



# The Bard and 'the Other': A Post-colonial Re-reading of Sir Thomas More, The Merchant of Venice and The Tempest

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is to shed light on the representation of 'the Other' in three Shakespearean dramas: Sir Thomas More, The Merchant of Venice and The Tempest. The article describes several Shakespearean characters through the prism of post-colonialism and, therefore, the paper is structured as the post-colonial re-reading of the aforementioned dramatic texts. William Shakespeare portrayed the sad fate of immigrants in Sir Thomas More, but the Bard also tackled the refugee issue which remains relevant for the contemporary period. Additionally, Shakespeare dramatized the position of the Jewish community in Venice through the portrayal of Shylock. The re-reading of The Tempest focuses on the process of colonisation and the Manichaeian division within the conquered world. In conclusion, the article portrays experiences of those dramatic individuals stigmatised and subjugated by the colonial forces, thus allowing the readers to better understand the binary division within colonial systems.*

**Keywords:** *William Shakespeare, Refugee Issue, Stereotyping, Manichaeian World*

## **Article History**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare is one of the most profoundly important writers to have ever existed. In the contemporary framework, the Bard may be synonymously associated with the very term of drama, as such. His narrative poetry, his sonnet sequence, as well as his dramatic pieces are the body of work which encompasses numerous elements of the social and cultural sphere. Shakespeare thus stands as the just equal to some of the most brilliant minds to have ever worked in the realm of literary achievements, such as Dante, Dostoevsky and Dickens. As some of the most important contributions to the great literary tradition, the Bard's dramas are an inexhaustible field for various literary theories. The post-colonial literary criticism is especially important for Shakespeare's dramas, because particular plays superbly depict the process of 'othering.'

In order to better understand the representation of 'the Other' and 'otherness' in Shakespearean dramas, it should first be explained why a single minority group of people(s) is subjugated by the community which surrounds them. Brons (2015) elaborates on idea of 'otherness' by stating: "Othering often sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, it can also create distance between self/in-group and other/out-group by means of a dehumanizing over-inflation of otherness" (72). Edward W. Said's work *Orientalism* also explains the Eurocentric opinions of the East and anything which is related to the so-called Orient. Said (1979) explains that the Orient is: "Almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1). However, this rather biased and Eurocentric worldview does not only portray elements of romance, or exoticism, because more often than not, the dwellers of the 'mysterious East' are perceived as 'the Other,' hence extremely negatively. The basic aim of this paper is to further disseminate the knowledge of the Bard and 'the Other.' In other words, this paper will analyse three dramas through the prism of post-colonial literary theory: *Sir Thomas More*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest*. In the case of *Sir Thomas More*, the Bard was not the main or the only author, however Shakespeare did add a particularly interesting monologue which describes the rising tension of the people of London, as well as their frustrations. The inserted speech presents the clash between the superior 'in-group,' that is to say, the people of London, and the dangerous and unwanted 'strangers.' Moreover, this drama focuses on some of the most vocal protests especially in regards to the refugee issue.

Secondly, this paper will focus on *The Merchant of Venice*, as one of Shakespeare's greatest and best-recognised tragicomedies. The characters of Shylock the Jew will be analysed in order to portray the negative elements attributed to the Jewish community in Venice during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Shylock will be described as the character who is perceived as 'the Other,' but with the highest degree of negative connotations. As a Jewish character, Shylock is heavily

marginalised by the Christian society. Different characters treat him harshly, attributing animal pejoratives to Shylock, and ruthlessly try to expel him from the society since he is perceived as 'the Alien' of the Venetian state. The third and therefore the final segment of this paper will focus on the inhabitants of the mysterious island in Shakespeare's final play *The Tempest*. The paper will predominantly focus on the analysis of Caliban as the natural native of the aforementioned isle. On the other side of the spectrum there stand Prospero and Miranda who are the newcomers of the island and they epitomise the European conquerors. Thus, Caliban will be presented as the downtrodden and colonised individual, whereas Prospero the Wizard will be analysed as the dominant ruler. Ergo, this paper will focus on the portrayal of implicit/explicit forms of subjugation of 'the Other,' but also the response which 'the Other' makes in order to survive in the coloniser's domain.

## 2. THE CASE FOR STRANGERS: SHAKESPEARE'S CONTRIBUTION TO *SIR THOMAS MORE*

In the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so heavily marked by censorship and intolerance, one author's voice was able to transcend all barriers of time and space. William Shakespeare's literary opus remains, undoubtedly, one of the best-recognised contributions to the realm of theatre, poetry, but also linguistics and modern understanding of various political and social systems. Shakespeare was not an author situated within a single timeframe, rather he was a writer for every day and age, and since he was able to brilliantly understand and depict the socio-political difficulties of his own epoch, the Bard's dramatic pieces remain relevant for the contemporary era.

