UNIVERSITÉ DU BURUNDI
GRENIER DU SAVOIR DU BURUNDI
Dépôt institutionnel officiel
https://repository.ub.edu.bi

The impact of self-interest in William shakespeare's the merchant of venice

Mukeshimana, Emmanuel; Supervisor: Mr Nganyu Dominic Nformi

2014
UB, Institute for Applied Pedagogy
https://repository.ub.edu.bi/handle/123456789/1089

Document téléchargé depuis le **Grenier du Savoir du Burundi** — https://repository.ub.edu.bi

UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH-KIRUNDI DEPARTMENT

THE IMPACT OF SELF-INTEREST IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

By

Emmanuel Mukeshimana

Supervisor:

Mr Nganyu Dominic Nformi
Lecturer, University of Burundi

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "**Licence en Pédagogie Appliquée, Agrégé de l'Enseignement Secondaire en Anglais**"

Bujumbura, November 2014

DEDICATION

To the Almighty God;

To my parents;

To the family of Pierre-Claver Rutomera;

To my wife Josélyne Ndayizeye;

I dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been the result of joint effort of many people who gave me moral, intellectual, financial and spiritual support.

First and foremost I am grateful to my supervisor, Mr Nganyu Dominic Nformi, for accepting to supervise this thesis. I thank him more especially for sacrificing time to read through my manuscript and discussed with me, in spite of his tight schedule.

Second, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all my teachers from primary school to the university, and particularly Girukwishaka Illuminée and those of the Department of English-Kirundi, for the education they gave me.

Third, I am thankful to my brothers and sisters and other relatives who contributed morally and materially to the completion of this work.

Special thanks equally go to my uncle, Nzisabira Tatien, and his wife for their support during the last year of my primary school.

Last but not least, I express my sincere gratitude to my friends and classmates for their moral support.

ABSTRACT

This work examines the impact of self-interest in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. It x-rays characters whose actions and relationships are guided by selfish motives. This self-interest does not only pervade business, love and judiciary among other issues but also cause untold consequences on the characters such as losing credibility, material things, friends, lack of full happiness, etc. This research consequently anchors on the hypothesis that relationships that are motivated by self-interests bring about many negative consequences. This play is therefore a reflection of Shakespeare's time, a period when people appeared to be faithful, helpful and merciful with regard to others whereas in reality they were interested in their personal interest and well-being. This hypocrisy makes Shylock victim and leads others into problems. Using the New Historicism approach, which focuses on historical and cultural background of the production of a text, we have found out that the sixteenth century English society was characterised by self-interest which resulted from capitalism and religious leanings that were in steady growth at that time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

ABSTRACT iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iv

GENERAL INTRODUCTION 1

0.1. Background of the Study 1

0.2. Definition of key terms 4

0.3. Bibliography of the author 6

0.4. Statement of the problem 8

0.5. Motivation 9

0.6. Aim of the study 9

0.7. Hypothesis 10

0.8. Research questions 10

0.9. Theoretical Framework 10

0.10. Literature review 13

0.11. Structure of the work 18

CHAPTER ONE: SELF-INTEREST RELATED TO CAPITALISM AND RELIGION **20**

CHAPTER TWO: SELF-INTEREST IN LOVE **40**

CHAPTER THREE: CONSEQUENCES OF SELF-INTEREST **53**

GENERAL CONCLUSION **63**

WORKS CITED **68**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. Background of the Study

William Shakespeare who wrote the play *The Merchant of Venice*, lived under two monarchs, Queen Elizabeth I monarchy (1533-1603) and James'I (1566-1625) for a short time. Elizabeth I's era is often depicted as the golden age in English history. Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England after a period of immense upheaval, caused largely by the action of her father, Henry VIII (1491-1547) who had come take throne in 1509.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I was an age of intense religious passions, which Elizabeth managed to tone down in contrast to previous violence. The threat of civil war was never far away. When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, she staved off the threat of rebellion by dealing ruthlessly with any hint of treason. Many of her enemies-perceived or actual-were beheaded. The consequence of this was observed through the anti-Semitism and the persecution of Catholics. Much of the plotting against Elizabeth I had its origins in the religious intolerance of the era which begun when the Elizabeth's father Henry VIII, broke with the Catholic Church. Desperate for a male heir to guarantee the Tudor succession, Henry was eager to divorce his then-wife and marry Ann Boleyn, whom he hoped would give him an heir. The Pope refused to grant him a divorce, and Henry VIII's solution to this conundrum was to break from the Catholic Church and create the Church of England, installing himself as head of a new Protestant religion.

The persecution of the Catholics followed and was due, at least in part, to a series of plots to murder Elizabeth and seat the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. A religious war for the sour of England then developed. By the time Elizabeth was Queen, the threat was not just internal but international as the Pope and Catholic European countries plotted against the Protestant monarch in the hope of returning a Catholic to the throne of England.

Concerning foreigners, most people of Jewish descent living in England in the 16th C. were not persecuted by their Christian neighbours. But there was one notorious event which could hardly have escaped Shakespeare's notice. In the history and background of the play, Bernard Lott mentions that in 1593, a few years before *The Merchant of Venice* was written, Queen Elizabeth I's physician Roderigo Lopez was accused of trying to poison her. Lopez, allegedly in league with the king of Spain, was convicted of treason, hung and drawn and quartered in 1594. He was taunted by slurs on the scaffold as he died, still proclaiming his innocence. It was a clear but unfortunate sign that there was a latent anti-Semitism within the English public. Jews were viewed as outsiders, and were often barred from many professions because of their religion. www. Bardweb.net puts that only Christians however, could not lend money with interest and many earned a lucrative living as usurers. Jews were often presented on the Elizabethan stage in hideous caricature, with hooked noses and bright red wigs, and were usually depicted as avaricious usurers-an example is Christophe Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta*, which features a comically wicked Jewish villain called Barabas. They were usually characterized as evil, deceptive, and greedy. The title page of the Quarto indicates that the play was sometimes known as *The Jew of Venice* in its day which suggests that it was

seen as similar to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta.*

In economic sector, there was a rising interest of the commercial capitalism, bent on securing the freedom to grow to what stature one could, and produce by what methods he/she pleased. Montesquieu remarked with perhaps excessive optimism that the English "had progressed furthest of all peoples in three important things, piety, commerce and freedom". However, no one can read the discussion which took place between 1500 and1550 on three burning issues - the rise in prices, capital and interest, and the land question in England - without being struck by the constant appeal from the new and clamorous economic interests of the day to the traditional Christian morality, which in social organization, as in the relations of individuals, is still conceived to be the final authority. Elizabethan society was a society in rapid motion, swayed by new ambitions and haunted by a new spirit of individualism. The prosperous merchant, once content to win a position of dignity and power, in fraternity or town, now flung himself into the task of carving his way to solitary pre-eminence, unaided by the artificial protection of state. Richard Herny Tawney describes the period that followed the Tudor peace. He precises that the time of Elizabeth I saw a predominance of capitalism creating contrast between sectors. He writes:

> In economic and social, as in ecclesiastical matters, the opening years of Elizabeth I were a period of conservative reconstruction. The psychology of a nation which lives predominantly by the land is in the sharp contrast with that of commercial society. *(Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: a historical study,* 171.)

He recognizes a disturbance that increased speculation and a formation of a new

class of middlemen who exploited the opportunities. This disturbance led also to competition amongst all classes in their attempts to maintain their power and self-assertion and the society was disintegrated, moulded anew by a revolution with a rational individual struggle.

The play, *The Merchant of Venice*, fulfils the characteristics of Shakespeare's time as we are going to see that in the development of our topic "The impact of self-interest". Shylock experienced injustice because of his Jewishness and his practice of usury. He was also a victim of his own malice and that of the Christian group. Each was committed to the harming of the other as it was the case in 16thC. in English society.

0.2. Definition of key terms

Before one proceeds with the analysis, it is worthwhile defining the key concepts which are used in this work. The first and the foremost is "self-interest"

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English defines "Self-interest" as the fact of somebody only considering their own interests and not caring about things that would help other people.

Webster's Ninth New collegiate Dictionary defines "self-interest" as one's own advantage and well- being. The online source, Wikipedia, specifies that "self-interest" generally refers to a focus on the needs or desires (interest) of oneself. The same website adds the extension of the concept. By the extension then, "self-interest" can mean.

- Individualism, a philosophy stressing the worth of individual selves,

- Psychological egoism, the view that humans are always motivated by self-interest,
- Ethnical egoism, the ethnical position that moral agents ought to do what is their own self-interest,
- Enlightened self-interest, a philosophy which states that acting to further the interests of others also serves one's own self-interest. To this last extensional concept, it gives some other related concept:

1.Altruism which calls for people to act in the interest of others - often at the expense of their own interests and with no expectation of benefit for themselves in the future,
2. Rational selfishness which is a term referring to a person's efforts to look after his own well- being, to cultivate the self and achieve goals for the good of self. The focus in rational selfishness might be considered to be more self- directed than the focus of enlightened self-interest which is more group-directed.

In this work, "self-interest" is defined as the focus people put on actions or activities that are advantageous to them as an individual or organization. The sense that is going to be used in this work is close to that of "psychological egoism". As we are going to see, 'altruism' is scarcely possible for most of the characters of the play, thing which is even verifiable today.

On the other hand, the second concept, "impact" is defined by *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, as the effect or impression of one thing on another, a forceful consequence, a strong effect. It adds that an "impact" is also a "phenomenon that follows and is caused by some previous phenomenon".

As far as the concept of "impact" is concerned, the sense that is used within this study is "actions or reactions following individual previous enterprise with self-interest motive". Along this work, the tendency is that this concept is almost used with a negative connotation.

Lastly, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, defines society as "capitalist" if it entrusts its economic process to the guidance of the private businessman. It also says that common parlance applies the adjective "capitalist" to almost all the phenomena of modern society, particularly when envisaged with reference to the socialist alternative.

Karl Marx, a German economist and socialist, qualifies "capitalism" as flawed system because it involves the maintenance of few people in power by the repression of many. He continues to call it "dictatorship" of the bourgeoisie" (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). The sense that is adopted for the term "capitalism" is that of "an economic system in which business and industry are privately owned and which places every man in a competition and which often calls upon people's self-interest while grabbing the available wealth."

0.3. Bibliography of the author

William Shakespeare, the author of *The Merchant of Venice* was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist. He was born in the sixth year of Queen Elizabeth I's reign in 1564, at Stratford-upon-Avon and his actual birthdate remains unknown, but is traditionally observed on 23 April, S^{t} George Day.

