


Edited by Sybil L. Hart  
and Maria Legerstee

*Handbook of*  
**JEALOUSY**  
Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary Approaches

 WILEY-BLACKWELL

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In memory of my grandparents  
Sara, Simon, Hannah, Herschel  
S.H.

I dedicate this book to my parents  
Johanna (Ansje) Koreman and Pieter Legerstee  
(The Netherlands),  
my children and to all children  
M.L.

# Handbook of Jealousy

*Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary  
Approaches*

*Edited by*  
Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerstee

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# Preface

According to an Old Russian proverb, “jealousy and love are sisters.” This seems to suggest that both come from the same brain regions, and because love exists early in life, so might jealousy. Although accounts of infant jealousy date back many centuries, the scientific study of jealousy only started in the mid 1990s, generating but a paucity of information. The idea to address this shortcoming in a volume on Jealousy was sparked by very stimulating discussions I had with Joseph Campos and Sybil Hart at the International Conference of Infant Studies in Kyoto (2006), and again with Sybil at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in 2007. The SRCD symposium was especially revealing. It suggested two important things, namely (1) that the preconditions for the emergence of human jealousy could be elicited during the first months of life; and also in older children with autism; and (2) that there was little systematic knowledge about its development and the factors which influenced its expression. While at SRCD, Nirit Bauminger, Sybil Hart, and I discussed what might be the socio-cognitive and socio-biological foundations of jealousy. How do environmental factors such as parental rearing practices affect the expression of jealousy and how does the age of the person and her culture affect the presentation of jealousy?

What we ultimately discovered was that because little scientific data was available on the *development of jealousy*, few people actually *believed* that jealousy could present itself during infancy as a normal expression against exclusion by a loved one. However, infants have an innate desire to form social bonds and jealousy could be seen as a reaction to the presence of one who threatens this social



bond. Would infants be able to perceive such a threat? If so, at what age and more importantly, in what context would infants express jealousy, and what would this reveal about the socio-cognitive underpinnings of jealousy? Another difficulty was that jealousy is not a single emotion. Jealousy is more appropriately labeled “a state” that one experiences and that, depending on the context, may conjure up emotions such as sadness (loss), anger (betrayal), fear/anxiety (loneliness), etc. Consequently, jealousy per se does not have accompanying coherent infrastructures in the brain and thus mapping jealousy onto a specific region is not possible.

It became clear that there was a lot of unpublished work out there that could inform about the development of jealousy in infants and children. I suggested to Sybil that we publish an edited book that focuses on the *development* of jealousy. We created the *Handbook of Jealousy: Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary Approaches* to provide a comprehensive picture of jealousy, dealing with its functions, origins, and differentiation from infancy to its subsequent development. Twenty-one chapters and two commentaries chart how jealousy unfolds while also looking at the familial, cultural, cognitive, and biological factors that drive its development.

The *Handbook* is organized into five parts.

Part I: *Background*. In order to see how current understanding of jealousy has been formulated, it is important to put jealousy into context. Chapter 1 discusses social, cultural, and political trends during the twentieth century which gave rise to current thought on the topic of jealousy. Chapter 2 discusses issues which pertain to the interpretation of infants' responses that may indicate jealousy and distinctions between these and similar ones involving loss within social contexts that include attachment figures. Chapter 3 clarifies the importance of exclusivity in

adult romantic jealousy by distinguishing between jealousy and envy, and examining the sense of belonging and concerns over comparisons with a rival that are key components of jealousy.

Part II: *Socio-Biological Foundations*. The development of jealousy has a starting point and this section provides an account of the socio-biological foundations of jealousy. Chapter 4 explores facial affects associated with the presentation of nascent jealousy during the first year, and proposes a model in which jealousy is conceptualized as an independently organized dimension of temperament. Chapter 5 speculates on the type of neural structures that might be activated when infants experience social exclusion among loved ones and peers, thereby delivering a unique report on the integration of neuroscience and infant behaviors. Chapter 6 provides insight into the evolutionary sources of jealousy by suggesting that jealousy relies on learning and socio-cognitive abilities, but may have a head start as well, in that it is more clearly “prepared” to take on its core form. Chapter 7 examines sibling rivalries in non-human species, and modes of responses to intra-familial competition that may underpin human behavior among siblings. Chapter 8 provides a detailed commentary of the above works and reflects what a world without jealousy would be like—a world without an overriding desire for an exclusive relationship.

Part III: *Cognitive Underpinnings*. It has often been argued that because jealousy is a complex emotion, it cannot have its onset until certain cognitive prerequisites are in place. Chapter 9 establishes the existence of socio-cognitive prerequisites in the development of jealousy in infants, such as social bonds, perception of triadic relationships, and awareness of goals, and with a creative experiment shows that emotions of jealousy are observable early in the first year. Chapter 10 is suggestive of jealousy among infant-

peer trios, where vocalizations and gestures are being used in a seeming attempt to elicit or maintain the attention of a favored partner while in competition with a rival infant. Chapter 11 details rich parental reports on sibling interactions showing thwarting or open hostility toward a rival. Finally, Chapters 12 and 13 shed light on whether jealousy is a complex emotion with research on jealousy in people with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) who have emotional deficits but often only minor cognitive impairments to highlight what capacities are necessary for experiencing jealousy. Chapter 14 provides commentary on the previous chapters and highlights issues in need of attention and elaboration in order to shed light on the processes responsible for the development of jealousy.

