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## 1. Introduction

This thesis deals with William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. In particular, the focus of investigation will be its Jewish protagonist Shylock and his respective visualisation in four filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* dating from 1973, 1980, 2001 and 2004. The main objective of this thesis is to examine how Shylock is rendered and perceived in the aforementioned films.

In terms of structure, this paper is divided into two parts: as this study assumes a postcolonial perspective, Part I will focus on theory and examines postcolonial criticism, especially the work of Edward Said, i.e. *Orientalism*, and two essays taken from Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture*. Their theories will be examined in more detail because, they are integral to the present study since *The Merchant of Venice* deals with issues prevalent in postcolonial criticism, such as race, otherness and asymmetrical power relations; for example, Ania Loomba remarks that it is the only play by Shakespeare which deals with the "Jewish difference" (*Race* 20) and its resulting concerns as such. In addition, Shylock can be seen as a member of an oppressed minority, and these two postcolonial critics, who, generally speaking, try to explain the position of minorities in our society, will provide a theoretical framework within which this thesis works. From this follows that their findings will form the starting points for my analyses.

Although Said's and Bhabha's theories mainly refer to the study and constructed image of Oriental cultures and its peoples as well as the ambivalent dichotomy of coloniser and colonised respectively, Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, who have adopted Said's ideas for their purpose in *Orientalism and the Jews*, argue that "[t]here is a broader orientalism that does not have much to do with the Orient, and a more specific orientalism that does. Both are Western discourses of domination, constructing an Other that will be, or is already ruled by the West" (Kalmar, xvii). Even Said himself claims that the Orient is not necessarily an actual place but rather an invention.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Said 1

However, Kalmar and Penslar link Said's observations in *Orientalism* with the situation of the Jews as the following passage taken from the introduction of their volume clearly illustrates. The study opens with the following lines:

At the turn of the twenty-first century we are painfully aware that in spite of growing globalization there remains in the world a split between the West and the rest. The manner in which this split has been imagined and represented in Western civilization has been subject of intense cross-disciplinary scrutiny, much of it under the rubric "orientalism". [...] In this book we maintain that orientalism has always been not only about the Muslims but also about the Jews. [...] The major objective of this volume, consequently, is to demonstrate the urgency of making connections between the study of orientalism and the study of Jewish history. (xiii)

Kalmar's and Penslar's main premise of *Orientalism and the Jews* is "that Jews [...] had been the target of orientalism" (xv) and subjected to Orientalist representations, because they "have been seen in the Western world variably and often concurrently as occidental *and* oriental" (xiii). They continue this line of argumentation by saying that Jewish people have historically and traditionally been regarded as 'other' and constantly suffered from colonial forms of oppression and marginalisation such as expulsion, exploitation and discrimination<sup>2</sup> because they were regarded as both "insiders and outsiders, with deep roots in Europe, but also with long histories of persecution and migration" (Loomba, *Race*, 14). In a similar vein, Said states in *Orientalism* that "Jews are always represented as outsiders having a special role to play *inside* Europe" (71). Consequently, Kalmar and Penslar hold the view that particularly European Jews have been subject to colonial discourse as they have come to represent "a kind of colonized population, subject to quasi-colonial domination by the Gentiles" (Kalmar xvi).

It has to be noted, though, that this line of inquiry is not uncontested; some postcolonial critics warn that there is a risk that postcolonial ideas, e.g. those concerning Orientalism and otherness as proposed by Said as well as Bhabha, are generalised and become rather vague concepts. Bill Ashcroft, for example, argues that "the tendency to employ the term 'post-colonial' to refer to any kind of marginality at all runs the risk of denying its basis in the historical process of colonialism" (*Reader* 2). However, Kalmar and Penslar claim, for example, that

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kalmar xiii and Janik 34

“any discourse of Otherness that is associated with domination merits the label of Orientalism” (xvii). Likewise, Peter Childs in *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory* believes that theoretical concepts deplored by Said and Bhabha are flexible and can be regarded as useful tools for any discussion of domination, marginalisation, victimisation and otherness. For example, he underscores the

enormous flexibility of the concept [of the Other], its potential for creating different oppressive hierarchies organized around gender, class, rationality, or any number of categories, at whose normative centre remains the figure of the white, Western, middle class, heterosexual male. (*Introduction* 101)

Moreover, the present thesis does not “deny [...] its basis in the historical process of colonialism” (Ashcroft, *Reader*, 2) but rather tries to establish a link between postcolonial criticism and *The Merchant of Venice*. That the play is deeply embedded in colonial discourse is shown by the fact that at the time the play was written, Jews played a crucial part with regard to England’s nation formation and self-image<sup>3</sup>. For example, Emily Bartels, who applies Bhaba’s theories to her research on Jews in early modern England in *Spectacles of Strangeness*, tries to explain that Jews were instrumental in order to settle the English in a time of national unstableness with the English nation not being existent yet.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, James Shapiro in his seminal work *Shakespeare and the Jews* delivers an important strand of argumentation by saying that Jews had an important, though often neglected, impact on English early modern society.<sup>5</sup>

Following this, Shakespearean scholars and theorists working within postcolonialism have been examining the ways in which colonial and racial attitudes and tensions of early modern England might have influenced Shakespeare’s work, since issues of race and colonialism “were central to the culture of that period” (Loomba, *Race*, 1). *The Merchant of Venice* reflects these colonial, racial, religious and economic attitudes as well as anxieties present in England’s early modern society.<sup>6</sup> During Shakespeare’s times, “[e]ven though Jews were not living in England (at least not openly)” (*Anti-Semitism and The*

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bartels 6

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bartels xiv

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Shapiro 2

<sup>6</sup> Bartels argues that “racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and the like, though they did not have a local habitation or name, had their beginnings here” in Shakespeare’s times. (9)

*Merchant of Venice*, 8)<sup>7</sup> Jews were scapegoated, ostracised and stereotyped - mainly for their practice of usury, which was against Christian belief.<sup>8</sup> “The Jew then was the scapegoat of Christendom and the usurer the scapegoat of nascent capitalism” (Mahood 21). Jews, thus, came to be hated for religious, racial as well as economic reasons.

Concurrently, England was about to become a great empire and different kinds of foreigners and outsiders were means of identification as well as potential threats. Like Said has argued in *Orientalism* by pointing to the otherness of others in negative and stereotypical ways, English superiority was established and fostered. For example, Elizabethans considered Jews to be distinctly different from themselves but it was “increasingly difficult to define what distinguished Christian from Jew” (Shapiro 32); Jews – the “alien[s] at home” (Bartels, *Spectacle*, 9) – were physically indistinguishable from the English and their elusiveness posed a threat to the constructed binary division between the English and the Jews. As a consequence, for Bartels, drawing on Bhabha’s findings with regard to the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, particularly early modern conceptions of the Jew come to reveal that binary divisions are not stable and straightforward constructs but are finally prone to fail due to the ambivalence inherent in colonial discourse. As a result, according to Bartels, Jews were not only regarded as inferior but paradoxically also seen as a potential threat.<sup>9</sup>

Following this line of argument not only the impact and marginal status of Jews within English early modern society mark a (post)colonial connection also their part within beginning colonialist activities is crucial. As a consequence, Part I will not only treat theoretical aspects but will also focus on the historical background of *The Merchant of Venice* examining the colonial context of Jews in Elizabethan England.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf.

<[http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/spring\\_2006/Merchant\\_Venice\\_Discussion\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/spring_2006/Merchant_Venice_Discussion_Guide.pdf)>. All subsequent references taken from internet sources will be stated by the file name or the name of the author.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Shapiro 43

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bartels

The main concern of the second section of this thesis is Shylock's visual presence in films and constitutes the empirical part of the present paper. Part II consists of a screenshot close analysis of Shylock's portrayal in four filmic adaptations and, consequently, comprises the major part of this study. Taken the theoretical concepts presented in Part I into account the ways Shylock is constructed visually with regard to each film's mise-en-scène will be examined in detail.

Since a film's visual style mainly refers to "what the audience can see and the way in which we are invited to see it" (Gibbs 6), mise-en-scène will predominately determine the way Shylock is perceived. According to Louis Giannetti in *Understanding Movies* a shot's mise-en-scène tells us how a picture means.<sup>10</sup> In addition he argues that "[e]very shot can be looked at as an ideological cell, its mise en scene a graphic illustration of the power relationships between characters" (Giannetti 68). As filmic representations provide a complex field in which power relations are enacted<sup>11</sup>, questions with regard to how Shylock is visualised in the films under consideration will be: is he a powerful character or is he dominated and marginalised by the Christians? Is he established as 'the other'? Is he presented stereotypically? Is he a tragic victim, a greedy villain or simply a comic figure?

Mise-en-scène, thus, is a powerful means of visual construction and every shot is carefully and purposefully designed.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, relevant aspects of mise-en-scène, i.e. its definition, constituents as well as implications on Shylock, will be outlined in the beginning of the second part of this paper. This is followed by mise-en-scène analyses of a variety of screenshots. It goes without saying that a complete mise-en-scène analysis of each and every single shot of the films in question would be very time-consuming and complex - even impossible - and would definitely go beyond the scope of this thesis. As a result, the examination will concentrate on different situations in the play and their equivalent visual representations in each filmic adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* respectively.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Giannetti 51

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Sturken 113

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Giannetti 51

That is, apart from the beginnings and the endings of the film adaptations, the situations in which Shylock is characterised will be closely analysed: Shylock's first appearance; the display of power between Shylock and Antonio; Shylock's behaviour with regard to his daughter Jessica; Shylock's reaction to his loss as well as his defence, and Shylock at the trial.

To conclude, the main aim of the present thesis is to tackle the question as to how Shylock's visual presence is affected by means of visual style, i.e. mise-en-scène, in selected films of *The Merchant of Venice*. Since Edward Said proposes in *Orientalism* that dominant and stereotypical ways of seeing still circulate and have power in the present through media (television and films)<sup>13</sup>, the basic assumption underlying this paper, thus, is that Shylock – being a member of a minority, i.e. the Jews, and a colonised subject - will be presented stereotypically, derogatory and/or negatively in the four filmic versions of *The Merchant of Venice*. Additionally, the present paper examines, in the case that Shylock is rendered stereotypically, if there are moments in which Shylock poses a threat to the Christians.

Last but not least, it has to be noted what this paper does not comprise: although postcolonial theories form the theoretical bases on which this thesis rests, my paper will not pose a postcolonial analysis of the play text as such. That is, the play text will not undergo a close reading. Rather, it merely functions as the basis on which the filmic adaptations in question rely on. The films in question have been chosen due to grounds of availability and each film, though different in the making – the films range from filmed stage production to cinematic adaptation - will be treated equally. Although the respective films do not vary considerably in terms of plot outline, a synopsis of the play text will be provided in the Appendix of this thesis.

Before the theoretical framework within which this thesis works will be outlined, the character of Shylock – being the main protagonist of my study - will be briefly sketched.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Said 26

## 1.1. Shylock

Although Shylock is not the main character in *The Merchant of Venice* – “he appears in only five scenes and speaks only about 360 lines” (Janik 105) – he has been brought into focus and become synonymous with the title of the play itself; although Antonio is the merchant, Shylock is the most pivotal character. Because of his complexity, the character of Shylock is seen as both sympathetic and despicable. On the one hand he is the play’s villain who seeks Antonio’s life and, correspondingly, he is attributed with negative character traits such as greed, deceit and cruelty. In addition, he is constantly marked as ‘other’, which is mainly based on his Jewishness. On the other hand, the audience sympathises with Shylock who suffers from the Christians’ disdain, scorn and exclusion. “Yet the most famous lines from the play seem to infuse the character of Shylock with some sympathy and humanity, though contradictions abound.” (*Anti-Semitism and The Merchant of Venice*, 11). Shylock’s well-known lines<sup>14</sup> evoke compassion by emphasising similarities between Christians and Jews. However, by the end of his monologue Shylock is mainly driven by hate and revenge.

Shylock is not considered as a human being and seldom addressed by his name. Instead the Christians dehumanise him by calling him “cut-throat dog” (*Merchant*, 1.3.106), “most impenetrable cur” (ibid. 3.3.18), “a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch” (ibid. 4.1.4), “inexcrable dog” (ibid. 4.1.128) whose “currish spirit / Govern’d a wolf” (ibid. 4.1.133-134) and whose “desires / Are wolfish, bloody, starv’d, and ravenous” (ibid. 4.1.137-138). In addition, the Christian Venetians refer to him as simply ‘the Jew’, often combined with derogatory adjectives, like “villain Jew” (ibid. 2.8.4) or “currish Jew” (ibid. 4.1.288). The most prominent reasons why Shylock is ostracised are his faith and his profession. “Throughout the play, Shylock is despised and insulted by the other characters. Shylock is spat upon by Antonio, reviled even by his servant, abandoned by his daughter, Jessica, and ultimately undone by Portia.” (*Anti-Semitism and The Merchant of Venice*, 8)

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Merchant*, 3.1.52-66. All quotes of *The Merchant of Venice* are taken from Brown.

However, Shylock is not only reduced to a tragic victim; what makes him so enigmatic and memorable is his

[a]mbiguity: both his own energetic ambiguity and the resulting ambiguity we feel toward him. He is a villain, a Jew, hoping to kill a Christian; but we cannot avoid recognizing his motivation. We see [...] Venice's hypocrisy and bigotry [...] surrounding and trapping him. The Venetians mock him and then ask his help [...]. We sense that their scorn has driven him away, and we can sympathize with his sense of separation. Finally, [...] we pity his grief for his dead wife and his anguish over his ungrateful daughter: Thus, along with our revulsion for his unbending cruelty, paradoxically we do not entirely lose sympathy or respect for him. This remains unsettling. (Janik 106)

## Part I

### 2. The Merchant of Venice in Theoretical and Historical Context

#### 2.1. Postcolonialism

Literally speaking, as the prefix *post* denotes, postcolonialism refers to the time directly following colonialism. Colonialism, according to Ania Loomba's definition in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, is the violent "conquest and control of other's people, lands and goods [...]" (8). In English context, thus, colonialism was "the powerful encounter between English and other cultures in the period of the Empire, roughly between the late sixteenth and twentieth century" (Döring 6). People under colonial rule were usually exploited, enslaved, degraded and persuaded of their inferiority in relation to the colonising power. This explains, for example, why the British Empire could handle large parts of the world for so long; not only physical coercion, but also convincing both colonising and colonised people to perceive each other in particular ways, was crucial.<sup>15</sup>

In the nineteenth century large parts of the world were colonised by European powers. Scientific concepts of race as well as Christianity were the basis of and justification for imperial and colonial domination over colonised peoples, who were considered morally, intellectually and physically inferior. As a consequence, colonialism established a sense of difference between Europe, which was considered as the centre of civilization, and the rest of the world. Only European culture represented civilization and, consequently, superiority. Colonised people, in turn, were regarded as subordinate to Europe, were very often homogenized, and regarded negatively. Although colonial processes differed considerably over time and space, colonised people were stereotypically constructed to perceive themselves as 'the other'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. McLeod 19

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Young 2-3

However, colonialism does not end when a country becomes politically independent and very often forms of colonial domination continue to persist. Therefore, postcolonialism cannot simply mean coming after colonialism, basically referring to its end but “more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism” (Loomba, *Colonialism*, 16). For example, Bill Ashcroft believes that “all post-colonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem” (*Reader*, 1-2). This leads to the effect that “a country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time” (Loomba, *Colonialism*, 12).