A historic play dubbed *Sir Thomas More* grants the readers an invaluable opportunity to discover one of the most passionate defences of the refugee policy. The refugee issue was an important element in England's history, however it is equally if not even more relevant for the contemporary society. The dramatic work is titled after the famous English chancellor Sir Thomas More whose devotion to the Pope cost More his own life. Since the Chancellor refused to accept Henry VIII's divorce and his political split from the Church of Rome, he was beheaded. Thomas More is even nowadays remembered as a passionate defender of the Catholic faith who stood against the teaching of Martin Luther<sup>1</sup>. After the passing of Elizabeth Gloriana, Shakespeare was invited to make adjustments to the text of the play. He and other playwrights revised the text and the Bard of Avon included 147 lines in the middle of the central plotline. Namely, Shakespeare inserted an additional monologue for the character of Sir Thomas More. In this speech, More addresses the violent outbursts of the anti-immigration riot on the streets of London. This speech is intended for the people because they so fervently desire the immigrants to be removed. It was explained that they are baying for the so-called 'strangers' to be unequivocally banished (Dickson, 2016). In this case, the superior and self-entitled group of the rioters is

juxtaposed with the 'the Other,' and the term refers to the 'strangers' in their unfortunate position. More's philosophical enquiry about the fate of the outcasts attempts to reignite some degree of empathy among the angry people and More says, "What would you think / To be thus used? this is the strangers case; / And this your mountainish inhumanity" (2.4.121-123). At this instance, More switches the places of the two opposing sides. He hypothetically 'otherises' the rioters by placing them into the roles of those whom they deem unworthy. Through More's mouthpiece, Shakespeare poses the question of what would happen if the downtrodden individuals were to replace their position with the people who want to see them banished.

Shakespeare presents a kind approach, prompting both sympathy and empathy among the rioters, whereas the plight of the alienated and dispossessed is viewed with mercy rather than contempt. Dickson (2016) adds that this speech may prefigure the great dramas which would later ensue in Shakespeare's opus; such dramas being *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*. The Bard was able to successfully implement his own opinions into the monologue, by portraying a sharp eye for the troubled relationship between the ethnic majorities and minorities. The long speech additionally depicts Thomas More's own courageous side as he was more than willing to face the rioting mob at St. Martin's Gate. Thus, Shakespeare can be examined as a transnational traveller, and More as his representative in the dramatic world. More's albeit unsuccessful attempt to stop the rioters does not only pose urgent ethnical questions, rather the same speech addresses the issue of the responsibility for 'the Other.' In his article, Stephen O'Neill (2020) explains that: "These iterations draw Shakespeare, long imagined as a type of transnational traveller, into urgent ethical questions about borders, displaced peoples, and responsibility to the Other, as More's empathetic plea comes to function synecdochally for Shakespeare" (1). In addition to the aforementioned empathy-prompting, More's speech exemplifies the notion of cultural tensions and mistrusts that still prevails. The cultural mistrust remains ever-so-present even in the contemporary setting, whereas this play emphasises the idea that cross-cultural connection should be bettered by all means necessary. It would appear that the 16<sup>th</sup> century society of England and the post-modern era of the world do not differ vividly from one another. Globalisation and mass-communication brings together various cultures nowadays more than ever before. However, xenophobic nationalists and those people adhering to the rightist political systems consequently try to drive different ethnic or cultural apart. The Bard was able to inform the audience of his own time about issues which plague their own society, and his words, or rather those of Thomas More as a character, definitely must have tackled many people, giving them additional reason to muse over the anti-immigration crises. The multi-authored play of *Sir Thomas More* appears to foreshadow not just some of Shakespeare's own great tragedies and comedies, but also the countless problems which will be described later on in literature, especially in terms of 'the Other' and the so-called 'them-us' division. Bamford's paper (2018) connects the late Renaissance period to the 21<sup>st</sup> century in this regard by further perpetuating the notion that the mistrust

between the cultures and nations is growing: "Sir Thomas More's speech, attributed to Shakespeare, and found in the little-known and multi-authored play *Sir Thomas More*, which deals with the responses to Huguenot immigrants to the UK in the 16th century, demonstrates that mistrust of other cultures, and the recognition of the need for cross-cultural communication are nothing new" (1). Furthermore, it should be noted that the Bard used whatever medium he had at his disposal to portray the hard position of 'the Other,' or in this case the mistrusted 'strangers.' As a playwright, his empathic plea was delivered through the adapted lines of Henry VIII's Chancellor, while the theatre in itself was profoundly important as an entertainment medium of his own era. Similarly enough, for many decades numerous people have been able to enjoy the medium of television in a similar yet far more modern setting and Bamford (2018) adds: "Shakespeare made his plea through the medium of contemporary entertainment, and in the last hundred years many have used the medium of screen entertainment to make similar pleas" (1). Born in William Shakespeare's mind, the idea of 'the Other' was transmitted through the adaptation of this less-known play.

Although the xenophobic and superior society of England desires to see all strangers exiled from their kingdom, Shakespeare decided to alter the overall focus of the spectators listening to the speech: "Shakespeare shifts the focus of the audience and of the play as a whole from fear of the other to fear for the other" (Lawrence, 2018, p. 2). For the xenophobes, all strangers are the enemy. Moreover, everything or better to say everyone who is not a part of the mainstream English society in this case is considered to be 'the Other,' therefore these strangers are posing a serious threat for all those who do not wish them to stay. Shakespeare, or actually More's empathy-prompting, in this speech addresses the issue of the mob suffering. In fact, More compares and contrasts the pain of the audience present with that of the 'terrifying strangers.'