Son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, William Shakespeare married at the age of 18, a 26-year-old Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith. He was the third child of eight and was the eldest surviving child. Often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon", Shakespeare attended the Stratford Grammar School, which had an excellent reputation and rather distinguished teachers. He would have been educated in the classics, particularly Latin grammar and literature. Whatever the veracity of Ben Jonson's famous comment that Shakespeare had "small Latine, and less Greeke" much of his work clearly depends on knowledge of Roman comedy, ancient history, and classical mythology.

In 1594, Shakespeare became an actor or playwright for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company that later become the King's Men under James I. Until the end of his London career, Shakespeare remained with the company; it is thought that as an actor he played Old's men roles, such as the ghost in *Hamlet* and Old Adam in *As You Like It.* In 1596, he obtained a coat of arms, and by 1597, he was prosperous enough to buy New Palace in Stratford, which later was the home of his retirement years. In 1599, he became a partner in the ownership of the Globe theatre, and in 1608 he was part owner of the Blackfriars theatre. Shakespeare retired and returned to Stratford in 1613.

His surviving works, including some collaborations consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, 2 long narrative poems, and several other poems. Shakespeare's first published play was *Titus Andronicus*, printed anonymously in 1954 and followed within about a month by a bad text of *Henry VI*, part II, likewise anonymous and still disputed authorship. 16 other plays were published in his lifetime in separate

"form". *The Merchant of Venice* was written a year or two before the end of the sixteenth century, at some time between the summer of 1596 and that of 1598. Shakespeare's plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. Shakespeare William died on 23 April 1616, fifty-two years after his baptism. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

0.4. Statement of the problem

Shakespeare's era is one of the periods in British history that was characterised by a steady growth in the economy. This growth developed in most people the desire to become rich. Considering the glory that wealth brought to the individual, each and every member of the society strived to gain recognition and prominence through well. This spirit consequently led to so much competition and unscrupulous dealing in the attempt to get rich. Everyone was therefore interested in how he/she would get through whatever means. This therefore justifies the spirit of self-interest at the time. In religious matters, it should be noted that the society comprised people from different religious backgrounds. These thus divided the people into spheres of religious interests, which equally brought about tension at various levels of interaction. The challenge for English society was that its people were developing a spirit of hatred relying on religion, capitalism and on a disguised love.

0.5. Motivation

The topic "The impact of self-interest in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*" has been chosen because it reflects the reality that prevails worldwide. Today, people are becoming more and more selfish and intolerant and consequently hate each other. Yet, Shakespeare's imagination of hatred and greed in the play reflects the origin of different evils observed in societies. It can also help people in general and Burundians in particular to be aware of the consequences of self-centeredness. No doubt that in Burundi self-interest is present and manifests itself under different aspects. The embezzlement of public fund, the corruption, murders, hypocrisy to name but a few that we observe today, result from self-interest. There are common and omnipresent conflicts emanating from this.

0.6. Aim of the study

This work examines the impact of self-interest in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. It x-rays characters whose actions and relationships are guided by selfish motives. This self-interest does not only pervade business, love and judiciary among other issues but also cause untold consequences on the characters. This study therefore explores Shakespeare's time as seen through this play, a period when people appeared to be faithful, helpful and merciful with regard to others whereas in reality they were interested in their personal interest and well-being.

0.7. Hypothesis

This research is written against the hypothetical thrust that most relationships that are in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* are motivated by self-interests that bring about many negative consequences.

0.8. Research questions

The following questions have been raised and answers are attempted all along this research.

- What is the place of self-interest in human relationships?
- What is the consequence of self-interest?
- What should be done to end this evil?

Answers to the above questions make the cornerstone of the whole research on the play.

0.9. Theoretical Framework

The New Historicism approach will be used in the course of this study. New Historicists pay key attention to the historical and cultural background of their production.

New Historicism was born in Anglo-American history scholarship and began to be applied to text by readers in the late 1970s and early 1980s.It is a school of

literary theory, grounded in critical theory that developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, and gained widespread influence in the 1990s.

Proponents of this approach include Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Baktin, Clifford Geertz, etc. They consider history as an important factor that determines the production of a text, but history is conceived not as a set of fixed objective facts, but like literature, a text that is subject to interpretation. Texts are generally conceived as tools that may seem to present or reflect an external reality, yet are in fact containers of "representations", that is verbal formations that are "ideological constructs" or "cultural constructs" of the historical conditions specific to an era. They continue arguing that these "ideological and cultural" representations in texts serve mainly to reproduce, confirm, and propagate the power structures of domination and subordination, which prevail in particular place and period. As well as this approach is concerned, literature is a reflection of economic, social, and political conditions specific to a particular era. According to Louis Althusser, a revisionist Marxist, ideology manifests itself in different ways in each of the semi-autonomous institutions of an era, including literature. Most ideologies, he says, work to form and position the "subjects" in a discourse in a way that subordinates them to the interests of those in power.

Michel Foucault's view that the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting pre-existing entities or orders, brings into being numerous semi-autonomous structures which function as propagators of power and social change, and as a result, the particular discourse formations of an era determine what is considered as "knowledge" and "truth", as well as what is considered normal or abnormal, legal

and criminal. Clifford Geertz's view that culture is constituted by a set of distinctive signifying systems which call for a close examination of a particular social production or event in order to view the meaning it has for the people involved in it, and to discover the general patterns of convention codes, and modes of thinking that invest the item with such meaning. In his study of Shakespeare's works, Greenblatt came to the realization that, in order to sustain its power, any durable political or cultural order allows and even fosters "subversive" elements and forces, yet in such a way that it can effectively contain. In this way, those in power are able to know the tensions that lie buried in the hearts of the people and contain them before they foment into a revolution. Gleenblatt terms this process as "subversion-containment dialect". New Historicists then conceive of a literary text as "situated" within the institutions, social practices, and also specify that the production of texts is invariably connected to the economic, political, and cultural interest of people involved in producing it.

When we apply this New Historicism approach to *The Merchant of Venice,* most of the characters Shakespeare imagined set forth the political, economic, religious, and philosophical reality specific to the author's time. Historical events that happened during Shakespeare's life and slightly before are reproduced in the play. In effect, the play is mentioned by name in 1598 with some references that show cultural and historical events specific to English eras.

The most important of these is the reference to a ship as "my wealthy Andrew" (I.i.27). In 1596 a Spanish ship called the S^{t} Andrew ran aground in harbour of Cadiz and was captured by English seamen. She was bigger than the English merchant ships and was consequently often in danger of running aground

again, particularly off the eastern shores of Britain. There is little doubt that Shakespeare had this incident in mind when he made Salerio imagine he saw "my wealthy Andrew docked in sand". Another reference no longer taken as evidence from which to date the play is that of Gratiano's words about "a wolf-hanged for human slaughted" (IV.i.134) which may likewise refer to an incident in history. It has been suggested, further, that Gratiano's mention of "wolf", which is in Latin lupus, would remind people of Lopez mentioned above, particularly since Lopez was popularly known in English as Lopus.

Therefore, in undertaking this research, the New Historicism approach can helpfully be used in the sense that the focus is put on the references of English history. *The Merchant of Venice* propagates Elizabeth I's ideologies and policies.

0.10. Literature review

The play, *The Merchant of Venice*, is one of the most famous plays of William Shakespeare. It has raised the attention and comments from people of different status, especially around the character of shylock- his deeds and the treatment he has gone through. Some consider the treatment encountered by shylock as an anti-Semitic exhibition. Others consider him as a villain usurer, a "bloody creditor", a "cutthroat dog", a "wolf", an "impenetrable cur", a "weight of currior flesh" to feed his revenge. Other criticisms were directed to the author of the play especially on his writing style.

Commenting on the reaction of shylock over Antonio's arrest and the exhibition of the hatred he bears for Antonio, Laurence Lerner in *Shakespeare's*

comedies: An Anthology of modern criticism says that Shylock had made up his mind to kill Antonio long before Jessica's flight with Lorenzo-that he had, in fact, been in the habit of delivering at home speeches of the kind which he was shortly to repeat in the court-house. He mentions this extract where Shylock is decided not to take money.

If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat
I would not draw them,
I would have my bond (IV.i.8i-7)

For him, Shylock, carrying his hatred to extremes, exposes the injustice and ferocity of the social institutions from which it springs. He appeals to the twin laws of retribution and property on which the society in which he lives is based. Lerner evokes here two main facts-shylock's malice and the injustice of Venice. This Christian hypocrisy is revealed at the court where no law of these two is applied.

The encounter between the opponents invites us to perceive not only temperamental but ideological antimonies: the opposition between good value and good faith, between self-preservation and self-sacrifice, mercy and justice. On this Ruth Nevo in *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* recognizes that what shylock demands can be compared to the practice from the bible. He says that the pound of flesh acquires still further symbolic power. Shylock's "pound of flesh" is the letter of the old law. The blood, the invisible blood he may not spill, is the free-flowing, transcendent and unquenchable life of the spirit. Talking about "old and new" law, Nevo refers to the new and old Testament. He opposes the Christian and the Pharisee, and according to him the Pharisee is crushed.

Marc Parrott comes back to the judgment that has been made against shylock. He concurs with Nevo by saying that "--- in Portia's decision, we see the triumph of the spirit over the letter of equity over legalism" (*Shakespeare comedy*, 139). Marc criticizes Portia's decision at the trial. Marc and Nevo both converge on the point that the irony in the judgment is that Portia, so far from representing New Testament spirit against Old Testament letter, is behaving exactly like a Pharisee.

Graham Midgley, "The Merchant of Venice: A Reconsideration", *Essays in criticism*, vol X (April 1960), comes to the same conclusion after the denouement of the issue. Shylock's defeat, he says is his (Antonio's) defeat, too, for "it has deprived him of the one great gesture of love which would have ended his loneliness and crowned his love with one splendid exit" (131).He observes Antonio's sadness in the beginning and the end of the play.

In his article "the two worlds of Shakespearean comedy", Sherman Hawkins distinguishes two characteristics of the play. He recognizes from the play the two worlds of Shakespearean comedy .The dramatic expression necessary to subdue or expel the anti-comic spirit seems to proceed on two principles. One is "acting out" its latent impulses [which] locates the general lunacy or evil in a criminal or scapegoat in whom it can be overpowered and driven out (71). The principle refers to Shylock as character. It attributes to him criminality and sees in the author's imagination a want to create a wicked Shylock.

William Hazlitt compares Shylock's vices with those of Christians from the play. In *characters of Shakespeare's plays*, he says that at least he [Shylock] is honest in his vices; they [Christians] are hypocrites in the virtues. Shylock has become a half-favourite with the philosophical part of the audience who are

disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. He presents Shylock's monstrous project to be mischievous when compared to Christians' evil.

