



The History and the Origin of the Shakespearean Characters in The Merchant of Venice: A Critical Review

Dr. Wisam Hamid Lateef

Dr. Khalid Rokan Mansoor

Al-Turath University College

Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The paper delves into revealing the historical and original background of the tales related to the events of the play, which Shakespeare, with his intelligence and wit, turned into an unparalleled literary and dramatic work. The paper also provides new insights into the analysis of the characters of the play, whether these characters are major or minor. The paper depicts how Shakespeare succeeded aptly in linking the good and the bad qualities and customs to the characters, and how these qualities and customs became part of their behavior in dealing with each other.

Keywords: The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare, the origin of the play, the major characters and the minor characters.

المستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على مسرحية تاجر البندقية لشكسبير. يتعمق البحث في الكشف عن الخلفية التاريخية والأصلية للحكايات المتعلقة بأحداث المسرحية والتي حولها شكسبير بذكائه ودهائه إلى عمل أدبي ودرامي لا مثيل له. يقدم البحث أيضاً رؤية جديدة لتحليل شخصيات المسرحية، سواء كانت هذه الشخصيات رئيسية أو ثانوية. يوضح البحث كيف نجح شكسبير بشكل مناسب في ربط الصفات والعادات الجيدة والسيئة بالشخصيات، وكيف أصبحت هذه الصفات والعادات جزءاً من سلوكهم في التعامل مع بعضهم البعض.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تاجر البندقية، ويليام شكسبير، أصل المسرحية، الشخصيات الرئيسية والثانوية.

1. Introduction

The original story of *The Merchant of Venice* has taken place in Italy and it has been circulated by other nations. It is about a girl with abundant money, brilliant beauty and intellect. She is like a bright planet. Her parents have died, so she has inherited a gigantic wealth. Many nobles, including the King of Marrakesh and the Prince of Aragon, have come to propose her. But she has inclined to a gentle young man from her hometown and of her own race, who borrowed the money he had spent on marrying her with the guarantee of his poor friend like him, as a pawn to the Jew who lent that money in exchange with a pound of his breast flesh. So the girl asked God for her future, and entrusted her command with three boxes of gold, silver and lead. In the first of which she made a dead skull, and in the second the head of a scornful idiot, and in the third her paint, so whoever chooses the right box in which she drew her image, she becomes his wife. It has been mentioned in this tale what usually comes in every tale like it, that the girl's lover is the one who was inspired to do the right thing. Therefore, she has

rejoiced and devoted to save his friend from the liability of his guarantee to the Jew, by adorning herself with the clothes of a legal advocate. So, she has eliminated the usurer. Shakespeare, in his inventive mind, has portrayed it in the best conditions of life, time and place. All in all, he has tied the foundations of form in all aspects of art, combining all of that such as weeping with celebration. A wonderful and strange combination, mixing what angers and what pleases. What a wonderful mixture.

The best thing to do is to understand the play in the way that Shakespeare referred to it in making it a play about the truth that turns out to be a marvelous wonder. What amazing is getting it out of those crumbling, contrived, incoherent ruins of the ancient legend and edifying it. Nothing better than showing sincere afflictions of human sufferings with their preludes and consequences that are never old and never new.

The play has become one of Shakespeare's masterpieces and there is no way for the critics to ask about something that completes the lessons in it. If critics want to turn to the moral detail by shedding light on the nature of each character in the play, they would recognize the greatness of Shakespearean verses, each verse deepens it to the nature and environment of humanity. What great about Shakespeare is his ability to transform a colloquial fable that the old women tell their grandchildren and great-grandchildren into a dramatic play which is one of the loftiest masterpieces in art and literature.

The more authors and critics read about this man, Shakespeare, whether it was a unique poem or a play, a question in a conversation between two characters or an answer, a serious word that he threw in blame, the more they become fascinated by his literary works. Not to mention Shakespeare as a poet by whom genius was brought to the height of majesty.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare made the representative play an unlimited scope for description, showing through it the conditions of the soul as it was created, the heart and the multiplicity of origins and qualities, and the diversity of livelihoods. If greed is embodied by a character, then it is possible say, It is not depicted more accurately than in the character of Shylock.

