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Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English

Stereotypes and prejudices using the Historical approach in the book *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare during the first quarter of 2023.

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Chapter I

Introductory Framework

The Merchant of Venice is a work written by William Shakespeare between 1596 and 1598; however, it was not published until 1600. William Shakespeare introduced us to new work with several factors to consider, such as the historical, cultural, and social aspects of 16th century England. Sattar (2013) states, "The play is one of Shakespeare's most famous works and has been widely discussed and studied throughout the world." It also had and continues to have controversial issues such as racial discrimination against Jews, sexual discrimination against women, and religious repression, especially of Jews.

The play was initially considered a historical play classified as a comedy. Still, directors, fans, and other writers have debated this over the years due to previously written factors. Today's the story is considered more as a problematic play or even as a tragedy or the typical tragedy. Consequently, this is why Shakespeare is more recognized for those tragic endings. Regardless, the story was and will continue to be one of the writer's most outstanding works, as much as Rome and Juliet, Hamlet, or Macbeth.

However, over the years, the work continues to be the object of analysis due to its messages and attitudes of the characters towards others in the book, being a circle of research that, instead of ending, seems to continue. Due to its controversy, since its publication, the work has been branded anti-Semitic due to its treatment and phrases. This caused it was nominally a comedy to be set aside; nevertheless, it became one of the most challenging works in recent years. Frank (2016) stated that, "No matter how liberally Shakespeare's intentions or the play's interpreted, it is impossible to ignore their disgusting anti-Semitic language." These references fall mainly on the

character named Shylock, the story's villain; as curiously, he was a Jew but still treated them as if they were nothing. Thus, we reach the point where *The Merchant of Venice* is one of the most beautiful works of Shakespeare due to famous landscapes. However, for others, it is one of the most repulsive works due to its actions.

The big question is whether Shakespeare did it on purpose or explored those ideals to create the character of Shylock, who is the most controversial and well-known character, along with Portia, who is the opposite. Like a coin on one side, we have the good on one side and evil on the other the side. Moreover, the character of Shylock is one of several reasons why it is believed that the author had racial preferences and a sense of superiority that, for his time, were normal. However, this book still has much analysis and questions to answer.

1.1 Problem Statement

As mentioned above, *The Merchant of Venice* is world-renowned, praised by its writer, and surrounded by controversy in recent years. Moreover, it has been the subject of discussion up to date. Many stereotypes and prejudices throughout history are openly known to the public, and others remain debatable but are not overlooked by researchers and historians. However, what exactly do these prejudices and stereotypes allude to? Some are easily recognized either by how the character expresses them or by the phrase's double meaning.

Nevertheless, others go beyond a person's basic understanding. It is more about history and what Shakespeare wrote down, as it was common during those years. It is necessary to have a historical repertoire of what countries like England were going through to understand what precisely some phrases alluded to. That, for us, does not make sense, but for them, it did for example, in countries like the United States it is utterly wrong that a person who is 20 or 30 years old does not have studies, to continue living in their parent's house.

They consider it strange. Nevertheless, for example, here in Costa Rica you can spend a lifetime living with your parents, and it is considered normal. This is what happens to various roots of culture or history; therefore, it is necessary to carry out a literary analysis with a historical emphasis to highlight exactly what a phrase or word alludes to and why it is considered a stereotype or prejudice.

In addition, among other things, a character that stood -out is Portia. In fact, it can be stated that she did it more than Antonio; nevertheless, similar to the popularity that Shylock has. As mentioned above, they are remembered for different reasons. She was a feminist, according to the author, but without being an extremist. In some cases, Portia is believed to have been created in allusion to Queen Elizabeth I. This given the psychological personality of the character and also, due to in those years she was the monarch, and it would not be surprising that Shakespeare felt admiration and wanted to pay tribute by creating Portia.

This could also be his way of communicating, in a tone of indirect protest, that the actions Elizabeth was taking, were not of Shakespeare's liking and also used Portia to protest using her and being honorable to her but also sending the message that not always she made the correct decision.

Therefore, the analysis with a historical emphasis is necessary to understand the text better, learn more about the history of that time, and be able to answer the question: What are the stereotypes and prejudices in work *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare during the first quarter of 2023?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To evaluate through a literary analysis the prejudice and stereotypes in the book *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare through a historical approach.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify the prejudices and stereotypes in the book.
- To illustrate how those prejudices and stereotypes influence the characters.
- To demonstrate the relationship between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I as a possible character in the play.

1.3 Justification of the Study

The primary purpose of this research is to make a literary analysis with a historical emphasis on the stereotypes and prejudices presented in *The Merchant of Venice*. Since its publication, it has been a book that has had several opinions and has had several analyses with different approaches. It is sought to specify which occurrences in the book ~~work~~ refer to those prejudices and stereotypes that continue to transcend 400 years after its publication. These prejudices and stereotypes would be racial, economic, and religious. According to Frank (2016), "Shakespeare certainly reflected the prejudices of his time.

Today, after the Holocaust, such anti-Semitic slurs are not acceptable in polite society." If the author drew on his reality of those years, they are still stereotypes that resonate today, especially since we live in a society that is not very tolerant of such issues.

Even though, it is fictional, the phrases, decisions, and thoughts of the characters in the play, still resonate. For example, one of the best-known characters is the Jew Shylock, who has been controversial for his actions and thoughts in the story, which were modified for the film or theatrical version to avoid problems with the audience. However, it is still something that resonates, even in productions. To make him more empathetic to the new generations, it has been decided, in some cases, to change Shylock's ethnicity to Afro-descendant. Still he is the antagonist of the story and will continue to be because of the several aspect he was created as a representation on how discrimination can transform people wanting revenge at all cost.

On the other hand, the people who benefit from this study can be university students who need to carry out similar research for a thesis or a research paper, as it can help them to compare various analyses of this history and to open their branch of knowledge. In addition to college students, this investigation is addressed to anyone else who wants to know more about the book or is interested in reading it, understanding it better, and doing their analysis. Moreover, a research like this can also allow them to be able to be more explicit about what some parts of the book refer to.

The way to learn about these stereotypes and prejudices is through a literary analysis in conjunction with the various symbols presented in the book. The idea is to take direct fragments from the book and put them in comparative tables where in a column will go the excerpt chip or dialogue from the book, in another column which is the stereotype, symbol, or prejudice it refers to, and in the third column, the reason why and to what historical allusion it makes reference to.

1.4 Antecedents

The Merchant of Venice has been one of Shakespeare's most controversial plays over the years. No matter how often it is said, the play is a little more remembered for that than the actual plot or writing. Some believe that this play should be canceled for its retrograde ideas; however, for others, it remains an object of study and intrigue. Nevertheless, ~~but~~ one thing that is not debatable is the mind of its author, Shakespeare, who, despite the time, remains one of the best writers of the 16th century. This work has transcended the pages, taken to plays and even to the cinema, which from time to time, returns to bring another version. Curiously, as new theatrical and film performances come out, an adaptation is sought for the new generations, trying to leave the wrong messages that the work conveys.

As already mentioned, The Merchant of Venice is one of Shakespeare's plays that has been performed more times in live action. We have American, Russian, and Japanese versions, among others. Regardless, the play continues to impact today. The author used the characters to reflect his opinions and beliefs on various topics. "The Merchant of Venice is quite unusual among Shakespeare's comedies for its particular focus on money and property" (Ward, 2016). The story has several aspects, but one of the main ones is the role of money and the essential status to be someone in society. Each character sought for something beyond what they already had. Moreover, controversial themes such as religious and racist indoctrination, make the play unforgettable.

In this case, the aim is to understand better the prejudices and stereotypes in *The Merchant of Venice*, the author's reasons for using them, and why he intended to use them in his work. Therefore, it is necessary to know the background of international and national investigations to address a greater understanding of the prejudice and stereotypes in The Merchant of Venice.

Qasim Ali Kharal and Zafar Zone did the first research used as a basis for Sargodha University in Pakistan. The topic addressed was "Racial discrimination and religious otherness; a comparative study of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*." The main objective of the research was to investigate and explore racial discrimination and religious otherness in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. They claimed that Shakespeare encouraged racism throughout his work, including pride and social preference. They indicated that Shakespeare's world was centered on white people with Christianity as a religion.

This work is relevant to the research as it indicates how Shakespeare saw racism as something habitual and seeing whites as the superior race and specifies the moments in which these thoughts of superiority are present in the play. Another exciting thing about this research is that although, the stereotypes and prejudices were apparent, so Shakespeare did not add them much importance. Instead, it was so typical that Shakespeare said those phrases unconsciously that he would never think that his work would generate so much controversy.

The subsequent research was conducted for Stony Brook University in New York by Weijian Wang, in 2015. The research topic was "Portia as an embodiment of Queen Elizabeth I." Its main goal was to examine social and economic factors to illustrate Shakespeare's true intention in his play, as well as to defend the theory that Portia is a character that the author invented to flatter the queen, but also to show which policies of the queen, he felt dissatisfied with without directly offending her majesty. This research would not be the first to show the theory that Shakespeare relied on a real woman to create Portia. The difference is that in this investigation, Wang went directly to the inference that it was Queen Elizabeth I.

Therefore, the work helps the research by defending that there is a relationship between the queen and Portia. In addition, the story highlights how Portia was not overshadowed by any man and got what she wanted, but also had her forms of humiliation to some extent with her suitors. Interestingly, this research helps to see that Portia, as a feminist symbol, was another way Shakespeare indirectly conveyed his thoughts about the real society to his readers, and how women were limited and undervalued.

The following work was carried out by Abdulla Al-Dabbagh, in 1996, for the University of Jordan called "The inversion of stereotypes in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*." It investigated how Shakespeare, throughout the play, played with prejudices and stereotypes of the characters and how he influenced them to take hasty actions and also divided the stereotypes into religious and economic ones. It concluded that all the characters in the play were victims, and although, some did not harm them as much, others did, as in the case of Antonio.

Moreover, this research had as scope to investigate the stereotypes and included information for a deeper analysis of the topic. Al-Dabbagh observed how all the characters in the play thought of some stereotype and how they related it to normality or, more than anything, how their lives should be because of it—comparing your life with that of another person who is better off because they had social and economic pressure.

The following is an article published in 1978 by Monica J. Hamill titled "Poetry, Law, and the Quest for Perfection: The Role of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*." Among the things the article describes, its primary goal was to point out where Portia's character excelled in different areas, from conflicts of law to moments of romance. Throughout the story, Portia attempted to bring the characters to their true perfection as she, too, sought for her perfection and developed as

a poet and lawgiver. In moments of love, Portia was calculating, and her heart was jealous and demanding before some prospects arrived at her door.

