable of revenge, gives vent to his feelings through words, as a substitute for revenge: “The reaction of an injured person to a trauma has really only then a perfect ‘cathartic’ effect if it is expressed in an adequate reaction like revenge. But man finds a substitute for this action in speech . . . .” Boabdelin after one of his outbursts admits that he is on the verge of madness because of the pressure he is exposed to. Referring to love and state and the magnitude of the strains they put on him, he says, “[E]ach of ‘em [is] enough to make me mad.” His incapacity to take revenge on either Almanzor or Almahide forces him to seek relief in cursing himself on one occasion and in threatening them on another. “Curst be that fatal hour when I was born!” Boabdelin says when his wife agrees to send for Almanzor. Even in the worst conditions (when Almahide is accused of adultery), he vents his anger in describing her as “false” and “ungrateful,” leaving the physical punishment to be executed by the court. Jealous outbursts, then, become more or less a mechanism by which Boabdelin assuages the excruciating pain of disappointment and failure, and his wife becomes a scapegoat, bearing the brunt of his frustration at his failed political relationships and his desperate fight for self-preservation. By associating jealousy closely with political pressures and the lack of supportive social relationships, Dryden breaks the standard link of romantic love and jealousy. In light of the findings of psychological studies, there is almost consensus among modern writers that jealousy is strongly associated with forces other than sexuality.

Dryden also distinguishes himself in the technique he uses to reveal to those who viewed jealousy as a sign of true love the self-deception into which they had fallen. Interestingly enough, Othello asks Desdemona to say her prayers, kisses her, and then kills her without even piercing her skin to show how much he loves her and that he kills her only because he is overwhelmed by jealousy. Present day psychotherapists deal with jealousy as a psychological problem that needs to be addressed clinically. Restoration dramatists, likewise, present jealous people in their plays as sick people, but not as victims who need help; rather, as dangerous people who need to be curbed and despised. Accordingly, no tolerance is shown for them. For instance, in Davenant’s The Siege of Rhodes (1661), once Lanthe feels that Alphonso is jealous of Solyman, she immediately says to him, “Sure you are sick.” Laura Brown finds some ground for Alphonso’s jealousy; she observes, “Proximity might make Alphonso’s jealousy seem justified.” But Davenant does not give
Alphonso the opportunity to defend himself and express his own viewpoint; instead, he manipulates the scene and presents him as a guilty person, ashamed of his own jealousy. "Oh jealousy if it be / Would I had here an asp instead of thee!", Alphonso says regretfully when his jealousy surfaces. Also, the Chorus in the play equates jealousy with "fever" that plagues love and accordingly such love suffers "fits" of "cold" and "trembling", once again using symptoms of sickness to describe jealousy. It is thought-provoking that the notion of sickness has persisted into our present time. Anne Maguire explains that in jealousy there is an aspect "perhaps harmful and dangerous to the structure of personality", suggesting that jealousy is associated with psychological problems. Surprisingly, Almahide does not label Boabdil as a sick or selfish person when his jealousy becomes noticeable; she, in fact, deals with it in a highly sensitive way and does her best not to provoke it. She tells her husband that she has banished Almanzor, not because she was afraid that she might yield to his relentless efforts to woo her, but because she is sensitive to her husband’s feelings and wants to save him the torments of jealousy. When he asks her to send for him, she sympathizes with him, realizing that, upon Almanzor’s return, he again has to bear the fire of jealousy: “In his return too sadly I foresee / Th’effects of your returning jealousie.” More importantly, she defends him when Almanzor describes him as an unworthy person because of the pains he causes her as a result of his jealousy:

You'r much too bold, to blame a jealousy,
So kind in him, and so desir'd by me.
The faith of wives would unrewarded prove,
Without those just observers of our love.
The greater care the higher passion shows;
We hold that dearest we most fear to loose.
Distrust in Lovers is too warm a Sun,
But yet 'tis Night in Love when that is gone.
And, in those Clymes which most his scorching know.
He makes the noblest fruits and Metals grow.

The presentation of Almahide as an advocate of jealousy should be read as an attempt on Dryden’s part to include the voice of those whose position he dramatically undercuts. Through Almahide, Dryden here speaks on behalf of those who do believe that jealousy is a sign of true love, an age-old conviction that still persists and cannot be ignored. In his book *The Dangerous Passion* (2000), David Buss defends jealousy as “a supremely important passion that helped our ancestors, and most likely continues to help us today, to cope with a host of real reproductive threats.” The sharp reaction to Buss’s viewpoint, particularly by female writers, is evidence of the ongoing argument between the two parties. In spite of the numerous statements by prominent figures attacking jealousy and undermining jealous people, there will always
be writers like Buss who argue that jealousy accompanies us like our shadows (an instinctual passion) and that it is the natural companion of the emotion of love.