More openly asks the people gathered what they would think of their own exile, at least hypothetically. More enquires, "Should so much come to short of your great trespass / As but to banish you, whether would you go? / What country, by the nature of your error, / Should give you harbor?" (2.4.107-110). In this portion of the long speech, More is trying to make the connection between the actual exile of the foreigners and the hypothetical one, and Lawrence (2018) explains that: "Fear for the other precedes and serves as a model of fear for the self" (8). In order to tackle their own compassion, Shakespeare through More inverts the logic of the so-called social contract. He accepts the alleged existence or the myth of the 'state of nature,' and moreover, he perceives it as a terrifying primordial phenomenon, an anarchy of some sort. Thus, More accuses the rioters of their inhuman approach to the strangers, arguing the strangers' case. Lawrence (2018) elaborates on this notion by explaining: "Instead of imagining a state in which everyone would fear for herself or himself, however, More imagines a situation in which everyone would fear for other people" (8). The communal spirit is important. By not being, to phrase it bluntly, selfish to the core, various people are able to open themselves to empathy. The rioters, as well

as everyone else, should feel this level of genuine human compassion in order to redirect fear from themselves to other individuals, as such. Essentially, the gathered people are called to recognise 'the Other' as 'the stranger' and vice versa. However, in this particular case, More advises the people to perceive them differently.

More explicitly advises the people to recognise 'the Other' as the widow, the orphan, and Lawrence (2018) further elaborates on this idea by explaining that: "More's speech calls for a recognition of the Other as "the stranger, the widow, and the orphan" (8). The migrants carry different stories with them, they can be recognised perhaps as strangers, but also as someone's child, someone's mother, father, sister. Their own experiences do not necessarily have to differ greatly from the experiences of the people who want them to be banned from London. William Shakespeare advises, in turn, the fictional characters on the stage, but also his real spectators, to pass through the doors of fiction and reality, but also to transcend the barriers between their own experiences and the experiences of 'the Other.' In More's vision, the rioters are commanded almost to imagine their own position wherein they would be excluded from the society, reduced to a level of bare existence, and denied citizenship, as well as the status of a human being (Lawrence, 2018, pp. 8-9). The inserted speech transmits one very important message for the fictional rioters, but also for the theatre audience, because More openly says: "Nay, any where that not adheres to England, – / Why, you must needs be strangers" (2.4.112-113). Evidently, More tells the people that only England is their home, for anywhere else, they would be discarded and perhaps even treated unfairly. The Londoners are not invited immediately to care for the strangers' case by comparing their own position to the plight of the newcomers, because this would imply a level of personal agenda or self-interest. Rather, they are first asked to empathise with the tragic fate of the foreigners before their hypothetical exile is described. More asks his addressees to imagine the journeys of the foreigners, or as More calls them 'the wretched strangers.' This can be observed when More says: "Imagine that you see the wretched strangers, / Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage, / Plodding tooth ports and costs for transportation" (2.4.57-59). The actual pain of the 'wretched strangers' should be also considered, because as Lawrence (2018) moreover explains: "The rioting Londoners are not called to care for the strangers by comparing "the strangers' case" to their own, which they would first care about in the manner of self-interested agents. Before being asked to imagine themselves becoming exiles, they are asked to imagine the suffering of "the wretched strangers"" (9).

The tale of *Sir Thomas More* remains relevant for the contemporary society, due to the fact that we are able to reinterpret the Bard's writings in order to better comprehend our own world, and Loomba (2002) emphasises this notion by stating that Shakespeare's writings: "Form a bridge between the past and us: even as we read in them stories of a bygone world, we also continually reinterpret these stories to make sense of our own worlds" (4-5). The Bard's contribution to the dramatic realm in terms of post-colonial theory remains a prominent aspect

because as Popa (2013) explains: "Postcolonial theory attempts to consider the circumstances of marginalized, exploited or subaltern systems and the social groups that become stigmatized and it is a reflection on the difference, on *the Other*, but more importantly, an address to the colonial *Other*" (92). Taking into consideration Shakespeare's entire dramatic opus, numerous dramatis personae which may be described as 'the Other' can be found in the Bard's writings, and as Popa (2013) explains: "Four of Shakespeare's plays deal with non-white characters: *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Tempest*, while in *The Merchant of Venice* we have non-Christian characters" (93). Moreover, Popa (2013) also adds that: "There are a few other characters who contribute to the general picture of Shakespeare's perception of a racial Other" (93). For this reason, it should be noted that Shakespeare's dramas are a fertile ground for the portrayal of 'the Other' while in turn the post-colonial theory can consider and analyse such stigmatised social groups. The plight of various refugees can be detected all around the globe, even in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As countless peoples from Palestine and elsewhere voyage over heavy terrain and dangerous seas. Women, children and elderly immigrants can be seen moving from countries ravished by conflict. By acknowledging such strangers as 'the Other' Shakespeare instructs the London rioters, but also everybody else to remember that our own fates and experiences do not have to differ so vividly, due to the fact that the wheel of fortune keeps turning. The Bard presents the case for 'the Other,' whereas Shakespeare's teachings and instructions during the Renaissance period also prevail as something extremely relevant for the contemporary society. Shakespeare's empathy-prompting refers to the Bosnian society as well as to all other communities. Since the playwright was able to understand the functioning of the human heart and mind so analytically, it is no wonder that Shakespeare successfully managed to contribute to the overall sense of empathy and/or compassion in the real world.

