

## Jealous love and morbid jealousy

Carlo Maggini<sup>1</sup>, Eva Lundgren<sup>2</sup>, Emanuela Leuci<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Neuroscience Department, Section of psychiatry, university of Parma; <sup>2</sup>Post graduate school of psychiatry, University of Parma; <sup>3</sup>AUSL Parma, Distretto di Fidenza, Parma, Italy

**Abstract.** Jealous love and morbid jealousy, although inextricably linked, cannot be considered the same: jealous love (trait jealousy) is the behavioral and cognitive-affective precondition of morbid jealousy (state jealousy). Love is jealous when it is devoured by the desire for the exclusive and total possession of the partner, whose unconditional and continued presence is avidly requested. This type of love, in addition, is permeated by the need to know what the other is thinking, in order to scrutinize every minimal flaw in the faithfulness of the partner even in his or her innermost thoughts and fantasies; in it, jealousy is virtually always present, even in the absence of a triggering event, because captative love, by its very nature, includes the expectation of a conflict which inevitably actually takes place in reality. Finally, jealousy emerges as an emotional event (jealous flash) in response to a more or less significant change in the behavior of the partner, and reveals to the jealous individual a dimension which was previously latent or inexistent. This intense and brief experience, leaves a more or less blurred memory behind, and tends to progressively repeat itself and take root as a feeling. ([www.actabiomedica.it](http://www.actabiomedica.it))

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The most suggestive and pregnant images of amorous jealousy are those of the great explorers of the human soul (moralists, philosophers, poets and narrators) who have described, more effectively and deeply than clinicians, the torments of this consuming fire, of this eternal, and at the same time banal, topic.

In fact, amorous jealousy is not only a psychiatric symptom, but a universal experience and, to quote Lagache (1), "*is not only a way of experiencing love, but also a way of existing.*"

### The Torment of Jealousy

In the words of Henri Ey (2), amorous jealousy is "*the feeling of being deprived of goods in our possession in order for them to be given to others, or rather, of goods being moved away from us only to be moved towards others.*"

Jealousy is a desire to keep, and not to lose, and is inextricably linked to the threatening possibility that all that belongs to me, that I claim to be mine, and that I cannot be deprived of without being significantly impoverished, moves away from me and towards another.

When this movement, which is at the core of the torment, worry, and fervor of the jealous individual, ceases to exist, his or her preoccupation is no more and the certainty of definitive loss or of a new possession bring an end to the jealousy itself.

Therefore, one is jealous of that which one possesses, but the possession does not satisfy completely if it is not nourished by the dynamism of desire. That is to say, if one does not desire what one has, one does not possess it completely. It is from this avid desire to have that the threat of deprivation emerges, whether it is due to the impossibility of its realization, or to the monstrous intensity of its avidity, which cannot be satisfied.

Over the years the meaning of the term jealousy has become degraded compared to the original one. It no longer means zeal (or ardor) for the object of love (dedication, devotion, fervor), but rather, possession, fear of loss and the suspicion of a rival. The hand of the watch of jealousy, instead of pointing to zealotry, now points to possessiveness and rivalry.

In addition to these negative connotations, others should be added, as evidenced by terms used in various other languages (3).

The German word "*Eifersucht*" derives from "*Eifer*" (zeal) and from the suffix "*-sucht*", related to "*siech*", which means "unhealthy": jealousy is thus an unhealthy, sick and gloomy zeal.

The French term "*jalousie*", "blind", "obscured" is used as a substantive to indicate blinds for windows with horizontal bars, and has been adopted as such in the Italian language. The angle of the bars allows for seeing without being seen, or rather, for leering and glimpsing. The term, therefore, has a stealthy and hidden meaning, as well as an unclear and undefined one.

The English word "jealous" has an analogous meaning. Jealous glass is an opaque, translucent, and non-transparent glass which allows one to glimpse, to intuit, to imagine, to conjecture, and at the same time to be unsure of that which one sees.

The eye of the jealous tortures itself with the fear of being expropriated and, furtive and unseen, it scrutinizes, searches, analyzes, sees innumerable facts, yet only gathers details that are inconsistent and insufficient enough to wreath a story without resorting to conjecture, fantasy and imagination.