Almahide tells Almanzor that jealousy is a reflection of love; the stronger the jealousy, the stronger the love. Almost the same argument is presented by Roxolana, the wife of Solyman, in Davenant’s *The Siege of Rhodes* (1661) when she justifies her jealousy by saying that “jealousy does spring from too much love.”58 Jealous people commonly use this justification to make jealousy an acceptable passion, or at least to lessen its ugliness in the eyes of those who see it as merely a sign of mental sickness. What is unusual in *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71) is that Almahide is the “object” of jealousy, not the jealous party, yet she expresses a positive view of jealousy. One might think that she says this to deter Almanzor from wooing her, for to accept his criticisms of Boabdelin would be seen as encouragement to him. But Almahide’s response exceeds even the ordinary justification of jealousy, counting jealousy among the desirable traits of a lover in the eyes of the beloved. It is, in her opinion, the reward for her faithfulness to her husband, something that might be far from acceptable to many, but Dryden aims to take the view of advocates of jealousy to the extreme in order to explore the whole range of attitudes to jealousy through his discourse. To avoid being marked as unreasonable, Dryden makes Almahide admit that jealousy does cause disquiet to the other party, but she insists that this unease is much better than suffering the indifference of a man who displays no jealousy.

Interestingly enough, people who claim no jealous feelings are usually condemned by jealous people, just as the latter are condemned by those who renounce jealousy as a symptom of mental sickness or a manifestation of selfishness and low self-esteem. For instance, Pinchwife, the jealous husband in Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675) who himself is ridiculed by his wife and friends, despises his friend Sparkish and describes him as “insensible” and a “pander” to his future “wife” because the latter introduces his fiancée to his friend Harcourt and urges them to get acquainted and become friends.59 Though the play is a comedy, it throws light on the complicated relationship between jealous and non-jealous people. So, Almahide, like Pinchwife, feels little respect for men who do not feel jealous when other men try to woo their wives. According to her, the uneasiness caused by jealousy strengthens and renews love the same way the excessive heat of the hot sun produces delicious and tasty fruit.

Almanzor does not ridicule Almahide’s position—a prudent lover would not take such a tack. Instead, he flatters her independence by arguing that a husband has the right to enjoy a wife’s love but that she is “not possest” by him.60 Almanzor’s response to Almahide could be taken as Dryden’s own to those who hold similar views. Through Almanzor’s response, Dryden makes a distinction between having the right to the love of the partner and claiming the lover as one’s property. Such lovers, according to Dryden, deprive themselves of the pleasure they could take in the
“Heaven of love”, as Almanzor explains to Almahide. Despite the fact that Almahide still defends her view of jealousy, she gradually learns—though she is unable to declare it—that her husband’s jealousy is less about his love for her than about his own low self-esteem, despotism, and insecurity. She is shocked when he lashes out at her for obeying his command to ask Almanzor to return to Granada. She does not excuse that outburst of jealousy, let alone cherish it. Rather, in a soliloquy soon after he leaves, she sadly says that it is her fate to be his wife and to be the “oblation” to her people. Her decision to “despise” life and “cherish” honor is a decision to continue her life with Boabdelin though it is unhappy one. But what is obvious in this phase is that she is not aware of the evils her jealous husband can bring upon her.

In the last act of the second part of the play, events disclose to Almahide these evils and finally she is convinced that the least one can say about jealousy is that it is a cruel passion. The earlier outbursts of jealousy were reactions, as Boabdelin pretended, to an assumed emotional infidelity, not a sexual one, for he believes that Almanzor is a “loved Rival” but does not think that Almahide has taken any move to act upon that love. In other words, his inability to bring any solid evidence against her prevents him from venting his anger entirely, since men show stronger reaction to sexual rather than emotional infidelity, while some argue that women’s reactions are the reverse. Should there be such a difference in the patterns of male and female jealousy, it may have a biological basis, since, as Sarah L. Strout et.al point out, “a man cannot be sure he is the father of his mate’s children.”

However, in the fifth act, Dryden brings supposed sexual infidelity into play to allow Boabdelin’s suppressed anger to explode at last. It is only at that point that Almahide discovers the extremes to which jealousy can drive even a weak man. Boabdelin is quick to believe Lyndaraxa’s story that Almahide had sexual intercourse, not with his rival, but with Abdelmelech, someone Boabdelin has never viewed as a rival. His blind rage leads him to demand that she be stoned to death. Proclaiming that “They shall be punish’d as our Laws require”, he leaves Almahide no opportunity to defend herself. In the court, Boabdelin forsakes his wife in this horrible situation and is satisfied to be among the many spectators who have come to witness the trial. Standing before the judges, Hamet and Zulema, both Zegrys, implore the judges to “appeach the Queen / And Abdelmelech, of Adultery” while Alamanzor and Ozmyn introduce themselves “as Champions of the Queen’s fair fame.” It is interesting that her innocence will depend on the result of the combat between the accusers and the defenders. Fortunately, her defenders win, and before he dies, Zulema pronounces the Queen innocent and reveals that the whole plot was designed by his sister Lyndaraxa.

