

Evaluation of the Jealousy in the Play “The Winter’s Tale” by William Shakespeare

Muhammad Yasir Khan* & Shumaila Naz**

*M. Phil English Language and Literature

**Department of English Language and Literature, Chenab College of Advance Studies, Mianwali

ABSTRACT:

Shakespeare's play "The Winter's Tale" is about the love between a husband, Leontes, and his wife, Hermione. It is also about the love of a young girl, Perdita and a young boy, Florizel. On the other hand the play tells us about the years old friendship of two friends Leontes and Polixenes. In act 1 scene 2, Shakespeare wrote about two hundred lines about Leontes' jealousy. The researchers have tried to find out the jealousy theme in the play. It was the tragic flaw in the character of Leontes Which cause the destruction. The methodology used in this research is qualitative. The researchers, through the critical analysis, have explained the theme of jealousy in the character of Leontes.

Key Words: *Evaluation, Jealousy, Play, The Winter’s Tale, William Shakespeare.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

This article investigates the theme of jealousy in the play “The Winter’s Tale” by William Shakespeare. Shakespeare's characters are universal in nature. His dramas and characters are specified not for his age but for all ages. His characters have some tragic flaws in their nature which brings disastrous in their fate.

The Winter’s Tale is one of Shakespeare’s final plays. It was composed and performed around 1610-11. This play has a happy ending that sets it apart from earlier tragedies and histories, but it emphasize the danger and power of evil in the world, while never finally victorious is an evil present before in the stories . In “The winter’s Tale we have a happy ending in the last, but we have to endure us the madness of Leontes and being accused of an innocent Queen. We also bears the pain of deaths of three innocent people before we reach the happy ending of the play.

When the play starts we have seen that the king of Sicily convincing his friend, king of Bohemia to enlarge his stay in Sicily. Leontes asked his wife Hermione to help in convincing his friend stay here. When Hermione politely convinced polixenes and catch the hands of the polixenes to force him, her husband got jealous and suspects his wife having sexual relationship with his friend. He also confused about his son Mamillius and the child carrying his wife. Leontes asked his servant Camillo to give poison to Polixens and imprison Hermione. Camillo warns Polixens and they flee away in Bohemia.

In her prison Hermione gave birth to a baby girl later name perdita but Leontes does not accept his child and asked to through her away in a desert. When Antigonus after putting the baby in a desert coming back attacked by a bear and tour him. Mamillius does not bear the bitter words of his father about his mother and dies from heartbreak. The news of Mamillius death shocks Leontes back to reality and he became regret. Paulina broke the news of the death of Hermione in prison(which is wrong).

In Bohemia beach a shepherded and his son discovered the child and took her with them. Sixteen years passed, In Bohemia Polixenes son Florizel and Perdita fallen in love but Polixenes opposed their love. They run away to Sicily with Camillo help, who in turn are pursued by Polixenes and Camillo. The revelations of the shepherd show Perdita identity.

Everyone goes with Paulina to see the statue of Queen and the statue moves. Florizel and Perdita are united. Hermoine and Leontes are also united. Everyone was happy there.

The writer investigates the role of jealousy and misunderstanding factor in this play that how much the factor of jealousy brings disastrous in the lives of all the major characters and effect them.

2. Aims and Objectives:

- To investigate the jealousy factor in this play.
- To explore the theme of misunderstanding.
- To find out whether Leontes is only responsible for his suffering?

3. Research Questions:

- How does Leontes become jealous from Polixenes?
- What is the role of misunderstanding in the play?
- Does Leontes regret on what he has done to his wife and friend?

4. Research Methodology:

The methodology used in this research is qualitative, further it is descriptive. It is analytical and critical in nature. The researchers have used dialogues to explain the factors and root causes of catastrophe in the play.

5. Delimitations of the Study:

Many dramatists wrote about the themes of tragic comedy, pastoral elegy, etc. but researchers delimitized the study to the theme of jealousy. It does not talk on social problems and does not hit society. There are no exploitations of the social rules. Its results are confidential. It is research for research purpose.