If the loyalty of a friend to a friend reaches the highest level of exaggeration from Socrates' time, it would fail to be compared with the meanings of friendship of what Shakespeare made in the soul of Antonio. Antonio, in a conversation with his friend Bassanio, said:

I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death; The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me:
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.
(Inchbald, 1808, p.55)

2. The Historical Background of the Play

The story of *The Merchant of Venice* is woven from various threads as old as human nature, so that historians of English literature can confirm that the whole structure of the play is in which Shakespeare has nothing but the merit of the artistic plot. The story of caskets, and the story of cutting a pound of human flesh, which goes back to ancient historical origins, is likely to be oriental. However, the story of the caskets as it came in the play *The Merchant of Venice* is found in a Latin group of stories called



Gesta Romanorum compiled in 1300. It was translated into English and printed by Wynkiv de Worde, and it was popular among the English in the era of Elizabeth to the extent that it was printed six times between 1577 and 1601, that is, in Shakespeare's youth.

Both the Bond and the Casket Stories in the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of stories presumably compiled towards the end of the 13th century in England. The *Gesta Romanorum* in its original form says it's admirable Editor, Mr Herrtage in the early *English Text Society's Series* is a collection of fictitious narratives in Latin compiled from Oriental apologies, monkish legends, classical stories, tales of chroniclers, popular traditions, and other sources, which it would be now difficult and perhaps impossible to discover. (Furness, 1888, p.305).

However, there is another source to the story of cutting off a pound of human flesh, it is found in Aryan mythology and in Eastern literature in general, and ancient Egyptian in particular. It appeared in English literature in one of Cursor Mundi's poems in 1320, a religious story in which it is stipulated that a few pieces of flesh be cut off without a drop of blood being shed. Perhaps this harsh penalty is due to the violent Roman law, which gives the creditor the right to deduct a piece of flesh from the debtor's flesh. Before Shakespeare, there were quite a number of stories that narrated the story of a pound of human flesh, such as the story written in French by Alexandre Salvain and translated into English in 1596. Perhaps the closest resemblance to the tale of Shakespeare in his play *The Merchant of Venice* is the tale of Pecorone that Giovanni Fiorentino reported in his collection of stories in 1378, three years after the death of the famous Italian writer Boccaccio.

It is generally agreed that the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* derives in large part from a story in the fourteenth-century Italian collection *Il Pecorone* (The Simpleton), the tale of Giannetto. No English translation of *Il Pecorone* was published until long after Shakespeare's death, which means that he must either have read the tale of Giannetto in Italian (assuming he knew enough for the language) or in a translation circulating in manuscript. (Gross, 1992, p.15).

As for the story of Jessica's escape, Shylock's daughter, after she stole some of her father's money and jewels, it can be traced back to Italian origin in the fourteenth century, in an Italian novel written by Salerno. It narrates the story of a wealthy miser's daughter from the people of Naples, who stole her father's jewels and took her way through the land to escape with her lover. It is then a common tale in all the kingdoms of the earth. However, the main idea of *The Merchant of Venice* is said to be taken from the *Venetian Jew*. Whatever the source of the tales included in Shakespeare's play, the unparalleled poet of humanity was stripped of his genius, his spirit, and the magic of his language, which made it a wonderful universal play and above the focus of tales and stories.

3. The Construction of the Play and the Unity of Time and Place

If it is agreeable that the main principles and techniques such as the opening, the beginning of the plot, the turning point, the falling actions towards the end, and the end that the experts recommended in writing plays after long experiences, then it is recognized that the end of the tragic plays ends with the hero's struggle against hostile



forces, and the struggle ends with the defeat of the hero, while ending in the comic plays leads to the victory of the hero over his enemies.

In light of these principles, it is possible to understand that *The Merchant of Venice* is a comedy in which Antonio triumphs over all the difficulties encountered in his path. When things get tough in front of Antonio and he is unable to pay Shylock's debt on time, and news of the loss of his money and ships comes at the time when Bassanio rejoices in his marriage to Portia, while this happens, if the trial begins, and if the sane, wealthy girl Portia turns the law in cleverness and skill against Shylock, casual sub-tragedy mingles with original comedy, and it all ends with a happy ending to the beats of the music, and in the moonlight that overlooks the palace of Portia in Belmont.