Part IV: *Social-Emotional Foundations within the Parent-Child-Sibling Context*. Early presentations of jealousy often take place within the parent-child-sibling context. This section explores the manner in which these are presented, and how they differ with child characteristics, family dynamics, and parental attitudes. Chapter 15 proposes a model of jealousy's development through the integration of theoretical and empirical works on jealousy's presentation in different eliciting conditions, its functions and individual differences. Chapter 16 explores variation among twins in terms of attachment security, and reports findings which lead to suggesting that quality of attachment may be shaped by processes akin to jealousy that reflect sibling competition. Chapter 17 examines family correlates of children's responses to differential treatment and findings of research on sibling jealousy in a sample of toddler and preschool siblings during a triadic laboratory paradigm. Chapter 18 examines parental attitudes toward sibling conflict, how these are distinguished from those toward child misbehavior in other settings, and how they are shaped by concepts of jealousy as an expression of love.

Part V: *Socio-Emotional Foundations within Other Eliciting Contexts*. Chapter 19 details the young infant's awareness and involvement in social exchanges between mother and father, and the challenges of being faced by social exclusion. Chapter 20 sheds light on the evolutionary basis of jealousy before turning to a discussion of cultural conditions that influence the manner in which jealousy is expressed in Western and non-Western caregiving settings. Chapter 21 presents an ethnographic account and anthropological analysis of jealousy as it is encountered among children and youths involved in sports in Canadian cities. Chapter 22 examines friendship jealousy among children and young adolescents, as well vulnerability to jealousy in relation to child characteristics, including age and gender. Chapter 23 focuses on jealousy in adult romantic relationships through attention to factors that impact its elicitation, experience, and expression, including adult attachment styles, relationship variables, attribution processes, rival characteristics, and gender.

This *Handbook* tells the story of the development of jealousy. This story should be intriguing and important to everyone who is interested in the mind, brain, and in the development of love; in short, in what it means to be human.

I would like to express my appreciation to the wonderful scholars for their excellent contributions, which they produced in a timely fashion. The new scientific literature on jealousy depends, like any science, on the work of other scientists. I hope their work is acknowledged accurately through the inclusion of detailed and extensive end-of-chapter notes and reference lists presented by the contributors.

I am deeply grateful to my mentors and colleagues who gave feedback on the original proposal: Marinus H. van IJzendoorn of the University of Leiden, Alan Fogel of the

University of Utah, Stuart Shanker of York University, and Colwyn Trevarthen, University of Edinburgh. I also like to thank the very talented Christine Cardone, Executive Editor of Psychology at Wiley-Blackwell, who shared our enthusiasm for this project, and to Steve Smith who saw the project through. I further express my gratitude to the efficient and always gracious Constance Adler, editorial assistant and to Hannah Rolls in Wiley-Blackwell's Oxford office and Annette Abel for providing exemplary support to this project.

My ideas and research for this *Handbook* were supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada (410-2006-2424), a sabbatical grant (2008) from the York Faculty Association, and funds from the Dean of the Faculty of Health.

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Maria Legerstee, PhD,  
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Canada Day, July 1, 2009



# Introduction

The word *jealousy* stems from the Latin, *zelus*, meaning passion, a term that aptly describes a common thread which weaves through the array of works presented in this volume. When unleashed by a competitor for a treasured relationship, jealousy can entail a level of ferocity and destruction so passionate as to have permeated some of the most ingrained features of prevailing cultural ideologies and to have inspired some of the most significant works of poetry of all time.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. (Song of Solomon 8:6)

O! beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on.

(William Shakespeare, *Othello*)

Yet, jealousy can also be recognized as a more subtle phenomenon, and one that can be interpreted in light of what may be considered its more pro-social function, as passion that drives ardor as well as goal-directed behavior that protects relationships and helps ensure survival. This side of jealousy has not inspired as much poetry, nor has it received as much investigative attention, especially in research using humans. To most people, its existence is, more or less, taken for granted. Seen as something so ubiquitous, if not inevitable, its constant presence in everyday life is almost invisible except to the exceptional poet.

Jealousy in romance is like salt in food. A little can enhance the savor, but too much can spoil the pleasure and, under certain circumstances, can be life-threatening. (Maya Angelou, *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*)

This *Handbook* started with questions about the darker side of jealousy, but did not begin to take shape until the importance of jealousy's other dimensions were brought into the picture. This gave rise to our overarching goal of embracing jealousy through more nuanced and balanced treatment, and specifically through the integration of three interwoven themes that are unique to this volume.