6. Recommendations:

There are many topics for new researchers, which are role of fate in The Winter's Tale, deception themes, character evaluation of Leontes, theme of pastoral elegy, etc.

7. Literature Review:

“ The winter’s tale by Evelyn Mclellan”

“ What happens when a king is dominated by jealousy? After ruining the lives of those close to him, he finally learns about life and offered a second chance. A sub plot of lovers torn by class differences ends with a measure of happiness and the final scene of the drama is upbeat”

“Wonder in the Winter's Tale: A cautionary Account of Epistemic criticism by Charles Altier”

“Let us track in dramatic terms how Leontes becomes so secure in the fact that what he feels fits into a jealousy plot and that the object of jealousy should be Hermione. What might he feel when Polixenes says he will depart for Bohemia? Disappointment is present since this interlude of replaying their past will be over. Irritation and twinges of impotency emerge because he seems helpless to change Polixenes mind.

“ Winter’s Tale-Study Guide Yale Repertory Theatre”

“ Things dying and newborn : The Winter’s Tale Tragicomedy”

“At one time labeled a “ Problem Play” - a moniker still sometimes attributed to several of Shakespeare’s other genre bending dramas. The winter’s tale is now regarded as near kin to three other late- career plays : The Tempest, Cymbeline and Pericles. All four works move from catastrophe to restoration and forgiveness. Like these other three plays, the winter’s tale has long defied classification. The play’s first three acts could be mistaken for a tragedy: Leconte’s unhinged jealousy, recalling that of Othello, alienates his closest friend, exiles his daughter and kills his son and (seemingly) wife.”

“ The Rush to Knowledge”: perception and interpretation in Shakespeare’s Much Ado About nothing, Othello and the Winter’s Tale”

“The sudden and violent on set of Leontes’ jealousy has been over the years, One of the most criticized elements of a much criticized pla, and it is worth noting that in representing Leontes’ suspicion in this way Shakespeare is making a deliberate - break with his source material.”

“ The importance of Gender (Transgression) in the Winter’s Tale by Stephanie. N. Schnabel”

“ As with Othello , the other principle Shakespearean character famously overcome by jealousy is Leontes descends into madness early in the play. In contrast to the famous Moor, however, the Sicilian King’s mental decline swiftly takes up only a short fraction of A ct one Scene 2. The Winter's tale clearly focuses rather on his healing process than the development of his jealousy throughout the whole play.”

8. Data Analysis/Findings:

Quote 1

"Force me to keep you as a prisoner, not like a guest"

Polixenes wants to go back and did not want to prolong his stay. Leontes did not want that his friend go back so early. So, he urges Hermoine to force his friend not to go back Bohemia so soon. Hermoine used these words to agree Polixenes.

Quote 2

"Your guest than, madam; To be your prisoner should import offending"

This is the moment when Polixenes become agree not to go back and here Leontes feels jealousy. He became jealous in two levels. Firstly he become jealous to Hermione that she becomes able to agree Polixenes and secondly he feels jealousy to Polixenes as he is behaving friendly to his wife Hermione.

Quote 3

**"The once forever earned a royal husband
The other for some whiles a friend."**

The situation become troublesome for Leontes when Polixenes and Hermoine leave for garden. Leontes become very possessive in the matter of his wife. This is the misunderstanding of the Leontes that he images his innocent wife and close friend to be husband and wife.

Quote 4

**"Good my lord , be cured-
Of this diseas'd opinion."**

Leontes become in his jealousy. He uses immoral language in front of Camillo about his wife. Camillo does not agree with him and refuses it. Camillo talk in the favor of Hermoine but Leontes in his madness does not want to listen any single word in the favour of his wife.

Quote 5

**"To givemine enemy a lasting wink;
Which drought to me were cordial."**

Leontes become blind in his jealousy. He is acting just like a mad. He forgets the chastity of his wife and friendship to Polixenes. He orders his servant Camillo to take poison to Polixenes.