This article helps the investigation since Portia is the character that will be analyzed throughout the play due to her outstanding characteristics and the fact that Shakespeare created an independent and intelligent person. For this reason, the similarities with Queen Elizabeth I are sought, as she stood out in years when women were still fighting for equality. This article independently delved into Portia's actions. It showed that she had a specific way of dealing with different situations and political, social, or romantic backgrounds along with other characters in the story, while also being a bit of help to the development of others. She stood out for her personality, her thinking, and the concept of reaching total perfection.

Mariel Jiménez Delgado conducted the latest national research for the International University of the Americas, in 2014. The topic addressed was "Analysis of Portia as a feminist character in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*." Its main objective was to analyze Portia's character as a feminist character in the story written by William Shakespeare. The researcher focused on the feminist characteristics that the character showed during the play and considered a qualitative research method using theories such as the types of feminism of Helene Cixous, a pioneer of feminist studies.

She concluded that Shakespeare was one of the first writers to create a feminist character making her appeared strong and decisive in her decisions and being one of the pioneers for other writers who also began to introduce solid and independent female characters. As mentioned before, Portia, in addition to being the feminine touch in the story, she is the feminist representation and how Shakespeare navigated it. This research helps to support the study because it is a direct analysis of Portia with a different approach to the character, which is challenging to manipulate

and makes reference to the fact that Shakespeare could have used a real woman to create a character as outstanding and with qualities as marked, as Portia.

1.5 Scope

1. The main achievement of this study is to show the readers the prejudices and stereotypes in *The Merchant of Venice*.
2. To allow the readers to see how all these aspects influence the characters and their development in the story.
3. To demonstrate how Shakespeare created Portia as a reflection of Queen Elizabeth.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Literature

Literature is present almost all our lives. For example, when we are in school, we are required to read some books, and adults, we read as per work or as we like to enjoy a particular book. No specific date indicates when literature was born, but it can be said that it is very personal. In the end, you are reading something from someone else's imagination, who had his reasons and ways of seeing things to invest a world in the form of a book. Another critical point is that literature itself is sometimes different. There are many genres, so literature always continues and will continue to be present in people. According to Robson (2020), "Literature has always been a matter of detour, spacing, uncertain hesitation, bold confession of a desire that marks a gap" (p.6). Often, the analysis of a book is part of its reading, especially those books with a psychological approach, where doubts are short in coming, and most of the time, there is only one way to answer them: reading.

If we look for an exact definition, it also varies, as it depends on the person and their perception. However, we seek for a meaning closer to what literature is in general. According to Berthoud (2020), "Literature is imagination in the form of words on paper or memorized and recited. It crosses physical and mental boundaries, allowing us to travel beyond our limitations" (p.6). Literature is almost like a time machine; we can find many of the world's past epochs, feeding us with history and facts that happened in real life. When we read, we learn many things, like new words and their meaning, the culture of another place, about ourselves, understanding other people, and generate more empathy. Beyond that, it is one of the best ways to enrich our minds and souls.

According to Berthoud (2020), "Literature is today at an exciting point in history, accessible almost instantly to everyone, everywhere and, in the case of some books, available in almost every language in the country" (p.8). Therefore, we have a basis for the importance of literature in our society.

Literature teaches many things and opens the opportunity to understand a time better, it helps to remember the old days and those great authors who were outstanding in their time and continue to do so even though they are not alive. It is a form of expression, a message for people or a story well told with characters remembered with nostalgia. Any genre of literature leaves a mark on whoever reads it and enjoys it, therefore they are one of those things that can change a person's life.

Literature is one of those subjects that is learned at some point in basic education, either in college, university and depending on the country, from school. Outside of that it may also have been learned by self-interest which is more outstanding interest in reading and is favored. Apart from that, there are many types of literature, such as basic literature, American, English or Caribbean. Whatever it is, it ends up being a source of knowledge and even inspiration among authors.

Among the fathers of literature, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Dickinson, Voltaire and many more than a pillar of this important subject stand out, they were and continue to inspire many readers and authors. Therefore, literature may not have the same intensity as before or simply appreciated more before the virtual era, but regardless that does not remind that it is not indispensable. For something all those works that have more than a century some are still important in the reality of many people who like or study literature. So out of entertaining and

teaching people. They are a memory of the past and how things were compared to the current literature.

2.1.1 Literary Theory

It is already clear what literature is and also the benefits it brings. Hence, now we have to establish the definition of the theory, which goes hand in hand with the previous concept. Among the definitions found, Andrew and Nicholas (2016) highlighted that "Theory is an unavoidable element in the study of literature and criticism and, indeed, in thinking about life and the world around us" (p.9). Therefore, one way to contribute is to have a book, analyze it, and develop some theory about a character or plot. Having these two concepts clear, which by themselves have their importance and meaning, they also become one of the most important aspects of literature, Literary Theory. IntroBooks (2016) stated that, "Literary theory is a set of ideas and methods that help a reader or researcher understand the literature better. These ideas guide researchers during the practical process of interpretation" (p.5). It has, among its functions, to enable readers and critics to give a better understanding of the literature through close reading and contextual knowledge. A specific type of methodology to analyze your books in depth.

Therefore, depending on the book that one chooses, it has to be chosen the literary theory the critic wants to use. More than anything is to be able to make the analysis and to understand, based on that theory, the plot and the characters through the filter that is made with the idea and the chosen approach, depending on the system that will be the basis for the complete analysis.

The literary method helps establish a starting point. Researching any book is a tedious job because books usually deal with different subjects, places and characters, so a topic doesn't cover the whole story. Here is where the method comes in to go slowly choosing the right option

and see what you want to study. Find your basis understand if it is a subject which has enough repertoire to go forming a complete investigation.

2.1.2 Historical Approach

Before going into the approach in which this research will be based, it is essential to clarify the term. The literary process or theory is a set of ideas and methods used during reading. It is more than just skimming through the task to see what it refers to. According to Brewton, "Literary theory is a description of the underlying principles, one might say the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature." In several cases, the literary approach defines the relationship between the author and the work.

Viewed generally, it is understood that it is a significant concept, so there are many approaches that a person can choose and apply to a reading. We have the formalistic approach, psychological approach, Reader-response approach, Inter-textual approach, and many others. In the case of the Merchant of Venice, different approaches were adapted to the reading. One of the clearest was the feminist approach based on the character of Portia. This would be chosen, and the highlights of the work would be very different from using another, such as the formalistic approach.

In the case of this research, the main objective is to find the prejudices and stereotypes found in the book. Therefore, it was decided to go for the historical approach. This is one of the four most common approaches used in literature. Such approach is to understand a specific moment of the work and relate it to a historical moment. According to Wijaya (n.d), "This approach sees a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and times of the characters in work." This is why a historical approach was chosen.

Prejudices and stereotypes constantly change or evolve, just as our society changes is-little by little. For example, a stereotype that is still implemented in some homes, is that "women stay at home taking care of the children, while men go out to work to support their families." Now, since female empowerment started, it is usual to see families where both, men and women, work and even a some men who cooks and takes care of the children. Again, this is due to the social and even, historical evolution that has changed people's perceptions.

Therefore, the same applies to history. The Merchant of Venice takes place in the year 1596, which illustrates the mercantilist era, the situation of the Jews in England, and many other historical aspects. We are talking about a work that is more than 300 years old. Consequently, it is understood that stereotypes and prejudices cannot be the same as they are today. Hence, that was the main reason why the historical approach was chosen. Some phrases may not make sense to you, but you must consider the historical background to understand why something was stereotyped or prejudiced at that time. Just as there will be others that still hold on to, and one can easily find them.

As a consequence, it is necessary to understand the historical background to know how something continued to happen after so many years have passed. It is intriguing to be able to know the social pressure people were under and what they did not like to hear, to be able to have a broader knowledge of history to understand what was "normal" for them and why it was taken as prejudice or stereotype and compare it with our society and see if there has been a significant change in all these years.

Also, to show that these situations not only occurred at that time, but in 2023 society is still threatened by various prejudices and stereotypes of which still do not know exactly where it comes from, if they are part of the upbringing or the way in which human beings relate, therefore

understand what historical situations were behind the story is a way to expand the why they were occurring.

Period dramas, in this case also comedy, have a great weight because of the historical events behind them, because if it is related to an event that many people know about, it helps to attract the attention of the public. Like the time of racial discrimination in the United States, several plays as well as movies attracted audiences because many had a curiosity of how things were in those times. The characters may be fictitious but the history behind it is not, because it resembles what was the reality of many people in those years. Being able to give a historical analysis to the work helps to better understand and see why the author based his work on it.

Apart from what has already been endorsed, like all approaches, this will not always be the best fit in a story. If we choose a work by for example Jane Eyre that is usually more like suspense and delves much more into some topics. It would be better to use a psychological approach. Because it is the one that best adapts to this story.

If we talk about the work Little Women if we will have a chance with history, but the feminism that is given in a courteous way stands out more. Therefore, it is to go playing and see which one is better since everything depends on the story and what issues are involved. Among its advantages history always has enough information to support itself, but if it is about a work or a great revolution, since as researchers that is sought, have so much information that you even have to omit details by the amount they are, or know how to choose correctly which aspects help or not. That is why this approach is essential give the investigator the opportunity to learn a lot more of history, read and understand not only the story but everything that was behind and even why the author decide to make and story bases on that story. Because a personal experience oother things people can investigate thanks to the history.

2.2 Themes, Symbols, and Motifs

2.2.1 Themes

At this point, we already know the meaning of what literature and theory. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that they have similar purposes because of their relationship, and together they form one of the most important qualities when analyzing a reading. Now, let us move on to another important concept that lays the foundation for good analysis: the theme. Generally, it is a theme or idea in reading, art, research, or music developed throughout that work. The theme is emphasized in different areas. If we talk about themes in qualitative research, Thomas (2019) indicated that, "Themes should be thought of as the main question that emerges from a systematic process of data analysis" (p.10). Although, not related to literature, it gives us an example that, regardless of the field in which it is used, the theme will always be the main idea in which a song, play, or research is based on. Conforms a big part of the plot in the story and can be things, personas, feelings or animals that represents something to one or many characters, because it is just for the, it will be a symbol for an specific character, not all in the story. If that happen then it will not be a symbol anymore. It would be a theme or transform in nothing more than an object, person or animal because it has to be specific.