Quite obviously, postcolonialism is a highly vexed area of many differing concepts, approaches and activities which cannot be defined precisely. Consequently, scholars’ opinions differ considerably how to use the term postcolonial accurately. This may be mainly due to its interdisciplinary character; postcolonial theories are often based on and influenced by concepts taken from “other critical practices, such as poststructuralism, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and linguistics” (McLeod 2). Postcolonial activities “may range from literary analysis to research in the archives of colonial government, from the critique of medical texts to economic theory” (Loomba, *Colonialism*, 2). As a result, there seems to be no consistent framework or single practice which can be identified as characteristically postcolonial. According to Ashcroft postcolonialism implies

all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. [...] So the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures. [...] What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial. (*Empire*, 2)

As a result, postcolonial criticism is concerned with various areas of interests, such as “migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics [...]” (Ashcroft, *Reader*, 2)

From a literary studies point of view, postcolonial critics engage in the following practices; they mainly deal with reading, writing and analyzing literature from countries with a history of colonialism and examine representations of non-Western cultures and their “states of marginality, plurality and perceived ‘Otherness’” (Barry 199). However, these states are not regarded as drawbacks but seen as “sources of energy and potential change” (ibid. 199). Moreover, postcolonial literary critics apply various theoretical concepts taken from other disciplines and, consequently, different kinds of textual analyses emerge. For example, critics such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have used the insights of poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan and mainly consider the status of colonised peoples in colonial texts and literature.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.2. Re-reading the Canon**

Since “postcolonial criticism draws attention to the issues of cultural difference in literary texts” (Barry 198) another important part of postcolonial textual analysis involves the re-reading and re-interpretation of classic English literary works. In the context of English colonialism, English writers and their work were particularly important for moral and aesthetic reasons. As such, English literature became synonymous with Christian values and beliefs and, consequently, immaculate English behaviour.<sup>18</sup> In particular, Shakespeare and his work were considered as “typically and quintessentially English” (Döring 11). As a result, Shakespeare’s work was used to establish and sustain colonial authority. This was accomplished

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. McLeod 23-25, Barry 199

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Post-colonial*, 1

by interpreting his plays in highly conservative ways (so that they were seen as endorsing existing racial, gender class and other hierarchies, never questioning or destabilizing them) and by constructing him as one of the best, if not 'the best', writer in the whole world. (Loomba, *Post-colonial*, 1)

However, with "the collapse of formal empires [...] critiques of imperial and colonial philosophies, ideologies and aesthetics" (Loomba, *Post-colonial*, 2) were provided and "established colonialist readings of history, culture and literature were challenged" (ibid. 2).

This explains why, in the context postcolonial criticism, English literary texts do not represent timeless and universal works of art, but are seen as "complicit with the imperial enterprise" (Ashcroft, *Reader*, 3). In a similar vein, Peter Barry argues that "whenever a universal signification is claimed for a work, then, white, Eurocentric norms and practices are being promoted [...], and all others are correspondingly relegated to subsidiary, marginalised roles" (193).

Some English classics feature prominently in postcolonial analyses. According to Peter Childs, these are *The Tempest*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Jane Eyre* and *Heart of Darkness*. These literary works are essential for postcolonial studies because they deal with the history and culture of the British Empire. In addition, they all involve a character of the (exotic) 'other', i.e. a form of cultural, social or religious outsider.<sup>19</sup> However, postcolonial analyses of literary texts have also focused on texts that seemingly have little to do with the British Empire and colonialism.<sup>20</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* – without doubt a part of the English canon - does not overtly express colonial themes. For example, the play is not set in a far away country and the marginalized, exotic figure is of European origin. In addition, the play was generated "at a time when English mercantile and colonial enterprises were just germinating" (Loomba, *Post-colonial*, 1). Nevertheless, "because a literary text is not set in a colonial location, nor makes colonialism the predominant theme to be explored, does not necessarily imply that such a text is free from the realities of the British Empire" (McLeod 147). However, as already mentioned in the

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Childs, *Post-colonial*, 3

<sup>20</sup> Cf. McLeod 33

introduction, the stereotypical depiction of Shylock as 'other' as well as the engagement with a particular phase in English colonialism in the play particularly indicates a relationship between *The Merchant of Venice* and the contexts of colonialism.

### **2.3. Theories of Colonial Discourse - How Power Relations Are Examined**

Theories of colonial discourse, i.e. the construction and representation of the colonised via discourse for control's sake<sup>21</sup>, as proposed by Said and Bhabha, have been substantial in the development of postcolonialism. For instance, by analysing strategies that supported European superiority and maintained colonial rule Said's study on Orientalism was highly influenced by Michel Foucault's examinations concerning his notion of discourse as well as the relationship between knowledge and power.<sup>22</sup> Simplified, discourse refers to "the process of regulation and regimentation by which social order comes to pass" (Döring 23). It denotes a system of statements which can be made about a particular topic at a particular time in a particular culture including the rules which govern what can be said and thought and what not.<sup>23</sup> As such, discourse is a "combination of the linguistic and pragmatic means of power by which social control is enacted" (Döring 22).

Orientalist scholars and writers, "by generating structures of thinking which were manifest in literary and artistic production, in political and scientific writings" (Loomba, *Colonialism*, 45) - describing the Orient in negative terms - consolidated and perpetuated Western dominant views. As Said puts it, such written material

can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (94)

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. McLeod 17

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Barry 176-177, McLeod 21

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Colonialism*, 38

As a consequence, colonialism has been producing ways of seeing that foster the inferiority and subjugation of colonised peoples. These modes of representation as well as their dismantling form the basis of the study of colonial discourses.<sup>24</sup> According to Döring, colonial discourse analysis examines “figures of speech and structures of thought by which imperial world views were constructed as the basis for imperial projects” (23).

The following postcolonial scholars, among others, by examining colonial discourses, have come to be fundamental to postcolonialism. By investigating the (ambivalent) power relations and binary division between the colonised and the coloniser, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have challenged established views on literature. As briefly outlined in the beginning, Said’s and Bhabha’s studies are of particular interest for this paper because their ideas have influenced and formed the basis for further research on this topic, such as Ivan Davidson Kalmar’s and Derek J. Penslar’s *Orientalism and the Jews* and Emily Bartels’ *Spectacles of Strangeness* respectively. Kalmar and Penslar stress this fact by saying that a “broadening of Said’s *Orientalism* to the study of colonialism in general as a discursive phenomenon has already proved to be among the most important achievements of scholarship at the turn of the twenty-first century” (xvii). As a result, general summaries of the concepts of Said as well as Bhabha will be given subsequently.

As mentioned earlier, postcolonialism as an intellectual movement started in the late 1970s. The study is said to be instigated by Edward Said’s highly influential and much-debated work *Orientalism*.<sup>25</sup> Published in 1978, *Orientalism* is a wide-ranging historical, political and literary study about European imperial observations and modes of representations of Oriental cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>26</sup> In general, Said examines the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser with special focus on the latter. He argues that

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. McLeod 17-19

<sup>25</sup> It has to be mentioned, though, that Said was not the first scholar interested in colonial discourse and its implications. Before 1978, Frantz Fanon, for instance, raised concerns with regard to colonialism. (Cf. Loomba, *Colonialism*, 44)

<sup>26</sup> Cf. McLeod 39

Western nations like Britain and France observed and wrote scientifically about the Orient, which was usually represented in a negative way. As a consequence, “[c]olonial power was buttressed by the production of knowledge about colonised cultures which endlessly produced a degenerate image of the Orient for those in the West, or Occident” (McLeod 22).

Generally speaking, Said examines how Orientalism, originally an “academic discipline” (Said 50) which emerged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Europe, became an “imperial institution” (ibid. 95), and a means of control. Furthermore, he observes how Orientalism was supported by a variety of written materials, such as travelogues and literature, speeches, etc. – displaying [t]he authority of academics, institutions, and governments [...] (ibid. 94) - which established certain modes of representations, in order to consolidate the functioning of European colonial powers.

Thus, according to Said, Orientalism describes the “systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” [...] (ibid. 3). The Orient, Said claims, was handled “by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (ibid. 3). This was achieved by turning the Orient into an object

suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national religious character. (ibid. 7-8)

From Said’s point of view, stereotypical assumptions and constructions of Oriental people and cultures were the basis for Orientalist constructions. This resulted in a division between Europe and the Orient that “has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (ibid. 1-2). Consequently, Said continues, the established sense of difference justified

colonialism. Thus, the Orient as well as its peoples were repeatedly constructed and portrayed in negative terms:

[t]he Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or – as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory – taken over. [...] Since the Oriental was a member of a subject race, he had to be subjected [...]. (ibid. 207)

Consequently, the Orient embodied everything Europe was not; this binarism was important to European self-image. Said claims that “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (ibid. 3).

Orientalism, according to Said’s definition of the term, is the “style of thought based upon a [...] distinction made between “the Orient” and [...] “the Occident”” (ibid. 2). As such, assumptions about the Orient are the product of Western imagination. Although Orientalism is regarded as imaginative and fictitious, its effects are presented as reality. However, this reality does not exist in actuality, but is “man-made” (ibid. 5) and not “an inert fact of nature” (ibid. 4) constructed by those who are in power. Nevertheless, Orientalism as “a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”)” (ibid. 43) materialised and produced scientific facts.

In analogy, Kalmar and Penslar, who work “on a more or less Saidian pattern” (xvii), in *Orientalism and the Jews* argues that Orientalist modes of representation have not only been about Oriental cultures and its peoples but also about Jews. In their opinion, “the Western image of the Muslim Orient has been formed, and continues to be formed in inextricable conjunction with Western perceptions of the Jewish people” (xiii). In their introduction to the volume, Kalmar and Penslar claim that “[o]rientalist representations of the Jews have always been at the very center of orientalist discourse” (xiv), which stems from the fact that in historical context Jews have been regarded as both “occidental *and* oriental” (xiii). As Said has

succinctly put it, Orientalism signifies “one of [Europe’s] deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (1). In a similar vein, Kalmar and Penslar state that it describes “the Christian West’s attempts to understand and to manage its relations with both of its monotheistic Others” (xiv) – Muslims as well as Jews.

However, Said emphasises the fact that stereotypical and dominant representations are not a thing of the past but are still present and influential in our contemporary world. He states that Orientalism’s “scope, as much as its institutions and all-pervasive influence, lasts up to the present” (ibid. 44). For instance, Said criticises the fact that Orientalist representations still appear in Western media reports of Eastern, especially Arab, lands and that “[c]ontemporary Orientalist attitudes flood the press and the mind” (ibid. 108). He reaches the conclusion that “[t]here has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media’s resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds” (ibid. 26).

This leads up to the following assumption: Jews have been targets of various forms of colonialist acts such as expulsion and persecution, and have suffered from different kinds of colonialism such as discrimination, oppression, domination and other kinds of inequalities.<sup>27</sup> As has been outlined in the preceding section, colonised subjects are usually represented stereotypically, derogatorily and/or negatively in colonial discourse, in order to be controllable for the colonisers. If this theory is applied to the four filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice*, it could be deduced that the Jewish character Shylock will probably be rendered stereotypically in the adaptations under consideration.

However, this strand of inquiry is not unchallenged and it has to be noted that further criticism has been prompted; for example, Kalmar and Penslar argue that

by drawing on the [...]process of subjectification through the incomplete singling out of an Other, Homi Bhabha has been perhaps the most effective proponent of the thesis that Western and colonial/postcolonial subjects

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<sup>27</sup> How Jews were regarded as ‘other’ in early modern England will be illustrated in more detail in chapter 2.5.

define their selfhood through the same set of discourses – in our case, orientalism. (Kalmar xx)

In a series of highly sophisticated, abstract and demanding essays collected in his renowned book *The Location of Culture* (1994) Homi Bhabha also deals with the examination of binary structures in colonial discourse. However, instead of emphasising the “rigid structural opposition” (Kalmar xix) between coloniser and colonised, as Said did, Bhabha concentrates on “the cracks and fissures in the system, the spaces in between the assumed opposites” (Döring 56) and recognises that the “boundaries are flexible and permeable” (Kalmar xix). As a consequence, Bhabha examines the ambivalent psychological relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, as well as “[t]he lack of conviction within colonial discourses” (McLeod 51).

In his essay “*The Other Question*”: *Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism* Bhabha argues that the discourse of colonialism is based on stereotypical and discriminatory modes of representation that seem to legitimise colonial domination. Similar to Said, Bhabha maintains that “[t]he objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (101). As a result, stereotypes are used to achieve this end. According to Bhabha, stereotypes often appear in negative terms as colonial discourse presents “terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire, in colonial contexts” (104). For Bhabha, the stereotype is not only a means of construction and control but also “the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both colonizer and colonized [...]” (107). As Peter Childs succinctly puts it, “the colonized cannot be discursively placed without the colonizer also being placed” (*Post-colonial*, 73).

However, “according to Bhabha, stereotypes work paradoxically. One purpose of stereotypes is identification: knowledge about the other is produced and its otherness is described in familiar terms, which makes the colonised knowable, and thus controllable. As a consequence, the boundary between colonisers and

colonised is reduced. Nevertheless, stereotypes are used to sustain and extend this boundary, which makes the colonised unknowable and threatening – completely different from the coloniser. Alienation is established, and the colonised is split from the coloniser.<sup>28</sup> As Bhabha puts it, “colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an “other” and yet entirely knowable and visible” (101). This paradoxical condition of the colonised subject in colonialist representations explains why, according to Bhabha, the colonised subject is never fixed. Instead it keeps shifting ambivalently from sameness to otherness and vice versa. Moreover, due to this shifting, stereotypes are used as a means to confine the ambivalence of the colonised subject. This means that stereotypes must be perpetuated, i.e. they “*must* be told (compulsively) again and afresh, and are differently gratifying and terrifying each time” (Bhabha 111).

Eventually, Bhabha comes to the conclusion that binary division in colonial or Orientalist discourse is by no means straightforward. It is more ambivalent, volatile and complex than Said proposes in *Orientalism*, because it cannot produce stable and fixed categories; “[i]n trying to do two things at once – construing the colonised as both *similar* to and the *other* of the colonisers – it ends up doing neither properly” (McLeod 54).

In another essay, *Of Mimicry and Man – the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*, Bhabha again tackles the ambivalent condition between coloniser and colonised and how it poses a threat to colonial authority, which is manifested in the concept of mimicry. Literally speaking, mimicry denotes imitation. As such, it is a colonial device that tries to establish authority and power by provoking the colonised to imitate the coloniser or as Bhabha puts it “a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other” (122). However, mimicry is also a menace to established Orientalist categories of classification. However, mimicry “is not the familiar exercise of *dependent* colonial relations [...].The *menace* of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority” (Bhabha 126). This means that mimicry is not just a strategy consolidating colonial rule but also a means of subverting authority.

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. McLeod 52-53

As such, it is “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (ibid. 122).

Bhabha states the example of the colonial situation in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In order to manage a vast country like India British authorities needed native inhabitants to carry out their commands. As a consequence, the natives were taught the English language. These natives were supposed to behave and look English but were not regarded as such. As Bhabha puts it succinctly, “to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English” (125). However, Bhabha argues that the more English the colonised appear by way of speaking the English language, the more the colonised resembles the coloniser. The difference between them is lessened, which poses an imminent threat to the structure of differences on which colonial discourse is based. Mimicry, thus, constructs but also depends upon a system of differences and “is at once resemblance and menace” (Bhabha 123).

This ambivalent relationship between the colonised mimic men and the colonisers –“almost the same, *but not quite*” (Bhabha 123) - as well as the failure of colonial authority to reproduce itself completely, subverts colonial authority.<sup>29</sup> “The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from *mimicry* – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to *menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite” (ibid. 131). By revealing that power relationships between coloniser and colonised are not straightforward but ambiguous - always threatened and split by ambivalence as well as mimicry - Bhabha comes to the conclusion that colonial discourse eventually cannot define the colonised in fixed terms and that stable notions of colonial rule are basically groundless. As a result control is eluded creating room for anti-colonial resistance.

