
A TEST OF LOYALTY AND TRUST FROM THE EYES OF DOLLY AS DESDEMONA IN OMKARA

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the representation of loyalty and trust through the character of Dolly in Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara* (2006), a cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Reimagined within the socio political landscape of rural eastern Uttar Pradesh, *Omkara* relocates Shakespeare's tragedy from Venetian military hierarchy to a world governed by caste, kinship, and political allegiance. Within this context, Dolly comes as a culturally transformed counterpart to Desdemona, whose loyalty and trust become central to the film's emotional and moral structure. While Desdemona's tragedy in *Othello* has often been read through themes of innocence, obedience, and patriarchal vulnerability, Dolly's experience reflects a more localised negotiation of female agency, familial defiance, and emotional faith. The paper argues that Dolly's complete trust in *Omkara* is not a sign of passivity but a conscious ethical stance shaped by her love, resistance, and belief in emotional integrity. Different to Shakespeare's Desdemona, whose loyalty is framed within the ideals of chastity and obedience, Dolly's devotion is made through acts of rebellion, including her elopement and rejection of caste based authority. Her trust towards *Omkara* becomes both her strength and her undoing, exposing how patriarchal suspicion weaponizes loyalty against women in male dominated world. The Trust or that lack of eventually leading to the tragedy of *Othello* and his surrounding.

KEYWORDS: *Omkara*, *Othello*, Dolly, Loyalty, Trust, Caste, Honour, Shakespeare, Love.

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's *Othello* remains one of the most searching examinations of trust, loyalty, and betrayal in early modern drama. At its emotional centres stands Desdemona, a character

whose unwavering faith in her husband has been interpreted variously as virtuous devotion, tragic innocence, and fatal submission to patriarchal authority. Her death, precipitated not by proven guilt but by suspicion carefully manufactured by Iago, exposes how female loyalty becomes vulnerable within systems governed by masculine honour and control (Shakespeare 4.2.32–35). Modern adaptations of *Othello* have repeatedly returned to Desdemona's character in order to reassess the meanings of trust and agency in changing cultural contexts. Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara* (2006) offers a particularly compelling reworking of this tragedy by relocating it to the caste ridden and politically charged landscape of rural Uttar Pradesh. In this adaptation, Dolly assumes the role of Desdemona, yet her social position, choices, and emotional commitments are shaped by local structures of kinship, honour, and power. Dolly is not introduced as a sheltered noblewoman but as a woman who actively defies paternal authority by eloping with Omkara. This act alone reconfigures the meaning of her loyalty, marking it as a conscious and costly choice rather than inherited obedience.

Critical discussions of *Omkara* have often emphasized its portrayal of political rivalry, masculine violence, and caste anxiety, sometimes treating Dolly as a passive casualty within a male driven narrative (Trivedi 1492). However, such readings risk overlooking the ethical force of her perspective. Dolly's trust in Omkara is not blind. It is rooted in shared history, emotional intimacy, and the belief that love can transcend social prejudice. Her refusal to doubt Omkara, even in the face of mounting suspicion, reflects a commitment to emotional truth rather than ignorance of danger.

Feminist literary criticism has long noted that Desdemona's tragedy lies not in disloyalty but in excessive trust within a system that interprets female fidelity through male paranoia (Showalter). *Omkara* intensifies this dynamic by embedding suspicion within the politics of masculinity and caste. Loyalty in the film is repeatedly tested through displays of violence, dominance, and sexual control. Against this backdrop, Dolly's faith appears anomalous, even threatening, because it resists the logic of constant verification that governs male bonds.

Cinematic form plays a crucial role in articulating this resistance. Bhardwaj frequently frames Dolly in moments of quiet assurance, positioning her emotional clarity against the escalating chaos of male rivalry. The audience is encouraged to share her trust, not because the narrative guarantees safety, but because her sincerity offers moral stability in an increasingly unstable world. This alignment invites a reconsideration of trust not as naivety but as an ethical position that challenges suspicion driven power structures.