#### THE 'ALIEN' OF VENICE

Shylock the Jew is the main antagonist of one of Shakespeare's greatest (tragi)comedies. He is at the same time a comic character, villainous, but also particularly tragic in his own right. The Bard represents Shylock as 'the Other' of the play. The Jew stands in contrast to the other Venetian characters due to his Jewish identity, his usury and money-lending occupation. This type of a profession, so to say, was greatly frowned upon during the Elizabethan times. Hence, in post-colonial terms, Shylock is 'the Other' in *The Merchant of Venice*. Huang (2019) elaborates on this notion by explaining that: "Compared with the other characters in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock seems to be totally an outsider and alien of Venice because he is considered to be the "Other" in the eyes of the other Venetians as a result of his identity a Jew as well as his occupation as a usurer, both of which are despised and degraded at the Elizabethan times" (661). Shylock may be presented a villainous individual, however his fate is, indeed, very tragic at the end of the dramatic piece.

Moreover, his entire fictional existence seems to be marked by this constant element of degradation. The Jew stands in contrast to the people of Venice who are predominantly Christian.

Thus, it would appear that the superior Christian group has placed itself over the position of 'the Other' when it comes to Venice. Taking into account Frantz Fanon's monumental work *The Wretched of the Earth*, it becomes evident that the Venetian society may be interpreted as a 'Manichaean world' in a nutshell. Primarily, because the Manichaean world is a functioning community divided into different segments. Fanon (1963) rendered the Manichaean setting in the following lines: "The affirmation of the principle "It is them or us" does not constitute a paradox, since colonialism, as we have seen, is in fact the organization of a Manichean world, a world divided up into compartments" (84). Ergo, the Manichaean setting is established as a world where there exist constant binary divisions. In *The Merchant of Venice*, this division is exemplified through Shylock. He is a part of the world split into compartments, and in his case, Shylock is the less-fortunate compartment of this environment. Fanon's contribution to post-colonial studies has allowed numerous scholars over the decades to better understand the binary dichotomy when it comes various texts. More often than not, Shylock is undermined by other Venetian characters. This is particularly plausible when Antonio insults him at the Rialto. Shylock reminds Antonio of these insults when the Merchant arrives to ask money from the Jew by citing the following lines: "You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog, / And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine, / And all for use of that which is mine own" (1.3.121-123). From this description, the position of the Jews in the Manichaean environment of Venice is easily recognisable, because Shylock is condemned for both what he is and for what he does. Since the Manichaean world represents a divided environment, it should be noted that the term is derived from the name of Mani and his teachings. Mani's teachings focused on the duality of the world, or in other words: "As he developed Manichaeism, Mani composed seven writings, including the *Shabuhrgan*. His teachings focused on the origins of evil and taught a "dualistic" view between good and evil" (Reese, 2019). Therefore, Venice can be perceived as a Manichean world divided between the Christian characters on one side and Shylock the Jew on the other. The Jew of Venice and everything relating to him is vividly frowned upon by Antonio and the rest of the characters.

In a similar manner to the speech delivered in *Sir Thomas More*, William Shakespeare yet again invites (or instructs) his audience/readers to cry and sympathise with the fate of the Jew. Undoubtedly, Shylock might have wronged different characters through his shrewd money-lending profession, nonetheless his own existence in Italy has been greatly undermined by the Christian population. In one of Shylock's most famous monologues, the Bard touches the basic humanity of every individual when Shylock says, "If you / poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall / we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will / resemble you in that?" (3.1.64-67). Shylock wants everybody to recognise that he is a person, just like all other dramatis personae. Primarily,



the Jew should be perceived as a human individual regardless of his origins, his creed or even his profession. Huang (2019) presents the notion that Shylock actually tries to deny his own position as 'the Other': "Shylock denies his status as the "Other" and makes every effort to defend and justify his identity and at the same time attempts to other the Christians" (668). In the previous chapter of this paper, it was explained that More tried to draw the gathering rioters closer to the feeling of empathy by presenting the empathic case for strangers. In this drama, however, Shakespeare through Shylock tried to depict the Jew in a different manner. The usurer should be treated justly like any other Christian individual, because as Shylock himself explains, they are not so vividly different from each other after all. One might examine Shylock of narcissistic or vengeful, yet he is a tragic individual when everything is taken into consideration. Shylock is the 'alien' of Venice and is therefore (mis)treated accordingly.

The term 'alien' in this case is of vital importance, due to the fact that the term denotes a social pariah, an outsider. For this reason, Shylock's position is not something one would desire. Near the end of the play, the lexeme 'alien' is used once to describe Shylock, referring to the laws of Venice. Once the Jew decides that he would get his revenge on Antonio and seize one pound of his flesh, Portia disguised as Balthazar comes to the Merchant's rescue. Once Shylock is not persuaded to render any mercy to Antonio, and once he is robbed of the opportunity to kill the Merchant, Portia informs Shylock that he cannot yet escape the Venetian justice. To confirm this, Portia recites the following: "It is enacted in the laws of Venice, / If it be proved against an alien / That by direct or indirect attempts / He seek the life of any citizen, / The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive / Shall seize one half his goods" (4.1.363-368). One of the greatest Shakespearean actors Sir Patrick Stewart presented his article describing Shylock as Shakespeare's 'alien' in which he explains Shylock's sad fate. Namely, Stewart (1981) addresses the issue of Shylock's greedy personality, and Stewart explains that the Jew's nature is disordered by avarice. It is Shylock's bad experience of the world and his endeavour to cope with it which makes Shylock so malicious and cruel at certain instances. Shylock and his kind are the outsiders, they are the strangers of Venice, feared and hated simply for being different than the rest. They are, as the laws of the Venetian state clearly explain, the aliens. The Jews are stamped by the world, thus being always vulnerable (142-143).