D. Boje and Luhnm (1999) in their analysis describe financial systems undertaken by Antonio and Shylock .They see in the play a clash of "feudal, banking and commercial capitalisms". Those two systems involve two characters in the play. They characterize Antonio who earns his money through venture /merchant capitalism and gain 1,000 or more per cent in interest from successful investments in slave-implantations in Africa and the Americas, and Shylock who earns his money like a banker, by lending it at interest (35% was the going rate for loans).According to them, Shylock and Antonio are capitalists. That capitalism is operated under different ways and in different settings.

Sociologists like Talor, Walton and Young have attempted to examine such Shylock's source of behaviour. They first reject the idea of earlier theories of deviance that held that "deviance" is determined by factors such as biology, personality, anomie, social disorganization or labels" (*Sociology*, 803). For them, «individuals actively choose to engage in deviant behaviours in response to the capitalist system" (803).They give here the individual impulsion to engage in deviant behaviours. Capitalist system sometimes provokes conflicts between individuals.

Other most modern discussions of Shylock have understandably turned upon or implied the question whether Shakespeare was anti-Semitic ,whether and to what degree he shared the anti-semitic stereotypes of folklore and popular. In effect, there has been a great variety of critical approach to Shakespeare's works since his

death. During the 17th and 18th C. Shakespeare was both admired and condemned.

Early critics were directed primarily at questions of form. Shakespeare was criticized for maxing comedy and tragedy and failing to observe the unities of time and place prescribed by the rules of classical drama. John Dryden (1631-1700) an English poet, dramatist, and critic in Cambridge University, and his colleague Johnson were among the critics claiming that he had corrupted the language with false wit, puns, and ambiguity.

Generally critics of the 17th and 18th C. accused Shakespeare of a want of artistic restraint while praising him for a fecund imagination. The German critics Lessing Gotthold Ephraim (1729-81), a philosopher, dramatist and critic, one of the most influential figures of the Enlightenment, author of critical essays such as *Hamburgishe, Dramaturgie* and Augustus Wihelem Von Schlegel (1767-1845), a scholar and poet saw Shakespeare as a romantic, different in type from the classical poets, but an equal footing Schlegel 1st elucidated the structural unity of Shakespeare's plays, a concept of unity that is developed much more completely by the English poet and critic Samuel Coleridge.

However, the present study is different from the others above because it treats the theme of self-interest and its impact in *The Merchant of Venice.* The work investigates on the way the characters behave in relation with their society where each is struggling to satisfy his/her own desires.

0.11. Structure of the work

For the sake of clarity, this work will be divided into five parts. It is preceded in general introduction, followed by three chapters and ended by a general conclusion. The general introduction comprises respectively Shakespeare's lifetime, definitions of key terms, bibliography of the author, motivation, the aim of the study, hypothesis, research questions, theoretical framework, literature review and lastly the structure of the work.

Chapter one entitled "Self-interest related to capitalism and religion" concerns what Shylock portrays outwardly through his hatred. This manifestation is viewed from the angles of the religion and capitalism as characteristics of 16thC.English society. Shylock as well as Antonio practise capitalism but the act of usury seems to divide them and arises enmity between them. Then, they rely on their respective religions to highlight their tensions and to further their self-interests. Having entered into a merry bond, Antonio is seized and Shylock will show no mercy.

The second chapter is entitled "Self-interest in love in *The Merchant of Venice*" and analyses the general behaviours of the characters of the play, *The Merchant of Venice.* A focus is put on the different unions and deeds of the characters. The apparent love between Bassanio, Portia and Antonio aims at the interests of each. Shylock takes necessary precautions to guard his riches but he loses everything by the help of his daughter. The chapter also shows that the love professed by various characters of the play is not an agape one. In other words, most of the characters if not all seek for pragmatic purpose. Christians of the play happen

to hide this side.

The third chapter entitled "the impact of self-interest" simply examines the result of the characters' self-interest. Indeed, their selfishness happens in society and should have consequences in their environment. Shylock's self-interest makes him losing everybody around him and being deprived of everything. The chance falls on the Christians who celebrate the downfall of Shylock, the Jew. One of them, Portia organizes an outlawed plan to save his friends. This celebration does not bring happiness to everyone especially Antonio.

The general conclusion is going to give the summary of what we have previously said in this work. It also states the findings and recommendations. In addition, this section gives room for further research for interested scholars and is also an evaluation of the results of this research.

CHAPTER ONE:

SELF-INTEREST RELATED TO CAPITALISM AND RELIGION

This chapter aims at showing the double face of 16thC England. It considers the character of Shylock as a reflection of the religious and capitalistic weakness of a pretending organized and Christian society-England. Indeed, *The Merchant of Venice* is set in Venice in the 16th century. It is no coincidence that Shakespeare had chosen such a setting where self-interest-mostly in the form of economic profit-was gradually becoming the sole purpose of the life of every individual in the society.

Among the most serious challenges Queen Elizabeth I had faced there were capitalism and religion. At that time, Venice used to be a city of merchandise where capitalism began to thrive. This economic system allowed people to buy and sell with goods and services with the incentive to gain interest and maximize their profits. Similarly, in religious matters, one of Elizabeth I's first acts was to re-establish Protestantism through the act of supremacy and uniformity (1559). The measures against Roman Catholics grew harsher as www.bardweb.net mentions it. The persecution of English puritans and Jews not converted to Christianity was common. Some English people used that religion to prevail ideological implications, serving to justify the interests of ruling of the Queen at the expense of the Conventicles. This religious hatred characterized the England under Elisabeth I's reign. For a time, it will be recalled, in English society, there was enmity between

the Christians and Jews, the Christians accusing the Jews of killing their God, Jesus while the Jews never accepted Jesus as their messiah.

This happened after that the religious settlement of 1559 had made Elizabeth I Supreme Head of the church. However, she did not give any clear indications as to the directions of her church and many of the clergy maintained altars and images and they refused to destroy any equipment needed for mass. She steered a middle course between the extreme Protestants (Puritans) and the Catholics. She adopted an extreme moderate religious policy that brought stability to her realm. But extremism on either side was considered politically dangerous.

Religion and capitalism are dividing factors between some characters in the play. They have often been used for individualistic ends. This self-interest within religion and capitalism holds up of some characters in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice.* We have many characters in the play *The Merchant Venice* but one of them-Shylock is going to capture our focus in this section. Shylock is a victim of a materialist world, but he is also cruel with it. The tendency is that when we read the play we consider Shylock with negative conception. He is often qualified of being covetous and greedy. Even the character's name has become a synonym for loan shark and as a verb, to Shylock means to lend money at exorbitant rates. In addition, the phrase "pound of flesh" has also entered the lexicon as slang for a particularly onerous or unpleasant obligation.

On the other hand, religion, especially Christianity, is something that is meant to bring people together. Yet, in *The Merchant of Venice*, people like Shylock and Antonio use their religion as a justification for their abysmal evil behaviour. In act I scène 3, Shylock states three reasons why he hates Antonio. Among them economic

and religious motives are here referred to. Shylock is among the main characters found in *The Merchant of Venice* pinpointed as antagonist. At the first sight of his rival Antonio, Shylock discloses his intention and motives. He declares:

Shylock: How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian:

But more for that in low simplicity.

He lends out money gratis and brings down

The rate of usance here with us in Venice.(I iii.34-8)

Shylock explodes with anger in an aside spilling all his bile about Antonio. This example shows how economic pursuit generates hatred among countrymen. Shylock's words though uttered as an aside make us aware of the double face of his character. From this instance, Shylock's hatred is also religious based for he is a Jew and Antonio a Christian.

The play *The Merchant of Venice* introduces the concept of ethnic hatred fuelled by religion. Around the character of Shylock, religion is used for personal ends. Shylock hates the Christians because they belong to a religion different from his and never agrees with Christian beliefs:

Shylock: Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation

Which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil

Into! I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with

You, walk with you, and so following. But I will

not eat with you drink with you , nor pray with you. (I. iii.33-7)

Here Shylock assures Bassanio that he can cooperate with the Christian in a number of domains except in religious affairs. So do Christians also use their religion as a

justification for their dreadful behaviour. The simple fact that Shylock is a Jew is enough for Venetian Christians like Bassanio to ostracize and slander him. We hear for instance Solanio calling Shylock "the dog Jew" (II.viii.14), Antonio who used to call him "Misbeliever, cut-throat", spit upon his Jewish gaberdine (II. iii.111-2) and hated their sacred nation (II.iii.48)

Both the Jew and the Christians in *The Merchant of Venice* fall short of their own religious standards and therefore each perceives himself as better than somebody else to justify their religious stature. At the court for example, the Christians represented by Portia make a very persuasive speech about divine faith especially about mercy. Nonetheless, when it comes to deal out justice, Portia is less generous than her words.

Just as Shylock missed his chance to be merciful, so Portia comes back with the full weight of the laws and shows no mercy. Having begged Shylock to show mercy to Antonio (Then must the Jew be merciful.IV.i.182), she seems less than merciful to him. Shylock, on the other hand, rather prefers a "Stock of Barabbas" (IV.i.296) over Christians, but he will claim for a pound of flesh near Antonio's heart. The idea behind this religious management is the gain pushing each individual. There are personal interests that each wants to privilege at the expense of others'. On this, H. De Glasenapp in *Croyances et rites des Grandes Religions* contends that:

> La foi peut inspirer à l'homme les opinions et les actions les plus diverses dans le domaine politique, social, économique, moral ou culturel. (12)

Translation: The faith can inspire one's most various opinions and actions in political, socio-economic, moral and cultural domains (Translation mine)

De Glasenapp insinuates that we use our belief from a given doctrine to reach our desires and this guides our intentions. All the domains he mentions above are of the man's welfare preservation. A greedy man participating in one or another domain develops some evils while satisfying his interests. The economic interests are manifested through capitalistic system.