Bhabha’s theories are important for the present paper because they can be used to explain Elizabethan conceptions of the Jew as such. Scholars like Emily Bartels, for example, draw upon the work of Bhabha in their literary criticism. In particular, Bartels examines in *Spectacles of Strangeness* why “the alien, [in our context, the Jew] was such a vital and appealing subject on the Renaissance stage and within

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. McLeod 55

Renaissance society more generally” (xiii). She explains that depictions of the Other prevailed at that time because it indicated a decisive moment in England’s early modern society, i.e. “the prominent emergence of imperialist [and following this, colonialist] ideologies and propaganda” (ibid.). She argues that although Jews were represented stereotypically, derogatorily and/or negatively in a variety of texts at that time, they also posed a threat to these established binary constructs; “[f]or though imperialist [colonialist, Orientalist] discourse masquerades as being monologic, stable, and sure, it is marked by significant contradictions” (Bartels 6). Consequently, the Jew with his “polymorphic [and] perverse” (ibid.) notions represents an instance, in which the binary division between coloniser and colonised malfunctions by revealing its underlying ambivalence. According to Bartels,

the Jew [...] was sometimes a devil, sometimes (merely) an anti-Christian infidel, sometimes a cunning villain, sometimes a child-murderer, sometimes a usurer, sometimes some of the above, and sometimes none. Though Shylock and his prototype, Barabas, love their ducats at least as much as they do their daughters, Shakespeare’s Jew is a usurer while Marlowe’s is not. And while Barabas is all too ready to murder his daughter, along with anyone else who gets in his way, Shylock attempts murder only by law, according to a legitimate (though outrageous) contract. [...] To complicate the matter further, these stereotypes had to compete with more positive though less publicized images - of the Jew, for example, as a victim of the state, scapegoated in times of financial crises [...]. (6-7)

For Bartels these contradictory conceptions of the Jew illustrate the ambivalence inherent in colonialist discourse. Consequently, the aforementioned hypothesis, which asks if Shylock is presented stereotypically in the film versions of *The Merchant of Venice*, has to be modified accordingly: if there exist stereotypical depictions of Shylock, is there subversion possible? Put differently, are there instances in the films, in which Shylock poses a threat and/or changes from dominated to dominant character?

Before these questions will be tackled in the second part of this study, examinations with regard to England’s participation in colonialism in the early modern period as well as conceptions of the Jew prevalent at that time will be given.

#### 2.4. Colonialism and the Early Modern Period

*The Merchant of Venice* emerged during a time when England was gaining importance as an overseas power. Along with it, came the interest in trade with foreign countries and, subsequently, colonial enterprises. As such, central issues of that time were finance, commerce, i.e. trade in goods and humans, as well as the formation of colonies.<sup>30</sup> The play reflects these concerns; for example, we learn in the first act that Antonio - being a merchant of Venice – engages in and benefits from trade with foreign countries. His “argosies” (*Merchant*, 1.1.9) sail the oceans trading goods like “spices” (ibid. 1.1.33) and “silks” (ibid. 1.1.34). However, business with foreign lands was unequally conducted and those far away countries were usually exploited. Loomba argues that “European trade could not have attained its powerful global position without [...] systematic colonial plunder” (*Race*, 154). Thus, it could be argued that Antonio’s wealth mainly stems from colonial exploitations.

As already mentioned, colonial interests were instrumental in the English nation-formation development. As there was no clearly defined Elizabethan Empire or nation at that time, the interest in and circulation of nationalist and colonialist matters were important. This led to and relied on a production and spread of cross-cultural texts, i.e. “hundred of books, pamphlets, sermons, and performances of the early modern period” (Loomba, *Race*, 4) which concentrated on issues like overseas trade, foreign cultures and people, colonisation, as well as outsiders. These texts mainly dealt with supporting and justifying England’s dominant position and, consequently, helped to establish national identity.<sup>31</sup> However, the display of foreigners and outsiders in “a variety of media such as literature, law, cartography, or travel writing” (Loomba, *Outsiders*, 149) was often biased in terms of race. Knowledge, i.e. stereotypes, about other worlds and its inhabitants was produced and used to consolidate England’s self-image and its place within the world. As a consequence, English superiority was fostered by stressing the differences, and subsequently, inferiority of other races “or were

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Race*, 15

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Outsiders*, 149

becoming stereotypical demonizations of such figures as the Turk, the Moor, or the Oriental barbarian” (Bartels xiv).

Travel literature was particularly of interest because it described foreign and exotic locations. By viewing and exploring the world through travelogues, the English came “to believe in their common investments in overseas travel, trade, and colonization” (Loomba, *Race*, 13) and experienced “their future global success” (ibid. 13). However, “[o]utward journeying catalysed the internal tensions” (Loomba, *Race*, 135) in England and very often colonial enterprises were generated by anxieties about national identity and indicated an insecure national self-image. Bartels stresses this insecurity by asking “[f]or how was the state to impose its dominance across the globe until the ideological backing was vitally and visibly in place at home?” (xiv). Establishing colonies was regarded as a means to solve various English problems “such as growing unemployment, criminality and hunger, the result, many argued, of the rapidly expanding population on a small island” (Loomba, *Race*, 13).

England’s growing population fostered not only nationalist feelings - hostile attitudes towards foreigners increased, too.<sup>32</sup> As much as the English benefitted from the exploitations of foreign worlds, their anxiety of foreign peoples and cultures increased, too.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the notion of otherness and its differences became crucial at that time. As Bartels explains,

[a]s society attempted to come to terms with competing cultures and to establish its place beside and above them, it produced a discourse of difference, a discourse that interrogated and enforced the crucial, self-affirming distinctions between self (Europe, England, “representative man”, the status quo) and other (foreign cultures, nonconformists, alternative values). (4)

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<sup>32</sup> According to Loomba, London’s population rose significantly “between 1520 and 1600” (*Race*, 15).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Race*, 18

But what about those aliens<sup>34</sup> who could not be clearly defined as such? For Elizabethans, Jews were significantly different, but what characterised this difference was often hard to tell.

## 2.5. Jews in Elizabethan England

*The Merchant of Venice* was probably written around 1596-7 when Jews had not lived in England for over 300 years.<sup>35</sup> Although Shakespeare might not have met a Jew in person<sup>36</sup>, “Shakespeare’s creation of Shylock mirrored the sentiments, fears and myths of Jews that were commonly held in his day.” (*Anti-Semitism and The Merchant of Venice*, 11).<sup>37</sup> According to Janik,

[t]he anti-Semitism of London in the 1590s was more intense than that in many other European cities where Jews lived openly. No Jews officially resided in London, because they had been exiled from England [...] and were not to return officially until 366 years later in 1656. (33)

England, therefore, was a “pioneer in banning Jews from the whole kingdom” (Pollins 22). This “act of expulsion [...] was unprecedented”, leaving “England [...] the first nation in medieval Christendom to rid itself by law of its entire Jewish population” (Greenblatt 258). By and large, in the intervening period, i.e. from 1290 until 1656, England was said to be basically free of Jews.<sup>38</sup>

In medieval England, before the Expulsion, Jews were regarded as “a distinct religious entity, with separate political and social responsibilities, privileges, and liabilities” (Tomasch 250). In general, Jews were scapegoated for theological, political, social, and economic reasons, “being alternately commended or condemned according to the interests of their observers (ibid. 245). Although the banishment of the Jews was without doubt a consequence of a variety of factors,

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<sup>34</sup> It has to be noted that the terms *stranger* and *alien* were used for non-English Europeans as well as Africans and Jews. In addition, there were people from Scotland, Ireland and Wales, who were regarded neither as outsiders nor insiders. (Loomba, *Race*, 15)

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Brown xxi-xxii

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Greenblatt 259

<sup>37</sup> Loomba (*Race*, 137) argues in a similar vein.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Shapiro 4

“underlying all was the fact that the Jews were reviled, massacred, and expelled because they were not Christians, because they were not (truly) English, and because Christians/English were not (could not be, must not be) Jews” (ibid. 251).

Although the expulsion marked the end of the Jewish population in England, “the English colonialist program did not end in 1290, and its pernicious effects continued to be felt, postcolonially, by the colonizing subjects, the English themselves” (Tomasch 244). This means that despite their physical absence, Jews were virtually present and played a crucial part in the construction of English national identity.<sup>39</sup> As Tomasch puts it, “[f]or the sake of security, Jews had to be removed; for the sake of self-definition, “the Jew” had to remain” (245);

the desire on the part of the English to define themselves as different from, indeed free of, that which was Jewish, operated not only on an individual level but on a national level as well: that is, between 1290 and 1656 the English came to see their country defined in part by the fact that Jews had been banished from it. (Shapiro 42)

It has to be mentioned, though, that despite the banishment in 1290, England was not completely free of Jews; several communities of secret Jews existed in England in the sixteenth century. Shapiro, for example, argues that “[t]here were Jews in Shakespeare’s England, though probably never more than a couple of hundred [...] a very small number in a population of roughly four million, and [...] in relationship to the number of aliens residing in London” (76). Without doubt, they practised their faith secretly - in constant fear of being revealed. Nevertheless, Jews did enter “the realm for one reason or another, either as travellers and merchants, as refugees from Spain and Portugal, or as invited professionals” (Halio, *Understanding*, 4).

One of these Jewish residents in London was Rodrigo Lopez, who was physician to Queen Elizabeth I. Although a practicing Protestant, Lopez was charged with poisoning the queen after having been bribed by the King of Spain, England’s archenemy. Lopez repeatedly claimed his innocence but the Londoners took his guilt for granted since he was a Jew who had to be villainous and deceitful due to

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Shapiro 55

his Jewishness. Convicted of high treason Lopez was ultimately executed in front of a laughing and taunting London crowd.<sup>40</sup> The trial, which was a public event, attracted much attention and anti-Semitism was paramount.<sup>41</sup> If we believe Stephen Greenblatt, William Shakespeare witnessed the execution of Rodrigo Lopez in 1594 and, influenced by prevalent anti-Semitic tendencies, might have created the character of Shylock after that event.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, *The Merchant of Venice* “draws upon a widely shared European tradition and discourse of anti-Semitism” (Siemon xii).

### 2.5.1. Stereotyping the Jew

As already mentioned, although Jews had been expelled in medieval times, their virtual presence seemed to linger in Shakespeare’s day and knowledge about Jews continued to be produced and circulated by way of stereotypes. Although

there were no Jews left in England, the stereotypes and fears remained in Shakespeare’s England. Jews were immensely wealthy - even when they looked like paupers - and covertly pulled the strings of an enormous intellectual network of capital and goods. Jews poisoned wells and were responsible for spreading the bubonic plague. Jews secretly plotted an apocalyptic war against the Christians. (Greenblatt 258-259)

As such in early modern England, “Jews existed more as a nasty rumor or an ethnic joke than as ordinary people. The repository of ancient fears and fantasies, they supposedly had brought upon themselves” (Danson 112). Similarly, Berek argues that they “were more available to the English as concepts than as persons, more vivid as sites of speculation than doers of deeds (128). Jews were “an invisible people who functioned as symbolic tokens of all that was heartless, vicious, rapacious, and unnatural” (Greenblatt 261).

Until the sixteenth century the issue of Jewish identity had not been raised in England. Jews, as such, had to be “recognizably different” (Shapiro 13), as they

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<sup>40</sup>Cf. Mahood 20, Cerasano 16-17, Janik 36

<sup>41</sup> Loomba argues although “the part played by his Jewishness in the trial remains open to debate [...] Lopez’s execution ensured the success of a rerun of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, which had played to packed houses in the 1590s” (*Race*, 143).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Greenblatt 274-280

“were the accursed descendants of those who had killed Christ and who continued in their devilish ways” (ibid. 13), which simply meant that “[s]uch people could hardly be mistaken for fellow Christians” (ibid. 13). However, the situation changed and due to “the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, the Protestant Reformation, and the expansion of English overseas travel and trade, the question of who was a Jew began to be asked with greater frequency and, on occasion, urgency” (ibid.13-14).

The concept of the Jew in early modern England was complex with “political, theological, economic and moral dimensions” (Siemon xii). According to Berek, a Jew was widely “known in England in the 1590s’ as a Marrano<sup>43</sup> – a covert figure whose identity is self-created, hard to discover, foreign, associated with novel or controversial enterprises like foreign trade or money-lending, and anxiety-producing” (128). Due to their unknowableness Jews were assumed to keep a variety of identities. A Jew, then,

was likely to be a stranger, a merchant, or a physician, a person who advanced in the world by his ingenuity and by accumulation of wealth rather than by any traditional principle of birth or inherited position. A “Jew” was likely not only to deny being a Jew, but in some real sense *not* to be a Jew. He might worship with you in church, partner you in commerce, serve your Queen who was defender of the faith. But throughout all this, you would never know to what extent he “really was” what he gave every appearance of being. Were you seeing a real person or a feigned person? [...] A chooser of his own religion, as well as merchant, trader, money-lender and foreigner, the Marrano played a series of roles, all of which were associated with social and economic innovation and change. (Berek 134-135)

Consequently, a wide range of physical and moral traits as well charges were attributed to Jews.<sup>44</sup> For example, Jews were said to

stink (and become perfumed if they converted to Christianity), have large hooked noses, drink Christian blood, and Jewish men were said to

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<sup>43</sup> A Marrano was a converted Jew from Spain or Portugal. Literally translated, the term *Marrano* means pig in Spanish. (Berek 152, Shapiro 232)

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Marlowe articulates contemporary stereotypes of the Jew in *The Jew of Malta*: Barabas – the devious and evil Jew of Malta boasts of and delights in his crimes when he says; “I walk abroad a-nights / And kill sick people groaning under walls: / Sometimes I go about and poison wells; / [...] I enriched the priests with burials, / [...] slew friend and enemy with my stratagems. / Then after that I was an userer, / And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting, / [...] I filled the jails with bankrupts in a year, / And with young orphans planted hospitals, / And every moon made some or other mad, / And now and then one hang himself for grief” (*Jew*, 2.3.176-198).

menstruate and be capable of breast-feeding.<sup>45</sup> They were accused of ritually murdering children, of poisoning Christians (perhaps because they were often renowned as physicians), of forcibly circumcising men, of indulging in cannibalism, of desecrating the Eucharistic host, and, of course, exploiting Christians economically through usury (Loomba, *Race*, 144).

However, these stereotypes and charges were subject to change. As mentioned earlier, for Elizabethans, Jews had to be significantly different, but what characterised this difference kept varying over the course of time. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, for example, “charges of Jewish host desecration and the widespread medieval identification with Jews and the devil had virtually disappeared in England” (Shapiro 34). However, racial notions often attributed to Jews after the 18<sup>th</sup> century like “the spread of syphilis, or claiming that the Jews had weak feet or were prone to hysteria” (ibid. 34) had not yet surfaced in early modern England. However, due to “various social, religious, and political changes in England in the course of the sixteenth century, some [legends] were fading from view, some were being revived, and some, [...], maintained their power to terrify for centuries to come” (ibid. 93).

These stereotypes attributed to Jews were important to early modern England’s division of self and other – Jews “were the essential ‘other’, against whom the English defined themselves” (Mahood 55) - and, consequently, to its move towards empire.<sup>46</sup> Although Jews were despised, feared and ostracised they proved to be “conceptual tools [and] provided quick, easy orientation, clear boundaries, limit cases. [...] The Jew was a measuring device [...] and an identity marker” (Greenblatt 259). However, the distinction between Christians and Jews was not always clear-cut since Jews

were often indistinguishable, both physically and in terms of their activities, from their local populations, and yet they were marked as different, ideologically and often literally through clothing and confinement in ghettos. That difference was elusive, hard to define, and yet, culturally central [...]. (Loomba, *Race*, 141)

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<sup>45</sup> Paradoxically, Elizabethans endowed Jewish men with female traits. Shapiro argues that “the Jews as a people were often thought of collectively as feminine, especially when juxtaposed to the masculine English” (39).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Bartels 6

As a result, “the lack of clear-cut distinctions between Jews and Christians were worrying to many English people” (Loombe, *Race*, 151) and produced anxiety. This was reinforced by the fact that stereotypes and charges were being spread even when there were hardly any Jews in England. As a consequence, stereotyping and attributing negative qualities like hooked noses and a peculiar smell to Jews were anxious attempts to circumscribe Jews in fixed terms. As a consequence, although Jews had been banished from England three centuries earlier, they were nonetheless considered

as a potential threat to the increasingly permeable boundaries of their own [English] social and religious identities. The challenge of preserving these boundaries was intensified by the difficulty of pointing to physical characteristics that unmistakably distinguished English Christians from Jews (Shapiro 7).