This paper argues that Dolly's loyalty and trust constitute a form of moral agency that reshapes the tragic logic of *Othello*. By reading *Omkara* through Dolly's perspective, the

study examines how female trust becomes both a site of resistance and a point of vulnerability. In doing so, it seeks to demonstrate how Bhardwaj's adaptation transforms Shakespeare's tragedy into a critique of honour based violence and the social mechanisms that punish women for believing in love.

Literature Review

Critical engagement with Shakespeare's *Othello* has consistently foregrounded the themes of trust, loyalty, and jealousy, with Desdemona occupying a complex and often contested position within these discussions. Early criticism tended to idealize Desdemona as a figure of purity and obedience, emphasizing her chastity and moral innocence as tragic virtues. Such readings framed her loyalty as unquestioning devotion, thereby reinforcing patriarchal ideals of feminine submission. Later feminist interventions challenged this perspective by arguing that Desdemona's tragedy arises not from passivity but from her ethical commitment to truth and emotional constancy in a system that devalues female testimony (Showalter).

Feminist scholars have further examined how Desdemona's trust is repeatedly misread by male characters as either deception or weakness. Her refusal to perform suspicion, even when confronted with Othello's hostility, exposes the instability of masculine honour, which relies on control and verification rather than faith. Critics note that Desdemona's loyalty threatens patriarchal authority precisely because it resists the logic of ownership that governs marital relations in the play (Neely). In this sense, trust becomes a subversive act rather than a passive flaw.

Adaptation studies provide an important framework for understanding how these dynamics shift when *Othello* is reimagined in non Western contexts. Linda Hutcheon argues that adaptations function as interpretive acts that respond to the cultural and ideological pressures of their new environments rather than merely retelling canonical stories (Hutcheon). Indian adaptations of Shakespeare, in particular, have been read as sites where questions of gender, caste, and power are renegotiated through local social realities (Trivedi). Within this scholarship, *Omkara* has emerged as a significant example of how Shakespearean tragedy can be reconfigured to address contemporary forms of social violence.

Critical responses to *Omkara* often emphasize its exploration of political ambition, masculine rivalry, and caste based insecurity. *Omkara*'s suspicion is frequently linked to anxieties about legitimacy and honour within a rigid social hierarchy. While such analyses acknowledge Dolly's narrative importance, they sometimes treat her primarily as a victim of male manipulation rather than as a moral centre in her own right. This tendency mirrors earlier

critical approaches to Desdemona that prioritized male psychology over female ethical presence.

Studies of female representation in Indian cinema complicate this picture. Scholars such as Dwyer and Ganti observe that women in Hindi cinema are often positioned as symbols of honour whose bodies become sites of social control. Loyalty and trust, when expressed by female characters, are frequently rewarded only if they align with patriarchal expectations. When such loyalty challenges male authority or caste norms, it is often met with suspicion and punishment. Dolly's position in *Omkara* reflects this tension, as her devotion to Omkara is inseparable from her rejection of paternal and caste authority.

Feminist film theory further illuminates how cinematic technique shapes audience alignment with female characters. While classical cinema has been critiqued for privileging male perspectives, later scholarship has highlighted moments where films invite viewers to inhabit female subjectivity through framing, performance, and narrative emphasis (Doane). In *Omkara*, Dolly's emotional clarity is often foregrounded through visual stillness and restrained expression, contrasting with the volatility of male characters. This formal strategy positions her trust as a stabilizing force rather than a narrative blind spot.