In literature, this definition does not very much. It is quickly answered when you hear the question, "What is the book about?" Then, you start to explain what is going on and the genre. According to Glatch (2021), "The theme of a story refers to the deeper meaning of the story. All literary works grapple with certain complex ideas, and the theme is how a story or poem addresses these ideas." Therefore, there can be found several throughout the story. In other words, a book

can have more than one theme, so much of it is the reader's choice, as to which piece, they want to focus on.

If we put it in simple terms, if we consider *The Merchant of Venice*, just by reading the background of the book, we can deduce that among its main themes, there are: revenge, prejudice, law, and love, among others. Those are the ones that are seen on the surface. Of course, as you read the book, you will find more. Regardless, there will always be more than one theme, but there is always one that stands out more than others. The themes support the literary theory because they go hand in hand. For example, suppose you use the historical approach with the theme of prejudices and stereotypes. In that case, you know that historically there are many characteristics, but it helps us to look for those two aspects, which is what they focus on—giving bases to investigate each point. Without it then there is no sense of the story and even short stories have them, that is why they are important and each person decides which are more important than others, because like it was mentioned before, a story can have several themes.

2.2.2 Symbols

Following the theme, it comes another essential aspect of the analysis. Symbolism comes precisely from the term symbolism, which was an art movement in Belgium and France during the 19th century, to bring out the ideas that art and poetry could go out of what was known as "normal." Symbolism is something that you need to see through. It is not something that you will find quickly. For example, when you see an abstract picture, at first, you may only see a patchwork of colors, but beyond that, the painter left his soul and feelings that only by looking beyond this, ~~can~~ his message can be understood. According to the philosopher Ananda K (quoted in Cirlot, 2020), "Symbolism is the art of thinking in images" (p. 38). It is becoming one of the best-known

revolutionary facts in the artistic world. In other words, to have more than an idea of the origin and, why it is called a symbol, of something that represents the works of an author or painter when doing it. In the literary field, it can be said that all stories have symbols. Sometimes they are used, but they are difficult to find. In this field, a logo represents an idea, image, or action that may have a literal meaning, but it means something completely different. Diel considers (as quoted in Cirlot, 2020) that "The symbol is a precise and crystallized means of expression" (p. 38). Authors use it to be more precise when discussing feelings or one character's perception of another.

Moreover, symbols are divided into general ones that are universal, so everyone knows them; for example, roses are flowers, but they are a symbol of love that you give to people with strong feelings. The other type is the specific, which have a meaning based on the novel or poem to understand them. These symbols only exist if the author chooses to make them so. For example, a pair of eyes on a billboard in *The Great Gatsby* has no universal meaning, it is just an advertisement to us, but within the story, it symbolizes the eyes of God watching humanity.

One of the most important things when dealing with symbols is that you have to think and read deeply, since some can be found at first sight, but others, you have to analyze them and understand that it refers to a specific thing. Symbols help the reader to better understand the actual messages that the author wanted to show, so he/she used abstract phrases to enhance that. As well as themes, symbols reinforce the analysis and help to see what comparisons the author used to emphasize the character's actions because it can be a thing, a person, or something else that can have an abstract meaning. Symbols are the representation of feeling or desires characters may have during the story that is why they are important. Continue to be important and without them something we can not get all the story and the reasons for a character to act in some way during the story.

Giving us the message that maybe for a character something as simple as an apple or a book has nothing to do, even for the reader it is sometimes difficult to understand that something so simple has a great relevance in a story but it is thanks to it that a character or story comes to the surface and even becomes iconic.

Another great example is the book *Under the Same Star* where cancer, being a disease, is a symbol of union for the couple in the story. For the readers it is something sad but for the characters it is already a part of their daily lives and they make it their symbol to move forward and continue with their lives even though it may not be as long as others. The symbols are always there but each one decides if he wants to see them or understand them because they are an important part of the characters and therefore the story.

A story can cover many topics but it will always have as the main one and the others revolve around it. So when researching a book, there is a lot of freedom of choice about which topic to base one. Without a theme there is no story as it is the reason for its existence, the reason that moves the characters and much in itself where the story is carried out. So it is part of the job to understand why that is a symbol, why is so important for the characters and if the author eliminate it would it affect the story of the characters. Is important to know how many weight can have a symbol in a story and not all of them are useful or are good things. Remember that in a story there are not only heroes, we have villains and they have their own symbols. Like The Evil Queen with her apple or Voldemort with his snake Nagini. Those are symbols and no exactly good ones. So is important to recall that symbols are something important to a character that may defined who are them in the story.

2.2.3 Motifs

Finally, we have the last, but important term contributing to the analysis. Motifs, unlike symbols, go hand in hand with the theme. According to Garry (2017), "Simply defined, a motif is a small narrative unit recurrent in folk literature" (p.10). Therefore, it is defined as an image, pattern, or sound that is repeated throughout the story with the intention of better understanding a character. Sometimes, they are confused themes because they give-us an understanding of what the book is about and which aspects stand out to decide why that theme was chosen. According to Abbott (2021), "Themes and motifs are the two terms used frequently for the repetitions in narrative" (p.101). Motifs go hand in hand and, most of all, support the theme.

To be more explicit, we may be reading a book where, at the beginning, we may need clarification on the theme. It is necessary to remember that there may be more than one theme per reading, but the ones that are more hidden need more analysis. This is where the motifs come in and help the reader to find the theme of the story; they are like clues that help the revelation. Moreover, another critical point is that motifs remind us of the story's main idea; as every time you read it, you remember that crucial aspect. For example, in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry wanted to defeat Voldemort, and throughout the book, he showed the Horcruxes he had to destroy him. Near the end of the book, it was revealed to us that Harry was a Horcrux, this is when a theme becomes a motif because it reminds us that the Horcruxes have to be destroyed. Therefore, Harry had to die. This is where we see that a single word can connect ideas and even predict a character's future.

It is necessary to clarify that although motifs resemble the theme, because it is something that represents, the difference is that it affects a character ~~it~~ specifically. It also compares the symbol but remembers that it is an image, idea, or word. Still, the possibility of finding it

repeatedly in the story is few, unlike the recurring motif throughout the story. Haboucha (2021) stated that, "Recurring motifs are abduction, enchantment, magic objects, power, and other supernatural motifs" (p.500).

In a fantasy level, there are many, and they are usually linked to character, so that as the story unfolds, they are discovered. In terms of classic literature, several motifs are already known today. For example, prominent motifs in *The Great Gatsby* are wealth and excess, apparent from the lavish parties to Daisy's grand mansion. This makes us understand that some characters were corrupted by wealth. Another example can be found in an outstanding play by William Shakespeare, *Romeo, and Juliet*, where the motifs are light and darkness, alluding to two things that cannot coexist: the fate of the two characters. As well as these, many other motifs stand out when analyzing and reading the stories. In the case of *The Merchant of Venice*, similar motifs may be found throughout the story, as they give us more details about the characters and how this characteristic affects their future and decisions. The motifs of the three concepts seen are the ones that stand out the most in a play. Some people need help finding the theme hidden in the plot with motifs.

The motif is as important as the symbols, the difference is that a motif is more persistent throughout history, but if it is a saga of books where a motif can start small and already grow, until being part of the climax of history. So if we put it on balance, the motif has a little more weight in a story than a symbol.

It can even work on its own and take the reader by surprise, the motif is also a bit more general and can affect several in the story. So their weight is higher. In other occasions the motif is easily found even that during the story can be until the end where it is quite relevant.

Another thing is that they can also go unnoticed and motifs are not always lethal things like an enemy or a weapon, they can be simple things like chests, keys or even a person who is not a main character throughout history. This is the main reason why motifs play a big role in a story and just like symbols there may be several throughout history.

2.3 William Shakespeare's Biography

William Shakespeare is a name everyone has heard at least once. His name and plays have transcended the years and will continue. According to Ruitter (n.d), "Shakespeare held a special place because his works were already part of the larger cultural discourse" (p.3). He is one of the pioneers of English literature, and in fact he has influenced modern writers, and his works continue to resonate today. He was born in England on April 23, 1564, in a village called Warwickshire. He was an actor, playwright, dramaturge, author, poet, and lyricist. He is also known as the Bard of Avon. According to Bramley (2016), "Shakespeare lived in an exciting time. He witnessed the English Renaissance and the union of the English and Scottish crowns. He helped revolutionize our language with timeless classics such as Romeo and Juliet." (p.6). William lived with his parents, John Shakespeare, a merchant, and Mary Arden. He had seven siblings. His studies began at school, where he learned grammar. He studied for several years and never went to college.

At 18, he married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than him. It is rumored that they were in a hurry to marry mainly because Anne was pregnant with their first child. They had three children, the eldest named Susanna and twins, Hamnet and Judith. Unfortunately, Hamnet died at age 11. In addition, according to William's will, he did not have a happy marriage with Anne. Ten years later, Shakespeare was already in London and was an established playwright and theatrical actor. According to research, the first play he wrote was Henry VI, when he was about

25 years old. Between 1590 and 1613, he wrote more than 32 plays and collaborated in creating others. His plays became so important that he performed them at the court of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.

Shakespeare excelled in the genre of tragedy, which is a theatrical form where the protagonist goes through several things and only sometimes has the formula of the happy ending as in other genres and stories. According to Aristotle (as quoted in Ato Quayson, 2021), "Tragedy is a plot entailing devices of reversal and recognition and triggering pity and fear" (p.52). Shakespeare, while not a person who suffered so much, did have moments in which he was inspired to create several obvious tragedies and some combined with comedy. Among the works of this genre, are Rome and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth Hamlet (rumored to be inspired by the death of his son), Antonio and Cleopatra, and other works.

Outside the genre of tragedy, another genre Shakespeare influenced was comedy. A genre used to enhance the effect of tragic events. According to Bonello, Francis & Mackenzie (2018), "Comedy is characterized neither by optimism nor by the happy ending that tragedy denies us" (p.72). Therefore, in some works, comedy reinforces itself in the comedy genre. At this point, it appears another genre derived from the two already explained, which is one reason William excelled in his works: that is, tragicomedy.

According to Foster (2017), "The nature of tragicomedy is difficult to define because the dramatic genre can comprise so many different modes " (p.6). However, as the name entails, the forms usually used are comedy and tragedy elements. It offers the audience plays with a different message, as they contain enough comic elements to lighten the mood, which change as the character faces the tragic events in the story. Among the works that stand out in this genre are The Merchant of Venice, The Tempest, and Hamlet.