This is described in a masterly fashion in the novel *Jealousy* by Robbe-Grillet (4), where the eye of the narrator looks between the bars of the blinds, but the focus is altered by the play of light and shadow. The eye of the narrator perceives facts and observes the wife of A and Frank, who may be a lover, but we are unable to discover what is really happening since the bars are at the wrong angle; only a sliver of light passes through them and the eye is unable to see. The narrator's vision is also impaired by the imperfections in the glass, although it is clean and transparent, and by the fact that the windows face north and do not receive direct sunlight. There are other impediments to his vision as well: the light that shifts, the shadows that mo-

ve, the disconcerting reflections in mirrors and the continuous variations in refraction.

In the final scene the light fades and with the darkness falling on the hill the outline of the banana plants becomes blurred.

The jealous are *lecteurs de signes*, or rather *mauvais lecteurs*, because they transfigure them through a literary recreation of reality (5): a sort of prism transforms a banal reality into a universe of fecund signs.

The metaphors of literature keenly describe the glance of the jealous. To read means to elaborate a gathering of mute signs which then become psycholinguistic signs of infidelity, of lies, of hypocrisy, of the seductiveness of the rival, and of one's own disfavor in the eyes of the beloved, in a sort of discourse one murmurs to oneself.

The jealous actually decipher the signs that they have inscribed on reality and are thus readers of their own signs and not of the reality that surrounds them. As Pozdnichev states in Tolstoj's *La Sonata a Kreutzer* (6): "jealousy, helped by imagination, knows very well how to construct the proof that it claims to have", and this proof is a continuous source of new reasons to suffer.

### The birth of jealousy

The onset of jealousy is characterized by the so-called *jealous flash* (7) or *choc émotive* (8): a sudden, intense *autonomic arousal* which is a worrisome foreshadowing of infidelity and abandon (9).

A real or imaginary change in the behavior of the partner (a hypothesis, a suspicion, an interpretation) causes the onset. Like the lovestruck, the jealous use the arsenal of interpretations that constitute the pawns of the lovers' game (8): a lasting glance is a sign of desire; the subtle nuances of a facial expression are proof of unconfessable emotions; a lingering, brief handshake becomes a clear sign of complicity. Only a few examples are needed to evoke the scene of jealousy.

Although they move in a context illuminated by the conscious mind and do not leave a trace, it is in this way that "*dead thoughts*," quoting Musil (10), come alive. They come alive because "*something that is no longer a thought... combines with them so that we find*

*them to be true, like an anchor that burns the warm and living flesh.*" Thus, the discovery of infidelity becomes concrete and possible or certain, and only half of this discovery takes place in the circle illuminated by the conscious mind, while the other half unfolds in the dark recess of our most intimate being.

The jealous flash comes out of the blue, often in the context of an extended period of affective disenchantment, of boredom, of indifference, and of estrangement from the partner, experienced as being erotically and emotionally insignificant, and is a manifestation of an oxymoronic and idiosyncratic disparity between *la nullité de la personne aimée et l'immensité du drame which it causes* (11).

The jealous flash sets in motion a synchronic and diachronic multitude of contradictory and mutable emotional experiences. Jealousy is, in fact, a complex emotional state; an aggregation of various emotions (*émotion complexe* (12); *blended emotion*, a compound of *basic level emotions* (13, 14)) which includes, to a varying degree, fear, worry, sadness, anger, hate, but also regret, bitterness, envy, and disgust. An underlying *état mixte excito-dépressive* (8) accompanied by brutal, anguishing and painful emotional paroxysms and lacerating somatic symptoms.

The experience of a multitude of contradictory emotions becomes magnified, and one experience follows another in a dizzying way, provoking a profound emotional and affective disorganization, as well as an interior disintegration.

In order for jealousy to materialize and crystallize, however, the *jealous flash*, activated by the event (real or imaginary) must be linked to two other factors: the idea of infidelity (innescated by the behavior of the partner) and an individual emotional predisposition linked to particular personality traits (paranoid traits), or to a concomitant psychiatric disorder.

The triple alliance of the event, idea of infidelity, and hyper-emotionality come into play both in normal jealousy and in the pathological (passionate) kind, which is typical of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and personality disorders, where it can take on obvious or submerged aspects; essential or accessory ones, as well as lasting or temporary ones. In passionate jealousy, the triple alliance is related to the *mariage dystrophique*, involving an alteration of mood (which is a constant in

this type of disorder) and peculiarities of the underlying *personality*. The hyper-emotionality imposes the idea of infidelity, forces it upon the consciousness, and creates the event which is none other than the disturbing and deformed shadow of morbid subjectivity projected on the external reality. Thus, the feeling of jealousy takes shape, and is the cause of emotional hyper-reactivity to the environment and of a continuous production of jealous flashes or emotional shocks that feed interpretations and activate behavioral alterations. The fate of this sentiment is closely related to the affective state; it grows and abates with it, follows its ups and downs, as well as its pauses and paroxysms.