Despite these critical insights, there remains limited sustained analysis of Dolly as an ethical lens through which *Omkara* can be read. Much of the existing literature focuses on the transformation of Iago into Langda Tyagi or on Omkara's internal conflict, leaving Dolly's perspective underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by synthesizing feminist literary criticism, adaptation theory, and film studies to examine how loyalty and trust operate when viewed from Dolly's position.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This paper employs an interdisciplinary framework that brings together feminist literary criticism, adaptation theory, and film studies in order to examine loyalty and trust through Dolly's perspective in *Omkara*. This Paper also shall be using MLA 9th Ed. for citations. Rather than approaching the film solely as a political or caste based adaptation of *Othello*, the study foregrounds emotional ethics and gendered experience as central analytical categories. This approach allows for a reorientation of the tragic narrative away from masculine suspicion and toward the consequences of unwavering trust within patriarchal systems.

Feminist literary criticism provides the primary conceptual foundation for this analysis. Scholars such as Elaine Showalter and Carol Thomas Neely have argued that Desdemona's loyalty in *Othello* functions as a moral stance that exposes the violence inherent in male

dominated honour cultures. Building on this insight, the paper treats loyalty not as a static virtue but as an active ethical choice that carries risk. Dolly's trust is examined as a form of emotional labour that sustains intimacy while simultaneously making her vulnerable to misinterpretation and violence.

Adaptation theory further shapes the analytical framework. Linda Hutcheon's understanding of adaptation as reinterpretation rather than reproduction underscores the importance of cultural specificity in *Omkara*. The film does not merely retell *Othello* in an Indian setting but transforms the meaning of loyalty by embedding it within caste hierarchies, regional politics, and familial authority. Dolly's elopement, for instance, redefines trust as an act of defiance that severs her from paternal protection and places her entirely within *Omkara*'s moral world.

Film studies methodologies are used to examine how cinematic form aligns viewers with Dolly's perspective. Feminist film theorists have emphasized the role of framing, performance, and narrative focus in constructing subjectivity on screen (Doane). This paper analyses key scenes involving Dolly through close visual reading, attending to camera positioning, shot duration, and spatial arrangement. Particular attention is given to moments of stillness and silence, where Dolly's trust is communicated without dialogue. These moments are read as ethical assertions rather than narrative gaps.

Methodologically, the study adopts qualitative close analysis of selected scenes from *Omkara* that foreground trust, suspicion, and emotional conflict. These scenes are examined in relation to corresponding moments in *Othello* in order to trace thematic continuity and divergence. Rather than mapping characters directly onto one another, the analysis focuses on how similar narrative pressures produce different meanings in distinct cultural contexts.

The paper also draws on comparative textual analysis to examine how loyalty is gendered differently in the play and the film. While male loyalty in *Omkara* is repeatedly tested through violence and dominance, Dolly's loyalty is expressed through emotional consistency and refusal to doubt. This contrast reveals how trust functions as a gendered ethical practice rather than a universal value.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives and methodological tools, the paper aims to offer a sustained reading of *Omkara* that centres Dolly as a moral and emotional axis of the narrative. This framework enables an examination of how loyalty and trust, when viewed through female experience, expose the destructive logic of suspicion and honour that drives the tragic outcome.

Loyalty as Ethical Choice: Dolly and Desdemona

In both *Othello* and *Omkaara*, loyalty is not merely a personal virtue but a moral position that shapes the tragic structure of the narrative. When viewed through the characters of Desdemona and Dolly, loyalty emerges as an ethical choice grounded in trust rather than obedience. This distinction is crucial, as it challenges interpretations that reduce female fidelity to passive submission within patriarchal systems. Instead, loyalty becomes a deliberate commitment that resists the logic of suspicion governing male relationships.

Desdemona's loyalty in *Othello* is established through her defiance of paternal authority and her public declaration of love for Othello. By choosing her husband over her father, she asserts emotional autonomy while simultaneously entering a marriage structured by racial and gendered hierarchies (Shakespeare 1.3.180–184). Her continued trust in Othello, even as his behaviour grows increasingly hostile, reflects a belief in the integrity of their bond. Critics such as Neely argue that Desdemona's refusal to perform jealousy or doubt exposes the fragility of masculine honour, which depends on constant surveillance and control rather than mutual faith.