Now, moving on to the most crucial point of this part, Shakespeare had many inspirations. Each of his famous plays has its source of inspiration. According to research by critics and literary scholars, *Romeo and Juliet* was based on Arthur Brooke's poem entitled *The Tragic History of Romeo and Juliet*, published in 1592. It remains the most romantic work William has ever done. One thing that stands out is the rich vocabulary that it possesses unlike Brooke's. Moreover, *Macbeth* was inspired by the life of the monarch Macbeth of Scotland, where he used certain elements to give the play fantastic features such as the prophecies.

Among the theories, it can be found a list of events, people, or things that inspired Shakespeare, and one of them was that he saw the stars and some ideas. According to Costello (2016), "There are dozens of references to the astrological language in Shakespeare's works. However, modern audiences may be surprised at the frequency of such allusions since astrology has been marginalized in our day" (p.11). Thus, to date, not all of Shakespeare's sources have been found, and while he alluded to many things, his full inspiration beyond the things he saw, remains a mystery.

In 1611, William returned to his hometown to spend his last years. He died curiously on his birthday, April 23, 1616. Among the questions, it is said that Shakespeare was killed due to the consequences of alcohol, which he liked to ingest. It is said that he died from a high fever due to being drunk. Nevertheless, others claim that he had cancer. Regardless of that, he spent his entire life married to Anne. According to Bramley (2016), "Shakespeare may have died 400 years ago, but his genius burns as bright as ever" (p.6). He remains an icon of English literature, an inspiration for modern writers, and the creator of stories that continue to resonate in the general culture.

Shakespeare may not be the father of literature but he is one of the most remembered and celebrated writers of the last years. His sexuality was not a feature of great importance but some

suppose that his works made reference to men, which also makes him a symbol for the pride community. Another aspect is that he tried to give a diverse representation in his works which sought to give memorable characters.

Among its interesting aspects is that its female characters stood out for in those years and today they are still known as independent characters and it is interesting to see how an author in those years wanted their female characters to excel in their own way. Another aspect is also that he used memorable villains implementing fantasy and reality factors, historical drama and obviously drama and comedy, as well as romance that has very iconic couples over the years.

2.4 The Merchant of Venice's Plot

It is a play written by William Shakespeare between 1596 and 1598; however, it was not published until 1600. It belongs to the tragicomedy genre, but it also entered into romantic comedies during its publication. Nevertheless, as the years have passed and analyzes have been made, it is believed that the work is more tragedy than comedy. The story begins on the street in Venice, where we are introduced to the first character, Antonio.

He was a merchant who complained of a sadness that he could not explain; at first, one deduces that it is for some economic reason. Later, it was revealed that Antonio was thinking about his friend Bassanio, who was coming from a trip financed by the heiress, Portia. He described Portia as a beautiful, intelligent woman with great fortune. Bassanio expressed that if he had the appearance of someone wealthy, he would postpone competing for Portia's attention. For Bassanio Portia was his greatest love and was willing to conquer him asking for help Antonio thinking of returning the silver as soon as he could, thinking it would not be of great importance since it

was only a certain amount of money to get to Portia and after he was rich, pass him the silver Antonio and he would continue with his business.

Then, the play presented us with the face of another coin. Portia had many suitors from whom she needed to choose her future husband. His father, before he died, decided an unusual way of choosing the right one. Using three chests; one gold, one silver, and one lead, whoever chose the correct one would get Portia. Regardless, Portia always complained about everyone who asked for her hand, since according to her, there was something wrong with them.

Literal were almost three pages of Portia rejecting one by one the possible suitors because although she had no vote of whom she married if she was able to deduce that they were not for her because she examined them quietly from the time they entered until they failed the test. So being impressed rarely happened, as she had this idea of marrying the love of her life, which clearly had not happened but did not lose faith since for something had not had luck none of his pretenders. Also Portia knew that she was more than just a pretty face and more than her father's money, so she wanted her husband to admire her for who she really is.

Later on, we realize that Bassanio had the idea of wanting to look seriously rich. He met a Jewish moneylender named Shylock, who gave him the money using Antonio's credit. The problem was is that Antonio was anti-Semite and offended Shylock every time he could because he was Jewish. Shylock shrewdly approved the loan with interest in exchanging for Antonio to sign a promissory note promising that if he failed to pay the debt, he would have to pay it with a pound of his flesh, an idea that Antonio was not very interested in, since, at that time, he was sure he would have money before the expiration date.

While Antonio and Shylock were discussing, Bassanio learned the chests' rules to win. Afterwards, Jessica appeared. She was Shylock's daughter. She claimed that living with him was ~~is~~ hell and that he was ~~is~~ ashamed of her. Jessica's only desire was to elope, marry Lorenzo, and become a cryptid. Instead, they took advantage of the fact that Shylock was away to escape. They stole some money from her father. He was furious when he realized what his daughter had done.

Later on, it is revealed that Antonio's ships had sunk, putting his income at risk to pay Shylock. Shylock, upon hearing this gossip, was happy that he would be able to face his enemy; even though, he was still angry about his daughter. He was asked why he hated Antonio so much. He said it was for the reason that he hated him for being a Jew, and he gave a speech defending the Jews. He stated that Jews and Christians were equal, and that if a Christian could seek for revenge without any problem, he would do the same. Everything went on like this until Shylock realized that his daughter had spent all his money and went straight to have Antonio imprisoned.

Returning to Belmont, Portia continued to get rid of her suitors until the arrival of Bassanio, who was interested in her since the beginning. He already knew how the game was, chose the lead chest, and was victorious. He managed to win Portia and her riches. Everything seemed to be going well until Jessica arrived with her husband to tell them that Antonio was about to die because of Bassanio's debt. Portia decided to help her fiancé's friend. They got married in a haste, and sent Bassanio to help his friend with the necessary amount of money. Before leaving, Portia gave her husband a ring and asked him to promise never to take it off.

For Portia the ring meant a form of fidelity and love for her, In her mind if her husband took it off it was like a way in which he didn't love her because for her it is also a proof that Bassanio could probably lose so they were two forms for her that the ring meant. While Bassanio went to help his friend, Portia dressed as a man to pass as Antonio's lawyer. In the courts of

Venice, Shylock demanded justice and would not stop until he got it. That was when Portia appeared, and the trial began. Portia (as a man) began to appeal to Shylock's mercy, but she failed to make him see any reason. Hopelessly, Balthazar (Portia) prepared Antonio to pay the debt, when he understood that Shylock was sharpening his knife.

Balthazar confronted him and told him that if he was the one who collected the debt, he would also be imprisoned for plotting a murder. In the end, Shylock was willing to lose everything he had to make his enemy suffer. Portia cleverly managed to change the rules of the trial, claiming that Shylock did not want justice, but to provoke a murder.

For Shylock that managed to execute Antonio was a more than deserved gain after all the deals he received throughout his life for being a Jew, therefore according to him, he was asking for something small in return for all his dealings that he lived in his life in Venice. Thus he also manages to win against his eternal enemy, Antonio.

His guilt was proven when he demanded a piece of meat for every pound that Antonio owed him. Nevertheless, Antonio did not want in return Shylock's death. However, an agreement upon his death, all his wealth would be Jessica's, as well as Shylock. Therefore, a Christian destroyed him. After the trial, neither Bassanio nor Antonio knew that Portia was there. She then, and that put her husband's loyalty at stake. As payment for helping them, she asked for the ring Bassanio had in exchange. He refused at first and then, after Antonio convinced him, Bassanio agreed to give it to her. Upon arriving home, Portia scandalized Bassanio for breaking their marriage vows.

During this scene nobody manages to surprise Portia and she tests all his knowledge and manages to defend Antonio. She also manages to find out about her husband by asking for his

wedding ring as a form of payment, which he gives her but then she understands that it was not fair of her to put her husband in his position. Leaving aside the situation with the ring and accepting that love is not based on a ring.

Antonio came to the aid of his friend and offered Portia his soul as a guarantee that Bassanio would always be faithful to him. As she listened and accepted, she pulled out a ring and gave it to her husband. It was the original ring. Therefore, she then explained that it was her in the trial. She also pulled out a letter that said that not all ships sank; some came with money. The play ended with everyone being happy, except for Shylock.

Bassanio also understands that if not for the Antonio would not have ended almost dead, so the tambien learns an important lesson and also knows that his love for Portia is worth much to lose him for anything. Shylock is obviously left with nothing, no daughter, no money he invested, no revenge and no happy ending for his ambition and I sincerely hate that his way of being was not entirely his fault. He wanted a way to take revenge for all the evil the Christians had done to him for just being a Jew, so for Antonio's thing it would be a way to settle his debt for him, his wife and all the mistreatment the Jews have suffered in Venice.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This research analyzed essential concepts such as literature and its aspects, as well as the life of the author, in this case, William Shakespeare. In other words, his personal life, first years of life, his inspirations and tragedies. Another aspect that was covered was the plot of the Merchant of Venice. This served as a warm-up to begin to delve deeper into the play. The main objective of this paper is to find the stereotypes and prejudices in the book *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare through the historical approach during the first quarter of 2023. Based on this objective, the following concepts were chosen to obtain the results, effectively.

3.1 Research Approach

The methodology used in this work is qualitative. It is essential to mention that this paper, with the help of this methodology, aims to analyze the book and find the prejudices and stereotypes using a comparative table. This approach helps in deepening in the book and to understand the opinion of the interviewees. McLeod (2019) states that, "Qualitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as language. Qualitative research can be used to understand how individuals subjectively perceive and give meaning to their social reality." Given that an instrument that will be used is an interview, it is necessary to understand these three teachers' points of view and understand if they have the same opinion or not.

Given the type of research and the need to collect results in an academic environment and have the teachers' opinions, the use of a comparative table would provide a better outcome, as the historical approach would have more weight, since the researcher will be able to better explain it

and if a stereotype or prejudice is still present today. Give the weight to have a deep investigation in the book and what historical events were the background of it to have both of the sides. Sometimes having that background helps to understand better not only the story but the actions of the characters to and have the full view of how the story works.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is an aspect that in any work researchers can never omit. According to Jilcha, K (2019), a "Research design aims to provide a suitable framework for a study. A very significant decision in the research design process is the choice that is made regarding the focus of the research, as it determines the information relevant to a study to be obtained" (p.2). As already mentioned, it has to go hand in hand with the research design, as it gives much more support. The design goes hand in hand with the approach. In the research, historical design will be used to support the work. According to McKee (2018), "Historical research seeks to understand the past. Excellent historical research seeks to go beyond merely listing dates and facts." In this case, this design fits like a glove, as everything goes hand in hand with history.