Capitalism is defined by *Everyman's Encyclopedia* (1979) as a system underlying a society in which the means of production are privately owned and industry privately organized. From this definition, one can notice that in *The Merchant of Venice*, both the Christian and the Jew are capitalists. However, they live capitalism in negative way and consider it as an economic system which is there to favour a category of people after depriving the others. The Christians and the Jew are antagonists. This practice finds echo in Karl Marx's consideration when he describes capitalism as "a flawed system because it involves the maintenance of few people in power by the repression of many". In reference to this statement, capitalism can be rude and every participant is placed in competition with his fellows for a share of wealth. A few people want to accumulate big piles, but most do not. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the self-interest intrudes within this economic system. The struggle between the antagonist characters means the elimination or mistreatment of others for the sake of personnel gain. When Shylock is complaining about "lending out money gratis", he undoubtedly confirms his involvement in capitalist system-money lending. From his first intervention, we hear Shylock

talking about money. His first words are of ducats, his introductory conversation with Bassanio is typical for any usurer to any client: "Three thousand...ducats. For three months....Antonio shall become bound.... Antonio is good man... yet his means are in supposition... The man is notwithstanding sufficient... Three thousand ducats... I think I may take his bond" (I.iii)

Shylock expresses his delight while the money is evoked. This makes him qualify his enemy of "good". This irony is full of meaning. It is obvious that people are careful about any detail in order to avoid any loss. The deal to work there should be a bond, a feature that is essential to capitalistic system. There is no confidence between people. In addition, Shylock leaps on the occasion to trap his rival in a way or another. He wants to keep out whatever may hinder his aggrandizement. Antonio is the first target. Hence Shylock shows his determination.

Shylock : (...) If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,

Even there where merchants most do congregate,

On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,

which, he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,

If I forgive him!(I.iii, 46-52)

Here, Shylock swears to revenge. The moment is favourable to revenge the wrong Antonio has caused to him. Shylock may miss money but not his opponent.

The act of revenge is also one predominant flaw of self-interest. In a society where material things are given more value, human beings are not much appreciated. Wicki K. Janik in his *The Merchant of Venice. A guide to the play* (1987) comments

on Shylock's will of revenge. He says:

> The revenge opens up the covert reality of a money-centred society, which has created Shylock in its own avaricious image in order to project upon him its hidden guilty hatred of itself. (39)

Here Wicki recognizes in Shylock self-interest based on money. However, he is also aware that it is a practice shared by other English people of that time. He recognizes that Venice was a capitalistic based society. A society that develops a spirit of self-interest.

Money plays an important role in the capitalist operations. This is to mean that capitalism entails the use of money as Shylock insinuates above. Money facilitates the capitalist system. It is also evident that money sometimes disjoins people. D. Stolze, M. Jungbult and M. Galla hold the same idea when they link money to capitalism. In their work *Capitalisme*, they observe that:

> L'apparition de la monnaie marque sans doute celle du capitalisme. (...) et le capitalisme sous toutes ses formes ne serait pensable sans ce rôle de l'argent, facteur déterminant du système. (14)

Translation: The rise of money certainly marks that of capitalism. And capitalism in all its forms cannot be thought without that role of money, the determinant factor of the system (translation mine)

According to them, today we cannot think about capitalism without money. So money as well as capitalism have a permanent place in the way we think and behave.

L. Lerner adds on this that "our social roots are in money; no one can live without it". We are tied to money. Applied to *The Merchant of Venice*, we see that even the act of wooing also requires money. Bassanio wants to ask Portia in hand, but since he lacks money, he is hindered from it, and Shylock is the one who can lend a helping hand. Bassanio reveals his intentions in this talk with his friend Antonio.

Bassanio: O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them
I have a mind presages me such thrift
That I should questionless be fortunate.

Antonio: Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum, there go forth
Try what my credit can in Venice do. (I.i.173-180)

We understand from this dialogue that what defaults for Bassanio is the absence of money. Money helps to get what makes our interest. Bassanio wants to face other suitors so that he can have love and money. Within this section, we emphasize on Shylock's behaviour. We also scrutinize the gap between capitalistic society and self-centredness. Both are devoted to the promotion of personal gain and there has been always ruthless in its acquisition as we see it through the character of Shylock.

In the play, Shylock is a man of calculations. It is to him that Bassanio goes when he needs to borrow money for his journey to Belmont and Antonio agrees to be responsible for repayment of the loan (I.i.177-85). Shylock thinks over the proposal with great care, and wants to see Antonio first:

Bassanio : Be assured you may[take Antonio's bond]

Shylock: I will be assured I may: and, that I may be assured,
I will bethink me-may I speak with Antonio?

Bassanio : If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock: Yes to smell pork, to eat of the habitation
which your prophet the Nazarite conjures the devil
into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with
you, walk with you, and so following: but I will
not eat with you, drink with you,
nor pray with you... (I.iii.28-38)

It is clear from this Shylock's dialogue with Bassanio that though *The Merchant of Venice* offers an embarrassment of socio-economic riches, it treats not only merchants and usurers, but also religious matter with behind an idea of self-interest. Relying on this dialogue, we see Shylock insisting on the fact that he and the Christians do not share the same faith. In addition to that, if the pursuit of money has been the main concern in capitalistic development, the way it is got remains questionable. Max Weber in the *Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* gives light about the notion of capitalism. He states:

> The capitalistic system so needs this devotion to the calling of making money, it is an attitude toward material goods which is so well suited to that system, so intimately bound up with the condition of survival in the economic struggle for existence. (72)

Max recognizes the pillar role played by many in the acquisition of material goods. Here he also describes the way through which each one struggles to survive in the

economic world, like Venice we are told in the play. Money is the word that comes often in Shylock's mouth.

The proposal of Bassanio is a true temptation for Shylock. At this level, he should not show his true nature. He is eager to present his bait. In the following discussion he is presented hypocritically being humanist.

Bassanio: Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock.: I am debating of my present store,

And by the near guess of my memory

I cannot instantly raise up the gross

of full three thousand ducats: what of that? (...) (I. iii.57-63)

Shylock considers the sum of three thousand ducats as a banality. Yet, so far in the play, he will come back to his words. We hear him saying: "three thousand ducats-tis a good round sum. Three months from twelve then let me see the rate" (I iii.102-3). His thirst to satisfy his self-interest cannot be hidden and with this saying it bursts. After a deep thinking he is ready to deliver the loan since the gain is calculated.

Capitalism and self-centeredness go in pair as some economists mention. In England too, there is a marriage between capitalism and religion. And if religion especially Protestantism has married capitalism, then it may have been Queen Elizabeth I who officiated over the wedding. Max goes further clarifying that principle. He sees in capitalism an important self-interest. He says

> Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism and is still its spirit ... capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise.

(*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.17)

Here Max insists on the features of capitalistic system that are universal and common to people as well as to the antagonists in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock as well as some other characters in the play are on the pursuit of profit and have a strong desire for more wealth, possessions and in the least case power.

Shylock is carrying on a business, money-lending, which Christians in Shakespeare's England considered to be wicked, but which they could not manage without. Salerio attempts an explanation while Antonio expresses sorrow.

Salerio: ... But tell not me-I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Antonio: Believe me, no-I think my fortune for it.
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted
Nor to one place, nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad (I.i.39-45)

From this excerpt, Antonio is presented entirely involved in the economic pursuit. He is also complaining about the uncertain income. It follows that interest pursued through capitalism is part of life for most of the characters presented in *The Merchant of Venice*, particularly Shylock and Antonio. However, Antonio's economy is not in expansion. Above, he is complaining about it.

In fact, on the one hand, we have Shylock who represents the new merchant class of commercial /financial investment capitalists who bet, gamble and recalculate capital. On the other hand, Antonio stands for the old feudal and hoard principal and interest. There is a clash of two forms –hereafter of Antonio and

Bassanio. Indeed, in Shakespeare's days and for many centuries before, Jews like Shylock played a leading part in the business of money –lending.

The lending activity consisted in lending money to people and charging them interest (usury, usance) on the loan and the popular view was that no Christian could not do this because it implied getting money without working for it, whereas the Christian religion teaches that to get bread to eat one must work for money to buy it. The following dialogue between Shylock and Antonio shows that belief.

Shylock: (...) how many months
Do you desire? (to Antonio) Rest you fair, good signior
Your worship was the last man in our months

Antonio: Shylock albeit I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor giving of excess,
Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend
I'll break a custom. (...) (I.iii.58-64)

Antonio recognizes that in his habit, he does not practice usance. However, because there is an urgent need to come forward to his friend, he resigns to be out of custom. Antonio, as well as other 16th C. English Christians take usance and usury as a sin of covetousness and greed. Bassanio's desire is to achieve his goals and Antonio does not want to see him suffering. And since Antonio cannot provide him the money he needs at the moment, Antonio attempts to do something unusual.

Because the attitude toward material goods guides the way one leads his life, people animated by self-interest have in common many social attitudes, and so do capitalists. In such circumstances, members of a given society have commercial interests which do tend to determine their opinions and attitudes. Then, with the

reference to the background of the 16th C. reality, we justifiably see Shylock and especially his lending habits, as the embodiment of capitalism and as a way to satisfy his desires. In effect, Shylock's desire for revenge is both motivated by economics and possessed of a large degree of economic logic (e.g I. iii.39-40, and III.i.49, and 117-8)

In addition, Shylock, it should be remembered, is both a money-lender and Jew. His Jewish does not however prevent him from being well acquainted with biblical scriptures (I.iii.71-4, 76-80). It happens for example that he uses the parable of Jacob and the Laban's sheep to explain his practice of usury. The interpretation of the story becomes a dividing point between Antonio and him. Shylock cites and interprets the scripture for his purpose. Jacob, it will be remembered, was herding his uncle's sheep as payment for the young daughter of whom he had been cheated. Jacob toiled fourteen long years for the bride of his choice. The text is a mirror through which each of the two contenders (i.e Bassanio and Shylock) sees himself in his world and his orientation towards fortune and enterprise.

Shylock : This was a way to thrive, and he was blest (I.iii.89)

Antonio: This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd

For a thing not in his power to bring to pass,

Was this inserted to make interest good. (I.iii.91-3; 98)

The comparison serves each of them to find an argument to advance his actions or wishes. Shylock defends his practice of usance while Antonio is against it.

Antonio, it will be remembered, lacks money and under this situation Shylock takes over with his ability to lend. Hence, the former finally decides to speak openly about his experience of Christian "justice" which discriminates against Jews. We

find hereafter Shylock's famous outburst:

Antonio : well , Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

Shylock : Signior Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you have rated me

About my moneys and my usances:

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,

For suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,

And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then, it now appears you need my help:

Go to then, you come to me, and you say

"Shylock,we would have moneys"!

You that did void your rheum upon my beard,

And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur

Over your threshold. Moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I not say

"Hath a dog money? is it possible

A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or

Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,

With based bated breath, and whisp'ring humbleness,

Say this "Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last-

You spurned me such a day-another time

You called me dog: and for these courtesies

I'll lend you thus much moneys? (I.iii.101-124)

From this Shylock's long speech, he gives a flashback and makes us aware that the matter is not of today. Shylock makes much of the fact that Antonio, who has often treated him with contempt, now wants to borrow from him. There is suggestion for the first time that the Jew has a case. The Jew, moreover puts that case with a deadly logic, sharpened by persecution to the finest edge, and with a passion which no amount of sufferance can conceal. Nevertheless, this does not prevent him from being committed to a barbarous enterprise. Now that he is solicited to loan some ducats, he wants to take revenge and ironically remains that a dog cannot have and lend money.