Jealousy which manifests itself in the context of chronic psychoses, such as schizophrenia and dementia for example, defined by Borel as representative or imagined, involves the immediate use of the idea of infidelity and its transformation into a delirious idea by the morbose process, without affective arousal coming into play.

With jealousy, an existence tormented by doubt, suspicion, pain, anger, resentment, sorrow, hate and desire begins. In this inextricable emotional and spiritual accumulation, the existential disposition vacillates and the vision of the world mutates radically. Consolidated values become meaningless, and feelings of modesty, honor, faithfulness and honesty dissolve.

This is a transformation of meaning that involves the partner as well, who appears enigmatic, cruel, unworthy, and immoral, yet at the same time charged with unusual erotic valence. The fear of loss causes a hypertrophy of desire which solicits the repeated and compulsive possession of his or her body, as if such possession of the body could permit the possession of the soul as well.

The consciousness is dominated by the pain of the possibility of loss, and by resentment for the loss of self-esteem caused by alternating certainties followed by doubts. A sort of feverish worry, consuming anxiety, and almost physical pain indicate how deeply jealousy penetrates in the sphere of vitality, where it moves in the depths and feeds on an atmosphere of suspicions, certainties, interpretations, the searching for proof, blame, threats and aggression.

Like in a kind of bulimia, the jealous obsessively exasperate the suffering they would like to have hea-

led: they gather all the elements necessary to feed their jealousy and do anything to get them, fortifying themselves by assimilating them. From now on life will be “poisoned” by this avid and incessant search for new wounds, and nothing can stop the work of the imagination which creates the dizzying indeterminateness of the possible.

The jealous, due to a kind of *painful curiosity* (an expression borrowed by Proust from *L'Education Sentimentale* by Flaubert (15)), want to know the truth and their passion for truth is endless. Neither Podznychev, in the *Sonata a Kreutzer*(6), nor Brentani in *Senilità* (16), nor Swann in *La Recherche* (17), ever come to know the truth about the unfaithful woman, or the woman believed to be such.

## Jealous Love

Jealous love and morbid jealousy, although inextricably linked, cannot be considered the same: jealous love is the precondition; the cognitive-affective and behavioral antecedent of abnormal jealousy (state jealousy).

In a love relationship, Lagache (1) identifies two fundamental dimensions: one implies the desire to have and possess the object, to assimilate it and identify it with oneself; the other dimension implies the desire to give oneself and lose oneself in the love object, to identify with it. These dimensions, respectively called *amour captatif* and *amour oblatif*, describe two ideal types of love relationships with which the real types can be compared to a greater or lesser degree. In reality, in the love relationship captation and annihilation coexist synchronously and diachronously to a varying degree: a certain annihilation is immanent in captative love and vice versa. Thus, in love relationships, there is a balance between self-assertion and self-surrender (18).

A similar concept is that of Maslow (19) who, referring to Fenichel (20), identifies two faces of love: *Deficiency-love* or *D-love*, based on needs of dependency, a need for security and belonging, and *Being-love* or *B-love*, based on a love of the other simply because he or she exists rather than because of the satisfactions he or she provides. The kind of love that most people experience is *D-love*, based on the desire to

obtain what the other can give, to have that which the other has, and it is in this fertile ground that jealousy grows. *D-love*, in fact, facilitates jealousy while *B-love* impedes it: once the jealous flash is experienced (and anyone can experience it), *B-love* opposes the emotional-affective movement of pain, anger and distrust that it triggers, while *D-love* activates and intensifies it.

A third kind of love relationship, called *amour-communion* by Lagache (1), is one in which the coexistence transcends unilateral possession and absorption. It is in this type of relationship that the schelerian intention is actualized *par excellence* of love that presupposes the autonomy of the subject and the object, leaving no room for reciprocal possession or fusion.