Quote 6

**". all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake. "**

The situation is reversed when the oracle of Apollo is red out. Suddenly the behavior of Leontes changed. He regrets on his doings and wants to repent to his wife and his friend. All the negative thoughts of Leontes go away.

Quote 7

**"The heavens continue their loves!
ARCHIDAMUS
I think there is not in the world either
Malice or
Matter to alter it"**

Archidamus and Camillo talking about Polixenes friendship that their friendship will never be end. Here we see that Shakespeare used irony of dialogue. Before the end of the play we see that Leontes' jealousy break up the friendship as well as the whole family.

Quote 8

**"(Aside) Too hot' too hot!
To mingle friendship far is mingling
Bloods.
I have tremor cordis on me! My heart
Dances;
But not for joy ; not joy.This
Entertainment
May a free face put on' darive a
Liberty
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile
Bosom,
And well become the agent;'t may, I
Grant;
But to be paddling palms and pinching
Fingers,
As now they are, and making practiced
Smiles,
As in a looking – glass, and then to sigh,
As 'twere
The mort o' the deer; o' , that is
Entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows!
Mamillus,
Art thou my boy?"**

When Leontes sees his wife with his friend Polixenes, he becomes crazy. Although he knows that his wife is persuading Polixenes not to go back. She is talking with Polixenes in a friendly manner and her hands were in the hands of Polixenes. Leontes seeing his wife's hands in his friends hands and Polixenes got infuriated. In his anger he forgets his friendship and he thinks that their behavior is of as a lovers. He also suspects Mamillus of being his own son, although Mamillus resembles to his father. The quality of Leontes speech is also affected by his jealousy. We notice a confusion in his dialogues because he becomes blind in his suspicion. There is no connectivity in his dialogues.

Quote 9

**"Why, that's my bawcock. What, hast
Smutch'd thy nose?
They say it is acopy out of mine.
Come, captain,
We must be neat; not neat, but**

Cleanly captain:

**And yet the steer, the heifer and the
Calf
Are all call,d neatstill virginalling
Upon his palm.....How now , You wanton
Calf!
Art though my calf?"**

Now Leontes suspects Hermoine having sexual relations with Polixenes. He again become confused about Mamillus whether he is biological father of his son or not?Leontes puns on the word "neat" which means "clean"and also "cattle" with horns. This is all tinged with sexual meaning.

Quote 10

**"Thou want'st a rough pash and the
Shoots that I have,
To be full like me: Yet they say we are
Almost as like as eggs; women say so,
That will say anything but were they
False
As o'er-dyed blacks, as wind, as
Water, false
As dice are to be wish'd by one that
Fixes
No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were
It true
To say this boy were like me. come,
Sir page
Look on me with your walkin eye:
Sweet villain!"**

Leontes is confused about Mamillus' true identity. He also suspects Hermoine that she is carrying Polixenes' love child. Although many women comments that Mamillus is look like his father, Leontes , but he insists that most women are liars and say wrong. He thinks that women are dishonest and liars than why he could not say that his wife is also dishonest and disloyal to him.

Quote 11

**"HERMIONE
If you would seek us,
We are yours I'the garden:shall's
Attend you there?
LEONTES
To your own bents dispose you: you'll
Be found,**

Be you beneath the sky.

Aside

I am angling now,

Though you perceive me not how I

Give line.

Go to, go to!

How she holds up the neb, the bill to

Him!

And arms her with the boldness of a

Wife

To her allowing husband!"

Leontes thought a plan to catch his wife Hermione with his friend in a shameful condition. Basically, when his wife invites him to join them in a garden, he refuses and after that he uses it against them to make a case against his wife and friend. Hermione and Polixenes are just good friends and she is behaving nicely with her husband guest.

Quote 12

"CAMILLO

Business, my lord? I think most

Understand

Bohemia stays here longer.

LEONTES

Ha?

CAMILLO

Stays here longer.

LEONTES

Ay but why?