This anxiety of confusing identities is reflected in *The Merchant of Venice* when Portia “touches an exposed cultural nerve” (Loomba, *Race*, 151) by asking, “[w]hich is the merchant here? and which the Jew” (*Merchant*, 4.1.170).

### **2.5.2. Jews, Usurers and Merchants**

*The Merchant of Venice* also “touches a raw economic nerve” (Loomba, *Race*, 151) and draws attention not only to the unstable separation between Christians and Jews but also between merchants and usurers.<sup>47</sup> [M]uch of the tension in the play comes from the issue of usury” (*Anti-Semitism and The Merchant of Venice*, 8), which is the chief reason for the conflict between Antonio, who opposes lending at interest<sup>48</sup>, and Shylock, who gains profit from it.<sup>49</sup> In the first Act, for instance, Shylock reveals that he hates Antonio because he is a Christian: “[b]ut more, for that in low simplicity / He lends out money gratis, and brings down / The rate of usance here with us in Venice (*Merchant*, 1.3.38-40). Usury, i.e. “the lending of money while charging exceedingly high interest” (Cerasano 14), was illegal in

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Race*, 18

<sup>48</sup> Antonio confirms his opposition to the practice of usury, saying: “I neither lend nor borrow / By taking nor giving of excess / [...] I do never use it” (*Merchant*, 1.3.56-65).

<sup>49</sup> Actually, usury is not performed in *The Merchant of Venice* and mainly functions to stereotype Shylock.

Elizabethan England until the statute of 1571 granted individuals to collect 10 percent interest on their loans.<sup>50</sup> Yet, “[i]n the real world of the 1590s, [...], credit was becoming a necessity for the poor to survive, the middle class to prosper, and the wealthy to maintain control” (Janik 32).

At the time the play was written, money-lending was a very common occupation in Europe and a particularly important political issue in England; the English economy was expanding and shifted from an agricultural<sup>51</sup> to a “mercantile economy [which] could not function without the possibility of money lending” (Greenblatt 271):

[e]ntrepreneurial Londoners, absorbed in growing rich, needed credit and funding; they sought loans from investment bankers, mortgage holders, or anyone who could give them financing to enlarge their businesses, accelerate foreign trade, and explore other countries. Still, Christian[s] condemned usury as a sin. (Janik 29)

Two professions could use money that functioned to generate more money and these were usurers and merchants who were competitors with common activities and objectives.<sup>52</sup> In addition to being competitors, Antonio has “deliver’d from [Shylock’s] forfeitures / Many that have at times made moan to [him], / Therefore [Shylock] hates [Antonio]” (*Merchant*, 3.3. 22-23); apparently, Antonio has hindered Shylock huge sums of money and is detrimental for Shylock’s business. *The Merchant of Venice* mirrors this economic competition by “crafting a tension between usury and mercantile activity, and by racializing this tension” (Loomba, *Race*, 152). Although usury was predominantly practised by Catholic and Protestant merchants - “in the absence of organized banks, almost anyone could [lend money]” (Danson xix) - it was mainly associated with Jews. For most Elizabethans “usury and Jewishness were interlocked” (Halio, *Merchant*, 11) because

Jews had been barred from most trades in those European nations where they were allowed to live, so the few who came to money lending did so by default in spite of rabbinical scholars who had condemned usury as early as the eleventh century. Still, Christians’ identification of Jews with money lending was ubiquitous [...]. In England, monstrous imagined Jewish

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Shapiro 98

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Race*, 141, Danson xx

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Loomba, *Race*, 151, Cerasano 17

lending practices conveniently distracted people from the reality of Christian usury. Bias against usury thus became bias against Jews. Still, England, like other Christian economies in Europe, was dependent on money lending, although not necessarily by Jews. (Janik, 33)

However, by identifying usury solely with Jews – “the most convenient Others of the world” (Janik 30) – Elizabethans tried to dissociate from the Unchristian habit as much as possible:

[w]riters about usury project onto the figure of the usurer as “other” a set of desires that their own culture both feels and fears. Usury threatens because it is part of Elizabethan everyday life, yet in conflict with avowed Elizabethan beliefs. (Berek 145)

It goes without saying that scholars and writers of the time very often denounced usury, and subsequently Jews. For example, Thomas Wilson, in his *A Discourse Upon Usury* (1572)<sup>53</sup>, clearly condemns usury as “woorse than anye plague” (177), an “oughe, detestable and hurtefull synne” (177), as well as “a manifest and voltarye knowen thefte” (231). Furthermore, Wilson argues that usury is solely ascribed to Jews; he states, for instance, that

the lewe, that hath used thys horrible sinne most above all others, [...], hath so robbed the christians wheresoeuer hee came, that his evill lyvinge seene, hee is banished out of the most places in christendome, and worthily; for surely that common weale and country cannot long stande in prosperous state and welfare, wher merchants and all others become usurers. And no better do I call them then lewes, yea, worse than any infidel, that wittingly lvyne by the onely gayne of their money (283).

In Wilson’s opinion, usury, as based in the Bible, simply opposes Christian charity; in other words, a Christian ideally should lend money to a friend without charging interest.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Wilson remarks that he does not “know anye place in christendome so muche subject to thys foule synne of usurie as the whole realme of Englande ys at thys present, and hathe bene of late years” (178). Although Wilson generally condemns usury, he finally ends up accepting money-lending at high interest as a fact of Elizabethan way of living.

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<sup>53</sup> In *A Discourse Upon Usury* Wilson invents a fictional dinner conversation about usury among four men: a preacher, a doctor of law, a civilian, and a merchant.

<sup>54</sup> This is exactly what Antonio does.

In 1625, for example, Francis Bacon published a short essay titled *Of Usury*, in which he notes its “incommodities and commodities” (Bacon 241). He argues that, according to Christian belief, money should not generate money and that profit must not be made on a Sabbath. In addition, he wants to visually mark usurers and demands that they “should wear orange-tawny bonnets, because they do judaize” (421). However, the Jewish associations of usury do not keep Bacon from realising that lending money is a necessary activity. Bacon admits that usury, although being a “lazy trade” (421), is a means that is not only tolerable, but essential “for the wheels of the commercial market to turn” (Cerasano 44).

By and large, at the end of the sixteenth century, usury was “a common source of funding for agriculture, manufacturing, and domestic and foreign trade” (Janik 31). Although, according to Christian belief, usury “violates the Laws of God, nature, and nations” (ibid. 32), the practice was widespread even amongst aristocracy in Elizabethan England. Even Queen Elizabeth herself had borrowed money from foreign bankers. Interestingly, Shakespeare’s father, John, lent money at interest and, in fact, was sued twice and punished once for charging high rates.<sup>55</sup>

However, the image and concept of usury in Elizabethan England was about to change; reasons for this transformation were “greater sophistication about finance in the late sixteenth century”, which was “a by-product of expanding overseas trade” (Shapiro 98) and, as mentioned before, the decree of 1571. Shapiro concludes that “by the end of the sixteenth century, then, Jews were increasingly identified not with usury per se, but with outrageous and exploitive lending for profit” (98).

After the historical and theoretical frameworks have been outlined, this paper will now turn to its practical part, i.e. the analyses of Shylock’s visual presence in four film adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice*.

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Janik 32

## Part II

### 3. (Dominant) Ways of Seeing Shylock – *The Merchant of Venice* in Film

Although *The Merchant of Venice* has been very popular on stage few film versions of the play exist.<sup>56</sup> This may be partly due to its controversial treatment of Shylock, which many people in our times find morally reprehensible. It goes without saying that the horrific events of World War II – the persecution and systematic extermination of millions of Jews<sup>57</sup> – have altered the understanding of the play effectively. Without doubt, screening *The Merchant of Venice* poses a challenge for filmmakers and Shylock is a difficult character to present in films. Bearing the Holocaust in mind, there is a tendency to present Shylock as the tragic victim of the Christians' ruthless behaviour. Likewise, Hindle argues that

[i]n a post-Holocaust world, Shylock is regarded more as a tragic figure whose persecution as a Jew can be read as representative of the treatment of any ethnic group, alienated, viciously attacked or 'ethnically cleansed' by other who claim racial and, religious or ethnic superiority over them. (63)

As already mentioned in the introductory part of this thesis, the main concern of the second part of this paper is Shylock's visual presence in films. According to Marita Sturken in *Practices of Looking* filmic representations provide a complex field in which power relations are enacted and can be seen as important elements in the production and distribution of stereotypical and dominant ways of seeing. She argues that these modes of representations were and are not without considerable influence and power in European ways of dealing with other peoples

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<sup>56</sup> In 2002 a New Zealand company produced a Maori *Merchant of Venice* derived from a 1945 translation of the play into Maori. The film was directed by Don Selwyn. Although a very recent production, which deals with postcolonial matters such as minority status and oppression, this version is not part of my analysis. Additionally, Orson Welles made a colour film of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1969, but two reels were stolen during the production and its release was never realised. Apart from this, eight silent film versions of the play were made between 1908 and 1923 in Germany, Italy, America and France. (Cf. Cerasano 117-118 and Welsh 53)

<sup>57</sup> Lacquer argues that an exact number of Holocaust victims does not exist. All in all, the majority of European Jews was killed in the course of this genocide. Eventually, when the war was over, "European Jewry had effectively ceased to exist". (121-122)

and cultures: colonial ways of seeing still circulate and have power in the present.<sup>58</sup>

How power relations are enacted has been attempted to illustrate in Part I: based on theories by Said and Bhabha, Kalmar and Penslar as well as Bartels have come to argue that Jews were and have been subject to Orientalist, i.e. stereotypical, representations. This was mainly due to their marginal status within societies, in which the colonising power almost always dominated the colonised minority. In the context of English colonialism, which started in the early modern period, Jews were regarded as a colonised people who were dominated and suffered from expulsion, persecution and other forms of maltreatment. However, although they were considered as alien their indistinguishableness to the English produced anxiety, as stable and dividing notions between the English and the Jews were erased.

If films provide a field on which power relations are enacted, how are Shylock's filmic representations engendered? How is Shylock visualised in the films under consideration: is he a powerful character or is he dominated and marginalised by the Christians? Is he established as 'the other'? Is he presented stereotypically? Is he a tragic victim, a greedy villain or simply a comic figure?

Shylock's visual presence will be affected by means of visual style in the selected films. Since a film's visual style mainly refers to "what the audience can see and the way in which we are invited to see it" (Gibbs 6), mise-en-scène will predominately determine the way Shylock is perceived. But what exactly is mise-en-scène? This analytical film term is basically concerned with the contents of the film frame and how it has been structured and organised to achieve particular emotional and psychological effects. The purpose of a shot's mise-en-scène is to convey an image's meaning and each shot is usually deliberately constructed.<sup>59</sup> David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson argue in *Film Art: An Introduction* that mise-

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Sturken 113

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Giannetti 51

en-scène is a powerful device in film-making mostly because it is “of all techniques of cinema [...] the one with which we are most familiar” (Bordwell 176).

As will be explained in more detail subsequently, mise-en-scène basically refers to almost everything that goes into the composition within the frame and usually comprises setting, lighting, colours, decor, costumes, character (object) placement as well as camera shots and positions. According to John Gibbs in *Mise-en-scene: Film Style and Interpretation*, by means of active interaction these elements are most productive<sup>60</sup> and, consequently, influence how we take in Shylock visually.

The following mise-en-scène analyses will focus on these filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice*:

- *The Merchant of Venice* (1973) directed by John Sichel; Shylock played by Sir Laurence Olivier
- *The BBC Merchant of Venice* (1980) directed by Jack Gold; Shylock played by Warren Mitchell
- *The Merchant of Venice* (2001) directed by Trevor Nunn; Shylock played by Henry Goodman
- William Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (2004), directed by Michael Radford; Shylock played by Al Pacino

As already mentioned before, not many contemporary film versions of *The Merchant of Venice* exist, which have been screened after the Holocaust. Consequently, the selection of the films under consideration does not follow certain criteria but has been mainly made on grounds of availability. Before I start with the film analyses, a detailed description of mise-en-scène and its components, as well as its emotional and psychological implications for the viewer, will be given.

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Gibbs 26

Mise-en-scène is a French theatrical term and literally means “having been put into the scene”.<sup>61</sup> For film makers it has a more extended meaning and refers to the way iconographic, i.e. physical and visual, elements are arranged spatially within the film frame/camera shot.<sup>62</sup> However, Gibbs notes that mise-en-scène is “not a straightforward descriptive term” (1); which components of filmmaking are included in the mise-en-scène is subject to debate and film scholars use this term differently.

In this thesis mise-en-scène will be applied simply as follows: everything physical and visual that goes into the frame before filming begins. Consequently, points of analyses will be setting, costume, props, makeup, lighting and colour scheme. Furthermore, the paper’s examination of mise-en-scène will include the contents of the frame and the way it has been organised, i.e. what is shot and how, camera position and angles and the space a character occupies. Additionally, although not part of mise-en-scène, sound, editing and camera movement will be considered if they affect the composition.

The setting generally refers to the locale of a film or film scene and includes everything the audience sees of a place. Settings can either be constructed studio sets, actual locations or computer-generated settings. Shooting on location enhances the authenticity of a film and is generally cheaper than a studio set. The advantage of studio sets and computer-generated settings is its ability to create artificial worlds, which can be controlled by the film maker. However, computer-generated scenery is very often cost and labour intensive.<sup>63</sup>

Settings usually function to establish the situation and provide visual information about the time and place of a film. However, according to Giannetti, settings are “not merely backdrops for the action, but symbolic extensions of the theme and characterization” (303). Thus, the setting is very often informative: it serves to direct, or sometimes even misdirect, viewers; provides thematic and psychological

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Nemes 63

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Giannetti 45, Bordwell 207, Valasek 6

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Giannetti 303-305

commentary; and conveys character disposition. Since the action of the film and the setting are interrelated, the design of a setting may influence the way we perceive characters and the film as a whole.<sup>64</sup>

Costumes, props and makeup are usually important elements of the setting of a film. Put simply, costume basically refers to the clothes a character wears. According to the principle 'you are what you wear', costumes primarily function to denote, identify and differentiate characters and can reveal "class, self-image, even psychological states" (Giannetti 317) and can indicate character transformation. Costumes as well as props, i.e. objects in the setting of a scene given a specific meaning and function, are both indicators of/suggest time and place and usually match with the setting. Props usually have a great associative effect; by introducing bits of information they help advance the story or delineate the character. Make-up is regarded as part of costume and was originally needed to improve the expressiveness of the actor's face on early film stocks. Now it is mainly used to stress and change parts of the actor's face as well as facial expressions.<sup>65</sup>

According to Bordwell, lighting is the most important element of *mise-en-scène* as it creates a film's overall visual tone, i.e. its general mood and atmosphere (198). Lighting has "great expressive power" (Gibbs 6) and, consequently, determines the way we take in characters. As a result, how an image or character is presented to us depends much on its lighting key. By creating highlights and shadows characters and objects are commented on; for example, a strongly highlighted portion of the frame may guide our attention to someone or something important. In contrast, a shadow may hide a portion of a face or an aspect of the frame composition, which mainly creates tension and suspense.<sup>66</sup> Lighting, thus, establishes a scale of importance, usually emphasising the main character.

