
The Merchant Of Venice: Themes Of Money And Religion

For a long time, individuals have been segregated for their religion and their beliefs on money. The equivalent has occurred in William Shakespeare's epic play, *The Merchant of Venice*. This play is about Antonio, a racist merchant, who applies for a new line of credit from a Jew, called Shylock. This credit will support Antonio's beloved companion, Portia. Yet, when the opportunity arrives for Antonio to reimburse his obligations, he doesn't have the cash. Shylock requests consequently a pound of Antonio's flesh to settle the entirety of his debts. Portia gives back in kind to Antonio by professing to be a legal counsellor to eradicate all charges against Antonio. In this essay, I will critically analyse a given passage from the play from Act I scene 3, explicitly looking at and commenting on Shylock's tone, repetition, and rhetorical questions. Furthermore, I will address the dispute between Antonio and Shylock. And, lastly, I will prove how money throughout the play has its significance.

Shylock is a Jew, and confirmation is found at the beginning of the play as well as in his reaction when he expresses how Antonio 'spet upon my Jewish gaberdine,' (Shakespeare, 1.3.7). Additional verification is found in his discourse designs, for example, the usage of 'gaberdine', which is a word that alludes to a mantle that the Jews wore during the medieval era. He also makes reference to our kinfolk (Shakespeare, 1.3.5) which he refers to from the Sacred text. His references from the Sacred text shows the wellspring of his pleasant language (Tretiak, 1929:345). Moreover, we discover that Shylock refers to sacred writings to demonstrate his argument. Not only is he a keen and clever entrepreneur but he is also a very devoted Jew. In the entry we discover him alluding to himself as a bondsman (Shakespeare, 1.3.18) which is amusing because here he snidely compares himself to a slave with no power. Later, when he has loaned the cash sum to Antonio, it turns out that he has all of the power. Shylock is an ace at utilizing the intensity of poignancy (passionate intrigue) in his contentions. He, furthermore, utilizes non-serious inquiries in the section (Shakespeare, 1.3.15-17) which shows that the individuals of the Venetian culture where he lives see him comparable to a canine in this way adding to the contempt.

Through the conflicting ideas of Antonio and Shylock, they are the epitome of the centuries-long dispute among the Jews and Christians. Shylock and Antonio have conflicted heads (Shakespeare, 1.3.1) demonstrating that for quite some time, there has been acrimony between them. Antonio has assaulted Shylock in an assortment of ways (Shakespeare, 1.3.6-7) which includes calling him different injurious terms and spitting for him. Tretiak (1929:345) composes 'When Shakespeare lets Shylock say: '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, not pray with you,' [1.3.358] he gives a true picture of the distant relations of the refugees with the Londoners, limited exclusively to commercial intercourse.' Tretiak shows that the ill will between the two characters were not just between them but between all Jews and Christians during those times. The characters are, as Radford (1894:108, 109) says, '...outsiders in race' and 'rivals in business'. This adds more hostility between Antonio and Shylock.

Cash and riches are extremely huge in Venetian culture. This is supported by the fact that Selanio thinks Antonio is tragic because his money is in transportation exchange. An exchange that is very dangerous (Shakespeare 1.1.20-23). Shakespeare attempts to report Anti-Semitism

by showing how the people feel concerning riches, the advantages of profitable trading, and moneylending, and how this then aids in separating Christians and Jews from one another. In the play, Jews are victimised by Christian characters because they, the Christians, believe that Jews are only interested in the money they can receive. This can be found in the first two lines of the given passage when Shylock reprimands Antonio who scolded Shylock many times before about his money and businesses. Not only do Jews see the importance of money but Christians do also, otherwise Bassanio and Antonio would never have gone to Shylock to borrow the 3000 ducats that they needed. If the Christian characters never cared for money, they would never have felt the need to borrow it from Shylock. All of this, therefore, proves to a certain extent that the Jews and the Christians have at least this in common – that they both place great significance on money and wealth.

The given passage thus shows that Shylock has been discriminated against by yet another Christian. Shylock is a Jew character in the play who, like everyone else in Venetian culture, places great importance and acceptance on money and wealth. This, and the fact that Antonio is antisemitic, causes great conflict between the two characters.