Just as it was the case with the strangers in *Sir Thomas More*, Shylock is likewise another Shakespearean alien. In post-colonial terms, he is 'otherised' by the Venetian state. Huang (2019) explains the use of the verb 'othering' within the context of post-colonialism and other studies by saying that: "The term "Other" together with its other variations such as its noun form "otherness" and verb form othering is often used in psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, and cultural studies" (662). Since 'the Other' is a term used in post-colonial studies, and since this paper classifies Shylock as 'the Other' of *The Merchant of Venice*, it is safe to assume that Shylock is the epitome of the post-colonial 'otherness' within the Venetian state. Furthermore, Huang (2019) confirms this aspect of Shylock's 'otherness' by explaining that: "He is a stranger and a foreigner as well as an

outsider and an alien “marginalized and firmly placed on the fringe of society”; he does not “fit the norm” which has been largely determined by the Christian Venetian society. Therefore, it is absolutely safe for us to define Shylock as an “Other” in the play” (662-663). The esteemed Shakespearean thespian also adds that Shylock has found a way to ‘merge’ with his environment. Stewart (1981) adds that Shylock appears as a shabby, unmemorable and eccentric old clown in the eyes of the people around him. Not many would consider him a threat. It is only Antonio, his competitor in business, whose senses are sharpened by commerce, and who is able to detect contempt behind Shylock’s visage (143). Nevertheless, the Jacobean audience of England would be able to recognise and condemn Shylock not only for what he does, but for what he is and the way he looks.

Primarily, this becomes evident in the process of stereotyping when Jews are concerned. In post-colonial terms, Mushtaq (2010) defines stereotyping and he explains that: “In post-colonial theory, ‘stereotype’ refers to the highly generalized views of the colonizers about the colonized” (25). In Shakespeare’s play, the image of Shylock the Jew is often presented rather negatively, and this is important to consider, because Mushtaq (2010) adds that: “Stereotyping can be defined as an image, mostly negative, of a person in relation with a group or society” (25). Shylock is the part of the so-called ‘out-group’ mentioned at the beginning of this paper, therefore he is the object of stereotyping. The superior group on the other hand perceives individuals from the ‘out-group’ as: “shirkers, liars, corrupt, weak, inferior, uncivilized, impotent, cruel, lazy, irrational, violent and disorganized” (Mushtaq, 2010, p. 25). Shylock’s outward appearance on the stage would mark him as the Jewish individual, and afterwards many stereotypes would be attributed to the character. Nahvi (2015) elaborates on this notion: “Elizabethan theatergoers would have recognized Shylock as a Jew immediately. His red wig, bulbous nose and huge cape immediately label him as the other and as an outsider. Even though Jews were not living in England (at least not openly), they represented a stereotype evil, cunning, greed and at the very core, heartlessness” (1293). Interestingly enough, in order to undermine Shylock’s positions, other characters, such as Antonio or Bassanio, even Portia/Balthazar refer to him simply as ‘the Jew.’ Nahvi (2015) adds that: “Even before the play begins, the dramatis personae presents Shylock as an archetype, Shylock, the Jew. Throughout the play, the other characters consistently refer to him as simply, the Jew. This characterization dehumanizes and de-personalizes Shylock” (1294). Such a characterisation certainly undermines but also de-humanises Shylock, however this is by no means the only case of Shylock’s de-humanisation, because, for example, Gratiano compares Shylock to a dog by saying, “O, be thou damned, inexecrable dog” (4.1.130). Such references serve one function and that is to replace Shylock’s human soul. Bianchi (2005) explains this element of de-humanisation by stating that: “The images increase in vulgarity as Gratiano dehumanizes Shylock, and the animal references serve to take the place of Shylock's human soul” (14). Other fictional characters and citizens of Venice reduce Shylock from a person to a mere category (Nahvi, 2015,

p. 1294). Shylock is furthermore moved from a position of 'the Other,' to the position of stranger, to his well-known 'alien status,' however even more prominently he is treated as an animal occasionally by various dramatis personae. He is attributed bestial terms such as 'dog' or 'wolf.' He is, also, equated to the devil. Shylock cleverly recalls this remark in the third act of Shakespeare's drama and Shylock says, "Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause, / But since I am a dog, beware my fangs" (3.3.7-8). He reminds the Merchant of this epithet, thus the danger behind Shylock's vindictiveness is portrayed clearly to the readers/spectators.