Three-point lighting is the standard lighting design for classical cinema and consists of key light, fill light and back light. Key light, which can be high or low

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Valasek, 6-11, 420, Giannetti 303-317, Bordwell 179-184

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Bordwell 184-191, Valasek 11-25, Giannetti 317-328

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Giannetti 17-18

key, is “the primary source of illumination” (Giannetti 17) and sets the general atmosphere of a film. Fill light is used to eliminate shadows cast by the key and back light illuminates the background areas and separates the foreground and background, creating depth.<sup>67</sup>

These lighting keys can be combined flexibly, in order to achieve a variety of effects. In classical Hollywood filmmaking, various styles of lighting exist, which are closely linked to particular genres. High key lighting refers to a lighting scheme that produces bright illumination with little contrast between brighter and darker areas. As a consequence, images are usually very brightly lit with less or no shadows and have smooth surfaces. Due to its brightness high-key lighting is very often associated with genres such as comedies and musicals with the main purpose of eliminating shadows. Low key lighting, on the other hand, is less illuminating and creates heavier and diffused shadows. Normally, little fill light in combination with little key light results in extremely dark and light regions within the image. Low-key lighting in combination with high contrast lighting, which produces very stark and dramatic contrasts between light and dark areas within the frame, is particularly applied to thrillers, mystery films and film noir as it creates a subdued and gloomy mood. Backlighting usually results in silhouettes of characters and objects. When a character or object is lit from the back, not only an air of mystery but also romance is produced. Backlighting is particularly important when something menacing is shown without really showing it.<sup>68</sup>

Colour is “an important expressive element for filmmakers” (Gibbs 8) and “tends to be a subconscious element in film” (Giannetti 22). Colour, which may be associated with costume, lighting, props or setting, is principally used for symbolic purposes. Colour symbolism is culture-specific, but usually appeals to emotion; cool colours, which normally retreat in a composition, tend to indicate “tranquillity, aloofness, and serenity” (ibid. 22), whereas warm colours, which attract the eye more easily than cold colours, stick out prominently and propose “aggressiveness, violence, and stimulation” (Giannetti 22). In terms of atmosphere, a bright and

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. Nemes 70

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Giannetti 19-22, Valasek 64-68

saturated colour scheme tends to suggest cheerfulness and vitality, while a washed-out and pale colour scheme refers to repression and melancholy.<sup>69</sup>

As already mentioned above, *mise-en-scène* deals with the organisation of people and objects within the film frame. As such, the frame forms an important and powerful component of *mise-en-scène*, as it actively comments on elements within the frame. Since the frame offers “only a selective view” (Gibbs 26) questions such as how a character or an object is framed and photographed, what is included and what is left out of the frame and who is positioned where within the frame, matter significantly and are integral concerns of frame composition.<sup>70</sup>

According to visual and psychological research, different areas of the frame have different implications; for example, the middle area of the frame generally contains the most important and dominant visual elements, since it is considered as “the intrinsic center of interest” (Giannetti 51). The upper part of the frame signals power, authority, as well as threat and dominance. The lower part of the frame implies subservience, vulnerability and powerlessness. This means, for instance, that a figure positioned closer to the top part of the frame tends to control those who are placed near the bottom part and vice versa. Figures positioned near the left and right fringes of the frame, i.e. off-centre, normally imply insignificance.<sup>71</sup>

The film frame, as well as framing devices within the film frame<sup>72</sup>, can powerfully affect the image by means of size and shape of the frame. Framing has several functions and meanings; as a means of segmentation, the frame literally delimits figures and objects, usually detaching these elements from its environment. In addition, framing creates a sense of imprisonment, as it symbolically traps those within the frame. However, framing also focuses our attention to particular elements within the film frame.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Giannetti 22-28, Gibbs 5, Bordwell 209

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Monaco 179

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Giannetti 51-53

<sup>72</sup> Framing devices within the *mise-en-scène* can be, for example, door frames, windows, other characters or objects, as well as lighting. Generally speaking, any objects or character on the set can be used to function as a frame. (Mikunda 77)

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Bordwell 209

How images are framed is also meaningful. Tight framing, for instance, generally suggests a feeling of entrapment within a confined space. For example, a tightly framed close up or medium shot tends to propose imprisonment. In addition, the closer the shot, the more confined a character appears. However, a tightly framed shot may also suggest emotional closeness and familiarity. Loose framing, on the other hand, generally denotes freedom, as the character has more space for moving.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, not only the place where elements are positioned within the film frame is a matter of importance. The way elements are arranged within the frame usually determines how we perceive film images visually as well as emotionally. Visual theorists assume that when we watch an image we scan particular regions within this image successively and are usually attracted by the visually most prominent areas. This stems from the fact that our brain and eyes are more likely to notice differences and change than “uniform, prolonged stimuli” (Bordwell 207). These prominent visual areas, to which the viewer’s attention is drawn, are called the dominant in film analysis. Usually created by contrast or change, the dominant is usually the brightest element within the frame and prominently stands out from other elements. Additionally, other techniques that create dominants are framing, colour, shape, size, movement, especially when other elements stay immobile, as well as speaking.<sup>75</sup>

Dominant elements within a composition, which instantly attract the human eye, are referred to as visual weights. The distribution of visual weight in films is governed by certain principles: for example, the larger an element appears within a composition the greater its visual weight. However, the screen size is not decisive but the perspective from which it is shot, i.e. high or low angle. The farther away an element is from the frame’s central area, the greater its visual weight. Since images are usually scanned from left to right, elements on the right are heavier than those on the left. Consequently, the left side of a composition is often made visually heavier than the right, in order to visually balance a composition.

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. Giannetti 73

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Bordwell 209, Giannetti 60-62, Monaco 190-193

Elements placed in the upper part of the frame are visually heavier than those in the lower parts of the frame. Lighter elements are heavier than darker. Warm, bold colours attract the eye more instantly than cold, pale colours. In addition, figures that attract attention by means of speaking and moving also create visual weight. Single figures and objects have more visual dominance than those in a crowd.<sup>76</sup>

Another “vital expressive element” (Gibbs 17) of *mise-en-scène* is space. As a “spatial practice” (Bordwell 176) the arrangement of the *mise-en-scène* within the frame lets the audience experience screen space, i.e. “the three-dimensional space in which the action takes place” (Bordwell 208) in certain ways. Consequently, as the film shot projected on the screen is two-dimensional, the *mise-en-scène* provides spatial devices which function to suggest the three-dimensional character of the action. As a result, particular perspectival strategies within the frame, such as lighting (shadows), movement, line and size, create distinct visual planes, which establishes on-screen space for the audience.<sup>77</sup> Within a film frame there are three visual planes: foreground, middle ground and background. These levels of space not only establish depth and volume of a film shot but also influence the visual weight considerably. For example, the more in the foreground the more prominent and dominant a character or object appears.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, *mise-en-scène*, does not only establish on-screen space but also provides a commentary on personal space between characters within the frame.<sup>79</sup> According to Giannetti, the frame functions as a kind of territorial space, in which power and interpersonal relationships are enacted. For instance, the more space a character occupies within the frame the more powerful and dominant this character appears. Likewise, less dominant figures usually cover less space.<sup>80</sup>

What the audience sees of a film’s *mise-en-scène* is basically determined by what the camera depicts. Consequently, “the position of the camera governs our access

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Giannetti 62, Mikunda 35-36, Valasek 42

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Bordwell 212

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Giannetti 67

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Gibbs 17

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Giannetti 67-70

to the action” (Gibbs 19) and camera shots create on-screen space for the viewer. According to Giannetti, camera shots refer to “the camera’s amount of subject matter that is included within the frame” (9) and can be described according to how close or far away the camera is to a human body. Although various different classifications exist, camera shots are generally divided into six main types: the extreme long shot, the long shot, the medium shot, the medium close-up, the close-up and the extreme close-up.<sup>81</sup> The extreme long shot, sometimes called establishing shot, shows distance and usually frames the landscape in which the action takes place. As a consequence, human beings figure very small in such shots. The long shot approximately refers to range between the audience and the stage in the theatre.<sup>82</sup> Although the background is still dominant, figures are clearly visible. The medium shot covers the human body from the knees or waist up and functions to show movement and dialogue. Medium close-ups range from the human body’s shoulders up and are the prevailing shots in scenes establishing conversations.<sup>83</sup> The close-up contains the human face or a small object, which is often enlarged. The extreme close-up shows a portion of the human face.<sup>84</sup>

From a psychological point of view, shots indicate physical and emotional distance and closeness respectively by projecting distance, angle and level onto an object or character. The distance between the camera and a character determines how we see and experience a character; the closer the space between the camera and the character, the more emotionally involved we feel. For instance, close-ups, revealing a character’s inner feelings by way of facial expression, suggest great emotional involvement. However, when the character is threatening, a close-up seems to invade our space.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. Branston

<sup>82</sup> Deep-focus shots are often long shots; photographed in depth a deep-focus shot presents different distances simultaneously in sharp focus. It is sometimes called a wide-angle shot because a wide-angle lens is used to shoot this type of shot. (Cf. Mikunda 56)

<sup>83</sup> Two-shots and three-shots represent two and three characters in one frame respectively. Two shots suggest harmony, balance and shared space, whereas three-shots tend to produce unbalanced and unstable situations and relationships. However, two shots can also convey hostility by keeping two characters at the fringes of the frame – leaving much space between them.

(Giannetti 66 and 69)

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Giannetti 10-11, Valasek 30-31

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Nelmes 71, Giannetti 1, Gibbs 19

With regard to a character's angle to the camera, i.e. how frontal a character faces the camera, the character can be shot in five basic kinds: full front, quarter turn, profile, three-quarter turn and showing his or her back to camera. How a character faces the camera suggests how intimate the audience gets with a character; the more we see of a character's face, the greater we experience closeness and identification. In analogy, the less we see the more mysterious and inaccessible a character will seem. Full front, i.e. when the actor faces the camera directly, is the most intimate position. When an actor is looking directly at the audience, his or her feelings are completely exposed and the character usually remains vulnerable as well as sympathetic. The quarter turn position still features a high degree of intimacy; however, the character is less emotionally committed. Characters in profile, i.e. looking off frame, seem to be watched from a neutral perspective and imply pensiveness and remoteness. When a character is in a three-quarter turn to the camera, he or she appears more detached. Finally, turning his or her back on the audience, the character suggests distance and remains mysterious and isolated.<sup>86</sup>

The angle from which the camera photographs characters or objects also influences the way the audience takes in characters or objects within the frame. It goes without saying that angle shots interpret character relationships considerably. In terms of vertical axis, camera angles can be straight-on, high angle or low angle. Straight-on is the most objective angle and takes on a neutral perspective. High as well as low angle shots are subjective and seem interpret character relations and scene.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, these angles indicate power relations:

[b]y tilting the camera down at a character, making it appear small, a sense of dominance over the character is created. On the other hand, with a low angle shot tilted up toward the subject can create the feeling of being dominated or overwhelmed by a force that appears larger than life. (Valasek 43)

In terms of horizontal axis, the camera can also assume a tilted angle. Sometimes called oblique or Dutch angle, tilted-angle shots imitate "impending movement" (Giannetti 15) and usually indicate the imbalance and anxiety of characters or

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Giannetti 75

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Mikunda 96-99, Giannetti 12-15

situations. From a visual and psychological point of view, oblique camera angles are disorienting and disturbing because the horizontal and vertical lines of the shot are not aligned with the lines of the frame.<sup>88</sup>

After all these film analytical terms have been explained, the paper will now turn to its analyses of Shylock in the four respective film adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice*. By examining screenshots, which will be listed in the Appendix, general observations regarding Shylock's status within the mise-en-scène will be made. In doing so, the aforementioned film terms will come to serve as descriptive devices for the analyses. That is, what effects do these criteria have on the perception of Shylock? How does the choice of setting influence the way Shylock is perceived? Moreover, how do costume, props and colour influence his visual appearance? How does lighting alter the way Shylock is presented visually? Do camera angle and position modify audience response with regard to Shylock? Does the frame as well as the distribution of characters and their space within the frame affect the composition and, in turn, Shylock?

As already stressed in Chapter 1, since complete mise-en-scène analyses would go beyond the scope of this paper, the same situations will be analysed carefully in each film: the beginning, the introduction of Shylock, the opposition between Shylock and Antonio, the relationship between Shylock and Jessica, Shylock's loss and defence, Shylock's behaviour and treatment at the trial, and the ending. The following analyses will concentrate on these very moments because they illustrate and focus on Shylock as well as his behaviour best. Although Shylock is not present at the beginning of each film, it is no less important because the beginning sets the general mood of a film. In addition, crucial aspects such as time and place, which orient the viewer, are settled. For example, whether filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* are set in the past or in our modern times, in Venice or some other locale will be decisive and meaningful to our understanding of Shylock. The introduction of Shylock is particularly important, since how Shylock is presented to the audience for the first time and what kind of impression the audience gets of Shylock matter enormously. Another crucial

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. Nemes 72, Valasek 45-47, Mikunda 103

aspect which influences the way Shylock is taken in is the opposition between Shylock and Antonio: are both opponents equal or does one character dominate in terms of mise-en-scène? How is their first encounter staged? How are power and space allocated? Not only Shylock's relation to his rival will be explored, his relation to his daughter is also of particular interest. How is the relationship between Shylock and Jessica established? Is Shylock a loving and/or authoritarian father? How does Shylock react to his pecuniary and familial loss and how does he justify his ruthless behaviour at court? Last but not least, the ending, in particular, the final feeling the audience is left with, will be commented on.

Along these lines of inquiry, the following screenshots will be scrutinised thoroughly. The subsequent films will be presented in chronological order starting with the oldest in terms of year of publication.

### **3.1. Laurence Olivier: "[w]hich is the merchant here? and which the Jew?" (*Merchant*, 4.1.170)**

This television production of *The Merchant of Venice*, which was filmed in 1973 and released in the UK in 1974<sup>89</sup>, features Sir Laurence Olivier and his wife Joan Plowright as Shylock and Portia. Directed by John Sichel it is a filmed stage adaptation of Jonathan Miller's National Theatre production, which was performed in 1970. Notably, playing Shylock was the last major Shakespearean stage role of Laurence Olivier.<sup>90</sup>

#### **Beginning**

The film opens with a long shot of a place surrounded by grey, tall houses (*Figure 1*). Three men walk by and two men exit from a house. The audience follows the three men into a cafe (*Figure 2*). Music from off-screen plays salon music; inside the cafe one sees an elderly Antonio who discusses the reasons for his sadness with his youthful friends (*Figure 3*). According to lighting and colour scheme,

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Janik 231

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Brooke, <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/542970/index.html>>

interior and exterior sets are dimly lit and subdued colours – brown, black, grey – prevail and dominate the scenes to come. An overall muted atmosphere is established, which forecasts that there will be tragedy and not comedy.

The costumes Antonio and his friends are wearing indicate the time in which the action of the film takes place: frock coats, top hats, suits, beards, hairstyles and walking sticks point to the fashion popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But why is this televised version set in this “mercantile, Edwardian setting” (Rothwell 66)? Bulman explains that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, anti-Semitic prejudices were mainly based on financial and societal rather than religious grounds. Racial anti-Semitism was about to begin, and Jews were regarded as a distinct race, which was based on scientific facts. At that time private bankers, usually Jewish, were highly influential in Europe, because they often provided the necessary money for industries and enterprises to expand. As a consequence, capitalists regarded rich Jewish financiers as the root of all economic evils. As such, Jews came to be envied for their wealth and were scapegoated for all iniquities which could not plausibly be explained.<sup>91</sup> In this particular time, thus, Jews were assimilated into society, but were regarded suspiciously.

### **Introduction of Shylock**

The first time the audience gets an image of Shylock, he is standing, as we learn in the course of this scene, in his office (*Figure 4*). The medium shot shows Shylock in profile, as he is looking out of a French window off-frame. As already mentioned, characters presented in profile suggest pensiveness. In addition, Shylock is tapping a pencil on his chin, which again might denote contemplation. And that is exactly what he is doing at the moment – considering Bassanio’s request for 3, 000 ducats. Although Shylock is positioned on the right side of the frame - a position that suggests power and importance – he seems confined. This stems from the fact that Shylock is tightly framed by the window frame located slightly off-centre, which reduces his space considerably.

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Bulman 76-81

*Figure 4* illustrates Shylock as an aged, grey-haired, dignified and austere-looking man wearing glasses and a black coat that seems to blur with the background. Although Shylock wears a skull cap, due to a lack of lighting, it is barely visible at a first glance. This might suggest that in this adaptation Shylock's religion is not the primary focus of interest and conflict. It seems as if Shylock blends in with the background, which indicates his efforts at assimilation. Only the white collar of his shirt and his highlighted face stand out prominently and establish dominant contrast. As a consequence, Shylock seems confident and commanding, which may be based on his financially affluent status.<sup>92</sup> For example, Shylock can afford an assistant, who turns the pages of a contract for him (*Figure 5*) and his house is elegantly furnished: bookcases, Oriental rugs and busts are decorative props that illustrate his wealth (*Figures 19, 46, 52*).