Dolly's loyalty in *Omkaara* is shaped by similar acts of defiance but operates within a different social framework. Her elopement with Omkara signifies a rejection of caste based authority and familial control, positioning loyalty as a socially disruptive act. Unlike Desdemona, whose marriage is legitimized through public ceremony, Dolly's union places her outside formal structures of protection. Her trust, therefore, carries higher stakes, as it leaves her emotionally and socially dependent on Omkara's belief in her fidelity.

The film repeatedly underscores this dependence through scenes that contrast Dolly's emotional certainty with Omkara's growing suspicion. While Omkara demands proof and reassurance, Dolly remains consistent in her trust, refusing to engage in defensive justification. This refusal is not rooted in ignorance but in an ethical commitment to transparency and faith. Her loyalty rejects the premise that love must be verified through control, aligning her moral stance against the violent masculinity that governs Omkara's world.

Cinematic form reinforces this ethical framing. Bhardwaj frequently isolates Dolly within the frame during moments of confrontation, emphasizing her vulnerability while simultaneously granting her moral clarity. The camera's lingering attention to her calm demeanor invites the audience to recognize trust as a stabilizing force amidst chaos. In contrast, Omkara's suspicion is visually associated with fragmentation and volatility, reinforcing the moral imbalance between doubt and faith.

The comparison with Desdemona further illuminates how loyalty functions as resistance. In *Othello*, Desdemona's insistence on honesty and openness destabilizes the narrative constructed by Iago, even though it fails to save her life. Similarly, Dolly's trust threatens the logic of suspicion advanced by Langda Tyagi. In both cases, loyalty exposes the ethical poverty of a system that equates control with love.

However, the tragic outcome in both texts underscores the limits of ethical loyalty within patriarchal structures. Neither Desdemona nor Dolly is afforded the authority to define truth within their respective worlds. Their trust, though morally grounded, is rendered powerless against narratives shaped by male rivalry and fear. This structural imbalance reveals how loyalty, when gendered female, becomes vulnerable to misinterpretation and erasure.

By reading loyalty as an ethical choice rather than a character flaw, this analysis reframes the tragedy of *Othello* and *Omkara*. Dolly and Desdemona do not suffer because they trust too much, but because their trust exists within systems that devalue female integrity. Their loyalty stands as a critique of honor cultures that privilege suspicion over emotional truth, revealing the human cost of mistrust institutionalized as virtue.

Trust, Suspicion, and Patriarchal Control

In *Omkara*, the emotional economy of the narrative is structured around a fragile balance between trust and suspicion, a balance that is systematically destabilized by patriarchal control. Dolly Mishra's tragedy unfolds not because of any moral failing on her part, but because trust, once broken within a rigid masculine order, becomes irreparable. Her loyalty operates in a world where female sincerity is constantly placed under surveillance, tested, and ultimately disbelieved. The film thus reframes betrayal not as an act committed by the woman, but as a failure of the male psyche to sustain trust without dominance.

Dolly's relationship with Omkara is grounded in voluntary devotion rather than obligation. She chooses him against familial authority, mirroring Desdemona's assertion of agency in *Othello*. However, once this choice is made, her autonomy is paradoxically revoked. Patriarchal logic permits female choice only at the point of submission; afterward, loyalty is expected to manifest as silence, endurance, and unquestioning obedience. Trust, in this framework, is never mutual. Omkara demands absolute transparency from Dolly while granting himself emotional opacity, a power imbalance that enables suspicion to masquerade as masculine vigilance.

Suspicion in *Omkara* does not arise organically but is cultivated through a culture of rumor, innuendo, and masculine bonding. Langda Tyagi's manipulation succeeds precisely because

the social order already assumes female duplicity as a latent possibility. Dolly's gestures of affection, her private conversations, and even her emotional openness are reinterpreted as signs of moral weakness once suspicion is introduced. This process reflects a patriarchal epistemology in which male doubt is treated as rational inquiry, while female assertion is dismissed as deceit or naivety. Trust, therefore, is not destroyed by evidence but by the authority granted to male perception.