In this kind of love the possibility of “betrayal”, in the words of Galimberti (21), pertains to love the way day pertains to night. It is a love that demands a renunciation of the “paranoid choice” of exorcising liturgies (declarations of eternal faithfulness, proof of devotion, promises etc.) and of the blessed innocence of the original trust. In this kind of love the adult awareness of mutual recognition exists, as well as the knowledge that in every love relationship there is a desire not to be annulled by the other, because love is a relationship and not a fusion. Thus, in the relationship there is presence or absence, there is faithfulness or unfaithfulness (even if only in one's mind) to escape the mortal embrace of “we”, maintaining the ability to leave safe shores, to go at one's own risk toward the unknown regions of life, to know oneself and discover who one really is.

In real love relationships, moments of communion, of captivation-annihilation, and of *B-love* and *D-love* coexist to different degrees. If *amour-oblatif* is prevalent in the relationship, that is, if one loves in an almost disinterested way and is satisfied by the feeling of belonging to the other there is no jealousy (1, 2); the same is true where *amour-communion* is prevalent (1). Love causes jealousy when it is *captatif*, when it is devoured by the desire to have, by selfishness and by greediness. The greed to be loved, to possess, and to keep, create a need for the total and continuous dedication of the partner.

Inherent in *amour captatif* (and in *D-love*) is jealousy, where it is virtually always present even in the

absence of a situation of rivalry, because it encompasses the expectation of a possible frustration and because of its being, inevitably, in conflict with reality. The needs of a jealous love can in fact only be satisfied by an imaginary or ideal partner. This idiosyncratic idealization cannot, however, survive the proof of reality, and is destined to cause disenchantment and frustration. The painful awareness and disappointment arising from the otherness of the partner creates a deep wound, a hole in the love through which the hateful image of the rival seeps (2).

In addition, this kind of love is permeated by the need to verify what is in the mind of the other, to know if that which appears to be love really is love, or just a simulation, the substance or the shadow. In this case an apparent behavior is not sufficient. The inner thoughts and fantasies must also be faithful: these are the demands of the jealous lover. "*To know, to know because love is knowledge, because love is sustained by truth, by the things that are said and confessed and not by the things that are hidden in being left unsaid*" (22). Once the process of self-questioning and doubt begins, jealousy has taken shape.

Desdemona is a faithful wife and Othello is a husband in love. Nevertheless, a mere trifle is sufficient to transform their love into tragedy. Just a few words uttered by Iago are enough to convince Othello. The passage from unconditional love to a devastating jealousy is sudden. According to Stanley Cavell (23), Othello trusts such slender proof as that of the handkerchief, easily believes Iago, disregards the sincerity of Desdemona's love and the friendship of Caio, all because of a sort of cognitive skepticism regarding the existence and humanity of others. This kind of skepticism is in and of itself pathological, in that it does not allow for trust nor does it need the kinds of guarantees offered by solid criteria or fundamental demonstrations. As per Cavell, Othello suffers from this kind of disease, and his jealousy prevents him from recognizing Desdemona as a being different from himself, with an existence independent of his own. Othello, being an invincible warrior and as such inclined to be controlling and possessive, views Desdemona's being different from him and outside of his command as a threat. Before Iago even speaks, Othello is already convinced who is believable and who is not.

## The jealous and the not jealous

The jealous are stigmatized because of their precarious personality and because of their inability to love, dominated as they are by oral and cannibalistic impulses, by the desire to devour and annihilate their partner without respecting his or her otherness, needs and values.

To a minor degree, the jealous are considered immature, dependent, unassertive and inadequate. In reality, there are many jealous individuals with abnormal personality traits caused by affective deprivations and childhood neglect and many with a mental pathology that subverts emotions, compromises insight, interferes with reality testing, revealing a perverse inner world and a latent homosexuality, and bringing about aggressive and destructive drives.

It is not uncommon, however, to find jealous individuals who do not exhibit a distorted *modus amandi* and the peculiarities of personality described in literature. Even individuals who are harmonious and at peace with their drives and needs can find themselves overtaken by feelings of jealousy that emerge from the secret depths of their souls following the tortuous pathways of pain, of disease, or simply resulting from the passing of time where the partner becomes the last berth of their history, their identity and their destiny.

It is only an approach free of bias and diagnostic automatism that permits the identification, in the lacerating suffering of these individuals, of the desperate cry of pain from the loss of a person who bolsters the identity and the anchoring to reality and of the "*protest against the dissolution of an ideal of commitment and faithfulness*." (24).