However, despite his wealth, the following screenshot depicts Shylock's seclusion (*Figure 6*): while the men are negotiating the terms of their business, Bassanio is in three-quarter position to the viewer, whereas Shylock faces the audience full front. Consequently, Shylock elicits more empathy than Bassanio simply because of his position vis-a-vis the camera. However, although on seemingly respecting and friendly terms, the desk with a treasure chest on top functions as a diagonal separation device. Again, Shylock is tightly framed and seems confined behind the desk as well as framed by the window in the background and, in addition, is dominated by Bassanio who is positioned in the foreground.

After the arrangements have been settled, Bassanio and Shylock leave the office and descend the stairs down to the ground floor (*Figure 7*). Apparently, Shylock's office is on the first floor. The downward movement could indicate that Shylock descends himself to dealings with Christians although they ostracise him.

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Janik 231

## **Shylock and Antonio**

On their first encounter and in terms of physical appearance, Shylock and Antonio are strikingly similar, one might argue almost indistinguishable (*Figure 8*); both have the same age, the same height and both are elegantly dressed gentlemen - wearing the same top hat, gloves and frock coat. Shylock and Antonio even keep the same posture: both have their walking sticks at their chins. Shylock's skull cap, the only thing which visually marks him as a Jew, is perfectly concealed under his top hat. This might suggest that whenever Shylock goes out in public, his skull cap disappears under the hat, leaving him indistinguishable from the citizens of Venice. As a consequence, it is not his appearance that marks him as alien to Venetian society. However, Shylock speaks in a slightly foreign accent. According to James Bulman, artificial teeth and gums made Olivier's mouth area stand out and helped him to assume a foreign accent (80). Nevertheless, although their sameness, and consequently equality, is stressed, Shylock's foreground position at the right side of the frame and highlighted face mark him as the visually more prominent.

Although it seems that these men seem to treat one another civilly – as gentlemen probably do - contempt is present and subtly displayed. For example, by circling one another, Shylock and Antonio betray their collateral hostile feelings. This results in a constant change of position in three shots of Shylock, Antonio and Bassanio (*Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13*). *Figure 15* powerfully illustrates how Shylock – framed in a long shot – shows his covert hate for Antonio. He symbolically threatens Antonio by pointing his walking stick like a sword. Likewise, Antonio's dislike for Shylock is emphasised in *Figure 17*: the camera moves along with Antonio, who invades Shylock's space when he talks of his ill-treatment of Shylock.

Nonetheless, Shylock is the focal point of attention and dominates this sequence by character placement and single shots. *Figure 12*, for example, shows Shylock reading a newspaper, and although his body is covered by the newspaper, he occupies the foreground and covers a larger part of the frame than Antonio and

Bassanio, who are confined to the left side of the composition. Additionally, this hiding behind the paper might again refer to his attempts at assimilation, i.e. not to be seen and blending in. As already mentioned, Antonio, Shylock and Bassanio move a lot and three-shots of them – mainly medium shots which indicate their dynamic dialogue situation<sup>93</sup> – prevail throughout this sequence (*Figures 9, 11, 13, 18, 20*). However, Shylock is the only one who gets single shots (*Figures 16, 19*) and is frequently placed at the right - intrinsically dominant - side of the frame (*Figures 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21*) or the attention-grabbing centre position (*Figures 9, 18, 20*).

### **Shylock and Jessica**

Although Shylock is a stern father (*Figure 28*) there are signs and moments of affection. *Figure 25*, for instance, depicts Shylock gently touching Jessica's chin; likewise, when he gives her keys to his house and safe, he lays his hand protectively on her hands (*Figure 30*). Although Jessica's lines of the original play that "Our house is hell" (*Merchant*, 2.3.2) are deleted in this television adaptation, one gets the feeling that Shylock's house is a cheerless place to live in. Jessica's sober dress and her gloomy facial expression add to this impression (*Figures 22, 25*). Only when she speaks of Lorenzo, does her face lighten up (*Figure 23*).

Shylock is a patriarch who commands his household and Jessica. This is reinforced by the fact that he dominates the frame by means of screen size, lighting and movement; for example, in *Figure 24* when Shylock adjusts his tie, he looks, as if into a mirror, full front into the camera. His face is strongly lit and his body occupies three quarters of the screen. Moreover, *Figures 26* and *30*, illustrate how Shylock intrudes into Jessica's space. Jessica feigns the obedient daughter, who hands her father his hat and walking stick as he is about to leave the house, and stays behind Shylock when they descend the stairs (*Figure 29*)<sup>94</sup>. As already mentioned, the act of descending could be interpreted as Shylock's

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. Giannetti 10

<sup>94</sup> Shylock also takes the lead, when he and Bassanio descend the stairs (*Figure 7*).

condescension to deal with the Christians. This time, Shylock condescends himself to have dinner with Bassanio and his suave friends.

However, that Jessica is scheming against her father is already hinted at in *Figure 22*: a low angle shot and her half lit face suggests her dubious plan and the betrayal of her father. In addition, Jessica is often shown in three-quarter turn position – a position which, as already has been mentioned, signifies detachment, and which implies that she has already dissociated herself from her domineering father (*Figures 26, 28, 30, 31*). What is more, in *Figure 27*, Jessica's body casts a shadow on Shylock. This might suggest that, on a symbolical level, Shylock's life will become overshadowed by her abandonment and its aftermath. When Jessica speaks the lines, "Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed, I have a father, you a daughter lost" (32:48-32-59), she is standing in front of the entrance doors, her face is reflected in the window pane. The audience does not see her actual face but a reflected complexion, which is delivering the lines. This again suggests her duplicitous personality and dissociation from her father (*Figure 31*).<sup>95</sup> In comparison to Shylock, who descends stairs, Jessica in *Figure 32* ascends the stairs, which might imply her social rise when she escapes and marries a Christian.

### **Shylock's Loss and Defence**

The next sequence shows Salerio and Solanio as they discuss Jessica's elopement and Antonio's lost ventures and mock Shylock's grief over his lost daughter (*Figure 33*). They come to a halt in front of Shylock's house, and miserable Shylock approaches them slowly (*Figure 34*); in this long shot Shylock is literally trapped between Salerio and Solanio, who are in the foreground and, due to perspective, restrict Shylock's space to a minimum in the middle of the frame. This time he is not an elegantly dressed gentleman; he does not wear a frock coat and a top hat but a vest and protective sleeves, which might suggest that he is at work. Jessica's abandonment has caused him so much pain that he is destitute, stripped of his confidence (and elegant attire), which leaves him vulnerable and

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Faulstich 152

unprotected to the verbal taunts of Salerio and Solanio. However, his misery turns to utter hate when they come to speak of Antonio and his muffled crying voice changes to uncontrollable screaming. Salerio and Solanio turn their heads to him and all the focus is now on raging Shylock (*Figures 35, 36*). *Figure 37* frames Shylock in a medium long shot as he rests on railings for support, his back is to the audience as if gazing into a canal; symbolically, Shylock has turned his back to the world like the world did as it took the things he loved most – his daughter and his ducats. Introduced with the sound of bells tolling, Shylock's turn has come and his despair turns to hate. The camera shot has changed from medium long shot to medium close-up (*Figure 38*); on a more intimate scale, Shylock's grief over lost Jessica has turned to hate for Antonio and becomes fully visible now. Revived by hate against Antonio, Shylock becomes threatening, like the stone relief of a dragon at the right side of the frame. A low angle perspective and Shylock's less prominently lit face reinforce the air of menace. In addition, Salerio is even forced out of the frame by rampant Shylock (*Figures 39-41*). In a medium close-up (*Figure 42*) directly facing the audience, Shylock exposes his inner feelings when he delivers his famous monologue, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" (*Merchant*, 3.1.52-53).

When Shylock says the lines, "The villainy you teach me I will execute" (50:43-50:47), he is again placed between Salerio and Solanio. However, this time he does not seem to be confined nor vulnerable as in the beginning of the sequence but simply threatening (*Figure 43*). Additionally, whenever he says the word "revenge" (50:31, 50:37) he slaps the backside of his right hand into the palm of his left, which creates a hard, chopping sound, which adds emphasis.

Back in his office, Shylock is standing with a picture frame in his hand (*Figure 44*). In comparison to *Figure 4*, Shylock has undergone a physical and psychological transformation: the smug and shrewd business man has turned into a grieving and caring father who cannot fathom the abandonment of his only child. This change is underscored by the change in his costume: his vest and shirt are unbuttoned and his skull cap is fully visible by means of lighting. The white, highlighted shirt contrasts with Shylock's less illuminated face, which refers to his gloomy frame of mind. Obviously, the less he wears the more vulnerable and exposed to pain he is.

Furthermore, Shylock's face is in quarter turn to the camera, which elicits more empathy than the profile position in *Figure 4*. Now, the character is placed mid-centre, his head is lowered and he gazes absent-mindedly off-screen - lost in thought and grief. The frame in his hands probably shows a photo of Jessica; by caressing and stroking the picture frame, an intimate effect is created (*Figure 45*).

The camera follows Shylock to the middle of his office where he smashes the photo frame to the ground. Now the frame - as Shylock himself - is shattered to pieces (*Figure 46*). However, the news of Antonio's ill-luck seems to vitalise him, and he starts a little dance (*Figure 47*). When Shylock learns of his daughter's prodigal activities in Genoa – the trading of the ring Shylock gave to her – he and Tubal are shown in a tight close-up (*Figure 48*). Shylock moves back to his desk and hugs another photo frame – this time of his wife (*Figure 49*). Eventually, out of a drawer of his desk, he takes a prayer shawl and wraps it around his face like a scarf (*Figure 51*). The close-up shows his intense emotional state and the tightly wrapped shawl seems like a protective shield. This series of close-ups of Shylock, in which his most emotional moments are shown, suggest that his further actions will be motivated by Jessica's desertion. In addition, the audience, who is now at its closest to Shylock, highly identifies with him (cf. *Figures 49-51*). Importantly, for the first time in this adaptation, Shylock's Jewishness is visually emphasised. Now Shylock is not presented as an assimilated gentleman similar to Antonio but a follower of the Jewish faith, who clings to his religion in hard times. Finally, the camera shot changes from close-up to long shot showing Shylock covered in his prayer shawl in the middle of the room (*Figure 52*); he seems lost amidst his wealthy home and his isolation and abandonment are apparent. What is left is bitterness, as the camera silently lingers on a shattered Shylock.

## **Shylock at the Trial**

The staging of the courtroom scene is civilised, muted, restrained – one might even argue – unexciting: Shylock does not bring a knife nor scales and Antonio does not reveal his bare breast ready for the execution. To start with, the courtroom is not really a courtroom, but resembles more an office with a large, oblong table in its centre (*Figure 54*). Obviously, the trial scene takes place in the duke's chambers and seems to be a private hearing rather than a public event. The duke probably hopes that Shylock and Antonio will settle their case amicably.

Shylock is presented confidently at the beginning. This stems from the fact that Shylock believes that, according to Venetian law, he is entitled to have his bond. *Figure 53* illustrates how his confidence is visualised by the way he enters the courtroom; Shylock takes the lead and moves in first – his two attendants follow suit; his illuminated face and white shirt improve his visual weight within the frame. Moreover, his black coat enhances his screen size considerably and he occupies the largest part of the frame.

Again, hostility and power relations are subtly represented; for example, the change in sitting and standing order indicates the shift in power relations. When Shylock speaks up in front of the duke, in order to state the nature of his bond and the impartiality of Venice, the duke is photographed at a high angle (*Figure 54*). However, when the duke insists on Shylock to temper justice with mercy (*Figure 55*), Shylock is sitting in a three-quarter turn position – distanced from the audience probably because of his cruel intentions – and the duke is towering over Shylock. Consequently, the duke is shot at a slightly low angle to stress his powerful position. Additionally, the downward movement of the shadows of the blinds, which are projected on the wall, add to focalise on Shylock's powerless position. In addition, the shadow of the blinds seems to indicate the impending fate of the opponents: first it is above Antonio (*Figure 56*), later behind Shylock when his plans have already been crossed (*Figure 62*).

Likewise, Shylock's waning power is visualised in *Figures 59-62*. Although Shylock at first dominates the frame in terms of lighting (*Figures 57 and 58*), he is soon relegated to the left fringe of the frame and eventually comes to be placed, i.e. confined, between the Christian Venetians. When Shylock learns that he shall not have his bond, he has taken the seat of Antonio, which might suggest that Shylock, not Antonio, must forfeit (compare *Figures 56 and 62*) the bond.

In *Figure 63* Shylock is already visually distanced from the desk and, correspondingly, the Venetian Christians, who are about to bring his downfall. When Shylock learns of the confiscation of his goods and forced conversion to Christianity, he clasps a column for support (*Figure 64*) and ultimately breaks down (*Figure 65*). The high angle perspective on Shylock on the ground stresses his defeat. He has to be supported by his attendants and Portia touches his face, in order to get his consent (*Figure 66*). His attendants carry Shylock out of the courtroom and suddenly a long and heart-throbbing wail from off-screen can be heard. Reaction shots of Portia, Bassanio, Antonio and the duke reveal their shocked and disturbed faces (*Figures 67-70*); apparently, there is no triumph in their faces. Lastly, the Venetians seem to be devastated by their own cruel behaviour (*Figure 71*). These images might imply that Shylock was treated too harshly and compassion for him is evoked.

## **Ending**

This television version of *The Merchant of Venice* ends with a medium shot of a saddened Jessica as she is reading her father's decree (*Figure 72*). Apparently, she is shaken by the fate of her father. Although Shylock does not appear in the final scene, his presence lingers powerfully; a mournful, Jewish song from off-screen underscores her melancholy and refers back to Shylock and their shared ethnic background. Even though Jessica is now officially a Christian, the background music emphasises her emotional bond with Judaism. Jessica and Antonio do not join the merry couples inside the ancestral house and both appear framed by two columns which might refer to their respective kinds of alienation:

although a Christian, Jessica will always be considered as an outsider, like her father. With Shylock's harsh disposal in mind, the audience is left with a feeling of pity, as Antonio and Jessica slowly leave the frame.

## **Conclusion**

Without doubt, Shylock is the main figure of this television adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. For example, lighting almost always illuminates Shylock's face, white hair and shirt; he frequently occupies the centre or the right side of the frame; he covers more space within the frame than other characters; and he is given more single shots and close-ups than other characters. However, Shylock repeatedly appears framed and, consequently, confined either by persons, props or set.

Laurence Olivier was particularly famous for his tragic roles<sup>96</sup> and consequently, the mise-en-scène works to represent Shylock as a tragic and sympathetic figure that is more victim than villain. There are moments which reinforce a sympathetic characterisation of Shylock; for example, many of the scenes that do not include Shylock or show Shylock's dark side have been cut out of the film completely. For instance, Shylock's hostile aside stating his hate for Antonio is removed from this television version. As a result, economic and religious reasons for seizing Antonio are gone and Shylock becomes motivated solely by Jessica's desertion and his subsequent personal loss. Additionally, Jessica's elopement disguised as a young boy and the comic parts of Lancelot and his father are cut, too, with the result that little remains of a comedy.

In this version, Shylock is not a miserly usurer as proposed in the original play text, but a dignified, austere and gentlemanly banker, who looks like other Venetian citizens. Particularly, his costume puts emphasis on assimilation and reinforces Shylock's attempt to emulate his opponents. His longing for social acceptance is powerfully suggested as his visibly Jewish characteristics, i.e. skull cap, is played

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Bulman 75

down. For example, Shylock displays his religion only at home and his skull cap remains unnoticed under a top hat whenever he goes into public. Consequently, in terms of appearance, Shylock is not constructed on binary oppositions. Contrary to Edward Said's assumption that colonised people often appear inferior and negative, Shylock is not regarded in such a manner.<sup>97</sup> However, although culturally and socially assimilated Shylock, who mimics the Christian Venetians, will never belong to Venetian society. Due to slightly exaggerated and stylised gestures, false teeth and gums Shylock seems at times awkward. As Homi Bhabha succinctly puts it, "to be Anglicised is *empathically* not to be English" (125).