Boabdelin’s readiness to judge Almahide as “false,” “faithless,” and “ingrateful,” together with his hasty dealing out of such a severe punishment without showing any degree of mercy, awakens Almahide to the possible consequences of entrusting her life to a jealous husband. Fuelled by jealousy, Boabdelin’s murderous impulses mark
an alarming transformation in his character. Almahide realizes that with such a jealous husband her life could be under serious threat from the very man who professes great love for her. Therefore, after being acquitted of the charge, she rejects Boabdelin’s excuse that it was his excessive love, which manifested itself in “too much jealousie,” that prompted him to demand such a severe punishment and “no common pity show.” At this point, Almahide does not care whether it is love or jealousy that made him react in such a monstrous way: “Be’t Love or Jealousie, ’tis such a Crime, / That I’m forewarned to trust a second time”. What she then realizes is that her conviction has exposed her life to a real danger. Rather than justifying jealousy as a proof of love, she concludes that it would be insane to trust her life to a jealous husband a second time. Consequently, she tells him that she, as a wife to him, “is dead: / And with her, dies a Love so pure and true,” a love that no one but he himself could kill and only by his “causeless Jealousie.” Thus, it is only after she realizes the danger in which jealousy puts even a loyal wife that she abandons not just her husband, but her beliefs about love and jealousy as well.

Dryden calls into question the validity of the notion that the sole ingredient of men’s jealousy is sexual or romantic love. From this perspective, his work is undoubtedly instructive because Dryden suggests that forces other than simply the sexual, romantic relationship play a part in provoking jealousy. He shows how external elements can impinge upon a man’s personal life, causing the eruption of his jealousy and how women with jealous husbands are compelled to endure an exhausting torment and eventually become scapegoats for the failures and insecurities of their spouses. Through the character of Almahide, he displays a faithful woman led, by experience, to abandon a romantic view of jealousy (as a manifestation of intense love) and to adopt the views of those who see jealousy as an emotion that must be suppressed for the good of civilization and, indeed, for the safety of the innocent individual.

Endnotes

3. Anne Maguire, 82.
4. David Buss, 30 - 32
11. Ibid., 32.
12. Ibid., 31.
13. Ibid., 35.
15. Ibid., 29.
16. Ibid., 38.
17. Ibid., 38.
18. Ibid., 36.
19. Ibid., 38.
20. Ibid., 36.
21. Ibid., 34.
22. Ibid., 38.
27. John Dryden, Part 1, 35.
30. Ibid., 59.
31. Ibid., 80.
32. Ibid., 30.
33. Anne Maguire, 79.
34. Ibid., 82.
35. Ibid., Part 2, 97.
36. Ibid., 101.
39. Ibid., 102.
40. Ibid., 102.


44. Rosemary Lloyd, 7.


46. Ibid., 115.


49. Ibid., 101.


52. William Davenant, 3:284.

53. Ibid., 288.

54. Anne Maguire, 78.


56. Ibid., 17.

57. David Buss, 5.


60. John Dryden, Part 2, 117.

61. Ibid., 117.

62. Ibid., 102.

63. Ibid., 100.


67. Ibid., 150.

68. Ibid., 153.

69. Ibid., 153.

70. Ibid., 153.
مسرحية جون درايدن "احتلال غرناطة": إعادة النظر في مفهوم الغيرة

د. محمد رواشدة

ملخص

تبين هذه الدراسة بأن الكاتب المسرحي البريطاني جون درايدن (John Dryden) بتعامل بطريقة مختلفة عن رؤية وتعامل معاصريه من كتاب المسرح مع هذه الظاهرة في الوقت الذي يتعامل معها معاصريه على أنها تعكس أنانية الرجل في الحب ونزعته لتملك المرأة التي يحب، يراها درايدن (Dryden) ناتجة عن عوامل خارجية، مثل الظروف الاجتماعية، الاقتصادية أو السياسية التي يعيشها الرجل. وروطه هذه تتفق مع ما بنيته الدراسات في العصر الحديث، رغم أن المسرحية تعود لفترة عودة الملكية في بريطانيا، حيث كتب بين عامي 1670 و1671م.

وفي الوقت الذي يصور معاصريه، في مسرحياتهم، الشخصيات التي ترى أن الغيرة دليل على قوة الحب وصدقه أساسًا غير متحضرين يتوجب على المجتمع فهمهم وتحقيقهم، يتبع درايدن أسلوباً منطقياً في التعامل معهم. خلافًا لأسلوب معاصريه فهو يسمح لهؤلاء الأشخاص بأن يبدوا وجهة نظرهم ثم يقوم تدريجياً وبأسلوب عقلاني بإقناعهم بأن اعتقادهم خاطئ، وذلك ببيان ما قد تمحص عنه الغيرة من مخاطر. درايدن (Dryden) بذلك يكون أكثر إقناعاً لجمهوره من الكتب الأخرين بشرور الغيرة وضرورة كبح جماحها.
References