Then, Shylock's security of his interest cannot be guaranteed unless a bond is signed. He is sure that capitalists cannot keep their word. Like today, each contract must be official.

Shylock: This kind will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your single bond, and, in a merry sport. (I.iii.144-7)

Shylock proposes to Antonio that a bond should be signed first. Antonio too trusts his luck though he faces an unrelenting and cruel enemy. Hence Antonio's reply: "Yes, Shylock, I well seal unto this bond"(I.iii.171). The Jew demands proof for everything that his adversary advances because thus he proves himself. He distrusts intuition because it is not open to discussion and because, in consequence, he is certain that it always sends by separating men. He reasons and disputes with his adversary, to establish the unity of intelligence. In effect, "the merry bond", half ingratiating, half menacing is preposterous, absurd, improbable in the highest degree

in the normal life.

But there is better enmity between the merchant and usurer and Antonio is too ready to take risk. The bond encapsulates the antagonism between these two, the alienation which characterizes their relations. Shylock thereafter shows a displaced desires when he assures that:

Shylock: an equal pound

of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

In what part of

your body pleaseth me. (I.iii.149-51)

Shylock, if he cannot be at one in love with these others will devour them. Thus he himself feeds fat not only the ancient grudge he bears them, but also that figment of their own ancient blood-libel paranoia that he is. They reciprocally reinforce each other's antagonism in a self-perpetuating spiral. Where the one sees a fawning Jew, the other sees a fanning publican, and each is determined his view shall prevail.

From the sealing of the merry bond, we move to Shylock's warning Jessica to guard the house well while he will be away. (Act II. Scene 5). We discover how deep Shylock's attachment to material things is. Shylock has to supper with the Christians for a business affair. Before leaving, Shylock confides.

Shylock: I am bid forth to supper, Jessica there are my keys...

But wherefore should I go?

I am not bid for love-they flatter me.

But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian.

Jessica, my girl, look to my house.

I am right loath to go:

There is some ill a- brewing towards my rest,

For I did dream of money-bags tonight. (II.v.11-18)

Here Shylock explains to Jessica why he should depart. Though Shylock has declared above that he cannot eat and drink with Christians (I.iii.36-7), it becomes clear that he is won by his own interests. Shylock fears for the safety of his fortune. This is fuelled by the dream he has had the day before. (II.v.17-18). However, he trusts in few people reason why he confidentially leaves keys to his own daughter. He persuades her to keep well his wealth through a number of reported words: "there are my keys,...look to my house, look to my house". Shylock insists his daughter be kept in doors to keep her away from feasting and merrymaking of the Venetians. He uses imagery to make Jessica and Launcelot understand the seriousness of the situation. He says:

Shylock: what, are there masques? Hear you me.

Jessica

Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum

And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,

Clamber not you up to the casements then,

Nor thrust your head into the public street

To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces:

But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements

Let not the sound of house. By Jacob's staff I swear

I have no mind of feasting forth tonight:

But I will go... (II.v.27-38)

Shylock advises his daughter to take the necessary precaution to guard his house. He

personifies his house to show its vulnerability. According to him, the house has "ears" through which it "listens": these are windows that are compared to "casements". No sound shall enter his house according to his wish. In this extract above, Shylock also talks of Jacob's staff. When he swears by Jacob's staff, he refers to the bible. In the Bible Jacob says (in Genesis XXXii.10) that when he crossed the River Jordan he had nothing but his staff, and that now he has two companies of men. It is fitting that Shylock should swear by Jacob's staff since his own experience will show how quickly worldly goods can come and go.

The following part of the play shows Shylock at his finest sufferance. Though he has told his daughter to shut doors after her, Jessica has a plan to run away from her father's house with some of his treasure. In act II, scene ii, Jessica with the complicity of his boy-friend take away some precious things and money. Then, we are shown a father whose affection is abnormally possessive. His self-centred affection is subordinated to the fury of a man of property upon whose well-won thrift an unspeakable outrage has been committed "my own flesh and blood to rebel...I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood" (III.i.34&36).This chimes perfectly with "Jessica, my girl, look to my house". Shylock loves his riches more than anything else, even his daughter: "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear" (III.i.72-3). Jessica becomes then another bad match apart from Antonio's one who has not been able to pay back the money borrowed.

Shylock:

> there I have another bad match
>
> a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scare show his head on the Rialto ,
>
> a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart.

> Let him look to his bond, he was wont to lend money for Christian curtsy let him look to his bond! (III.i.43-9)

Shylock shows delight when he hears that there has been wreck of Antonio's ships. This follows Jessica's flight. He rages more over the loss of the riches Jessica has taken with her than over his daughter herself as shown above. He even tries to search the ship which Bassanio has boarded for the voyage to Belmont in case she and her lover are there. Shylock also sends Tubal, a friend of his, to look for her. But the news that Antonio may have lost some ships pleases him, because he hopes to get the forfeit of the bond, and to this end he tells everyone concerned that after the agreed day he will accept no money but only Antonio's flesh. But who spread the information about that wreck remains questionable. Bernard Lott in *The Merchant of Venice*, describing the characters of the plays comments on Shylock delight after Antonio's losses news. He states.

> So deep was Shylock's hatred that it would not be surprising to learn (and nothing in the play disagrees with this) that he was responsible for circulating the news of Antonio's losses at sea, and of exaggerating them, he might even have had news of them before he proposed his "merry bond" and have seen that he had every chance of getting Antonio into just the situation he longed for.(xxvii)

Lott suggests that the Jew has planned his malice about time. He hates deeply and has turned against all Christians, and he has chosen Antonio among them to be the one who will suffer most severely at his hands.

The following scene (scene 3, act 3), Antonio has now been seized for debt, and walks through the streets of Venice with a goaler. He has come from prison to plead once more with Shylock, but Shylock refuses to hear him, and Antonio resigns himself to paying his penalty which falls due the next day. As the play reaches its climax, Shakespeare presents Shylock carrying his hatred to extremes. (VI.i.35-62)

In the course of this chapter, we dissected how capitalism and religion are used to reach individual interests. Far from being a hindrance to cruel capitalism, England religion became a spur. Shylock represents these capitalist and religious defects that characterized the sixteenth century England. Taking Shylock as example, we conclude that within religion and capitalism, self –interest dominates and sentimental considerations of friendship and kinship and in particular human values are less valued. The following chapter analyses the theme of self-interest in love as experienced by the characters of *The Merchant of Venice*.

CHAPTER TWO

SELF-INTEREST IN LOVE

This chapter aims at describing the relationships existing between different characters. It shows that though the play presents different relations-friendship-marriage or trade-the basis of all of this is self-interest.

Although human beings apparently love and care for each other, in reality they expect some sort of benefit from every relationship. In life, we can at least have three types of love: First eros love known as "erotic love" (man-woman, based on feelings). Secondly, Philos love - a love based on friendship between two people. Lastly, there is a love above Philos love and eros love. It is a love that is totally selfless where a person gives out love to another person even if this act does not benefit her/him in any away. Whether the love given is returned or not, the person continues to love (even without any self-benefit). This love is "Agape" or unconditional love. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* considers the last type of love as being a "strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties". In other words, this true love is regarded as a form of relationships where no one seeks any pragmatic purpose.

During Shakespeare's time, love took many aspects. We could find in some cases true love whereas in others it was not the case. For instance, marriages were arranged at the levels of the social hierarchy. In a few cases, love grew after the vows were said. In general, however, the purpose of marriage was not seen as companionship or romance, but rather like business.

(www.lotsofessays.com/viewpaper/1712593.html)

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, like all his plays, treats a number of various themes, but one of the predominant themes in the play however, is that of love. Most of it is self-interest or dependency posing as love. From the beginning of the play, we are told that Antonio has been especially kind and in love with Bassanio before the play opens. With him Antonio can talk freely, even about such delicate things as Bassanio's love for the lady-Portia. Even their friends recognize this intimacy.

Solanio: He comes Bassanio, your most noble
Gratiano, and Lorenzo...Fare ye well,
We leave you now with better company.(I.i.58-60)

Though Antonio is ad, Solanio recognizes that Bassanio can soothe him and perhaps Antonio can reveal the cause of his sadness. Antonio and Bassanio both show in act I., scene i. that their ties are reciprocally profound:

Bassanio: (...) to you Antonio
I owe the most in money and in love
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots and purp
How to get clear of all the debts I owe .

Antonio: I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,
And if it stand as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lie all unlocked to your occasions (I.i.130-8)

Bassanio prefers to acquaint first Antonio with his debts. Antonio accepts entirely to help him since Bassanio wants to go to Belmont for a love purpose. And to go to Portia again Bassanio needs money which he is eventually able to borrow from Shylock with Antonio agreeing to be responsible for him. These relationships shown by different characters lead us to a discussion of what are the features of a true love. Then, in *The Merchant of Venice*, it is therefore true that love and friendship that characterize the characters embody different sorts of self-interest.

Many suitors from various countries come to woo Portia and have to choose among a gold, a silver, and a lead casket. Their choice tells much of their personality and the nature of love they bear. Conclusively, the imagery of the three metals making up the caskets is different.

- gold is linked with riches and royalty,
- silver suggests cold purity (see the silver light of the moon and the virgin purity of Diana the moon goddess) and equity ("who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves" : the inscription on the silver casket)
- lead is heavy and unattractive to outward appearances, but has a value of its own.

Those are the features that are obvious. They are ranged from the most valued to the most undervalued. Whoever chooses one of them is labelled its significance. A research had been conducted in one class of Massachusetts' university for the interpretations of the three caskets. The directions given were simple: "Read each what each choice revealed about the chooser in the mind of Portia's father". They filled the columns with the following ideas:

Gold	**Silver**	**Lead**
. Greedy people	. cautious people	. risk-takers
. people fooled by flashy outward appearances	. wannebees...people who try to be what they are not	. people not fooled by appearances
. materialistic people	. people who make compromises for comfort	. spiritual, intellectual people
. people who sell out for luxury	. people who spiritual health for material wealth	. people who give more than they get
. people who take without giving		(**www.Shakespearemag. com/spring97/dakin as**).