The film intensifies this dynamic by situating it within a milieu of political violence and criminal hierarchy. In such a world, loyalty is a currency tied to control rather than affection. Omkara's identity as a leader depends on his ability to command fear and obedience, traits that bleed into his intimate relationships. Dolly's unconditional trust becomes unintelligible within this framework because it does not conform to transactional logic. Her refusal to suspect, question, or defend herself aggressively is read not as moral strength but as incriminating passivity.

What makes Dolly's position especially tragic is that her loyalty is internally consistent. She does not waver in her emotional truth, even when confronted with Omkara's hostility. Unlike narratives where betrayal is revealed through confession or exposure, Omkara presents betrayal as a projection. The real rupture occurs when trust is replaced by patriarchal anxiety about honor and possession. Dolly is punished not for disloyalty but for embodying a form of trust that resists control.

By foregrounding suspicion as a tool of patriarchal dominance, Omkara reorients the tragedy away from individual jealousy toward structural mistrust of women. Dolly's fate exposes how easily trust collapses in systems where female virtue is always provisional and male authority is never questioned. In this sense, her silence is not emptiness but a quiet indictment of a world that confuses control with certainty and suspicion with truth.

Loyalty as Ethical Resistance and Emotional Integrity

Dolly Mishra's loyalty in Omkara functions not merely as personal devotion but as an ethical stance that quietly resists the violent emotional logic governing the film's masculine world. In a narrative saturated with suspicion, strategic alliances, and performative aggression, loyalty is usually framed as obedience secured through fear or advantage. Dolly's fidelity stands apart because it is neither coerced nor conditional. It is rooted in trust that refuses to adapt itself to paranoia, making her position morally coherent even as it becomes narratively fatal.

Unlike the men in Omkara, whose loyalties shift according to power and survival, Dolly's commitment remains stable across changing emotional circumstances. Her trust does not

diminish when Omkara becomes distant, hostile, or cruel. This constancy is not the result of blindness or ignorance but of an ethical refusal to participate in a worldview where intimacy must be constantly verified through proof. In this sense, Dolly's loyalty challenges the patriarchal assumption that women must continually demonstrate their virtue to retain legitimacy. She does not argue, perform, or plead for belief, because doing so would already concede to a logic that presumes her guilt.

Feminist film criticism has often warned against romanticizing female suffering, and Dolly's fate certainly risks being read as an endorsement of passive endurance. However, such a reading overlooks the moral clarity with which her character is written. Dolly is not unaware of Omkara's transformation; she recognizes his withdrawal and anger, yet she refuses to respond with counter-suspicion. This refusal becomes a form of resistance. By maintaining emotional integrity in the face of escalating mistrust, she exposes the instability of masculine authority that depends on domination rather than mutual recognition.

Loyalty in Omkara is also deeply entangled with honor, a concept that disproportionately burdens women. Dolly's body becomes the imagined site upon which male honor is inscribed, defended, and avenged. Her loyalty is therefore never interpreted on its own terms. It is filtered through male anxiety about reputation and control. The more she remains faithful, the more her silence is read as concealment. This paradox reveals how patriarchal systems are structurally incapable of recognizing ethical loyalty when it is not accompanied by submission to surveillance.

Dolly's emotional integrity further destabilizes the narrative by denying the men the satisfaction of confirmation. She neither confesses nor resists in ways that would validate their suspicions. Her trust remains intact until the end, which renders Omkara's violence meaningless as an act of justice. The tragedy thus lies not in misplaced loyalty but in the impossibility of ethical trust surviving within a culture that equates doubt with intelligence and control with care.

By framing loyalty as an ethical position rather than a narrative weakness, Omkara invites a reconsideration of female fidelity in adaptation studies. Dolly's tragedy does not arise because she trusts too much, but because the world she inhabits cannot accommodate trust that is not governed by fear. Her emotional consistency becomes a mirror held up to a society that mistakes suspicion for wisdom and domination for love.