CAMILLO

To satisfy your highness and the

Entreaties

Of our most gracious Mistress.

LEONTES

Satisfy!

The entreaties of your mistress!

Satisfy!"

When Leontes asked to Camillo, he simply and innocently answered that everyone knows that Bohemia's king stay here because Hermione convinced him to stay here. But we know that Hermione do it so because her husband said her of doing so. She just helps her husband but her husband misunderstood it in his jealousy. When Camillo says Polixenes wanted to "satisfy" Hermione, he simply means that Polixenes becomes polite and make Queen happy in staying here. But Leontes misinterprets Camillo that he is saying that Polixenes stay here to make relations with the Queen. Camillo simple words added fuel to the fire of Leontes's jealousy.

Quote 13

**"Is whispering nothing?
Is leening cheek to cheek? Is meeting
noses?
kissing with inside lip?stopping the
career
of laughing with a sigh?a note
infalliable
Of breaking honesty.....horsing foot on
foot?
Skulking in corners? Wishing clocks
More swift?
Hours minutes? Noon,midnight?and
All eyes
Blind with the pin and web but theirs,
Theirs only,
That would unseen be wicked?Is this
Nothing;
My wife is nothing ; nor nothing have
These nothings,
If this be nothing"**

As Leontes jealousy builds, he misunderstood the relation of his wife and friend. Leontes convinces himself that his wife is unfaithful to him. He crossed every border of hatred and of misunderstanding his wife relation with his friend.

Quote 14

**"Dost think I am so muddy, so
Unsettled,
To appoint myself in this vexation,
Sully
The purity and whiteness of my
Sheets,
Which to preserve is sleep, which
Being spotted
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of
Wasps,"**

Leontes wrongly accused his wife of infidelity. This play like "Othello" both Othello and Leontes unfairly accused their wives of cheating. In "Othello" Iago is responsible of proving Desdmona's disloyalty while in "The Winter's Tale" Leontes is responsible of accusing his wife disloyalty.

9. CONCLUSION:

Jealousy factor in this drama takes a great part. The lives of all the characters effected very much by this factor. Hermione, Leontes, Polixenes, Perdita and all the other characters effected very much by this factor. The suffering starts when Leontes becomes jealous to see his wife's hands in the hands of his friend. Leontes thinks Polixenes as his rival. He become so crazy in his jealousy that he completely forget his wife's love for him. He forget the loyalty of his wife and accused her as a dishonest and disloyal wife and woman.

Leontes only does not effect of his jealousy alone as all the members of the drama suffered a lot because of his jealousy. Firstly, Leontes himself suffered a lot. He have to bear the grief of his son's death. He also have to bear the parting of his wife and his daughter. His heart fill with sorrow and he becomes remorseful of his doings. Secondly, Hermione also have to suffered a lot due to his husband jealousy. She have to remained in prison for many years. She endure her son's death as well as her daughter parting. She bears stigmatization owes to her husband. Thirdly, the children of Leontes and Hermione also have to suffer. Mamillius goes to death and Perdita in her adolescence forbearance the detachment of her parents. She also have to quit the royal life and have to live in a forest.

The other remaining characters also have to suffer to some extent, Polixenes, Antigonus, Paulina, also have to suffer. We can say that the whole sufferings comes due to Leontes, who is responsible of all the disastrous and sufferings in the life of all the characters. If he remained cool minded and does not go away in his jealousy so far than perhaps all the characters did not have to suffer so long.

REFERENCES:

- i. www.questia.com/library/120084485/the-winter's-tale
- ii. Socrate.berkeley.edu/altieri/manoscricpts/winter's-Tale.2005.pdf
- iii. www.yalerep.org/about-rep/willpower/winter's-tale-study-guide.pdf
- iv. repository.library.gorgetown.edu/
- v. [ejournals.org.uk/bjll/\[217-27\]ARTICLE-2-SCHNABEL.pdf](http://ejournals.org.uk/bjll/[217-27]ARTICLE-2-SCHNABEL.pdf)