The book is written on the basis of an era, which still resonates, even though many years have passed. A time of change for Venice, becoming one of Europe's major merchant docks. A city where many foreigners were entering, so they began to mix, along with thoughts, ethnicities, religions and that began to bother the locals of the place. Therefore, historical design allows us to understand how much a situation has changed, what historical effects affected something to change and why. All those things have that history that helps understand better all the aspects in a investigation.

.3.3 Information Sources

The source that will be used in the investigation and therefore the most important is the book. The book is the primary source of information from which everything will be extracted, since that is where the data will come out to complement the first column of the tables. Outside of this, websites will be used to support the historical aspects as justification in the other columns. This in order to support the historical approach, as well as other important details, such as prejudices, symbols, and information about the characters found in the book. Therefore, the most important part of the investigation comes out merely from the book to later follow it, supported by other sources of information, and give shape to the instrument.

3.4 Analysis Categories

An essential element of qualitative research is the concordance of categories that emerge from its objectives, which ultimately form part of the research. As reported by Morse (2008), "A category is a collection of similar data arranged in the same place, and this arrangement allows researchers to identify and describe the characteristics of the category" (p,727). These categories will be expanded upon to provide a better understanding of their importance in the research. As it is known, the main objective of the research is to evaluate, through a literary analysis with a historical approach, the prejudices and stereotypes found in the book *The Merchant of Venice*. The idea is to identify those aspects in order to give a critical historical approach, based on the book and the historical reasons behind all those phrases. Showing that just as today, societies continue to assume things about people or draw conclusions from rumors, a city that in the midst of all that was about to become one of the largest trading ports in Europe.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In a research, different methods are used. However, each researcher chooses the one that best suits their research. Depending on its focus and extension, an investigation can use up to 3 different methods. In a qualitative research, Austin, Z. and Sutton, J. (2015) referred that the “qualitative approach helps researchers to better understand the feelings and thoughts of the sample of the subject under study. It allows realizing the actual meaning people give to the things they know”. As previously mentioned, the qualitative seeks for results beyond statistics and numbers to understand how the situation affects people in a diverse approach.

Different elements such as interviews, questionnaires, diagnostics, and observation sheets are included in this period. In addition, the researcher chooses the one that best suits his research by analyzing it and visualizing which one comes closest to the expected result and making the investigation more valid and proving the objectives that were selected.

3.5.1 Comparative Chart

The Merchant of Venice is one of those books that cannot be missing from a list of classics of English literature. Naturally, most people have read it, heard about it, perhaps seen a paragraph or two and, why not, the movie. However, from the very first page it is explained that its intention is to explain the prejudices and stereotypes present in a world divided by classist thoughts as well as superiority.

Therefore, there are many aspects to take into account in this work divided into dialogues, so its approach has to be specific. This brings us to the instrument to be used, a comparative table. According to the Beautiful.AI team (2020), "as the name implies, a comparison chart compares

two or more items across different parameters. You can use a comparison chart to see the similarities and differences between items or services to choose one." So, since it is a historical approach, the goal is to compare which elements in the book are still in use today or perhaps have evolved over the years or are no longer present today. That is to say, if a character said something somewhat prejudiced or stereotyped, it is necessary to find out why. What is the historical context behind, why such a phrase or word is taken in such a way.

It also helps to understand the actions of the characters, what they have in common with each other and how their actions affect the story. It will be divided between the three specific objectives, specifying the act in which the dialogue takes place, which character said it and what is the historical background behind it.

Therefore, the chart will be used to show specifically which phrases refer to prejudices and stereotypes and why they were taken that way as well as explaining the historical relationship behind them. A third table will be used to understand the similarities between Portia and Queen Elizabeth, giving more information and see what they have in common. Giving them an analysis not in their physical appearances, but in their life, professional aspects, actions in history as well as their personality. These three pictures as an essential tool to be able to cover one by one the specific objectives.

That is why the chart was the best instrument in this investigation because the historical part can be better appreciated during the work and easily to understand because there are many historical events that conform the reason why something is like that. So it cannot be something easily to explain in other way that is not a comparative chart to understand everything better and give more wight to the investigation.

3.6 Collection data process and data analysis

First, the researcher will read the book, and then, she would reread it to underline the aspects to be taken out (prejudices, stereotypes). Then, the researcher will start to design two tables with 3 three columns each. In the first one, it will be found the stereotype or prejudice as well as who said it; in the second one, the act and the scene in which it happened; and in the third column, it will come the historical aspects it refers to. In the case of symbols, the researcher will explain what are the most important symbols throughout the story and explain why and how they interfered in the story. The same will happen with the motifs and another chart with a summary per character to know them better and a little background of them.

All in order to have the information ordered and go destroying everything because it is easy to get lost and what you want is to keep the line of what is the phrase, act and reason behind it. As well as the picture of Portia to give him to be direct and punctual in the similarities without taking away to each his aspects of essence that each one had. Another point is the summary of the characters that give a way to see how each one was in a direct way and also not being within the story but as their mission in the story and a little of their personality.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

4.1 Approaches to the investigation

The focus is an essential part of the research because it tells us precisely what we want to focus the analysis on. In both qualitative and quantitative research, there will always be a specific focus. The research may have more than one focus, but it will always focus more on one than the other. One may derive from a different topic. There are many types, and they are not always the same combination. Some combinations yield surprising conclusions, such as research with psychological approaches that go deeper into that part. If there were no specific approach, the research would be floating. It would be very general and difficult to fit all the topics into one research. There would be too much to cover and it would be messy.

Also, having a single focus helps to obtain more information and achieve the objectives sought. Another time you can choose the same book but with another approach, which will give a different result, which is the virtue of having other research methods. Brewton (n.d.) states, "Literary theory is a description of the underlying principles, one might say tools, with which we try to understand literature." Existing approaches include the feminist, mythological, psychological, and many others. In this research, the historical one was chosen. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d), "presents information in which a subject follows a historical course through its subsequent evolution and development". This approach was chosen since *The Merchant of Venice* has many historical factors throughout history along with reality.

Important, the approach in this story could be other and it would no be a problem because there are many other like the feminist or the economical approach giving more importance to

other aspects that would be also give another background a give a better view, but in this case since is an specifically object study the best way to give the answer was the historical approach.

On the historical level, the author relied heavily on the situation of the Jews in England at the time of Shakespeare, so he used those aspects as ideas in the story. Above all, the author, during his stay in England, never interacted with a Jew. He used the rumors he heard to know what they would be like. So it is essential to see what he based the Jews in the story and, according to the report, if it was confirmed that the events happened. He wanted to have that historical background that gives more weight to the history and also that people can be more related in case they want to know how thing where in those years in Italy in the economic and social aspect.

Thanks to this approach we can understand better what was happening and also see is this was actually something that happen in real life. Maybe the story is conformed by fictional characters, but the way they were or who they lived was a similarity between Christians and Jews. The author gave us a work based on facts of the society of Venice in those years and by, giving it a historical approach, he is getting the most out of it in terms of understanding why the characters reacted as they did.

4.2 Comparative Tables

4.2.1 Prejudices

Prejudices	Act	Historical Context
<p>Shylock: “Is he yet possessed?”</p>	<p>Act 1 - Scene 3</p>	<p>In Christianity, the term "possessed" is linked to the Devil, the ultimate expression of evil in religion. According to Anderson (2020), “Shylock as a Jew does not have a big sensibility towards the Christian Antonio, so he uses his prejudices to get to conclusions. Therefore, he uses his prejudices to conclude.”</p> <p>In those years, because of the barriers of religions, both assumed things about each other's beliefs. They even used terms that they did not fully know their definition. Since Venice was starting to be a port then mixing ethnicity and religions was</p>

		<p>complicated for a society that was not being tolerant of the change that was happening.</p> <p>That's where these differences religions were becoming a situation. As it was among Egyptians and jews, For the Egyptians the lambs were sacred and for the jews it was a conventional animal which at a time in history is put to the test and these differences is sometimes difficult to understand by that belief so it complicated the situation more.</p>
<p>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”.</p>	<p>Act 1- Scene 3</p>	<p>Shylock, throughout the play, emphasized the irreconcilable differences between Christians and Jews. According to SparkNotes (n.d), "Due to the different religions living together, eating pork for Jews was not well seen because they consider pigs as impure in the Old Testament."</p>

		<p>While merchants of different religions agreed not to mingle on a personal and social level, the division caused strife over what little free speech there was.</p>
<p>Shylock: “there be land rats and water rats, water thieves, and land thieves- I mean pirates”’.</p>	<p>Act 1- Scene 3</p>	<p>Shylock again showed his hatred by implying that the Venetians were hypocrites for owning slaves. According to Anderson (2020)</p> <p>"Commercial development was a race for many powers as it was for the United States and also for Venice, which in the sixteenth century sought to consolidate its commercial reputation through integration but at the same time social exclusion."</p> <p>The Venetians excluded themselves by replying that the slaves were theirs and no one else could change that, something Shylock increasingly despised. He hated the way he was treated</p>

		<p>because he was not treated with respect and he was so over it. By the fact that they were invading their territory therefore making them of their belonging and they only the needed to be slaves without reason to ask for better deals because they were the invaders, they had to get used to the new rules according to them.</p>
<p>Portia: “If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he has the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.”</p>	<p>Act 1- Scene 2</p>	<p>In most of this scene, it can be observed Portia rejecting her suitors with her prejudices one by one. Moreover, it can be stated this is because of racial discrimination against a colored man. According to Heng (n.d)," medieval England was the first racial state in the West. English ecclesiastical and state laws produced surveillance, labeling, herding, imprisonment, murder, and, ultimately, the expulsion of the Jews on the continent.”</p>

		<p>Portia's prejudice was not just hers, but it was general because it was what was lived and taught at the time. Thus it shows that discrimination was not only religious and further complicated the situation of society.</p>
<p>Shylock: "You called me a dog before you had a cause. But since I am a dog, beware of my fangs".</p>	<p>Act 3 – Scene 3</p>	<p>Shylock, besides being the villain of the story, was an established prejudice of what Shakespeare knew about of the Jews. According to William Anderson (2020), ‘ ‘ “Because of how Christians viewed Jews, Antony spitting on Shylock in public was not frowned upon by anyone because society considered Jews to be on the same level as dogs”’.</p> <p>This is one of the many nicknames that Christians had against the Jews, only that the author decided to choose one not so past but had much</p>

		worse. So you could tell that hatred was growing and abuse was more constant. Shylock for being a moneylender they told him more so, discrediting his work making him look like a thieving rat much worse than the other Jews working on something else.
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Table 1 shows the prejudices found during the analysis of the book. Source: Researcher's creation.