The findings above give an image of the love pursued. We can distinguish from people who are greedy, materialistic and those who give more than they get. Most of the suitors do not give much importance to the lead. An example of this within the play is the use of the pronoun **who** for gold and **which** for silver by the prince of Morocco (II.Vii.4&6). Even Bassanio, while he is choosing, Portia arranges that there should be a song continually rhyming with "lead" and ending in a conceit about coffins (III.ii.63-73). This provides a hint to him, what is considered as an act of cheating or favouritism.

With the lottery, the contests combine a number of teaching such as the idea that desire is an unreliable guide and should be resisted, and the idea that too much love for material things does not go together with love for people, the idea that appearances are often deceiving, and that people should not trust the evidence provided by the senses. The casket contests also resemble Venice of the play and

many other nowadays countries including Burundi in some respects-cultural and legal systems: same ideal opportunities, same rules to men of various nations, ethnicities and religions. Nevertheless, in reality those aspects do not profit all people. There are always nepotism and cheating.

Just as the princes fail to balance love and self-interest, the Christian characters present an inconsistency. It is therefore true that the love and friendship that seem to characterize them embody different sorts of self-interest. The triangular relationship among Antonio, Bassanio and Portia is based on selfish motives. Bassanio asks Antonio for money in order to marry Portia.

Antonio: Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you today promised to tell me of?

Bassanio: 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate, but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most in money and love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots and purposes

How to get clear of all the debts I owe. (I. i.118-134)

With this conversation, Antonio talks with his friend face to face. Their love appears to be deep since Bassanio believes it can help to clear the debts. This private talk also unveils a doubting relationship. We ourselves ask whether their love was erotic one or not. This question will also arise when Antonio will be seized and before he appears in court.

The following lines show Bassanio's intentions. He talks of his dual interest-Portia and money. For Antonio, he would sacrifice everything, his life and all, to help his friend.

Bassanio : In Belmont is a lady richly left,
and she is fair, and
fairer than that word, of word(...)
Her name is Portia,(...)
O my Antonio, had I but the means
to hold a rival place with one of them
I have a mind presages me such thrift that
I should questionless be fortune.

Antonio: Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea, neither have I money nor commodity to raise a present sum, therefore go forth try what my credit can in Venice do-that shall be racked, even to the uttermost, to furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia. Go presently inquire, and so will I, where money is, and I no question make to have it of my trust or for my sake. (I.i.161-185)

Bassanio aims at two things –women and fortune. With this conversation, we see that he introduces his speech with "...a lady richly left" and ends it with "... I should questionless be fortune". The love he is looking for is linked with the greed of fortune. This gives room to an erotic love and philos love. In any case, Bassanio expects a sort of profit with the love between him, Antonio and Portia. His motive for this coming union consists mostly of his desire to have Portia's wealth and be able to pay his debts and not solely his agape love for Portia. For Bassanio, the two are offset, but money seems to count more since he is indebted.

Since it is one of the foibles of human nature to offer this type of conditional love to others, the way we have to discern the wrongness of these forms of no-love is by seeing them compared with true love. We tend to believe that the standard for true love in *The Merchant of Venice* is Portia's "apparent" love. We see her leave her "Earthly Paradise" to do a good deed. She too is aware of her wealth as moral responsibility but the other inhabitants of Belmont, Bassanio, Gratiano, Lorenzo and Jessica, for all their beauty and charm, appear publicly as frivolous members of a leisure class, whose carefree life is parasitic upon the labours of others, including usurers. Another example to be considered as true love is the self-sacrificing love as displayed by Antonio for Bassanio.

Antonio:... my purse, my person, my extrement means

Lie all unlocked to your occasions. (I.i.137-8)

Antonio shows that he is Bassanio's best pal. Here Antonio accepts to help him whatever the cost. He likes Bassanio very much and agrees to be held responsible for a further loan.

That seeming love appears also before the trial. Antonio has entered into what Shylock calls a "merry bond" because of his friend. Nevertheless, their love does not go towards improvement. Antonio insists that his friend be there. He shows solidarity and the relationship tied between them.

Antonio: ... Pray God, Bassanio come to see me pay his debt,

and then I care not (III.iii.35-6)

Antonio's demand is sentimental since he intends instantly to resign after Bassanio be there.

Nonetheless, as the psychologists hold, all actions are ultimately motivated by consideration of self-interest (psychological egoism). In the play, the apparent love existing between most if not all of the characters can be proved to covertly expect different sorts of self-interest. On this Joel Feinberg, in his 1958 paper " psychological egoism", embraces the point by drawing attention to the infinite regress of psychological egoism. He expounds it in the following cross-examination also called circularity of human actions.

"All men desire only satisfaction."

"Satisfaction of what?"

"Satisfaction of their desires."

"Their desires for what?"

"Their desires for satisfaction."

" Satisfaction of what?"

"Their desires."

" For what?"

"For satisfaction."

With this theory, man's desires are continuously pushing him to satisfaction and he is always at the road of a relief. This continuous battle to satisfy his desires calls upon self-interest and makes him greedy. In the play, characters like Shylock and Bassanio and even Portia and the Duke avoid pain and wish to get pleasure. Because they do not care about things that would help others, their own interests or of their group prevail and they develop all evils among which immorality and violence in a case of dissatisfaction.

First, we have seen in the previous section that Shylock is inexorable to revenge against Antonio. He also agonizes over the loss of his money and is reported to run through the streets crying "o, my ducats". With these words, he apparently values his money and this suggests that his greed for things outweighs his love.

In the play, it will be also remembered that Bassanio's motive for the marriage with Portia consists of not solely his love for her but mostly his desire to have Portia's wealth and be able to pay his debts. One can also notice how Bassanio uses words like "value" and "worth" to describe his future wife. It is clear that Bassanio sees Portia as a meal ticket. Similarly, the indirect relationship between Portia and Antonio serves to an analogous purpose-since Portia knows that her husband, Bassanio, has an affection for Antonio, she endeavours to save Antonio from Shylock's malice so that Bassanio does not leave her, grieving over his friend's self-sacrifice.

Portia : What sum owes he the Jew?

Bassanio: For me, three thousand ducats.

Portia: what, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond

Double six thousand, and then treble that

Before a friend of this description

Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault (III.ii.299-305)

Portia wants to protect her indirect lover. She expects her true friend to bring Antonio along on the wedding-day. She is to rich that the money Bassanio has borrowed for the voyage to Belmont seems to be little to her. She also offers to pay the Jew twelve times as much. But when she hears Antonio's letter she knows that money will no longer be accepted " O love dispatch all business and be gone" (III.ii.325). She therefore makes a plan to help Antonio.

The plan that is going to save Antonio deserves critics. It is a complete fantasy. It appears that Portia has planned it long before in secret. Each detail is specific and only Nerissa is to know of it.

Nerissa: why, shall we turn to men?

Portia: ... But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device...

For we must measure twenty miles today. (III. Iv.78, 81, 84)

Here Portia reveals her plan to disguise as a lawyer. They will appear as men at the trial. Then, Portia though her intention is to further the interests of other characters in the play, she is trapped under the aspirations that she deserves to satisfy.

So far in the play, Shakespeare presents a setting where human realities are shown. The act V, at the court of justice, presents a climax where all characters value their interests. The Christians and the Jew mutually hate one another with an inhumanity which is common to both parties: Portia sings the praise of mercy, but

she is unable to pardon the Jew, she is about to insist that the Jew shall have the full rigours of justice according to the strict letter of the law but he will merely obtain no justice. At the same time, Antonio congratulates himself on his magnanimity in the very act of imposing on his enemy a sentence which deprives him of everything he values.

Other characters like Gratiano and the Duke applaud Shylock's punishment. Bassanio insults by flashing out in argument with Shylock until Antonio stops him, and he has to be satisfied with offering the money he has got from Portia : "moe offers" (IV,i)

Before the trial opens, the Duke has been acquainted with Shylock's sin of avarice. He therefore happens to sympathize with Antonio and here is their conversation:

Duke: What, is Antonio here?

Antonio: Ready, so please your grace.

Duke: I am sorry for thee, thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

Incapable of pity, void and empty

From any dram of mercy (IV.i.1-6)

The Duke describes Shylock of lacking mercy and being a dangerous adversary since he is "inhuman". The interest of the Duke lies on protecting his countrymen Christians to whom his love is directed. This refers to the question of anti-Semitism that was often dealt that time. He shows it through the way he calls him into the court: "call the Jew into the court" (IV.i.14). He does not call him by his own name. And when Shylock enters the trial room, the Duke's first intention is to call on him

to be merciful, things that would not be possible with Antonio. Here is the Duke's supplication.

Duke: Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too

That thou but leadest this fashion of thy malice

To the last hour of act, and them tis thought

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange (IV.i 17-20)

Here the Duke explains to Shylock the necessity to offer mercy to Antonio. Their long discussion appears difficult since Shylock is inflexible to his will. Shylock final answer is "I would have my bond-I stand for judgement –shall I have it?" (IV.i.85, 103). The Duke questions him on his cruel desires, but the talk provokes useless because Shylock is determined to make Antonio suffer. From this supplication, we also see that the diction the Duke uses when he addresses Shylock, the way he overtly categorizes Shylock as a merciless, malicious Jew and Antonio as "a poor merchant" (I.i.23) reveals his bias in favour of Christians and his prejudice towards Jews.

This chapter has showed that most of the characters in the play *The Merchant of Venice* failed to practice an agape love. They masquerade an appearance of love, but their main focus is wealth. With the example in our mind of self-sacrificing love as displayed by Antonio, while we can enjoy the verbal felicity of the love as duet between Lorenzo and Jessica, we cannot help noticing that the pairs of lovers they recall, Troilus and Cressida, Aeneas and Dido, Jason and Medea (V.i.1-14) are none of them examples of self-sacrifice, or fidelity but materialistic relationships. In other words, most of the characters of the play live either an eros love or philos love. If it is not possessions or materials that are considered, these characters care only about

their close friends. The relation between Portia, Antonio and Bassanio is an example. Most of them hazard everything in order to secure the happiness of the friends they love. Antonio has hazarded his fortune to help Bassanio out with money. Others like the suitors in general opt for material adventures for high stakes:"a wealthy and beautiful with or perpetual celibacy". Venice and Belmont show that through love, most of most of the characters of the play furthered self-interest and their relationships were built on materialism. Lastly, this section has shown that in the real world, no hatred is totally without justification, no love totally innocent. The next section shows the result of the characters previous' behaviours of self-interest.

CHAPTER THREE

CONSEQUENCES OF SELF-INTEREST

This last chapter aims at exposing a set of consequences of self-interest. In fact, most of the characters presented in *The Merchant of Venice* experience in a way or another the result of direct or indirect actions of the other characters. The end of the play *The Merchant of Venice* shows that the play is tragicomedy. The tragic denouement for Shylock and the celebrating situation for the group of Christians are the result of self-interest discussed in the first two chapters. In effect, after analysing the consequences of the characters' behaviours, we can notice that self-interest motive is powerful and determines human behaviours.