In response to the question of whether anyone is immune to jealousy, Kierkegaard (25), according to Tellenbach (26), would have answered in the affirmative, making reference to Don Juan, because this genius of the immediately erotic is the antithesis of jealousy. Don Juan is incapable of being jealous because he is incapable of loving; he wants to conquer, to possess, but does not want to keep what he has obtained so easily and nothing is more alien to him than the thought of a rival (an inescapable presence in the scene of jealousy). He is always victorious with any rival,

even with God, to whom Elvira was betrothed and then forsakes because of him.

Even Charles Bovary (27), who did not lack proof of the betrayal of Emma, nor of the identity of his rivals, does not seem to have been devoured by jealousy. In the impossible conversation imagined by Cesare Segre (28) between Charles Bovary and Flaubert, Charles wants to be “*remembered as an example of total, flawless and heroic love*” and not, as Flaubert liked to portray him, “*as a champion of banality, and even...a poor idiot.*” Charles says: “*But I was neither banal nor an idiot. Do you think I didn't realize that Emma betrayed me with Leon, with Rodolphe, and then again with Leon? Well then, one would have to be blind, not foolish, not to realize it...I noticed everything, and tortured myself in silence. Why didn't I react? Because of love, above all. I had understood that I was too inferior compared to the male image that Emma desired; too noble and refined, or more educated and sensitive than myself...But the major reason for my resignation was her nervous crises...they constituted a preoccupying clinical case...And I realized that she had a problem that our scientific knowledge could not resolve...Faced with such a case, it would have been egotistical to worry about my good name and the reputation of my wife...The only possibility was to have pity; and I was overflowing with pity.*”

Tellenbach (26) would have claimed that the jealousy in Charles Bovary had been tempered, bridled, and dissolved by the ethical appeal of pity. Lagache (1) would have claimed that *amour oblatif*, or *Being Love* according to Maslow (19), was his prevailing emotion. Cloninger (29) would have pointed to the existence of temperamental traits in him, such as high *Harm Avoidance*, high *Reward Dependence*, and low *Sensation Seeking*. Finally, DSM-IV (30), would authorize us to identify a peculiar constellation of avoidant, dependent, and depressive personality traits.

Don Juan and Charles Bovary, however, are not the only ones who do not experience feelings of jealousy. There are yet others who, because of peculiarities of personality or psychological aspects, manage to bridle jealousy within the complicated plot of their destiny and completely elaborate and overcome it. In others, because of a sort of anaesthesia and emotional and affective indifference, feelings of jealousy never surface.

This may be the case with Flaubert, who affirmed: “I admit that I have never in my life been jealous.”

Tolstoj (6), however, was not unfamiliar with feelings of jealousy, which he had described in Pozdnysev in *La Sonata a Kreutzer*. A few years later, he found himself in the same situation when the musician Taneev became a frequent guest in his home. Sonja, his wife, did not attempt to hide from her husband the interest and sympathy she felt for the musician. Tolstoj, in his diaries, speaks of the extreme suffering that his wife's feelings for the musician causes him, and blames the nature of his wife, and her “inability, as a woman, to subjugate feelings and instinct to reason.”

Tolstoj, as Gorkij, quoted by Pacini (31) wrote, at the time he wrote *La Sonata a Kreuzer*, was no longer the Tolstoj, cantor of life in its cruel yet attractive immediateness. He was no longer the Tolstoj who spoke of his extatic happiness with his young wife Sonja. Rather, he was the brooding and devastated Tolstoj who, after his existential crisis and religious conversion in 1878, denied the existence of passion and feelings. In addition, he became the Tolstoj of absolute reason, no longer able to love, but only to preach an abstract love for all of humanity, and also the Tolstoj of the *Tragedy of the Alcove*, one of the most painful tragedies regarding the life of mankind.

This was the Tolstoj who considered unfaithfulness as an intrinsic part of the nature of conjugal relationships and jealousy as an expression of the profound ambiguity of carnal love, where hate and desire are intertwined due to the need for absolute and exclusive possession of the other.