Surveillance, Rumor, and the Politics of Seeing

Betrayal in *Omkara* is sustained less by concrete action than by systems of watching, listening, and circulating suspicion. The film constructs a social environment in which visibility becomes a liability for women and a resource for men. Dolly Mishra is constantly seen, discussed, and interpreted, yet she is rarely heard on her own terms. This imbalance reveals how patriarchal power operates through the regulation of perception, turning ordinary gestures into evidence and intimacy into incrimination.

Surveillance in the film is informal but pervasive. It does not rely on institutions or technology as much as on male networks of observation and narration. Characters watch each other through doorways, from a distance, or via intermediaries, and these partial sights are then filled in with conjecture. For Dolly, this means that her presence in public and private spaces is always already coded as meaningful. Her interactions are never neutral; they are constantly available for reinterpretation once suspicion has been seeded. The politics of seeing thus transforms her visibility into vulnerability.

Rumour acts as the connective tissue between surveillance and betrayal. What is seen gains destructive power only when it is narrated, reshaped, and repeated within masculine circuits of trust. Langda Tyagi exploits this mechanism by offering *Omkara* not direct accusations but carefully framed suggestions. His strategy depends on the patriarchal assumption that women conceal truth behind appearances. As a result, Dolly's silence, which might otherwise signify dignity or restraint, is reimagined as strategic secrecy. The absence of proof becomes proof itself.

The film's visual language reinforces this epistemological violence. Close-ups of Dolly often emphasize her emotional openness, yet these moments are not granted interpretive authority. Instead, they are juxtaposed with *Omkara*'s increasingly hostile gaze, which claims the right to define meaning. The camera frequently aligns with male suspicion rather than female experience, reproducing the very imbalance the narrative seeks to expose. Seeing, in *Omkara*, is not about understanding but about asserting control over interpretation.

This politics of seeing also intersects with caste and class hierarchies. Dolly's social mobility through marriage places her under intensified scrutiny, as her legitimacy within *Omkara*'s world is never fully secured. Surveillance becomes a means of policing boundaries, ensuring that women who cross social lines remain subject to moral examination. Trust, in such a context, is structurally undermined, because belonging itself is provisional.

By foregrounding rumour and surveillance, *Omkara* reveals betrayal as a collective process rather than a personal act. Dolly is destroyed not by a single lie but by a network of glances,

half-truths, and patriarchal certainties that refuse to see her except through suspicion. Her tragedy underscores how systems of watching can erase female subjectivity, converting ethical loyalty into perceived deceit.

Dolly and Desdemona: Adaptation, Amplification, and Cultural Translation

A comparative reading of Dolly Mishra and Desdemona reveals how adaptation reshapes the politics of loyalty and trust by embedding them within specific cultural anxieties. While both characters occupy similar narrative positions as devoted wives undone by male suspicion, the transformation from Shakespeare's Venetian setting to the world of Omkara intensifies the consequences of mistrust by aligning them with honour, caste, and localized forms of patriarchal authority. The shift is not merely geographical; it is ideological.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, Desdemona's virtue is repeatedly asserted through speech. She defends her marriage before the Senate, articulates her love with clarity, and continues to assert her innocence even when faced with violence. Her verbal agency, though ultimately ineffective, allows her a measure of interpretive presence within the play's moral universe. Dolly, by contrast, exists within a cinematic environment where female speech carries less authority than male suspicion. Her attempts to explain, reassure, or normalize intimacy are absorbed into a culture that values masculine intuition over female testimony.

This difference reflects the adaptation's engagement with Indian social realities, where loyalty is often conflated with chastity and obedience rather than ethical consistency. Dolly's silence is more pronounced than Desdemona's, not because she lacks voice, but because the world she inhabits has already decided how to read her actions. The adaptation thus amplifies the tragic irony of trust by showing how female sincerity becomes illegible within systems that equate control with care.