Shakespeare set aside the unity of time and place in this play, and took on a more perfect and complete unity, the unity of life. Thus, he proceeded on an inventive way that violated the old classical doctrine.

This play takes a year in which events revolve, but it seems that it revolves in short hours. While the scenes move from the city of Venice to the city of Belmont vice versa. Here, it is right to say that time according to Shakespeare is completely timeless, or it is completely independent of clocks and calendars. Therefore, Morris and Farrell (2003) think that "One of the most fascinating features of *The Merchant of Venice* is Shakespeare's flexibility with the concept of time."p.33.

4. Critical Analysis of Characters in the Play

It is not an exaggeration to mention that *The Merchant of Venice* is rich and abundant in its characters. It is rich not only in quantity, but also in the quality, which makes this play one of Shakespeare's most beautiful masterpieces. Shakespeare has divided the characters of his play into two different groups, but the choice is tight to the extent that each of them fixed in the place chosen by the author.

In the play, there is a group led by Antonio, and there is a contrary group led by Shylock. On the other hand, there is the wealthy, wise, prudent girl Portia. However, it is not fair, when analyzing the characters of the play, to neglect the role of Jessica, the daughter of Shylock, who fell in love with the Christian boy Lorenzo, so she eloped with him after stealing the money and jewels of her miser father. They are two characters who have two ordinary roles in the play, but they have become gradually vital characters during the play so that they appear as one of its most significant characters.

4.1. The Generosity of Antonio

He is an important and attractive character in the play. His good nature and integrity makes him a good hero if compared with the villain Shylock. The features of his goodness appear to indicate that he is burdened with heavy worries. He is sad in the first scene of the play, and unable to reveal his reasons to his friends Salarino and Salanio, as they thought that he was suffering from fearing to expect a loss in his trade. However, the melancholy features that often appeared on his face could not change anything from his generosity and high character. He is generous with the dearest of what he possesses. He is patient in adversity, pardons mistakes, he is free when he loves, and he is open when he hates, and he loves money not for the sake money, but to help a friend with it or help a distressed person with it. According to Yachnin and Badir (2017) "Antonio declares himself bound to Bassanio before the latter has done anything



to deserve his friendship and generosity" p.95. It is suitable to ask a rhetorical question did not his chivalry make him guarantee his friend Bassanio with the Jew Shylock, who lent him money on the condition that he takes a pound of flesh from his body if the time for the debt is past and the debtor is unable to repay it? Antonio remained good throughout the play in all his respects, but he was very heavy-handed in his linguistic campaigns against the Jewish Shylock when he called him the most heinous descriptions and the dirtiest adjectives, and when he announced before the Duke of Venice that he was prepared patiently for what the same malicious Shylock throws at him. Antonio surrendered to the fate that the Jew wanted him to have by cutting a pound of flesh from his body and wished, without indignation or panic, if his friend Bassanio came to see and witness how he gave his life in order to fulfill his word. Here, the trial between Shylock and Antonio changes when Portia takes over the defense of Antonio, making the literality of the law a weapon against Shylock instead of a weapon in his hands. All these adventures against Antonio are revealed about his victory and the victory of his friend Bassanio, as well as the safety of his ships, which were rumored to have been destroyed at sea.

4.2. The Friendship of Bassanio

He is Antonio's friend, whose friend Antonio has borrowed money for him with his guarantee from Shylock, and Bassanio needed the money to propose to the beautiful heir, Portia, for every misfortune that Antonio faced was for Bassanio's sake. Everything in the play indicated that Bassanio was destined to be the husband of the beautiful Portia, despite the crowded proposers from the princes at her door, so the ballot boxes came from his share in favor of choosing Portia if she alone had the choice. He is kind-hearted with clean behavior. He is above that pliable. On the other hand, he has advised Antonio not to sign the bond.

At last, against the advice of Bassanio, who, notwithstanding all the Jew had said of his kind intentions, did not like his friend should run the hazard of this shocking penalty for his sake, Antonio signed the bond, thinking it really was (as the Jew said) merely in sport. (Agarwalla, 1996, p.120).