## Love and jealousy

The *Recherche* by Proust (17) is considered a novel about love, yet the only love relationships depicted where there is no delusion and jealousy are those of the grandmother for her grandchildren and of the mother for the writer. All of the other characters are permeated by dissimulation, lies, suspicion, lacerating contradiction and atrocious pain. In the Proustian universe there is no happy love. This is a “*psychological rule which is as difficult to break as the physical laws of gravity and death.*”

According to Proust, love exists only in the sort of agony that is jealousy. Love seems to be a curse, a sorcery like in a fairy tale, that cannot be overcome until the spell is broken. Either we are jealous, suffer, and are unhappy, or we believe that we love, aren't jealous and don't suffer. Happy love, however, is none other than an unavoidable boredom: this is the curse of love.

In keeping with Proust, one loves and desires that which a woman *promises: another world, another interior reality in which one wishes to partake*. As in the paradoxical love of the troubadours (28), the anxiety caused by the absence is the etiology and the totality of love, and that is why there can be no happy love. "One only loves that which one does not possess", and once one possesses the love object, one feels dispossessed of the illusion of the world once discovered through her, and that made one love her.

It is the unattainable nature of that unknown and imagined world that gives rise to love; the possession does away with the distance as well as the love. The passage from absence to presence is, according to Proust, the passage from desire to delusion, and with delusion love ceases to be happy.

In conformity with Proust, thus, love only exists in order to possess a person; to come to know their interior existence and to take part in their world. Jealousy only arises from whatever impedes this process, and renders inaccessible this inner existence, because of its irreducible opacity, its ubiquitousness, the freedom of everyone's consciousness (the mind can always be elsewhere and it is useless to possess a body if one does not possess that which it hides) and because of efforts made by the other to hide their being, because no one wishes to give to the other their own soul. Paradoxically, it is enough to feel loved in order to retreat and lie.

In a perverse circle, then, the unknown, gives rise to love but also to jealousy; as a consequence of jealousy there are also lies, and the lies activate a surplus of love and jealousy, and because of a sort of vertiginous craze for the possible there is nothing that cannot be suspected of the beloved (11). All the same, it is that which we suspect of the beloved that is but a projection of what we know of ourselves; it is because we are diabolic that others are sinners.

Our amorous imagination made us dream, as if invited on a voyage, of the possibility to enter, know, and become actors in the world of the other. The imagination of the jealous, however, knows how to hunt out, in the depths of hell, the world hidden there, into which it hopes to enter if only as a pathetic and complaining voyeur.

The suffering of the jealous only ends when love has become a faded and non-sensical memory; this is when they realize that they have healed because they have stopped loving.

### Eulogy to jealousy

Jealousy cannot only be considered a problem that needs to be suppressed and treated, but rather, a problem that needs to be deciphered in its complex combination of personal and social meanings. These are hermeneutics which presuppose the renunciation of clinical dogmatic paradigms and of the unconscious "bifocal vision" that induces one to consider the jealousy of others as something inferior, abnormal, pathological, to reject, to correct, or to treat, and our own as a powerful expression of our deep faithfulness towards our partner (21).

Moreover, trait or dispositional jealousy (jealous love) and non-pathological state jealousy, do not always have negative effects on the couple relationship, and are not always dangerous and destructive. On the contrary, at times they can have useful and constructive effects, in that they may reveal new and unexpected existential possibilities. In the place of tormenting and acute suffering, and its unseemly dramatizations, a more realistic understanding of oneself and one's partner might follow, with a remodeling of the relationship in a more solid way or a growing realization of the insignificance of the relationship, and the unveiling, in a rarified emotional atmosphere of indifference and detachment, of an unexpected truth: the end of love.

In addition, jealousy can be an advantage for the person who suffers from it. The excitement derived from the intrigue, and the atmosphere of shadows, mysteries, plots and machinations permeate the couple relationship and prevent boredom. It is a painful

yet also stimulating atmosphere: the partner dedicates much time trying to console the jealous partner, he or she is more available, and does everything possible to make the other feel less taken for granted and to improve the relationship.

Another advantage is represented by an increased libido. The jealous are in a continuous state of sexual hyperarousal, which is the pleasant, and at the same time, anguishing cause for erotic and masturbatory fantasies, and the constant demand for sexual relations with the partner.

Following the arguments and insults made during the day, the jealous seek, at night, a sexual fusion. They compulsively seek the body of the other and have a devouring desire for that body, albeit with the feeling of not being able to possess it even while clutching it.

The partner can, as well, derive benefits from a situation of jealousy: the attention of the jealous partner towards the other is greater, and the relationships attributed to him or her contribute to his or her narcissism. The sexual relations improve and he or she feels like a winner in the subtle fraternal competition with the partner.