The transformation also sharpens the consequences of desire. In Shakespeare's play, Desdemona's desire is framed as transgressive but ultimately noble, challenging racial prejudice and social hierarchy. In Omkara, Dolly's desire is inseparable from questions of honour and ownership. Her choice to love Omkara is initially romanticized, yet it later becomes the very ground upon which suspicion is built. Desire, once expressed, places her permanently under scrutiny, as if agency itself were a provocation.

Another crucial distinction lies in the representation of male authority. Othello's tragedy emerges from his internal conflict between love and insecurity, whereas Omkara's downfall is inseparable from his public identity as a power broker. His mistrust of Dolly is not only personal but political, tied to the need to appear decisive and dominant. This shift magnifies

the cost of trust, rendering it incompatible with leadership as defined by violence and control. Dolly's loyalty, therefore, threatens not just Omkara's emotional stability but his masculine legitimacy.

By reworking Desdemona into Dolly, the adaptation exposes how cultural translation can deepen feminist critique. The tragedy no longer hinges solely on individual jealousy but on collective structures that normalize suspicion toward women. Dolly's fate suggests that in such contexts, ethical loyalty is not only unrewarded but actively punished.

Through this comparative lens, Omkara does not dilute Shakespeare's concerns but radicalizes them. It reveals how trust collapses most violently in societies where female agency is tolerated only until it challenges male authority. Dolly's Desdemona becomes a figure through whom adaptation speaks back to both the source text and the culture it inhabits, transforming a familiar tragedy into a pointed critique of patriarchal control.

CONCLUSION

Dolly Mishra's trajectory in Omkara reveals how loyalty and trust, when viewed from the female perspective, expose the ethical failures of patriarchal systems rather than the supposed weaknesses of women. By centering Dolly's experience, this study has argued that betrayal in the narrative is not the result of female transgression but of a masculine order that equates suspicion with strength and control with love. Dolly's unwavering trust does not signify naivety; it represents an ethical consistency that remains intact even as the world around her collapses into paranoia.

The analysis of trust and suspicion demonstrated how patriarchal control transforms intimacy into a site of surveillance, where women are required to constantly validate their virtue while men are exempt from emotional accountability. Dolly's loyalty becomes unintelligible within this framework because it refuses to submit to the logic of proof and counterproof. Her silence, often misread as passivity, functions instead as a quiet refusal to accept a system that presumes her guilt in advance. In maintaining emotional integrity, she exposes the fragility of masculine authority that depends on domination rather than mutual recognition.

The discussion of surveillance and rumour further highlighted how betrayal operates collectively rather than individually. Dolly is undone not by a single act or accusation but by a network of glances, narratives, and assumptions that convert visibility into vulnerability. The politics of seeing in the film demonstrates how women are rendered hyper-visible yet epistemologically powerless, watched constantly but rarely believed. Trust disintegrates not

because it is misplaced, but because the structures governing perception are fundamentally hostile to female subjectivity.

The comparative examination of Dolly and Desdemona showed how cultural translation intensifies Shakespeare's tragic concerns. By embedding the narrative within Indian socio-political realities, the adaptation amplifies the consequences of mistrust, aligning them with honour, caste, and masculine legitimacy. Dolly's fate suggests that in such contexts, female agency itself becomes suspect, and ethical loyalty is recast as a threat rather than a virtue.

Taken together, these arguments reposition Dolly not as a tragic accessory to male jealousy but as the moral center of the narrative. Her trust, though it leads to her destruction, stands as an indictment of a world that cannot sustain relationships without control. The tragedy of Omkara thus lies less in the fall of its male protagonist than in the silencing of a woman whose loyalty exposes the emptiness of patriarchal certainty. By reading the film through Dolly's eyes, this study affirms the importance of reclaiming female perspectives in adaptation studies and underscores trust as an ethical stance that challenges, rather than conforms to, structures of power.

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