### **3.2. Warren Mitchell: "here he comes in the likeness of a Jew"** **(Merchant, 3.1.20)**

Another television production of *The Merchant of Venice* was produced by the BBC in association with Time-Life Television in their series of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays filmed between 1978 and 1985.<sup>98</sup> This televised version, which was released in 1980, was again produced by Jonathan Miller and directed by Jack Gold.<sup>99</sup> When it was broadcast in America, the Jewish Anti Defamation League uttered harsh criticism, mainly because the production was accused of a stereotypical and derogatory depiction of Shylock. These charges of anti-Semitism, however, were refuted by the fact that the producer, director and main actor – Jonathan Miller, Jack Gold and Warren Mitchell - were all Jewish.<sup>100</sup> As a result, the controversy surrounding the production, especially its treatment of Shylock, brought more publicity than that of any other play in the series.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. Said 207

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Janik 243

<sup>99</sup> Cf. DVD cover

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Willis 37-38

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Janik 246

## **Beginning**

*Figure 1*, the first image of the film, reveals in a very long shot a sitting Antonio in a half lit studio set framed by Salerio and Solanio and two free-standing columns and a part of plastered wall on the right side of the frame. The decor is reduced to a minimum; there are no streets, houses, canals – even no studio ceiling - visible. The background against which Antonio and his friends are viewed, is merely a backcloth mottled with muted shades of grey, brown and orange. Apparently, in this adaptation Venice is not a busy city but seems a vague and uninhabited place; emphasis is put on atmosphere rather than detail of setting or authenticity.<sup>102</sup> This emphasis on open and unrestricted space might refer to Venice's famed open-minded and impartial attitude to its inhabitants<sup>103</sup> or might be read as reference to the universal character of Shakespeare's plays in general.

However, against this spare and stylised setting, actors and particularly their authentic and highly detailed costumes come to stand out prominently. For example, *Figures 3, 13, 44* show the elaborate and richly detailed Renaissance costumes of the Venetians; furs, plumed hats, jewellery, lavishly decorated and gold-trimmed capes in bold colours characterise their attires and express their wealth. Apparently, the Venetians look noble, and their costumes express the wealth of their owners. Although the Jews, i.e. Shylock, Tubal and Jessica, wear exclusively costumes with sombre colours, they look no less noble (*Figures 21 and 39*).

## **Introduction of Shylock**

How is Shylock introduced in this adaptation? *Figure 2* shows Shylock reduced to a mere black silhouette framed under an archway. Together with Bassanio, who is also reduced to a black figure, he enters the scene, negotiating the loan. Both black silhouettes contrast sharply with the luminescent orange background. In addition to Shylock's dark silhouette, which already indicates menace and ill-

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Willis 209 and Edelman 88

<sup>103</sup> Shylock mentions Venice's liberal stance in, "If you deny it, let the danger light / Upon your charter and your city's freedom!" (*Merchant*, 4.1.39-40)

boding, his entrance is accompanied with a kind of sombre and ominous flourish; obviously, Shylock is a shady character who poses a threat. Unlike Olivier, Mitchell's Shylock is introduced on the public streets of Venice and not at his home.

From the beginning, Shylock is clearly established as the other in this adaptation; as far as his looks are concerned, one might argue that Warren Mitchell's Shylock looks stereotypically Jewish (*Figures 3, 7, 9*): his hair is curly, grey and receding; his face is covered with a thick, grey beard; his eyes feature dark eyebrows and his forehead is prominent; he wears a long black coat<sup>104</sup> and a black skull cap. In addition, he speaks with a strong foreign accent. Even his animated gesturing, like nodding head and hand movements (*Figure 7*) mark him as empathically Jewish.<sup>105</sup> However, Bulman critically observes that "this squat, domestic, garrulous little man, this comic figure played with a plaintive face, was the Shylock whom Gold and Miller called authentically Jewish" (103).

In terms of height, Shylock is considerably shorter than the Christian Venetians. To accentuate his diminutive size, he is often filmed at high angle, which might suggest that Shylock is not regarded as equal but looked down by Antonio and his friends. For example, *Figures 9, 14, 17, 37* serve a case in point. Notwithstanding his smaller stature, Shylock poses a threat and frequently invades the space of others (*Figures 4, 5, 8, 15, 24, 26, 53, 58*). However, his menace often comical and makes it hard to take his villainy seriously.

### **Shylock and Antonio**

Before Antonio and Bassiano approach Shylock to negotiate the terms of their business, Shylock delivers his hostile feelings about Antonio in an aside (*Figures 6 and 7*). Shot in a medium close-up Shylock conspiratorially speaks the aside with a low voice directly addressing and facing the audience, as if he wants to win the

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<sup>104</sup> The black coat might also be a reference to his menace.

<sup>105</sup> Edelman argues that Warren Mitchell's Yiddish accent, exaggerated hand and face movements revived the stage Jew (88).

viewer's confidence. The full-front position of Shylock makes his hostile feelings even more accessible and underscores his villainy.

In comparison to Shylock, Antonio is completely different. Their disparity is pictured in *Figures 8, 10, 11, 12, 13*, in which columns function as division lines separating Shylock and Antonio visually. Whereas Shylock is emotional, agitated and scheming, Antonio is restrained, self-controlled and chivalrous. Antonio is often framed in profile, which might suggest his pensive and detached character (*Figures 8, 10, 15*). Antonio's muted character might also explain the change in background colour scheme from bright orange to subdued beige (compare *Figure 5* and *Figure 13*). Moreover, his self-control is indicated in his stiff posture; for instance, *Figures 8, 10, 12, 13* illustrate Antonio's reserved posture and attitude in medium shots and medium long shots. Only when he gets emotionally upset, i.e. revealing his inner feelings with regard to Shylock, the camera moves in on Antonio and he is, accordingly, framed in a tight close-up with Shylock (*Figure 16*).

Throughout their meeting, power relations between Shylock and Antonio seem to shift. Although Shylock is not even once placed on the right side of the frame (*Figures 8-17*) he gains prominence via movement. At the beginning, Shylock is visually dominated by Antonio and Bassanio; for example, with regard to three-shots, Shylock repeatedly appears in the middle position between Bassanio and Antonio. Although central position usually attracts attention, Shylock simply appears confined with little space for moving between the two Christian Venetians (*Figures 10, 11, 17*). This is mainly due to Shylock's shortened size and perspective, which has already been commented on. In addition, Antonio's and Bassanio's ornamented attires outdo Shylock's plain black coat and attract more attention. However, in *Figure 12* the opposite seems to be true and Shylock dominates Antonio and Bassanio: Shylock is positioned in the foreground and perspective equals the height of the three men. What is more, Shylock appears powerful as he covers more screen space than Bassanio and Antonio. Likewise, in *Figure 13*, Shylock is again in the foreground and dominates the whole left part of the frame. Noticeably, when Shylock starts the lines, "Signor Antonio, many a time and oft in the Rialto you have rated me" (23:13-23:18), he has his back on the audience and is slightly out of focus. Consequently, due to selective focus the

viewer concentrates on Antonio, who is photographed full front in a medium shot and whose reactions we happen to observe.

Shylock leaves the same way he entered before: as a black silhouette through the archway (*Figure 18*). However, Antonio's arm on Bassanio's shoulder as well as the archway result in a frame within the frame, which reduces Shylock's space to a minimum and one gets the feeling that Shylock disappears like a mouse through a mouse hole.

### **Shylock and Jessica**

Shylock's chamber is dark and sparsely furnished: a wooden desk, cupboards, and a menorah<sup>106</sup>. *Figure 19* shows steep stairs which indicates that Shylock's workplace is in the basement. The stairs form a diagonal line across the frame pushing Jessica to the right fringe of the screen constricting her space of movement. Furthermore, the line could also refer to Jessica's divided loyalty. Obviously, living in Shylock's dark house is like hell for Jessica – a cellar in which she is literally captured. Additionally, the diagonal separation line might also foreshadow Jessica's separation from Shylock. That she wants to escape from her imprisonment is visualised in *Figure 20*, which shows Jessica with illuminated face looking upward referring to her bright future and desired social ascent when she escapes and marries a Christian.

Shylock and Launcelot Gobbo have to go downstairs to reach Shylock's rooms – the servant follows after the master (*Figure 22*). In contrast to Olivier's Shylock, who had his office upstairs, Mitchell's Shylock's office is below ground level. This means that Shylock has to ascend stairs, in order to meet the Christians. In addition, Shylock is shot at a low angle, which supports the upward gaze and reminds the audience of Shylock's inferior position (*Figures 22-24*). However, photographed from below, Shylock's importance is increased<sup>107</sup>, which indicates Shylock's important and commanding position at home. His repeated placement at

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<sup>106</sup> The menorah and his skull cap are Shylock's only visual markers of his religion.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Giannetti 15

the right side of the frame also supports this assumption (*Figures 23, 24, 25, 26, 27*).

Nevertheless, Shylock seems to be a caring father; for example, in *Figure 25* he gently touches Jessica's hand. Jessica, however, is ashamed to be her father's child, which she confesses in a medium close-up to the audience in an aside (*Figure 20*). In this shot, her half-lit face reveals her treacherous and deceptive nature. Obviously, Jessica does not harbour misgivings betraying her father. Although she behaves properly in front of her father, *Figure 27* depicts a disrespectful Jessica, who mocks her father behind his back, when Shylock delivers the proverb "Fast bind, fast find. A proverb never stale in thrifty mind" (47:31-47:37). Apparently, she must have heard the proverb a thousand times.

### **Shylock's Loss and Defence**

The next scene opens again with Shylock entering through an archway (*Figure 28*); he seems somehow distracted - mumbling unintelligible words – and does not notice Salerio and Solanio. As a result, Shylock literally bumps into them, which is reinforced through a cut (*Figure 29*). Consequently, we, the audience, also have the feeling to bump into them. What follows is a series of medium close-up three-shots, which record Shylock's physical harassment and humiliation and makes the audience feel for Shylock's victimisation (*Figures 30-37*); Shylock senses imminent danger, he probably has been manhandled before, and tries to hide his fears when Salerio and Solanio taunt him with his daughter's elopement. Visually, Shylock trapped between Salerio and Solanio, cannot escape their physical and emotional taunts – he is defencelessly at the mercy of the Christian Venetians. For example, when Shylock says, "My own flesh and blood to rebel!" (01:10:07-01:10:08), meaning his daughter, Salerio takes his words literally, choosing to understand his sexual passion and tightly grabs Shylock's scrotum (*Figure 31*). Naturally, he screams out in pain. Moreover, Solanio grabs Shylock in a headlock (*Figure 32*). But not only physical attacks characterise this sequence. Laughter comes easy, too. Obviously, Jew-bashing seems to be a teasing game and pastime activity for Salerio and Solanio. The Christians do not take him seriously and laugh at Shylock

as he delivers his famous monologue, which is treated as a running gag. For example, at the words, “If you tickle us do we not laugh?” (01:11:47-01:11:49), Salerio tickles Shylock, who does laugh but more in self-defence. His laughing is forced, which underscores his situation of helplessness (*Figures 33-37*). However, when his speech reaches the issue of revenge, laughing stops abruptly. Shylock turns savagely on his listeners as he says, “and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” (01:11:56-01:11:59). As soon as Shylock mentions his claim for revenge the camera zooms in on a close-up of Shylock, Salerio and Solanio (*Figure 38*). Obviously, the speech does not reflect shared humanity but emphasises shared inhumanity. On the arrival of Tubal, Salerio and Solanio let go of Shylock. As Tubal and Shylock keep on moving through an archway (*Figure 39*), Tubal tells him of Antonio’s ill-luck and a high light source renders his eyes dark and underscores his hateful attitude towards Antonio. However, when he learns about the barter of the ring he gave to Jessica, his face is drained from all its spite (*Figure 40*). The medium close-up of Shylock changes into a close-up – the audience takes in all his pain - as Shylock despairingly tears the golden ornaments off his garment (*Figure 41*).

### **Shylock at the Trial**

The trial scene is introduced with a high angle tracking shot. Consequently, the audience is invited to follow the duke from above and behind as he strides into a hall and proceeds to a brightly lit canopied dais (*Figure 42*). That the duke is in charge and holds a superior position is emphasised by low angle shots of the duke and high angles shots of Shylock when he talks to the duke (compare, for example, *Figures 44, 46 and 48, 49*). The trial is obviously a public event and for the first time in this adaptation people other than those mentioned in the original play appear as bystanders. This kind of audience, i.e. three rows of onlookers, will witness and comment on the climactic events taking place inside the court room. Noticeably, all bystanders are Christians (*Figure 45*).

Shylock’s entrance is framed with a long shot (*Figure 43*) and a ripple of murmur that goes through the crowd. In his hands he carries golden scales and a scroll,

probably the bond. As he strides in, he is again physically blocked by the Christians. Shylock seems confident to have his bond, which is underscored by a medium close-up (*Figure 47*) and his placement within the frame: in *Figure 50* Shylock dominantly occupies the foreground and examines his knife. In addition, he is sitting on top of the desk, which associates him with the duke – the only one sitting in the courtroom – and his superior status. Cuts to close-ups of Shylock whetting his knife on his shoe sole (*Figure 51*) and plucking a hair in order to prove the sharpness of his knife (*Figure 52*) reveal Shylock's determination of cutting a pound out of Antonio's flesh. He is about to harm Antonio and the danger can be felt.

Nonetheless, profile two-shots of Portia and Shylock (*Figures 54-56*) demonstrate that Shylock's end is near and his menace is clearly beginning to wane: although he first intrudes into Portia's space (*Figure 53*) she clearly is the more dominant according to visual weight: her red coat and hat are visually heavier than Shylock's black coat and her face is more lit than his. L-shaped framing of Portia's body and arm confines Shylock space noticeably. Furthermore, her clenched fist might suggest that Shylock will soon be ruined. Nevertheless, Portia offers Shylock opportunities to save himself. In a low voice as if in private (in contrast to the public event) she pleads with him to show mercy but he does not relent and continues his hopeless venture.

Meanwhile, Antonio, stripped of his jacket and bare-breasted, is prepared for the execution (*Figure 57*). Even though Shylock is in the foreground and slightly off-centre, Antonio attracts the eye more easily due to lighting. *Figure 58* features Shylock's last moment of power: Shylock is about to attack Antonio and his knife already touches Antonio's skin. By invading Antonio's space, the whole composition turns to the right moving in on Antonio. However, with the words, "Tarry a little" (18:59), Shylock is brought to a halt and Portia enters the frame (*Figure 59*). Now Shylock is encircled in by the Christians; the camera also moves in on Shylock and changes from medium shot to medium close-up (*Figure 60*). Although the knife still lingers on Antonio's chest, all the surge and menace is

gone. Eventually, by realising that he will not have justice but injustice, Shylock, for the last time, turns in bewilderment to the audience (*Figure 61*).

Once more, the Venetians get rough on Shylock; when Shylock is to beg for mercy, Gratiano knocks him to the floor and pulls his beard, while the other Christians form a threatening circle around him (*Figure 62*). In addition, his defeat is underscored by a high angle shot. By series of close-ups the audience takes in all of Shylock's emotions and humiliation when he accepts the verdict and becomes a Christian (*Figures 63-66*). Through all this, Shylock writhes silently in pain. After the duke has pointed out that the Christians are more merciful than Shylock, Gratiano knocks the skull cap from Shylock's head, and Salerio takes a large, heavy, golden cross from his own neck, and puts it around Shylock, who is forced to kiss it (*Figure 67*). The heavy cross and the chain might indicate Shylock's heavy cross he has to bear leading an isolated life as Christian and consequently outcast to his Jewish society. Finally, Shylock is shoved out of the courtroom by Gratiano and Salerio (*Figure 68*) and Portia seems to feel remorse as she gazes absent-mindedly off-screen (*Figure 69*). The trial concludes with a medium close-up of Shylock's scales and knife (*Figure 70*) and raises the question if justice has really been done.