## Conclusions

Being healthy, according to Lagache (1), does not mean being immune to jealousy, but rather means being willing to take a risk and sometimes to experience it, while at the same time being able to overcome it. "Normal" jealousy does not involve a distortion of all values and rules, but rather, remains within the boundaries of conventions and explicit or implicit demands within the couple, and can be normative in the sense that it may give rise to new rules and a new equilibrium. Pathological jealousy, on the contrary, becomes the norm in the sense of a stable and constant way of experiencing the sexual and love relationship in spite of its vicissitudes.

In normal jealousy, although triggered by a conflict with reality which is nurtured by feelings of frustration and revenge, the desire for revenge is bridled and elaborated by a personal evolution in which the jealous may come close to a psychopathological state, but do not lose their relationship with reality.

In keeping with the aforementioned, Ey (2) considers normal jealousy to be a comprehensible and proportionate reaction to a situation of certain or plausible unfaithfulness, and does not draw upon the affective and imaginative structure of the individual who maintains the ability to dominate a catastrophic situation without being overcome by it.

As Tellenbach (26) states (along with Stanley Cavell when he speaks of cognitive skepticism (23)), jealousy becomes abnormal when its relationship with trust moves in a unilateral direction.

According to Tellenbach (26), the emergence of jealousy in the primordial man, gives rise to an ethical reaction in the moral man, who is allowed the freedom of choosing to penetrate the honesty of his passion. Trust in the partner may permit him to interrupt this natural flow of strong emotion and to reconsider its diffident apprehension. If his suspicions are proven by facts, jealousy has a reason for existing and, as stated by Kierkegaard (25), so does the rightful indignation of a noble love where pain and resentment coexist. If the object of love is definitely lost, jealousy ceases to exist and the mourning for the death of love takes its place.

On the other hand, even if the suspicions are unfounded the individual gives in to his diffidence, and if the ethical appeal of trust no longer succeeds in dissipating the perceived threat, his natural feeling of jealousy becomes pathological.

Morbid jealousy, according to Henri Ey (2), is always delusional even when the delusion is not present: the delusion is latent and "projects" imaginary and subconscious ghosts onto reality after the falsely perceived event of the intrusion of the rival who is totally or partially fictitious, and who embodies the aggression and perversions of the jealous individual.

Jealousy is a universal experience and in most cases is not pathological. It is important to use caution and careful psychopathological analysis before one can consider pathological the feeling of jealous torment. It is not uncommon to find normal individuals who, when overcome by jealousy, manifest changes in their mental state and behavior which would lead one to have doubts regarding their mental health. Aside from the delusional form and those caused by an underlying defined psychopathology, jealousy can have similar

manifestations both in normal reactions and in many pathological ones.

A delusional person, a person with an antisocial personality, and a normal person can all infer the potential existence of a relationship between the partner and a rival and share certain behavioral and affective reactions. The inference is caused by a delusional system in the paranoid, can be the expression of an early parental rejection in the antisocial, and may be due to some behavioral ambiguity of the partner in the normal individual. In all three cases, the emotional charge of jealousy and the behavior that follows may be overlapping

The distinction between normal and pathological jealousy may be more difficult in borderline cases, where the evaluation may be greatly influenced by the values and the world view of the clinician. This distinction, however, should be made keeping in mind the relevant implications that it has for the management and treatment which in symptomatic jealousy should primarily be aimed at the mental disorder it is part of; in reactive jealousy at the personality disorder and at the particular sensitivity to abandonment with a secondary focus on couple relationship, and in normal jealousy at the couple relationship with a secondary emphasis on the partners.

We cannot discuss the treatment of the many types of jealousy in this paper. There are, today, numerous psychotherapeutic couple therapies available, as well as combined psychological and pharmacological therapies.

At present, there are certainly more possibilities of intervention than those available in the time of Robert Burton (32) who ironically ends his chapter on jealousy claiming to have an infallible cure, a formidable antidote, a refined treatment, which he cannot reveal. At the time all he could do was to quote the saying: "Good Lord liberate us from heresy, jealousy, and lust."

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Correspondence: Prof. Carlo Maggini

Neuroscience Department,

Section of Psychiatry,

University of Parma

P.le Matteotti

43100 Parma, Italy

Tel: +39 0521 206561

Fax +39 0521 230611

E-mail: carlo.maggini@unipr.it, www.actabiomedica.it