He hardly knew, while he was in the joys of the wedding by his marriage to Portia, of Antonio's crisis and the Jew's insistence on him to implement the condition in cutting a pound of flesh from his body, until he left his beautiful wife on her wedding night and ran to the place of the trial, perhaps to redeem him or help him with the much money that Portia had given him if the Jewish Shylock had exaggerated in demanding money instead of a pound of flesh.

4.3. Portia as a Cultural Character

She is the wealthy inheritor whose father, before he died, wanted her to marry by voting on three boxes: one of them is gold, the second is silver, and the third is lead. It was not her own will to choose a suitable husband for her, but rather what the lottery judged among the many who proposed to her. She thinks it is hard for her to be a sane girl because she is unable to accept the one she loves, or reject the one she does not love. Here, Shakespeare makes it possible for the readers and critics to raise questions about Portia and even other characters.

Does Shakespeare present us with a particular view of a character to serve the specific dramatic moment, without any expectation that we synthesize those viewpoints into a



coherent personality? In this view, Portia might be a paragon of virtue when the plot demands a spokesperson for mercy, and an assertive, even provocative woman when it's time for Bassanio's comic comeuppance with the rings. Is our sense of psychological complexity just a matter of our bringing to bear the wrong kind of modern expectations? Your answers to these questions might also bear upon how actors might approach the performance of Shakespeare's roles. No matter how you address these intriguing issues, it is clear that Shakespeare uses language with great artfulness to create uniquely multifaceted, complex characters that challenge our interpretive skills and stick in the memory. (Lanier, 2019, p.74)

Portia is considered a virtuous young woman. Therefore, happy fates were preparing her for happiness when young Bassanio chose the winning lead box. But Bassanio is poor, unable to compete with the rich people, so he turned to his friend Antonio, the merchant of Venice, to lend him money. But Antonio, in the midst of financial distress, turned to the greedy Jew Shylock. As soon as Portia learned of Antonio's plight when he was unable to pay the debt on time, she came to save Antonio from the determination of Shylock to fulfill the condition that a pound of flesh be cut from his body. Antonio had lent her an indirect hand when he secured the loan that Bassanio took to propose to her, so how can she now fail to help him in the calamity he suffered before Shylock? She disguises herself as a young lawyer to defend Antonio and save his life from the stubborn, spiteful Jew. Her position in the defense before the Duke of Venice was a site where poetry and philosophy were mixed. She mixed sober dignity with scathing irony. How wonderful it is when she resorts to the language of poetry to talk about mercy recently, trying to soften the heart of the Jew who has been made of rock! And how smart it is to turn the law against Shylock! It stipulated that he cut the flesh from Antonio's body without a drop of blood, or else the law of Venice would destroy him by confiscating his money and property.

Here, Shylock was forced due to her shrewdness to agree to abide by the principal of his loan without implementing the flesh condition! But in the end he lost his loan, and he lost all his money that went to his daughter Jessica and her husband Lorenzo.

4.4. Shylock as a Religious and Cultural Character

If Portia is the beauty of this play, then the greedy Jew Shylock is the secret of its power. Shakespeare tried to collect all the characteristics of the Jews and their general characteristics in the character of Shylock, who represents the Jewish people the most faithful representation. Among Jews are those who have mighty pride that did not stop for a moment throughout the ages from provoking enmities. Moreover, among them who have excessive scarcity that leads to hateful greed. Furthermore, among them are those who have weakness and humiliation. here represents the right model of the suffering of the Jews and their hatred. He himself was the object of intense contempt and continuous insults from those Venetian Christians around him.

He had enemies that he saw himself as greater than reconciling them, although he was weaker than their resistance. On top of that, however, he was no more in his Judaism than he was in his Shylockism. He has more special features than the characteristics of his people.

Shakespeare portrayed him more vengeful than greedy; The hatred was running in his veins and arteries like bloodstream. His hatred surpassed his love for money and made



him wrangle with Antonio before the Duke of Venice, so much so that he refused to retake his debt exponentially in exchange for him to cure his hatred by cutting a pound of flesh from Antonio's body. All of Antonio's guilt is that he is a man in whom the most honorable noble Christian values are gathered. He is forgiving, generous, uplifting, and a helper to those who are anxious. He does not lend to usury at all and does not deal with it.