It has influenced the characters' actions and opinions as well as the accounts they have given for their actions and opinions all along the play *The Merchant of Venice.* In particular, self-interest led them and sounded in contrast with their altruistic nature. With the course money-capitalism that lead to self-interest, the Bible warns: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6: 10). With too much love of money, everything can happen. In a self-interest driven community as the one under this study, where vanity, not virtue, is worshiped, all things we used to hold dear like religion, marriage, family, loyalty, faithfulness, friendship, parenthood are no longer sacred and most of the characters become less human. The consequences of this situation are harmful to some of these characters-as shylock, and advantageous to others. *The Merchant of Venice* is then a good example where some of these issues of

consequences of self-interest are stated.

As the Bible preaches, the consequence of sin is death. In accordance with the bible's verse, we confirm that *The Merchant of Venice* shows that the consequence of self-interest is trouble. The drive to demystify the self-interest analysed previously in the first two chapters of this work climaxes in the trial scene, showing its consequence. But before the trial, Portia has already shown some bad consequences resulting from her loving Bassanio. We have seen that she loves too much Bassanio. Lott in *The Merchant of Venice* (1964) analysing the characters of the play says about Portia that:

> (...) This (lottery) makes her tired and unhappy. She has so far seen no one she likes except Bassanio. To other suitors as they come, to the Princes of Morocco and Aragon, she is cold and formal, and listens patiently to their long, self-important speeches, but Bassanio, when he arrives at Belmont, she is warm and human. She begins by asking him to wait a day or two before making his choice and in a moment wants him to delay for months. (XXViii)

With Lott's analysis, we discover how deep Portia's love for Bassanio is. He relies on the lottery to show how Portia uses the occasion to manifest her love. Her early interest for Bassanio makes her not free. She has loved him even before he comes to try his luck:

Nerissa: True, Madam, he, of all the men that ever
my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving
a fair lady.

Portia: I remember him well, and I remember him

Worthy of thy praise.(I.ii.117-121).

Portia recognizes that Bassanio deserves her love. This conversation with Nerissa takes place before Bassanio comes to choose the caskets. In act II, scene ii, she too shows her desire to Bassanio. She needs him as companion and looks for his well-being. However, Roger Masters D. in *The political Philosophy of Rousseau* warns us about those needs when he considers that "The greater the needs of an individual the more likely he is to be wicked" (41). According to him, an individual acts according to the needs he/she wants to satisfy. In the play, at the very end of the third act, the love Portia bears for Bassanio makes her changing her fairness. She plans to help Antonio by judging unfairly shylock. Since it is an evil plan, she says nothing of it to anyone except her maid-Nerissa who becomes her complicit (III.iv).She leaves her house in the hands of Lorenzo and Jessica, she goes with Nerissa to a place near Venice where by arrangement with a cousin of hers who is lawyer in Padua, she collects the robes of a lawyer, so that when we next see Nerissa she is dressed as a lawyer's clerk preparing the way for " a young and learned doctor's"(IV. i.144) of law, who is, it is believed, waiting to enter the court in place of Bellario, the lawyer from Padua who is usually consulted.

In general, the most important consequence of self-interest is negative solidarity. Then follows the harassment of the members out of the system. In this play, we witness a solidarity of Christian group that persecute Shylock who opposes them. It happens that in both cases, most characters lose their credibility and expected personality. Portia's great moment has arrived: far from being a beauty and kind, she handles the situation with the bad intention to turn the case against

Shylock. It happens that she be obliged to lie

Portia: Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house.
Until my lord's return for mine own part',
I have toward heaven breathed a secret.....
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Until her husband and my lord's return
There is monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide (III.lv.26-32)

She keeps her plan secret. She assures Lorenzo to be absent for a moment for divine purpose. This contrasts with what she says and preaches others. On this hypocrisy characterizing Portia, Victor de Laprade; a French Philosopher dramatizes that "Un bon mot n'a jamais rendu les gens meilleurs" (Literary translation: "A good word has never made people perfect") which is equivalent to the proverb in English: "don't judge a book by its cover". This fits with Portia's nature. Through the play, we see Portia standing for divine good. She is supposed not to make that kind of lie. She also shows her attachment to divine standard during the trial when she is begging shylock to show pity towards Antonio.

Portia: The quality of mercy is not strained
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath, it is twice blest. (IV.i.182-4)

Portia shows the benefit of offering mercy. She also mentions that blessing follows This is well pronounced as a good moral stand. However, the deeds in fourth act suggest a radical antithesis in the matter of observing the God's commandment.

Portia's moral standard falls when she maximizes justice for Shylock, destroying him and degrading her own Christian values, preached by Jesus' sermon on the mount: "Love your enemies bless them that curse you, do good to this noble act. them that hate you" (Matthew 5.43). Portia acts hypocritically before the trial but the trial reveals her true nature. This state concurs with what Mateo Aleman considers as an hypocrite. In *Dictionnaire de la Langue Philosophique*, he writes that

> L'hypocrite en général, est semblable à une escopette chargée dont on ne sait ce qu'elle contient, mais approchez d'elle une parcelle de feu, une seule étincelle, et la voilà qui projette une balle qui abat un géant : de même, au moindre motif, il découvre la fin fond de son âme. (1)

Translation: The hypocrite, in general is alike a charged gun which we don't know what it contains, but if you bring it near the morsel of fire, a single spark, and it spews out a bullet that kills a giant: similarly, at the slightest motive, he discovers the heart of its bare.(Translation mine)

Mateo highlights the danger of hypocrisy. This hypocrisy is always ready to dodge human kind's ruin. Applied to our present Portia, she provokes the final tragedy in *The Merchant of Venice*. Antonio is saved while Shylock is ruined. That tragedy finally ensues when Portia's hypocrisy ensures Shylock's downfall. She refuses to let Shylock back out the deal saying "he shall have merely justice and his bond" (IV.i.338).

Similarly, Shylock has to suffer touchingly the consequences of his self-interested actions. Some of these consequences are manifested somehow early before the tragedy falls on him. That happens when his unique daughter-Jessica and

his servant-Launcelot Gobbo separately leave him. This depart is revealed through the conversation between Old Gobbo, Launcelot and Bassanio in act II, scene ii.

Oldo Gobbo : His master and he (saving your worship's reverence)
are scare cater-cousin

Launcelot : To be brief, the very truth is,
that the Jew having done me wrong, (129-132)

The talk comes back to the relationship between the Jew and Launcelot. It shows that they are not in good terms. Though Bassanio specifies to him that "Shylock, thy master spoke with me this day, and hath preferred thee...." (145-6), the final decision Launcelot takes is to leave Shylock: "(...) Father, come. I'll take my leave of the Jew in twinkling" (166-7). Launcelot prefers to serve a poor Christian rather than to live a "rich Jew's service".

It never rains but it pours. In the same way, Shylock's daughter scarcely elopes after Launcelot's leaving. Jessica is first seen as she gives a note to Launcelot Gobbo for Lorenzo, regretting that Gobbo is leaving her father's service for Bassanio's.

Jessica: I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so
Our house is hell, and you, a merry devil
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness
But fare thee well, there is s ducat for thee
And, Launcelot soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest,
Give him this letter, do it secretly
And so fare well : I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee (II.iii.1-9).

This instance shows that she too intends to leave her father's house soon, and looks to the time when Lorenzo will steal her away and marry her. He then arranges this with the masques, but something delays him and they are kept waiting. At last he is ready, and steals her away with some of Shylock's treasure that she throws down to him. Later, Shylock will suffer much of this elopement. Solanio dramatizes about that sufferance. He reports.

Solanio:

> I never heard a passion so confused,
> So strange, outrageous, and so variable
> As the day Jew did utter in the streets.
> My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
> Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter
> A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
> of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
> And jewels-two stones, two rich and precious stones,
> Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!
> She hath the stones upon her, and his ducats. (II.viii.12-22)

Solanio portrays Shylock enduring the sufferance caused by the loss of his treasure especially the ring given by his departed wife. He is miserable and the pitiful consequence will accompany him to the end of the play. In fact, the Jew is being goaded into claiming his pound of flesh by the abduction of his daughter. He shows too much self-interest that he begins to lose everything.

Having shown his relentless nature, the trial will by no means be fair for him. He tries to prove his claim to dignity, worth and value, thrust it down their throats, so to speak, in old its maddened extremity.

Shylock : What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong
The pound of flesh which I demand of him,
Is deadly bought as mine, and I will have it
If you deny me, fie upon your law. (IV.i.89, 99-101)

By this Shylock's demand for justice, he forces them to recognize his humanity, coerce the Venetian polity into accepting his membership of it. And when Portia disguised as a lawyer feigns to accord the forfeiture to him, Shylock explodes in joy: "A Daniel come to judgement: yea, a Daniel" (IV.i.222). That cry of joy when he thinks that Portia endorses his bond is, it will be noticed, not Daniel of the lion's den, but the Daniel-defender and justifier-of the wrong and libelled Susanna.

For Both contenders-Shylock and Antonio and his sympathizers, the fulfilment of the bond is a desperate act of self-assertion. Shylock experiences injustice and is deprived of everything. This injustice is the direct consequence of his self-interest. It is highly observed when Portia quotes a number of laws (IV.i.305-8, 325-7, 344-357) and confirms that they are enacted in the laws of Venice. She further feigns that "Thyself [Shylock] shalt see the act" (IV.i.310), but she will never show the act. The unfair treatment against the Jew also forces him to renounce his Jewish faith and turn to Christian, and loses half his estate to Antonio and when he dies, the other half to his daughter. We see this when Portia disguised in lawyer asks Antonio what punishment may Shylock deserve.

Portia: What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Antonio: So please my lord the duke all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it
Upon his death into the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter;
Two things provide more, that, for this favour
He presently becomes a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter. (IV.i.377, 379-389)

After that the "state" fines Shylock, we see with this excerpt that Antonio adds too more conditions. The Jew is ruined as a punishment for his desire of revenge, but the duke spares him from death. Antonio becomes rich again, but remains completely outside the happiness of the rest of the group. He is like Shylock. While others are talking and laughing with joy at the prospect of loving marriages, Antonio's words, almost his last, are: "I am dumb" (V.i.279).

At the end of the play, the rest of Christians' group, except these outsiders of Belmont (Shylock and Antonio) are moving off happily in music and moonlight, having laughed over the jokes of the rings-but Portia does not feel at ease with music, to mean that she is not totally content. She also declares.