4.2.2 Table 2 Stereotypes

Stereotypes	Act	Historical Context
<p>Nerissa: “yet for aught I see, they are as rich that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.”</p>	<p>Act 1 - Scene 2</p>	<p>The play's insinuations and differences between the rich and the poor were widespread; starting with the fact that England was becoming the biggest seller in the North. Gogela (1999) stated that, “As a marketing strategy, the markets increased the public anxiety that you need to buy something because it is new and is important to be a dynamic economy.” Only a part of the population would benefit from this expansion.</p> <p>At this point we understand that the discrimination not only comes towards other religions or foreigners, but among themselves occurred. In this case the economic difference was evident and enviable so that the one who had silver was relevant the one who did not, remained poor and irreplaceable.</p>

<p>Solanio: “As the dog Jew did utter in the streets”.</p>	<p>Act 1- Scene 9</p>	<p>Jews were tormented throughout the Middle Ages in England and several European countries, such as France. They were enslaved and became the king’s property. Shakespeare never lived with the Jews, so his characters in the story varied according to his perception. Marlowe (n.d) indicated that, 'Shylock derives from the closed, unscripted stereotypes that existed at the time.’ This was because, historically, King Henry IV expelled the Jews for centuries, so the primary source of knowledge came from spoken stereotypes. Feeding the discrimination between the Jews and Christians, reveling that his was coming from other many other countries, not only Italy. The book gives us a little background of what was happening in other countries and probably it was worst that in Venice giving more information in that part.</p>
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<p>Morocco: “They have in England a coin that bears the figure of an angel stamped in gold.”</p>	<p>Act 2 – Scene 8</p>	<p>The angel coins were introduced to England by King Edward IV in 1465. According to Danforth (n.d), "The pocket angel coins mean that they are a magical gift to carry throughout the day or to share with friends and loved ones."</p> <p>It was stated that whoever had them or gave them as a gift, it was meant that this person would have luck and hope. Danforth also added that "Angel coins, or "pocket angels" were a reminder of strength, hope, faith, and love. So if you had one means a really good thing for you and it was also a big gift for someone that was special or important. Another aspect is that normally only rich people had them until one decided to give it to someone else.</p>
		<p>The story was set during the mercantilist era, so several</p>

<p>Shylock: “He hath disgraced me, and hindered, half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies- and what’s his reason? I am a Jew.”</p>	<p>Act 3- Scene 1</p>	<p>factors directly influenced the elements of the story, as well as the division of religions. According to Barbosa and Chaparro (2018), "The story takes place in an era characterized by having a large number of values and prejudices of the Middle Ages; by the existence of a moral division of labor between Christians and non-Christians." It was stated a clear division, especially against the Jews. Of course there were also other religions but for Christians, the Jewish religion was the closest to an evidence, not to mention that there were not one two Jews in the streets, there were too many who gathered for their religious celebrations so for them it was a lot to spread their religion.</p>
<p>Shylock; “I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewels in her ear! Would she be hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin!”</p>	<p>Act 3- Scene 1</p>	<p>If there was one thing Shylock cared about more than life, it was money. It was not his fault, but Shakespeare's idea of creating it. According to-Arnot</p>

		<p>(n.d). “Few professions were lucky enough to get a loan, and Jews were cast as money grubbers.” Therefore, as long as Shylock had his money, he did not care if his daughter’s or anyone else's life was lost.</p> <p>Although not mentioned in part in the story, Shylock did love his wife and by losing her was a reason for his armature that fed his hatred of other people.</p>
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Table 2 illustrates the stereotypes found during the analysis of the book. Source: Researcher’s creation.

4.2.3 Table 3 Comparison between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I

Portia	Queen Elizabeth I
 <p data-bbox="201 1066 654 1098"><i>Portrait of Portia. Taken from Google</i></p>	 <p data-bbox="862 1066 1364 1098"><i>Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I from Google</i></p>
<p data-bbox="201 1188 821 1581">Portia liked puns and proverbs; she quoted them frequently. This was considered a sign of wisdom and wit in Elizabethan times. Example: “The head may dictate laws against passion, but ardor can do more than the coldness of a sentence.”</p>	<p data-bbox="862 1188 1466 1507">Elizabeth was fond of sayings and wordplay. Some are still remembered and even studied. Example: “Soon we will have a famous victory over the enemies of my God, my kingdom, and my people.”</p>
<p data-bbox="201 1667 833 1839">Since her father's death, marriage was a daily issue. She had many suitors, and she studied and rejected one by one, for various reasons. Even</p>	<p data-bbox="862 1667 1450 1839">Her marital status became a major issue when she ascended to the throne. She never got married; however, she had several prominent</p>

<p>though, there was the dynamic of the coffers, her only drawback was that she wanted to marry the love of her life.</p>	<p>suitors. She was concerned that marrying foreign nobility would influence the independence of England's foreign policy, so she was very picky about her suitors.</p>
<p>Despite she did not belong to royalty, she had money and dust. In other words, she was the wealthiest heiress in Belmont who was respected, known, and courted.</p>	<p>She was is royalty. Her fortune was around 370 million pounds. She was admired and respected. She was considered the greatest monarch of English royalty.</p>
<p>She was interested in law, reading, paying attention, and using her knowledge to help Antonio, and having a more civilian perspective. She at some point knew that studying and paying attention to details, she would have the opportunity to prove herself and she had when she knew she could save Antonio.</p>	<p>She was also involved in law with much more charge and with a national perspective because she depended on England and Ireland, so she had to be educated and well-versed in the law. Even though she did not choose to be queen she made all the effort to learn correctly and to understand the laws of all her reign to do what was best for her people.</p>
<p>She is a symbol of feminism, referring to the fact that even though, she was not taken into account in certain issues because she was a woman, she never stopped learning and studying, so that when the time came, she would have something to defend herself with. Women who read the</p>	<p>Queen Elizabeth is considered a symbol of feminism because she faced challenges such as social pressure for not wanting to marry during her forty-five years of reign. After all, Europe was not accustomed to having a woman as queen. Regardless, she overcame all that and</p>

<p>book nowadays still think Portia was a well writing character that if she would have been introduced in the present would have a big acceptance in the female population.</p>	<p>moved forward in her kingdom. Of course it important to mention that between her and her daughter, her child if the most remember and also a symbol of empowerment compared to her mother who is a feminist icon but not as strong as Queen Elizabeth II.</p>
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Table 3 illustrates the comparison between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I. Source: Researcher's creation.

4.2.4 Description of the characters found in *The Merchant of Venice*

Characters	
Antonio	<p>He was the merchant referred to in the title. He was a generous man who promised to repay Shylock the money borrowed by Bassanio. Otherwise, he agreed to have Shylock to cut off a pound of his fleece. His role in the play was relatively pas. He did not have great action on an emotional level. He was loyal to his friend and, in due course, showed his hatred for Shylock.</p>
Bassanio	<p>He was a young man who spent all his money and hoped to recover his fortune by marrying an heiress. He needed to borrow money to show off when he courted Portia. It was for Bassanio's sake that Antonio made a deal with Shylock. Bassanio was the only suitor who chose the right casket and got Portia to be his wife. He knew that Antonio's life would be in danger because of Shylock but still wanted to have the money to impressed Portia.</p>
Portia	<p>An essential character in the play. She was an heiress to her father's wealth and fell in love with Bassanio. Her father-devised a test with three coffins, and Portia must marry the man who chose the suitable coffin. Bassanio was the one who chose it correctly. She was clever and beautiful. She dressed as a lawyer and went to Venice to save Antonio from being murdered by Shylock. She mentioned that in her house in Belmont, it reigns</p>

	peace and harmony, unlike the very business in Venice.
Shylock	He was the antagonist of the story. He was a moneylender hated for his greed and for being a Jew. He was the direct enemy of Antonio, and when the latter did not pay Bassanio's debt, he demanded the pound of flesh that Antonio promised him as payment. After Portia he was the second most important character in the story that not only he was the villain, he was also the representation of how the Author sees the Jews and was the most prejudiced person in all of history.
Nerissa	Portia's lady-in-waiting who fell in love with Gratiano. When Portia traveled to Venice disguised as a lawyer, she went with her dressed as a lawyer's clerk. She was loyal to Portia and took care of her and more than once, she stressed to Portia the importance of choosing a suitable suitor.
Lorenzo	He was in love with Jessica, Shylock's daughter, he was also a Christian and planned to steal her from her father's house, so he could marry her.
Gratiano	A young man with a reputation for wild behavior. He accompanied Bassanio to Belmont and fell in love with Nerissa, Portia's lady-in-waiting, who helped him find suitors.
Jessica	She was Shylock's daughter and disguised herself as a girl to run away from her father's house, where she was unhappy. She wanted to be with Lorenzo, a Christian, and her father would never let them be.

	together. She stole some money from her father to live in peace.
Lancelot	He was the comedian in the play. Initially, he was Shylock's servant, and then he worked for Bassanio. His antics often consisted of foul English and were a break between the romantic and tense scenes throughout the play.

Table 4 describes the characters found in The Merchant of Venice. Source: Researcher's creation.

4.3 Symbols and Motifs

4.3.1 Symbols

4.3.1.1 The Three Caskets

To win Portia's hand, the suitors who arrived from any country, had to choose among a gold, a silver, and a lead chest that related to some aspects of Venice's cultural and legal system in those years. Venice became a trading port and offered opportunities to any man from any country, as the chests did. No matter the ethnicity of the man who chose the right chest, he would have the same opportunity as any another—of winning Portia's hand. Another critical point was that the Christian religion ruled Venice, and the chests went hand in hand with it. According to Graydon (2020), "The right chest is made of lead and warns that the person who chooses it must give and risk everything he has.

The contention combines several Christian teachings, such as that Christianity teaches that appearances are deceiving and that one should not trust the evidence given by the senses, hence the humble appearance of the lead casket." Moreover, it has to be mentioned faith and charity, which are core values of religion. The coffins were symbolic in the story because they defined Portia's future and whoever choose wisely her father's test. Just the only man who could have something to offer and was clever enough to choose the correct casket was going to get her hand, that in the story was Bassanio.