Shylock's lust for money and greed reached such an extent that it made him a dull, low-spirited person. Nothing saddened him more when his daughter Jessica fled with her Christian lover Lorenzo than he was saddened by the money she ran away with. As if honor has nothing to consider besides money.

When he learned of the news of her escaping with money and jewelry, he mentioned: Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search. Why, thou - loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding. (Shakespeare, 2008, p.83).

His sense of dullness has shown that he got used to hear the obscene insults against him, but he did not move or erupt, and he did not show any signs of anger. Antonio, Bassanio, and their friends often denounced him, and he did not seem to have heard a word from any of them. Shylock, if this expression is correct, had a great deal of cunning and malice, which was evident in the conversation between him and Antonio and Bassanio, when they came to him to ask for a loan. It was also evident in the conversation between him and Salanio and Salarino when Antonio failed to pay him back. Therefore, he believes that he has the right to implement the bond's condition on Antonio to cut off a pound of his body.

Coming back to the hatred of Shylock, he was full of hatred against Christianity due to his Jewish background, and he was full of hatred toward Antonio because he was mocking him, and because he was an honest merchant. So, it is possible to realise that Antonio was not usurious. However, Shylock abhorred the Christian Lorenzo, a friend of Bassanio, because he seduced his daughter Jessica with the temptations of love, and she eloped with him from her father's house, carrying with her gold and jewelry.

Shylock, the unfortunate Jew, was lost at the end of the lawsuit against Antonio, a material loss, by all canons. Because of Portia's skill at defending Antonio, all his money, which he had spent days and nights collecting, was lost to Lorenzo, who had married his daughter Jessica. Also, he returned empty-handed from the trail of the loan bond, which he considered profitable with the most severe loss.

The role that has been played by Shylock is very important in a way that the play was almost about to carry his name instead of Antonio, the merchant of Venice. It was found in one of the old records called Stationers Registers that:

However, in his history of the life and work of Shakespeare, 1886, Fleay returns to his former date, 1597. Early in this year, he says, ' was almost certainly produced *The Merchant of Venice*, founded on an old play of Dekker's called *Joseph the Jew of Vince*, written in 1592, and acted in 1594 by the Admiral's men, but not now extant. Again, *The Merchant of Vince*, or *Jew of Vince*, was no doubt founded on an old play called *The Jew of Vince* by Dekker. It seems from the title of the German version of this play that the Jew's name was Joseph. (Furness, 1888, p. 285).

These old records indicate that Shakespeare was in doubt about naming his play one of the two names whether Antonio or Shylock. Whatever the case, Shylock is the character of this play, and the rest of the characters are less important than him. But Antonio, in terms of drama, is the character of this play. Without him, Shylock would not have appeared.

4.5. Christianity and Judaism in Jessica and Lorenzo's Relationship

The daughter of Shylock the Jew, but she does not appear in any of her positions in the play in a way that alienates the reader, for she has such kindness, meekness and beauty that we forget many of her father's faults, so that some people might think that she is not of his kind, nor of his religion, for she is as Salarino said, addressing Shylock after her escape:

There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. (Shakespeare, 2008, p.81).

However, Jessica's own escape with her Christian lover Lorenzo may lead to assume two possibilities: either that the girl is an unkind girl, or that her father is not kind. Especially after a group of people stole with her from her father's money, but when we seek an excuse for her to flee from the house of stinging stinginess and stinging him because of it, we do not excuse her from some of the blame for this behavior. It is a wonder that this disadvantaged girl has taken her father Shylock's money after he lost his case with Antonio. He became Sidon after he was a fishing student.

Lorenzo is the lover of Shylock's Jewish daughter, Jessica, who ran away with her on a night when her father was invited to a costume party. And he helped him to escape with it and with the money that Gratiano and Salarino had brought, two of Antonio and Bassanio's friends, and, as if Shylock was feeling what would happen that night, he addressed his daughter, instructing her to close and tight the doors, and warned her not to go to the window to look out of it.