Portia: This night methinks is but the daylight sick

It looks a little paler-tis a day

Such as the day is when the sun is hid (V.i.124-6)

She orders to stop music, while musicians are ready to celebrate. She has a guilty conscience of the self-interest that has conducted her acts against Shylock. According to her mood and the time to be, the celebrating is not absolutely of the moment.

All in all, in this chapter we set out the consequence that followed some of characters' self-centred behaviours or actions. It has shown that at the end of the play, most of them are not as happy as they ought to be for Christians' side whereas for Shylock they are so tragic. He is deprived of everything at the end because of his evil desire of revenge. The rest has celebrated his downfall emphasizing the Christians' hypocrisy since they are unable to show mercy towards Shylock while the word "mercy" used to be their leitmotiv. Some of them like Antonio remains unhappy, a result of their selfish deeds and behaviours. Apart from losing his people and possessions, Shylock is also forced to renounce his Jewish and become Christian.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this study, we set out to examine the issue of self-interest in William Shakespeare's *The merchant of Venice*. We dissected the sixteenth century situation of religion and capitalism as experienced in the play through the character of Shylock. These two styles of living were the vehicles of the self-centred spirit among the Shakespearean generation. The challenge of self-interest was not a matter of a particular category of English people but a national wound. We aimed at analysing how each character in the play acted to further his or her personal interests. Our hypothesis was that Shakespeare's characters belonging to different classes (Shylock and the Christian group), in this play, could never effect the progress without dragging them and other individuals through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation. As Shakespeare wrote for his audience and generation, this research helps us to understand the author's period and the behaviour of the English people of 16th century. In addition, Shakespeare's writings and philosophy are also profitable since they are still interesting for people all over the world and for all times.

The first chapter of the present work entitled "Self interest related to capitalism and religion" dealt particularly with Shylock's nature. His unrelenting self-interest pushed his will to revenge to extreme. Shylock was supposed to only care about money, profits and such. He then became a scapegoat figure of a self-centredness that was omnipresent during the 16th century in England, especially within religion and capitalism. All the other characters, even his daughter Jessica,

detested him.

The second chapter is entitled "self-interest in love in *The Merchant of Venice*". It assessed the nature of love professed by the characters in the play .Most of the characters appeared or boasted to be possessed by an agape love whereas in reality they were motivated by personal-interests. This chapter exposed the hypocrisy of the Christian characters led by Portia. These characters talked about love and mercy but then went out of their way to alienate Shylock because he represented a menace to their advantages.

The last chapter is entitled "Consequences of self-interest". It is an analysis of the result of self-interest experienced by the various characters of the play. Shylock and the Christians hated each other. Shylock's servants and his daughter decided to leave him. Shylock is raged over the flight of his daughter and the loss of the property she took with her. A tricked trial was organized by Portia who was disguised and acted as a lawyer. Her act is considered as a pure revenge. The court decided that the state fines him, that he must be a Christian and that at his death all his property must go to his son-in-law and daughter, Lorenzo and Jessica. But at the end of the play, the moonlight lovers' duet " on such a night ",though it subdues to what it works in its remembered tales of tragic women, treacherous or betrayed -Cressida, Dido, Thisbe, Medea-echoes ominously. In fact, the story of the night is irremediably troubling for all the characters of the play rid now of the vulgar Shylock.

The study reaches to the results that the characters of the play without exception were in large degree possessed by self-interest. This self-interest led them to selfishness and greed. The Christian group attributed to Shylock their evils

whereas in reality both of them wanted to further their personal-interests, even in what seem to be acts of altruism. Through their self-assertive fantasies, each tried to drag his/her opponent(s) through an irretrievable situation by degradation.

I can say that I have reached my aim in showing that the impact of self - interest is trouble in the play, *The Merchant of Venice*. The hypothesis here has been confirmed since the self-interest possessed characters of the present play are troublemakers and the result of this idiosyncrasy makes victims from both sides. Nonetheless, I cannot confirm that I have come to a complete exploration of the themes of the impact of self-interest or other issues from the play, *The Merchant of Venice*. Many other aspects are still interesting for other researchers. For instance, one can imagine how at the trial, the author made the whole audience as well as the Duke not recognize a famous lady Portia or a single counterfeit law from the enacted ones. Or why Shylock was allowed and ready to bring a sharpened knife for cutting Antonio's pound of flesh near the heart at the court in an organized and fair state like England.

To the readers of the present work, our recommendations are that they should learn from all the consequences that followed the self-centredness of the characters of the play. They should avoid being most egoistic in their lives because this often calls upon many terrible evils that challenge stability worldwide. To limit the negative consequences resulting from self-interest, everyone is called to promote and value brotherhood and live in peace with other people. We should not only be altruistic but also know that whatever we do not want to happen to us should be banned or at least avoided to others. Another important factor to be taken into account when avoiding the harmful consequences of self-interest is not to be more

attached to the worldly materials. Though our life is linked to what our planet offers, we have to differ from animals challenging the law of the jungle. The earth still provides what is sufficient for its people. We ought to discourage the negative tendencies of piling big material riches while others are striving to be spared for a day. We must remember that our life is very short on earth and that there is no need to persecute our countrymen. Better to help each other in different difficult situations since we are sharing a short journey on this world: we must not make others fail.

This work is also an additional debate on English literature particularly over Shakespeare's plays. It is then a helpful tool for Scholars, researchers and such who orient their interests to Shakespeare and his works, especially *The Merchant of Venice.* First of all, it is an extra tool of Burundi literature beneficent to all amateurs and professionals. This work is also helpful for both teachers and students of different levels. This work faces them to a poetic style. This because a number of words and forms used within the play, are characteristic of Shakespeare's English and occur so often in the play. These words and forms have either changed in meaning since Shakespeare's day, or have fallen out of use altogether in everyday Modern English, or are shortened forms which Shakespeare used for specific effects. This work then offers comments and explanations of certain passages of the play that are not understandable to all readers. It also gives a sample of meaning conveyed in a rhythmic and in lines of verse. Students are not only acquainted within this work with the life of the 'English language's father' but also how the language evolved and how the meaning could be conveyed through it. Lastly, the work itself is an ideal vehicle of messages that are profitable for people of different ages, especially students who are the future leaders. An excellent potential in the present

work for students to be armed with is when I discuss the value of mercy during the trial. They should be taught how worth is mercy, how to beg mercy after having wronged and how to give it. In general, the moral lesson discussed within this work must light their lives and they shall be saved from the negative consequences of self-interest.

WORKS CITED

Primary source

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1962.

Secondary sources

A. Boyd, Gregory. *Repenting of Religion*. Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2004.

Alexander, Leggat. *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*. Love: Mathuen, 1974.

Antony, Giddens. *Sociology (3rd edition)*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997.

Awney, R.H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. New york: Harcourt, Brace & world, Inc., 1976.

Calvin S., Hall and Gardner, Lindzey. *Theories of Personality*. New York: John Wiley and sons Inc., 1957.

Elgin T., Hunt. *Social Science: an Introduction to the Study of Society* (2nd edition). New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961.

Francis Banker, Peter Hulmer and Margaret Iversen. *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

François-Victor, Hugo. *Shakespeare*. Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1964.

Geela, Parish. *The America Dream*. Global Vision Media, 2003.

H.M. Robertson. *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism: a Criticism of Max Weber and his School.*

Lerner, Laurence. *Shakespeare's Comedies: an Anthology of Modern Criticism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1967.

Martin, Coyle. *The Merchant of Venice, Contemporary Critical Essays*. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1998.

Masters, Roger D. *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Nevo, Ruth. *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare*. Cambridge: University Press, 1980.

Paul, Foulqué. *Dictionnaire de la Langue Philosophique*, Paris : Joseph Floch, 1982.

Peter L., Bernstein. *Against the Go: the remarkable story of Risk*. New York: John Wiley& sons, 1998.

Richard W., Murphy. *Status Conformity*. Virginia: Time-life Books, 1976.

Rowse, A.L. *The England of Elisabeth: the structure of society*. London: Macmillan & co LTD, 1951.

Vick. K. D., Janik. *The Merchant of Venice, A Guide to the Play*. Greenwood: Library of congress catalogue Inc., 1987.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's, 1958.

William, Hazlitt. *A View of the English Stage*. London: J.M. Dent & C°, 1821. *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. London: R. Hunter and C. and J. Ollier, 1817.

Unpublished works

Banyankindagiye, Félix. "Jealousy in Shakespeare's *Othello*". B.A. Dissertation, Bujumbura, University of Burundi, 1987.

Basekaruriho, Emmanuel. "From captivity to capitalism : a study of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*". B-A.Thesis, Bujumbura, University of Burundi, 2009.

Hamenyimana, Herbert. "The theme of Good and Evil in National Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown' and 'Rappacine's Daughter". B.A. Thesis, Bujumbura, University of Burundi, 2011.

Ndayishimiye, Benjamin. "Absurdity in Human Existence: a study of F. Scott FitzGerald's *The Great Gatsby*". B.A. Thesis, Bujumbura, University of Burundi, 2008.

Nicayenzi, Pascasie. "The battle over values in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*". B.A. Dissertation, Bujumbura, University of Burundi

Internet sources

D. Boje, Luhnm: capitalism in *The Merchant of Venice,* accessed on 1st December 2012.

https // answers. yahoo. com/question/index?quid: love during Elizabeth I's time. accessed on 10th April 2014.

http://www.geocities.com/juttafrguz/dialog.011: capitalism and racism, accessed on 23th April 2012.

http://www enwikepedia.org /wiki/self-interest: definition of Self-interest, accessed on 8th May 2012.

http://www.Shakespearemag.com/spring 97/dakin asp: Signification of the caskets, accessed on 8th August 2013.

www.bardweb.net: History of Elisabeth England, accessed on 10th June 2013.

www.helium.com/morality:recognition of evil state, accessed 4th May 2012.

www.lotsof essays.com/viewpaper/1712593.html: love in *The Merchant of Venice,* accessed on 14th August 2013.

www.Snmoop.com/merchant of Venice html: Bassanio's love, accessed on 20th November 2012.

Dictionaries consulted

Harrap's Shorter Dictionary English-French / French-English. Edinburgh: Edinburgh EH74AY, 2000.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

The Encyclopaedia Americana (vol 15).Connecticut: American corporation, 1980.

The Macmillan Students Edition of the Concise Webster's New world Dictionary of the American Language. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962.

Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus. Massachusetts: a Merria-webster Inc., Publishers, 1976.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Massachusetts: Merry-Webster NC., Publishers Springfield, 1987.