Additionally, Antonio in the play spits on the Jew, while his daughter Jessica runs off with a Christian, symbolically leaving the Jewish family, thus converting to Christianity. Eventually, Shylock is left without his livelihood, and perhaps even figuratively without his own life. Shakespeare's creation of 'the Other' unquestionably mirrored the sentiments, fears and the myths about the Jews commonly visible in the Bard's own time. Many of such sentiments prevail even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Nahvi, 2015, p. 1296). *The Merchant of Venice* remains relevant for the contemporary world, because as Nowosad (2017) states: "The play is a good selection for the time we live in right now as we strive to examine the way we look at people who are different from ourselves. Religious and racial prejudice prevail in this play opening our thoughts to what happens in our own modern day society." The aforementioned prejudice and intolerance can be observed also within the lives of various people today, because Nowosad (2017) likewise explains the notion that: "The desire for wealth, anti-Semitism, prejudice, racial and gender bias, all of these take place in this story as well as in many people's lives today. How we decide to view them are [*sic*] influenced by our own places in this life. Being open to examining them allows us to express our thoughts and perhaps overcome what we can."

The pivotal scene of *The Merchant of Venice* is, by all means, the court scene, when Portia beats Shylock in his revenge and makes him in turn pay for the foul agendas. Portia, or rather Balthazar in disguise, urges the Jew to render some mercy, nevertheless the Jew refuses to do so. It would appear that the 'crude' Shylock stands in contrast to the 'merciful' Christians of Venice. The basic messages of the Old and the New Testament(s) are juxtaposed through Shylock and the rest of the community. However, it should be noted that the mercy which Portia so adamantly mentions is not extended to the Jewish characters within the drama (Navih, 2015, p. 1296). In his (tragi)comedy, William Shakespeare portrayed the problems of his day and age which linger even in our own sphere of existence. The issue of Shakespeare's world is almost identical to the issue of the post-modern society. In order to connect the similarities of problems in Shakespeare's own time and the current era, Bambušková (2019) analysed *The Merchant of Venice*, especially in regards to the previously-mentioned court scene, and she explained that: "Today's 'Christian Europe' (Christian in name but focused on easy, enjoyable life, much like the Venetians) may profit from recognition of what kind of law and what kind of mercy we may offer those who come into our country, who are our 'Others' and whose 'Others' we are" (1-2).

Thus, it is less relevant whether Shylock the Jew is a tragic character or a sympathetic villain, because one fact is evident, he is 'the Other,' he is the undermined 'alien' of this dramatic piece.

### 3. CALIBAN THE NATIVE

Shakespeare's last (authentic) play, his final 'farewell' from the London audience, presents one of the most memorable dramatic pieces ever written. *The Tempest* perhaps above all other Shakespearean dramas remains most relevant for the post-colonial analysis. Characters such as Caliban, the original dweller of the enchanted island will be presented as the central element for the post-colonial examination of the play. Caliban, and other magic inhabitants such as Ariel, stand in sheer contrast to the European newcomers. The wizard called Prospero arrives from Milan with his daughter to the mysterious isle and it is there that Prospero establishes his hegemony over other beings of the enchanted island. Through his dominance, his alleged magical prowess, Prospero is able to control other island-dwellers, enslave them and 'otherise' them to such a degree that they are henceforth treated even worse than the strangers in *Sir Thomas More* or Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*.

In order to better understand both the colonised and the coloniser, it should be taken into consideration that the post-colonial (re-)reading of *The Tempest* was inspired by the process of de-colonisation. Singh (2016) connects *The Tempest* to the post-colonial interpretation by explaining the following: "Post-colonial readings of *The Tempest* were inspired by the decolonisation movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America." Initially, Prospero's craft symbolised the world of civility, as well as learning, rendered in contrast to the 'natural' dark spells of Caliban's mother, whereas the post-colonial re-reading of Shakespeare's play challenges this rather Eurocentric approach: "If, traditionally, Prospero's art represented the world of civility and learning in contrast to the 'natural' black magic of Caliban's mother Sycorax, anti-colonial revisions of the play challenged this rather abstract Eurocentric division between art and nature" (Singh, 2016). In the book *Eurocentrism*, the Eurocentric perception of the Western colonisers is explained, and in this sense the Westerners view themselves as efficient, rational, democratic, whereas the colonised peoples on the other hand are perceived as underdeveloped and as individuals who have nothing to offer, yet they have to imitate the West in order to progress, albeit slowly and imperfectly (Amin, 2009, p. 180). The post-colonial reading of the play challenges this Eurocentric approach by focusing on post-colonial elements. For example, Goicoechea de Jorge (2016) mentions the post-colonial representation of Prospero as the European coloniser enslaving the indigenous people of a newly-discovered place, but also as a European person who imposes his tradition and language over the natives' own culture. Caliban tries to resist by rejecting to learn Prospero's tongue. Therefore, it becomes obvious that this romance play grants a better insight into the world of the

'civilised' European society, and the naturalised albeit 'savage' realm of Caliban and the rest. The Bard gives the voice to 'the Other' in this dramatic work and moreover Caliban clearly reminds his colonisers that the isle once belonged to him, and Caliban says: "This island's mine by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me" (1.2.331). Caliban had inherited his home from Sycorax, yet the colonisers, in this case Prospero and his daughter who had previously escaped from Europe, made the island their home and furthermore they enslaved the creatures encountered there.