It is surprising that Jessica escapes with Lorenzo to the house of Portia and her husband Bassanio, that the two fugitive lovers take over the supervision of this palace until Portia returns to fulfill the mission of her noble defense of Antonio while disguised as a boy of the most capable lawyers. However, the story of elopement has a great importance in the play.

Jessica's elopement with Lorenzo probably comes from a story in the fifteenth-century *Novellini of Masuccio*. There may have been an intermediate source play called *The Jew*, now lost. (Overton, 1987, p.9).

4.6. The Role of the Minor Characters in the Play



There are characters who play a secondary role in the play, including Gratiano and Salarino, who are friends of Antonio and Bassanio. The sincerity of affection and the sincerity of love reached an extent that includes them in a unique and rare framework of friendship, the high example of which was manifested in Antonio.

Tubal the Jew, Shylock's friend, he is a minor character, but in any case he brought to Shylock the best and worst news and brought to him the news of the loss of one of Antonio's ships, and at the same time he brought to him the news of his fugitive daughter Jessica that she had spent eighty golden ducats in one night in the city Genoa. What a paradox between the two news!

This Tubal is clearly a serviceable friend, undertaking a trip to Genoa on Shylock's behalf and running to secure the arresting officer for the day that Antonio's bond will fall due. Of the nature of the man himself we know nothing and need to know nothing for the purposes of the drama. In his one appearance, he alternately throws Shylock into despair over Jessica's squandering of the stolen wealth, and then again raises Shylock's hopes that Antonio will be bankrupt. In so doing Tubal helps to emphasize the grotesquely comic aspect of the moneylender. (Education, 2020)

As for the character of Lancelot, he is a character that depends on the element of laughter and strangeness. He was in the service of Shylock the Jew, but he found out of his bad behavior that he did not desire to stay with him, so he left him to serve Bassanio. Indeed, the house of Shylock was like a piece of hell. Lancelot has decided to leave Jessica's house because of the scrimp of her father, Shylock. Therefore, He is afraid that staying with Shylock any longer might turn him become a Jew. Furthermore, Bassanio has welcomed him into his service, and Lancelot considers Bassanio to be a superior master. And Lancelot moved to the house of Bassanio, or to the palace of Portia, where Jessica and her lover and husband, Lorenzo, dwelt there, and where her father Shylock's wealth and vast possessions came to her.

5. Conclusion

It has been concluded that the main ideas in the play such as the story of caskets and the story of cutting a pound of human flesh came from ancient historical origins. However, the story of the caskets in *The Merchant of Venice* is found in a Latin group of stories, while the story of cutting off a pound of human flesh is found in Aryan mythology and in Eastern literature. On the other hand, some sources have indicated that, the story of a wealthy miser's daughter from the people of Naples, who stole her father's jewels and took her way through the land to elope with her lover is an Italian story. However, the main idea of *The Merchant of Venice* is said to be taken from the *Venetian Jew*.

However, What really matters is that Shakespeare, in his imaginative and creative mind, was successfully capable of transforming the folkloric tales that the old women tell their grandchildren into a dramatic work which is considered one of the masterpieces of Shakespeare.

With his imaginative way of thinking, Shakespeare was flexible and did not adhere to the classical techniques and structures of drama used in writing plays, including unity, time and place. It is possible to notice the shift of scenes from one city to another, for instance, the various scenes that took place in Venice and Genoa. Moreover, the lack of commitment to time is a technique used in the play.



Analysis and critical review of the characters in the play have shown that Shakespeare succeeded in portraying the general traits and habits and linking them to the characters, so they became reflective and expressive to their personality. We find that the protagonist Antonio, who helped his friend Bassanio, has become an icon of true friendship, self-denial, self-sacrifice and love for others. Therefore, the good natures of Antonio that prompted Portia, who is considered a symbol of honor and virtue, to defend him.

On the other hand, we find that Shakespeare portrayed the trait of miserliness through the character of Shylock, who forced his daughter to think of escaping from the house, which she described as a piece of hell. He became an icon of greed, miserliness and hatred. His rivalry with Antonio made him think of destroying him, because Antonio was lending people without any interest or usury.

Analysis and critical review of the minor characters such as Tubal, Lancelot, and Bassanio's friends in the play have shown that they played an important role in coordinating and plotting the events.

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