First, our emphasis is on jealousy in its normative form. Toward this end, chapters focus on forms that occur with some regularity, and on individual differences as a function of protective influences. Descriptive material, enriched by quantitative and qualitative approaches, on behavioral, affective, and bio-physiological norms, point to constituent components, processes, and substrates. In addition to carving out an empirical basis for answering the fundamental question, *What is jealousy?*, these observations give rise to further premises on which to base answers to the question, *Why does jealousy exist?*

A second theme pertains to contexts and conditions in which jealousy arises. Our breadth is unified by attention to contexts that are social, supra-dyadic, and include at least one individual that can be construed as an interloper or competitor; but these take many different forms. Several chapters focus on variations of the classic love triangle, and involve an individual, a beloved individual with whom a valued relationship has been established, and a rival; and where the beloved is an attachment figure, a romantic partner, or a best friend. Other chapters deal with triads in which a valued relationship has not been fully established. Still others involve triads that include more than one rival or

more than one valued relationship. Sometimes groupings are larger than a triad. Through varied approaches, we inquire into versions of jealousy that are widely known in different literatures as sexual/romantic jealousy, friendship jealousy, sibling rivalry, and parent-offspring conflict. We also touch on affect-laden events to which jealousy is tethered, such as social exclusion and envy. In doing so, we seek to open dialog across a number of disciplines and traditions, from anthropology to biology, with the aim of building bridges toward fresh insight.

A third and final theme pertains to development. Essentially, this issue is treated by asking: What actually changes, what doesn't, and how does change come to pass? Approaches, again, are marked by their breadth and reach. We consider patterns that are associated with differences in age and evident in phylogenesis. Others are explored via attention to samples marked by atypical affective and cognitive development. These patterns pertain to changes in goals, changes in sensitivity to different kinds of eliciting contexts, changes in the capacity to extract meaning from these contexts, and changes in affects and modes of response that are available to the individual. In line with prevailing views that change is more apparent during early development, numerous chapters in this volume focus on jealousy during infancy and childhood.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest thanks to Christine Cardone, Executive Editor of Psychology at Wiley-Blackwell, for her vision and enthusiasm for this project, and to Steven D. Smith for steering this project through to completion. The skill and attention to detail of Constance Adler, Annette Abel, and Hannah Rolls of Wiley-Blackwell are deeply appreciated as well. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Tiffany Field, without whose mentorship and generosity toward an unusual doctoral student a research topic as ambitious as infant jealousy would not

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# **Part I**

## **Background**

# 1

## **Jealousy in Western History**

### ***From Past toward Present***

Peter N. Stearns

Jealousy has a past—that is, it has been subject to significant change over time, which means it's a proper topic for historical study. Amid change, it also displays some interesting continuities within particular cultures—a common complexity which again means it's a proper topic for historical study.

Some stark contrasts are involved. Several of the most famous American trials of the later 19th century involved men who had killed either a wife or a wife's lover, and who argued (in several cases successfully, when they also could afford a high-priced attorney) that they suffered from a legitimate jealousy that simply overcame their will. Just a half-century later (we move to the 1930s), while a number of spousal murderers may have wanted to mount this argument (think of the possibilities, even later on, for O. J. Simpson), they got nowhere with it. Jealousy—in its legitimate power to overwhelm rational controls—had been reassessed, and effective law changed accordingly. We need emotions history to understand this kind of change and, through this in turn, to assess contemporary emotional formulations in terms of a trajectory from past to present. Jealous rage is not the only facet of this particular emotion to warrant historical analysis—it's not even the most

significant element in point of fact; but it does demonstrate the kind of dramatic shifts that invite entry to a historical project.

Emotions history, still a fairly new and somewhat tentative entrant, fills several needs. It helps explain why former behaviors often differed from contemporary expectations—when people defined grief, or anger, or jealousy by standards different from those of the present, it is hardly surprising that their patterns of action, even some of their basic institutions, differed as well. Emotions history, in other words, helps historians do their job of exploring the past. Emotions history can generate some good stories, providing some of the wonder that good emotions anthropology offers as to the amazing range of human responses in what might seem to be basic characteristics of the species. Above all, however, emotions history, particularly but not exclusively applied to the past century or so, illuminates current emotional responses and issues directly. By showing the immediate antecedents of a contemporary emotional pattern, there is a chance to seek causal explanations that purely presentist evidence would not permit; where significant recent change is involved, complexities may also be identified that might be difficult to discern, or certainly to account for, by using current data alone. Seeing certain emotional formulations in movement, from a prior point in time, adds a vital ingredient to emotions analysis, whether or not there is explicit interest in the past per se.<sup>1</sup>

At its best, emotions history also helps relate emotional standards and experience to wider developments in society. Examination of recent shifts in jealousy certainly requires attention to broader changes in family patterns and gender relationships. Emotional change responds to more general social currents, and adds new components to social patterns in turn. Contemporary jealousy is a revealing case in point.