One simple thing can chance the whole life of Portia and the man who choose correctly, making three simple things like a casket such power that can chance the fate of a person. It was interesting who the challenge and not exactly having Portia's hand was what motivate a lot of important men in Venice and from other places too.

The curious thing about these is that there were many men who made that test and none never found the right chest, it makes us think that maybe it was a trap or in fact it was the destiny of Bassanio and Portia, those chests meant happiness or unhappiness to her because she wanted to marry someone she really loved so it was complicated and finally made to Portia. The right man arrived with the right thought and a pure love for her leaving aside her inheritance.

4.3.1.2 Blood

Another symbol repeatedly spoken of, was blood. This is a symbol of the characters' shared humanity regardless their ethnicity or religion. One of the examples in which it was referenced was in Shylock's speech in Act 3. "If you prick us, do we not bleed?" Another moment is in act 2 when the prince of Morocco told Portia to give him her whitest suitor and said: "let us make incision for thy love - To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine." All the characters did not see this symbolism as Christians, but rather as a symbol that was part of their status as white Christians. Therefore, blood was a symbol that, depending on the character, meant one thing but will always be a symbol for something. In their mind they were different in all the possible ways even when inside they were the same, so if a Jew bleeds it was not the same as when a Christian bleeds.

For them if a Jew bled it was no big deal, if they compared them almost as with dogs, but if it was one of them who bled it was completely bad, they had to be healthy and if one bled it was something bad for them as a society. Shylock knew that so he asked for a kilo of Antonio's meat, it sounded twisted that but after understanding the story. We understand that it would anger the Christians, it was one of the most vindictive ways a Jew could choose, but if it was the

same who cut the pieces of meat. In his mind a Jew making a Christian bleed was one of the worst images he could have and it almost came true.

4.3.1.3 The rings

In the play, the rings are a symbol of love and marriage. An example is when Portia gave Bassanio her ring to symbolize their marriage and told him that he should never take it off. Otherwise, their marriage was over. This puts him to the test when she posed as a lawyer and asked for his wedding ring as a payment for helping Antonio. Bassanio gave his ring to her, knowing what it would mean. However, then Portia gave it back to him, as she realized she was not being fair with him—reiterating that the ring symbolized love, eternity, and marriage in the case of Bassanio and Portia.

In the case of Shylock, the ring represented the love he shared with his wife. Moreover, the ring helped us to realize that he could cry for something; even though, he presented himself as an individual incapable of love. He gave a ring to his wife, Leah, but later on he learned Jessica mocked him for taking it. This was the moment when Shylock, for the first time, saw himself as vulnerable and with feelings other than anger. In Shylock's case, the ring was ~~is~~ not very repetitive in his scenes, but losing it showed that he valued it and that it was ~~is~~ an essential symbol in his life.

The author took care that the story in the case of the rings had two faces, one of happiness, love and commitment, validating the meaning of marriage. The other side of the pain that began with love and ended in the memory of the misfortunes that sometimes people carry all their lives. Showing that a simple object can have a deep meaning for a people that can transform

everything in their lives, just like happened with Shylock and Portia making them see things different in a way they never imagine.

Again something as small as a ring was the happiness and bitterness of two characters, showing that an object is more than apparent and is capable of provoking various feelings and thoughts for a person who has great sentimental value. So the author thought of everything and the comparisons of how the same thing had different meaning, proving different actions that affected the character both negatively and positively.

4.3.2 Motifs

4.3.2.1 The law

The theme of laws was not so explicitly explained in the play, but subtly everything revolved around them, among them the statutes of Venice, and the rules for contracts and wills. In addition, these laws could be manipulated for gratuitous or cruel purposes, as in the case of Shylock with Antonio. Another example of how the law could be changed subtly was during Antonio's trial. Shylock, with the Venetian rule, was going to go to the last instance to make Antonio pay his debt no matter if his way of payment was twisted, until Portia arrived and manipulated the law with more excellent skills, as she managed to come out victorious and giving that "happy ending" to everyone. Antonio was set free, and Shylock was forced to abandon his religion.

An important message was ~~is~~ that although the law went unnoticed in the play, it was a motif in most scenes, such as the trial or the chests of Portia's father, and if the law was seized with malice and abuse, horrible things could happen. In the story laws was not always in all the scenes but when it was time to use them, it was really impressive how Portia knew how to defend Antonio having

absolutely control of how Venice did with the laws. It showed how some people broke the law while others suffered twice as much for it which was difficult but did not allow each other and complicated things more, even if things came out and sometimes if they were partial to everyone.

4.3.2.2 Cross-dressing

Throughout the play, three characters dressed up as men to achieve their goals. The first was Jessica, who fled Venice dressed as a page boy, and then, near the end, Portia and Nerissa impersonated an officer and a doctor to set Antonio free. The curious thing is that cross-dressing was not foreign to Renaissance plays. In some cases, boys or young men represented women in plays because it was previously forbidden for women to have a role in plays. Shakespeare was an admirer of cross-dressing and often used it in his plays. However, he made a turn in the Merchant of Venice.

In this play, it was used to criticize the nature of masculinity and male power. Portia, who, after meeting many men and studying their behavior and customs, was convinced that she could outwit anyone at court. She finally succeeded in fulfilling that prediction. Thus, beyond being the subject of comedy, she implied that the male attitude could be perfectly imitated. In the end, cross-dressing conveyed the message that a woman could assume the power and position denied to her as a woman by dressing as a man.

This also makes a little reference to the tastes in terms of the author's sexuality and showed that this topic was very normal in those years due to the lack of women in the theater. Obviously with his entry that was changing but showed that in some things society was tolerable with some subjects while with other two.

4.3.2.3 Filial respect

Portia, as one of the heroines of the story, was is the clearest example of filial respect. She regardless of everything, obeyed her father's will. On the other hand, there was Jessica, who had many reasons to get away from her father. The story did not explain how the relationship between them was before, but as she turned to other people rather than to her father, as there was an estrangement. The most questionable part was not when she left the house, but the exchange of the ring. An essential heirloom for Shylock. In the play, it showed that not all children and parents have a good relationship, becoming a motif because it was another subtle part, as the author gave little by little features that were seen with a deeper analysis of the story and the characters.

In the end the filial respect shows that sometimes parents with their actions have to be able to maintain it because the children see them as an example. Showing again two cases, one where we have a daughter wanting to be worthy of what was the image and role that her father had in Venice and another who simply wanted to get away from him in order to be happy, therefore shows how complicated can be the relationships between father and children showing that not always end up the way you expect.

4.3.2.4 Analysis of stereotypes and prejudices in 2023

The book has shown to have many stereotypes and prejudices that have a historical background to understand their meanings. Thanks to this, it can be seen that some of them are present in today's society.

For example, in the case of Bassanio, according to rumors, if he did not have money or something valuable to offer, he could not court Porcia. Without going too far it is still a reality.

Looking at it from the point of view that now it is not an obligation to have things to woo a person, but it is what is ideally sought after. Things like a job, study, courage...etc. So if a man or woman doesn't meet those qualities that people ask or expect from their next partner, it becomes tedious.

We can see that it is the same stereotype only evolved to the times of now, it is no longer a parent who demands that, but the same people who look for someone who has similar things to emerge as a partner. There are even still parents who expect certain things from their children's partners.

Another stereotype that is still present is the social classes, it is no longer as marked as before but people of lower class are still stereotyped as not being able to emerge, or have to be treated less because they are not at the same economic level as someone else.

So much so, that now even couples that have economic differences rarely last, due to these stereotypes and even prejudice from other people such as in-laws.

Today we live in a world in which women have achieved many things and are still fighting for equal opportunities in some aspects, but seeing the role that women had before, it is evident the change that has taken place. One situation that still remains problematic and more so

for the older generations, marriage. The importance of women getting married, because those who are over 40 are already old maids, they do not get love, among other famous prejudices.

The new generation does not even get married anymore, they live together, they make their life together and even almost most of them without children, which is another point of controversy between generations, so we see that it continues to evolve again how society intends a person to live his life according to the correct standards.

In the case of cross-dressing it used to be that men didn't care if a man wore makeup or nail polish. Now many see it as an offense to their manhood and that it is wrong for men to wear makeup or even if they are careful with their skin or clothes, it is even a symbol of certain issues that are still controversial to this day.

One would hope that the world would be more open-minded but if we put it in this context we can see that society has made very little progress on these issues. These generations are no longer going to change their perception of things and are confronted with a young generation that has very different ideas, more liberal, less monogamous and that of course come to clashes. Complicating the situation even more.

Another point is the arrival of social networks, it opens the door to many good things but also bad. It helps when you are in Costa Rica to see a person from Holland but the cultural points also come into play. Watching videos of for example what a Dutch person eats for lunch and comparing it with what he eats here starts those kinds of dislikes to what is different and new. Making it easier to transmit that message because you only need to press the "send" button and millions of people will see that message which is not positive and so it goes, spreading like a virtual virus.

So it's hard to live any kind of life today because you will always be judged by someone and at this point it's rarely going to change. I think that before stereotypes and prejudices didn't do as much damage as they do now, now with a single literal video everyone judges and criticizes you.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to report more in-depth the information obtained from the analysis and the selected objectives to indicate the prejudices and stereotypes throughout the work and to identify characteristics that Portia presented in comparison to Queen Elizabeth I. In addition, the researcher will provide in this chapter, some recommendations to be taken into account for future investigations.

5.2 Conclusions

Conclusions will be provided according to the objectives presented in this research. These conclusions have been drawn from the data provided by the book and the tables presented in the previous chapter. Divided in each objective to be more clear in which were the conclusion of each one as well as specific recommendations to help future investigators that have the same interest in the book or other Shakespeare's works.

5.2.1 To identify the prejudices and stereotypes in the book.

The stereotypes and prejudices were identified in the first and second tables with the historical approach behind those phrases. In the first table, we can see that most of the prejudices found were from Christians towards Jews. The greatest exponent of this was Shylock, who, on several occasions, protested and repeated the discriminatory phrases he received throughout his life. He received contemptuous nicknames such as "dogs" or "rats" and was said that he who could be spat at without any problem. Another prejudice highlighted was that of Portia and a racist comment about one of her prospects, who was a man of color. This prejudice was not just

Portia's. It was a way of showing that discrimination was not just against Jews, but also against foreigners of other ethnicities and religions that threatened their way of life and faith.

Among the stereotypes, which can be found in the second table, it can be found some sexist comments toward Portia. Among men, they commented that few women were left to marry, and they were also rich women who were more worthy of marrying.