There exists a clear dichotomy between the two opposing sides of the island. Shylock stood against the Christian characters of Venice, and he was 'otherised' because of his Jewish origins, religion, outward appearance, money-lending and other activities. Similarly enough, Caliban is vividly dissimilar from the Wizard or Miranda primarily because Caliban is a non-human being. He is a mysterious creature. As such, the island-dwellers possess a particular form of personality, just like Prospero or Miranda, nonetheless they still differ from one another. Prospero and Miranda are both human characters, with their own sets of unique traits, however on the other hand, the spirit Ariel and Caliban are portrayed as monstrous perhaps on the outside, but they also develop their own personalities. Harold Bloom (1998), as one of the greatest Shakespearean scholars, further perpetuated this idea by stating that: "Caliban and Ariel are personalities, but then Caliban is only half-human, and Ariel is a sprite" (582). Both Caliban and Ariel are 'otherised' and by being only semi-human unlike Prospero or Miranda, both island-dwellers can be perceived as 'the Other' in the play. The Manichaeic world can again be observed in this regard, and Fanon's own teachings can be applied adequately. The enchanted isle is a divided setting, it is an isolated world conquered and colonised by the Europeans. The island is colonised and inherently Manichaeic. Fanon (1963) openly proclaims that: "The colonial world is a Manichean world" (41). It is a world divided into segments, and it is a world where Caliban is constantly undermined.

The character of 'the Other,' in this case Caliban, appears to be a pun in its own right. In other words, the name 'Caliban' actually stands for the term 'cannibal': "The name Caliban/Cannibal appears in Shakespeare's play and in colonial history as a cultural stereotype for the natives of the New World" (Singh, 2016). For this reason, Caliban can be observed as one of the natives of the New World, and therefore his own background, his own culture and even language, all play a significant role in post-colonial theory. Prospero uses various methods in order to keep his slave at bay; moreover, the Wizard uses colonial methodology to harm, control, beat and subjugate the 'savage.' Prospero even attempts to assert his dominance via linguistic capacities.

It is clearly stated in the play that the colonisers, Miranda particularly, tried to teach Caliban their own, European, language. Colonisation, as such, brought with it subjugation not just on the physical level but also in regards to the cognitive sphere of the natives. Singh (2016) elaborates on this notion of Prospero's dominance by stating that: "His mission assumed that the natives lacked any culture or formal language until the Europeans brought them the

'gifts' of Western language and culture. If the natives resisted European paternal rule, then they were labelled as 'savages,' beyond redemption." Miranda even insults Caliban by addressing him as 'the abhorred slave,' reminding him that it was her who tried to teach Caliban their language: "Abhorred slave, / Which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour / One thing or other" (1.2.351). It is apparent that Miranda takes up a superior position and she is more than willing to undermine Caliban by any means necessary. However, Caliban does not even remain silent on this remark. Rather he, too, reminds Miranda that he loathes their language and that now he is only able to curse in their European mother-tongue: "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse" (1.2.363). The assertion of language backfires, due to the fact the 'the Other' is now able to retort in the language of his new masters. Their imposition of power and superiority is gradually subverted. Miranda and Prospero attempt to de-humanise the native as much as it is possible, nonetheless even in his own speech, Caliban appears more sophisticated than one would perhaps expect.

Primarily, it should be noted that Caliban is more of a poetic creature. He is able to utilise verse in order to transmit the message of his speech. Bloom (2008) explains that: "He never falls into the prosaic and low familiarity of his drunken associates, for he is, in his way, a poetical being; he always speaks in verse" (73). However, Miranda is not even swayed by this reply. She constantly attempts to degrade Caliban, going as far as reminding him that he was completely unaware of his own purpose. In other words, Miranda reminds Caliban that only through her education Caliban was able to realise his own existence, his own meaning: "When thou didst not, savage, / Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble" (1.2.355). It would appear that Caliban was unable to comprehend his own existence until the moment his new master came and took over. Caliban's quintessence and merit is constantly annihilated by such claims, and more often than not he is reduced to a particularly inferior level. Bloom (2008) states that such a proclamation made by Miranda would imply that in her own perspective: "Unlike a civilized person, the savage Caliban did not know what his true meaning was as a human" (16). The colonisers use violence in order to subjugate 'the Other,' but this violence is both open as well as subtle. Fanon (1963) adds that: "Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men at arm's length; it seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours" (15). Only when the entire heritage of creatures originally living on the island is destroyed, only then will the complete control be established. The implicit, as well as the explicit, forms of violence presented are there to serve one purpose - to make characters such as Caliban or Ariel utterly subservient. Thus, Prospero is able to establish his governance of the isle, and the Wizard becomes the sole sovereign of the enchanted landscape.