Another stereotype that haunted the story was the class differences and the importance of men having money to properly court a woman, especially if she was upper class. This affected not only the Jews, but the whole society, as the economic classes continued to be marked. The antagonist of the story is the most significant representation of both elements, as he was the one who had the most prejudices and stereotypes in the play. He gave his opinion and had the desire to get revenge for the way in which he was how he has been treated and, most predominantly, how the Venetians discriminated all people who were lower class, Jews, or any other religion that challenged theirs.

So it is clear that before society was more prejudicial than now but today it is still a complicated society that in its own way maintains some prejudices and stereotypes. It is important to mention that it is a time in which generations clash because young people come with parents or grandparents with very different opinions which begins to mix and the result varies depending on the situation and the place. Apart from that humanity has evolved a little but it is still a lot in social aspects to improve and is something that goes with time. We are talking that the epoch that happened these was about 200 years of difference and we see that there is a change but not so much. Still is very different and each mind has their own opinion in which is different and need to continue to improve so everyone can live better and have their own opinions and be free.

5.2.2 To illustrate how those prejudices and stereotypes influence the characters.

This conclusion goes hand in hand with the previous one. Stereotypes and prejudices were present throughout history. Behind the historical context, the story was set when these differences existed among the population. Therefore, the characters in the story had to see and live with those aspects; some were more affected than others. The first one to be affected by them was Portia. After her father's death, the fortune she was left, and the test-of the three chests made her life to go through several comments. For example, it was said that it was ~~is~~ time she got married with someone she did not know, and that her husband would come out to be the one who chose the right chest and therefore, there was dilemma due to her prejudices. How could she marry someone, she did not love?

This also affected another character in the story, Bassanio. Since he was introduced in the story, he wanted to go for Portia's hand, but due to the stereotype that a man had to have a lot of money and things to be a good prospect, mentally affected him. According to such mindset, he thought that he had little material value to offer, so there was no point in courting her.

Therefore, Antonio was dragged into this situation. Consequently, Bassanio asked Shylock for a loan to impress Portia. In addition, it has to be mentioned the bad luck, as all of Antonio's ships ended up sinking, leaving him with no income, and causing another problem with Shylock. Thus, it can be seen how slightly stereotypical several characters were in various situations. Moreover, we have Shylock, the antagonist. He was the one who exposed the stereotypes and prejudices he suffered in his life and the ones he also had. He was ~~is~~ prejudiced about whom he dealt with, his daughter, and Antonio whom he hated very much because of how

he treated him for being a Jew and who even related to him. All of this filled him with bitterness and hatred for others and even for himself.

An important aspect in the story is that most of the characters were influenced by these aspects, so negative things happened. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that stereotypes and prejudices were not good in those years and are not good today. They negatively affected the characters, and if they did not exist in the story, some conflicts could have been avoided. It has to be remembered that those phrases, nicknames, and general opinions do nothing else than to continue dividing the human being into classes and morally destroy society by a generalized negative attitude which affects the mental health of children and adults.

Every decision they make if it is for the sake of society or the situation is difficult the results will be difficult to decide but eventually affects the character in his way and will not always be the best result. As far as real life is concerned, sometimes people feel judged and make decisions that are hasty and they regret or think that what other people say was not important but they achieved what they wanted, enter the head and start that insecurity. So it is a harsh reality that is still lived and people can feel that they understand the situation that the character is suffering and in part that is the intention of the author. That there is a connection between character and reader.

It's a strategy to get more readers and that's how they get the price of the characters and it's a great connection to keep going. Showing that this fiction happens to reality and is hard for many people as the importance of having money to be relevant in a society or a woman and the importance of getting a young husband and more if you have money. So it is a story of historical drama but it shows that currently these prejudices affect a lot to the characters and the readers understand it perfectly.

5.2.3 To demonstrate the relationship between Portia and Queen Elizabeth I as a possible character in the play.

The goal was based on a theory that Shakespeare used Queen Elizabeth I as an inspiration for Portia, but also as a way of indirectly protesting the decisions he disagreed with. Throughout the story, Portia was an important female character and the most predominant. In the third table, the researcher provided the similarities between the two women. Although she was not a monarch, Portia was well known in her city. She was admired and desired by many. Her father's death triggered it, as she had to go through many things in order to get a husband. She was a woman who, like the queen, did not leave anyone's side. She was calculating and intelligent. She paid attention to details and specially, to those of her prospects.

This since she could not know them before the test of the chests, so she took into account each of their movements, way of speaking, dressing, and how they addressed her to have an idea of what they would be like as a husband. She was so observant that she could reject them individually with valid and concrete arguments. In that respect, she was similar to the queen Elizabeth I, who was a woman who looked after her husband's interests.

Portia was interested in the laws, it was not predominant, but she knew them and had studied them. This even helped Antonio during the trial. In the case of Queen Elizabeth, her whole life was a political apprenticeship for the day when she would come to her country's throne. Thus, a dividing line is drawn between the character and the person, who, in effect, were not the same person. Still, some traits showed that Shakespeare created Portia as a tribute to the queen and saw her as an intelligent and independent woman.

In short Shakespeare clearly wanted a strong and intelligent female character and in his way give recognition and his apprehension to a figure as emblematic in those years as Queen

Elizabeth. She is an intelligent character and also gives that to the reader to investigate what was her inspiration to create a character easily remarkable in history that remains a feminist symbol to date. At the end both women are incredible, strong and memorable and that is something women of today are searching for.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

According to the analysis of the data, it was concluded that the stereotypes and prejudices that flooded the book go hand in hand with Venice's political and social situation in those years. Disinformation and discrimination were other themes that can be found enter in the book. The author chose a time of change, in which the port of Venice became an important trading point in the world. Therefore, people from other countries and religions arrived in search of a better life or opportunities, like today's example of the American dream. Shakespeare never interacted with a Jew, so he relied on rumors and information he heard from acquaintances or friends. As a result, the book contains many prejudices and stereotypes regarding how people treated Jews and other ethnicities.

The main reason for the prejudices and stereotypes was the feeling of superiority on the part of the Venetians and how important Christianity was for them, so seeing a foreign person with different customs and professing another religion was like an insult to them. Consequently, that was the beginning of the bad treatment of most races received. However, the book focused on the Jews, but other people got a bad treatment and were not excluded because of their ethnicity. They got discriminated in terms of the way they were viewed and addressed. Thus, they were compared to dogs and got even spit on. Another example is when Portia commented, in the first act, about a colored and a Jewish suitor. Another type of discrimination was related to social classes and how that led some characters in the story to make hasty decisions

Regardless of how they both resemble each other or whether one was created as a reference to the other, they were important in the history of reality or fiction that shaped various facts in both history and the English monarchy showing that feminist icons have existed for years and continue to be remembered for their courage as well as their intelligence and way of standing up for women without denigrating men and showing equality between genders.

Stereotypes and prejudices if they were very marked in the history, some if it was necessary the historical contribution to better understand the why, but if there were several who understood why they were given and you put yourself at the level of them and how everything offends and hurts the person who receives them or perceives so it is not something to be taken lightly.

Both are strong women and that is what now more than before women are looking for. Having a female character that is not extreme feminist feels good and is so iconic that embrace a lot of women like for example Wonder Woman, of course she is a comics character but is something that even old women are looking forward and like to have in their minds like a good female representation worldwide.

.5.4 Recommendations

Throughout this research the objectives, background, basis of the work, and conclusions have been discussed to give an answer to what were the stereotypes and prejudices found in the book under analysis through a historical approach. Moreover, the research question was answered above and it was found that there were many stereotypes and prejudices throughout the story and that probably there existed more at that time that were stronger than those that appear in the book due to the historical moment in which the story came to life.

These recommendations are merely objective since the research work does not open much door as it goes hand in hand with the book, so there were no other people who studied involved as instruments, The intention is to help future researchers who are interested in this topic or book and may have this research as help.

Among the recommendations that can be given is that a topic that could be given more emphasis was the discrimination suffered by various ethnicities in those years. Therefore, it could also be investigated or considered how all those prejudices and stereotypes were part of those acts and denigrating opinions that existed. Another point is that, in the story Shylock spoke in "the voice" of how most Jews were fed up with the treatment of the English; however, in this case, the character was consumed by rage and revenge.

To go deeper in this topic let us know that there are many information to get, to help support the investigation and have more instruments to give more credibility to the investigation. Besides this could be use as a social experiment to see if it it actually something that continues to happen more often than before and who we as society can stop it to have a better place to live and continue with any prejudice and be happy with their own opinion.

It is not possible to generalize and to think that all Jews felt this way in Venice; therefore, in future research it can be deepen more in the subject of how the Jews felt and how they surpassed the situation to have already the two faces of the coin. Finally, another point that can also derive is how much different a person or the generations of today would understand the story today and if it is possible to agree that many of those prejudices still remain in a society that supposedly is more tolerant and respectful, as well as if women would continue to see Portia as a feminist symbol.

It would be good to implement the instrument of interviews either to a specific group or a general public or to professionals in the field of literature who can give their opinion on the subject and see how much they differ from each other, if they are different or very different, if there is a pattern that is repeated, if they thought a lot about the answer or went straight to the point to get an idea of how people react to hear something related to a topic that is little talked about.

To be able to understand why the patron keeps repeating himself is a brilliant idea for future research, using another approach and other instruments can have unexpected results and perhaps a form of help for society to see where the problem is and if there is a possibility of breaking the chains, besides that it is a way to start correcting, to see it as a letter from a critical constructive society to stop being so prejudiced that it poisons anyone.

So it's a way to go further, use the book as a basis for starting a much larger research that helps and is an example for others to form a chain of constructive criticisms for the good of society and this can be of positive thoughts and free of the knowledge that has been long as it is spread to future generations in a globalized world. With the idea to be better people and not judging a person for think being and think different.

Another recommendation is in the great research that could be done on stereotypes and prejudices in society. Some could say that before people were more prejudiced or rather that nowadays people are still prejudiced so it is to look for what is the trigger that these opinions are still generated in a world which is supposed to be a world with more open-minded people and freedom but the actions that are presented thanks to the globalization of social networks showing the harsh reality of many people seems that the human being still has not changed much. This is

a topic which beyond the work has a lot of information and could be interesting to see what results they show.

At the end of the investigation, the idea is to be better people and inform that even though it was based in a story, is something that actually happen. For example all the movies about the second world war, probably yes the characters are fictional but the historical events that are happening were true and they need to be something that matters and why not something that happens again because we do not knows the humanity will be in a future.

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