Caliban is 'otherised' in his own house, so to say, on his own island. He was the primary settler of the island, much earlier than Prospero or Miranda,

however even this right was taken from him. For Caliban, Prospero is the first intruder who betrayed his host's welcome and conquered with power and might. Caliban recalls Prospero's arrival: "When thou cam'st first, / Thou strok'st me and madest much of me, wouldst give me / Water with berries in't, and teach me how / To name the bigger light, and how the less, / That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee / And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle" (1.2.332-337). In Caliban's own rendition of history, it is described that it was Prospero who arrived to the island but later decided to take full control over its beauties. Now, it is the Wizard who holds the utmost power. Singh (2016) focuses on this element of representing history, as such, by adding that: "It is this rendition of history that became the battle cry for the anti-colonial movements in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America - a rendition that became the staple of many revisions and appropriations of Shakespeare's play in these regions." *The Tempest* is considered to be a multi-layered play which contributes greatly to the post-colonial theory, because it should be noted that: "While the play was written in 17th-century England, post-colonial criticism takes the play outwards towards its complicated transactions between European and African and Caribbean cultures in the succeeding centuries" (Singh, 2016). There exists a clear purpose in trying to define the history of the island by observing both sides. The post-colonial approach allows for a better insight when Caliban as the character is examined, because the readers or the spectators are able to fully understand his own experiences. They are able to better understand the perspective of 'the Other.' Post-colonialism in this case focuses on history from Caliban's angle. Thus, the version of 'the savage Other' challenges the version presented by Prospero to Miranda. Singh (2016) explains this by stating: "In trying to view the conditions of Caliban's servitude from *his* perspective, post-colonial criticism gives legitimacy to his claims to the island, based on a reading of history that challenges the version narrated by Prospero to his daughter."

William Shakespeare allowed for the amplification of the seemingly marginalised voices of 'the Other' in his dramatic opus. Predominantly, the Bard presented the shifting perspective of the island from both sides, emphasising the idea that even various things or elements should be constantly considered and reconsidered from numerous perspectives, because it should be noted that: "Post-colonial criticism in the West has mined this new archive of the reception history of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, questioning, once again, all normative ideas of a 'common humanity,' while articulating, as Shakespeare did, the voices of the seemingly marginal characters in Prospero's grand designs" (Singh, 2016). Caliban the Native in the play is 'Caliban the Other,' Caliban's home was taken from him, Prospero established his dominance and through the Wizard's ruthless demeanour managed to forcefully command every creature encountered. Caliban's cry stands for all those who were oppressed and stigmatised by the overwhelming power of the coloniser. Perhaps Prospero and Miranda thought that by teaching their language to Caliban they were bringing civilisation and enlightenment to the savage, however the de-humanisation, the mechanism of slavery applied, simply continue to assert Caliban's position as 'the Other.'

## CONCLUSION

The most important element which is easily recognisable in Shakespearean dramas is the Bard's universality. The dramatic plots of *Sir Thomas More*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* present a fertile ground for post-colonial analyses. In post-colonial terms particularly, representation of 'the Other' and 'otherness' is of paramount importance, due to the fact that Shakespeare's message remains crucial for every day and age, surpassing and linguistic, cultural and political boundaries. In *Sir Thomas More*, Shakespeare added a speech which clearly presents the Bard's opinions on the idea of the refugee issue, and through More, the Bard of Avon attempted to make his spectators render the deeds of mercy. Furthermore, The Bard endeavoured to show the plight of the immigrants who had to travel abroad in order to find a better life, en route they encounter various forms of stigmatisation. William Shakespeare managed to switch the roles, at least hypothetically, in order to remind the people of London that they could also experience great misfortunes should their own ruler turn on his own subjects.

In the second chapter, this paper examined the role of Shylock in Venice. Since Shylock is a Jew, he is the epitome of the marginalised Jewish community. Shakespeare cleverly presented Shylock as 'the Other' in order to remind his audience/readers that Shylock had to behave in a negative manner since he was constantly undermined by the predominantly Christian society of the Venetian state. In a sense, Shylock's stand against Antonio, Portia and the rest formulates a distinct 'clash' between the Old and the New Testament. In the final segment of this paper, the character of Caliban was analysed. Since Caliban was the original native of the magical island, he was subjugated by the European colonisers, primarily Prospero the Wizard. In post-colonial re-reading of the text, it became apparent that Prospero and Miranda applied all methods in order to bend the 'savage native' to their will. Prospero trapped, threatened and used violence against the poor creature, whereas Miranda even tried to teach him their language, therefore assimilating Caliban further. However, this paper portrayed Caliban as a poetic being, a creature which was able to distinguish things for himself. The paper also reflected on Caliban's position as 'the Other,' as someone whose home had been conquered. Ariel and Caliban might be non-human characters, however it may be presumed that they hold more humanity than Prospero and the rest.

In analysing William Shakespeare's dramas through the prism of post-colonial criticism, the readers were presented with an exciting dialogue formulated between the dramatic universe and the post-colonial portrayal of the world. The post-colonial academic field of research presents the repercussions of imperialism/colonialism as the main by-products of the European rule and exploitations. Hence, Shakespearean plays are the superb replicas of the worlds and societies branded by colonialism, and moreover the Bard's round characters transmit the suffering and experience of every inhabitant of the East subjugated by the European control. This paper determined the post-colonial 'Other' in three



Shakespearean dramas and it examined the story of colonial systems which exploited characters because they were perceived differently than the rest. It is the identification of the colonised and the oppressed individuals, however this article was also presented as the definition of the colonisers who attempt to assert their hegemony, relaying on all techniques necessary in order to exert utter dominance over 'the Other.'

#### 4. CONCLUSION

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<sup>i</sup> For more information on Thomas More, please consult the following: Pettinger, T. (2014, August 3). Biography of Thomas More. Retrieved from <https://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/thomas-more.html>.