## **Ending**

As Jessica reads the verdict of her father, she wears a beautiful, ethereal dress and her hair falls softly down her shoulders. Obviously, she has liberated herself from her paternal and religious constraints (*Figure 71*). Although sad cello music underscores this moment, Jessica's remorse seems short-lived and she happily exists to join the others. This televised adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* poses no comic closure either and ends with a very long shot of Antonio (*Figure 72*). This last image refers back to the beginning (*Figure 1*): Antonio – framed by columns, a fence and stairs - assumes the same position but now seems even more distant. The reason for his melancholy, which is underscored by the blue backcloth, becomes apparent: he is left alone without a partner.

## **Conclusion**

In this televised adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* Shylock is constructed on binary opposition and regarded as quintessentially 'other'. For example, physical appearance, mannerisms and accent are not played down but serve to distinguish him from the Christian Venetians and visibly underscore his otherness. He - more than any other character in the adaptation - is regarded as alien to Venetian society.

Mitchell's Shylock reinforces the stereotypical image of the Jewish moneylender with attributed derogatory qualities, such as greed, villainy and mercilessness. Shylock is not only reduced to negative stereotypes, within the mise-en-scène he is often represented as inferior and powerless. For instance, he is repeatedly photographed from a high angle perspective, which emphasises his subordinate position and often appears confined in three-shots and framed by the set or characters. In addition, he mainly occupies the left - less powerful – side of the frame.

Noteworthy, although defeated in the end, Shylock keeps posing a menace throughout the play. Consequently, he is recurrently shown as a mere abstract silhouette (*Figures 2, 18 and 28*), which might be a reference to his unknowableness; from Bhabha's point of view, power constructs based on stereotypes finally fail, because the colonised remains somehow unknowable and cannot be categorised completely. As a result, the colonised poses a threat to established binary constructions. Accordingly, Shylock has some subversive moments and frequently intrudes into the space of others.

Although he is presented as the victim of Christian society - his physical maltreatment at the hands of Salerio and Solanio as well as his humiliation and harsh disposal at the trial mark pinnacles of discrimination - the mise-en-scène makes sure that the play will not be received as Shylock's tragedy and there are not many moments in which the audience is compelled to identify with him.

### 3.3. Henry Goodman: “what’s his reason? I am a Jew” (*Merchant*, 3.1.53)

Originally staged for the Royal National Theatre in 1999, Trevor Nunn directed and adapted *The Merchant of Venice* for television in 2001. Broadcast on PBS, filmed and restaged for ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre, the televised version was produced by Richard Price. Chris Hunt functioned as joint producer and co-director.<sup>108</sup> It has to be noted that Henry Goodman won the Olivier Award and London Critic’s Circle Award for his stunning performance as Shylock.<sup>109</sup>

#### Beginning

The stage-to-screen production starts with documentary-style opening credits, in which short sequences of Venice and its people are shown (*Figures 1-4*). The sequence illustrates people sitting in cafes, drinking champagne and dancing in elegant night clubs. Underscored with swinging piano and violin dance music these images refer to gay, chic, diverting and unconcerned times. However, music gets lugubrious and colour tone changes from sepia to blue. Now, the scenes depict bearded men in black coats going for a walk or trading goods. By juxtaposing scenes of Venice and probably a Jewish ghetto a visual separation is established, which sets the mood and concerns of this version of *The Merchant of Venice* and already separates and comments on the characters in the film.

After the opening credits, the film turns to colour but retains a subdued black-and-white feeling using neutral colours like grey, beige, black, brown and white in setting as well as costumes. A high angle tracking shot reveals a couple of languidly lounging young men in tuxedos (*Figure 5*). A spare set design – a piano, drums, chairs, tables and women (probably prostitutes) - suggests a cafe or night club in the small hours. A pasty-faced Antonio wearing glasses plays some chords on a piano and declares he does not know why he is so sad, although his faint smile proves the opposite to be true (*Figure 6*). However, the oppressive

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. Janik 246 and Welsh 55

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Production notes on DVD

atmosphere, which is caused by Antonio's melancholy, is diverted as a bunch of noisy young gentlemen enters the cafe and Gratiano – literally playing the fool<sup>110</sup> - delivers his lines in front of a microphone like a stand-up comedian (*Figure 8*).

In terms of looks, Antonio looks a bit battered and sick in comparison to elegantly dressed and dashing Bassanio (compare *Figure 7* and *Figure 12*). In addition, Antonio comports oddly in the presence of Bassanio; for example, he tousles his hair just to devour Bassanio's scent on his hands (*Figure 13*) and the reason is plain: Antonio seems sick – he suffers from unrequited feelings for Bassanio and his lovesickness makes him appear awkward. Antonio is clearly established as a queer fellow<sup>111</sup> - the "tainted wether of the flock" (*Merchant*, 4.1.114) - and his abnormality isolates him; for example, he is repeatedly depicted alone in the frame (*Figures 7, 9, 10, 19*). Antonio is even separated from Bassanio – they do not share the same table - which might imply that their (homosexual) liaison cannot be tolerated (*Figure 11*).

Opening credits, set design and costumes evoke the 1930s. Nunn claims that by setting the film in-between the two world wars, the play gets more accessible to modern audiences. Additionally, that period records the shift towards fascistic regimes like in Germany and Italy and, concurrently, the persecution and punishment of minorities of every kind and finally resulted in the genocide of millions of people. Although many believe that the reality of the Holocaust has made the play unacceptably racist, Nunn argues that he chose this particular period because it explicitly deals with the issue of anti-Semitism – a topic he did not want to evade. According to him, at that time, anti-Semitic thought and behaviour was regarded as modern, fashionable even witty and anti-Semitism was openly expressed. As a consequence, this televised version of *The Merchant of Venice* captures the depressive atmosphere and bleak future prospects for Jews.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. "Let me play the fool", (*Merchant*.1.1.79)

<sup>111</sup> Literally speaking, Bassanio is the queer fellow in this adaptation and his homosexual tendencies are overtly expressed.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Edelman, 84 as well as production notes on DVD

According to film style, this time period is also evocative of film noir. Briefly mentioned before, film noir is mainly characterised by means of lighting. Visually, film noir usually features low key lighting in combination with high contrast lighting and results in harsh contrast between light and dark. Shafts of light and diffused shadows typically create a disturbing and ominous atmosphere. Very often, faces of characters appear half lit, which renders them dubious and torn - showing the darker side of human nature. Other characteristics of film noir are images of entrapment, sheer clothing and oblique angles. Normally, an attitude of pessimism prevails in film noir, which usually refers to characters' instability and anxiety in times of political, social and cultural upheaval.<sup>113</sup>

### **Introduction of Shylock**

Shylock is introduced with a dimly lit medium long shot (*Figure 14*) and photographed against a beige wall, as he enters the scene together with Bassanio. In terms of appearance, Henry Goodman's Shylock seems to be between Olivier and Mitchell: a businessman in a conservative black suit and black overcoat carrying a suit case and cane. Interestingly, Shylock is the only one in the film who sports a beard, which ostensibly renders him older and might stress his conservative and authoritarian stance. The introductory image of Shylock does not reveal his skull cap, which is hidden under his fedora. Initially, Shylock does not strike us as typically Jewish. However, his strong accent, i.e. the glottal pronunciation of /r/, his gestures and mannerisms, i.e. wagging index fingers (*Figure 24*), betray his ethnic background and perpetuate stereotypes of Jewishness. Additionally, his position on the left side of the frame, might already anticipate subsequent actions, i.e. his defeat at the trial scene.

Shylock and Bassanio approach a cafe, Shylock sits down and a waitress brings automatically coffee for Shylock. Bassanio remains standing and only at Shylock's gesture he dares to take a seat. Although Shylock is shot at a high angle and Bassanio's arm is visible on the right side of the frame, Shylock dominates this still through full-front position and lighting, which has changed from low-key to high-

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. Giannetti 19

key, illuminating Shylock's face significantly (*Figure 15*). During their conversation, Shylock seems confident and, accordingly, he is placed at the right side of the frame, which underlines his power being presently in his Jewish environment (*Figures 16, 17, 18*).

As already expressed in the opening credits, the contrast between the cafe world of the Christians and the ghetto world of the Jews becomes an important part of this version: in comparison to the licentious ambience of the Christian night club, the Jewish place seems modest and serene. According to colour scheme, Shylock's world features warm colours like shades of browns and beiges, whereas the Christian world is rendered cold using greyish and blue colours. However, bleakness and pessimism are omnipresent in both worlds.

### **Shylock and Antonio**

When Antonio joins their meeting, Shylock reveals his inner feelings in an aside. Correspondingly, he is shown in a close-up (*Figure 20*), conspiratorially engaging the audience by speaking full-front into the camera. Although this position usually elicits the audience's sympathy, low-key lighting renders him spiteful. At the beginning, Shylock and Antonio are visually separated and each is shown in individual frames (*Figures 21 and 22*). Their disparity is also shown in *Figure 23*, in which the table and the chair form a barrier between Shylock and Antonio. Moreover, Shylock's and Bassanio's leaning postures add to the feeling of separation. In their bargaining about the loan, Shylock seems friendly to Bassiano, but wary of Antonio, who is obviously loathe to make business with Shylock. When Shylock complains about Antonio's discriminations against his person, Shylock is relocated to the left part of the frame and Antonio's head shown from the behind reducing Shylock's space noticeably (*Figure 25*). In *Figure 26*, Antonio storms that he will insult him again reducing Shylock's space even more. Whereas Shylock's reaction is photographed in a high angle medium close-up (*Figure 27*), threatening Antonio is framed in a low angle shot, and the audience feels his condescension even more via the close-up (*Figure 28*). Antonio angrily and impatiently interrupts

Shylock (who cannot finish the story about Laban and his breeding of sheep) and seems to force him into their peculiar bond.

Although Shylock seems to be more dominant in the beginning of the scene, the power hierarchy is reversed and Shylock is undermined by means of lack of space; for example, *Figures 29-33* demonstrate how Shylock's scope of movement is reduced substantially – either by placing him between the Venetians, stressing a sense of entrapment, or to the left fringe of the frame. In addition, according to perspective, Shylock is allocated to the background, while Antonio and Bassanio feature prominently in the foreground. However, for a brief moment, Shylock regains power as he threatens Antonio, “and for my love I pray you wrong me not” (24:12-24:14), and, respectively, occupies the right side of the frame (*Figure 34*). Finally, Antonio agrees on the ‘harmless’ bond and both men shake their hands on the deal (*Figure 35*).

### **Shylock and Jessica**

Shylock and Jessica have an ambivalent father-daughter relationship, mainly due to his uncontrollable rage and outbursts of temper. Shylock is patriarchal and commanding at home and speaks Yiddish when he orders Jessica about. For example, Jessica does not clean a pot properly and, consequently, is badly scolded by her father (*Figure 37*). His authoritarian position at home is visualised in *Figure 36*: due to a high angle perspective, Shylock, who is standing on a ladder adjusting a lantern, towers prominently over Jessica. The still also represents the sequence of importance at Shylock's house: religion, which is represented by the lantern with a Star of David on top - dominating almost the left half of the frame - reigns over Shylock and Jessica; Shylock patronises Jessica who occupies the lowest rank.

Shylock's house is actually not hell but, at least, as dark as hell and only spotlights suffuse the interior of his home with pools of light. In addition to this subdued atmosphere, his house is not furnished except for a highlighted table, which is covered with a black cloth, two candles, and a photo-frame in-between - obviously

a shrine for his late wife (*Figure 46*). According to Jessica, however, her domestic environment feels like hell and she suffers under her father's harsh rule and prison-like constraints. Unhappy, frustrated and intimidated, Jessica wears no make-up, a plain, out-of-fashion dress and a thin, pale rose cardigan, which might indicate her modesty and innocence (*Figure 46*). As such, she stands in stark contrast to the prostitutes at the night club. Jessica finds solace in the kindness of Launcelot and seeks escape through her love for Lorenzo. In *Figure 48*, her upward-looking face is illuminated when she talks about being the wife of Lorenzo. Visually, she looks forward (upward) to her bright future, which is the only ray of hope in her present miserable life.

The sequence of Shylock's home is filmed in soft focus and visually implies a kind of tenderness and intimacy prevalent at home (*Figures 38-41*)<sup>114</sup>. In fact, when Shylock is getting ready to have supper with the Christians, he and Jessica have tender moments, in which he touches Jessica gently and shows his affection for his only daughter (*Figures 38-41*). Medium close-up two-shots – Jessica and Shylock are pictured in one frame - show their deep love and common heritage underlying their troubled relationship. This culminates in their singing an emotional Hebrew song together (*Figure 40*). Yet, the tenderness is all of a sudden replaced by Shylock's harshness, which becomes even harsher filmed in soft focus; when Shylock tells Jessica to shut his sober house against the licentious Christian party crowd, he gets so upset that he slaps her (*Figure 42*). At this moment, Shylock's dark and volatile nature is revealed and highlighted via low-key lighting and a slight low angle (*Figure 43*). However, appalled by himself, Shylock seems to regret his impetuous behaviour (*Figure 44*). Before he leaves for supper, he stares briefly at a photograph of his apparently dead wife. The close-up of the photo (*Figure 45*), which is slightly covered by his black hat on the left side, might suggest that Shylock's wife had died when Jessica was a little girl and he had to raise her all by himself. Although Shylock's treatment of Jessica appears harsh and unjust, his anger might be interpreted as over-protecting his child from the evils of the world. Finally, Shylock leaves his home and strides into the dark night to meet the Christians (*Figure 47*).

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<sup>114</sup>Cf. Nemes 72

## **Shylock's Loss and Defence**

In this adaptation Nunn interpolates two scenes, which mainly serve to stress Shylock's otherness and marginal status as well as his maltreatment at the hands of the Christians and which explains and justifies his subsequent behaviour. For example, the first additional scene shows Shylock meeting the Christians for supper; a very long high-angle crane shot depicts Shylock entering a smoke suffused night club, while Lancelot Gobbo mocks his former employer on the stage like a stand-up comedian (*Figures 49 and 50*). Shylock's actual presence causes even more laughter and he has to endure tease, taunts and ridicule by the Christians as he goes through the crowded place (*Figure 51*). This sense of humiliation is enforced by shaky visuals of a hand-held camera: Shylock is shown from behind and we follow him to Antonio's table - the audience is emotionally involved and witnesses and feels his humiliation. That Shylock feels uncomfortable, misplaced and isolated amidst the Christians, is tellingly illustrated in *Figure 52*. Consequently, inviting him to dinner does not make him a member of Venetian society but stresses the fact that he does not fit into their posh world.

The second interpolated scene, which might explain Shylock's relentless pursuit of revenge, shows Shylock returning to his already deserted house after supper. In the street in front of Shylock's house Antonio collects drunken Gratiano, who seems to be left behind after Jessica's abduction. When both men detect each other, Shylock greets Antonio by touching his hat and nodding his head (*Figure 53*). However, this civil gesture is not returned. Even worse, although Antonio pretends to touch his fedora as a sign of respect, he merely adjusts his hat (*Figure 54*). Antonio and Gratiano turn their heels and Shylock is left behind in bewilderment. Positioned at the left side of the frame Shylock reaches out his hand as if he were to ask why he is treated in such condescending way; the answer and reason for Shylock's derogatory treatment is given in *Figure 55*: because he is a Jew. Shylock realises that he will never be accepted but only exploited for their purposes and amusement. The medium close-up isolates Shylock from the surroundings and traces of Shylock's revenge can be detected in his face – he has been wronged and now he craves revenge.

Later, Salerio and Solanio, who are looking out for Antonio's ships, meet desolate Shylock, who is looking out for Tubal to bring him news of his daughter, at the docks. Diffused low-key lighting and a murky colour scheme add to the oppressive and bleak atmosphere (*Figure 56*). In terms of intrinsically weighted areas of the frame, Salerio and Solanio occupy the dominant right side of the frame, whereas Shylock is reduced to a smaller portion on the left. Additionally, the Christians dominate the frame by ways of dressing and body language: both wear fedoras and overcoats and leisurely have their hands in their pockets, while Shylock huddles himself in his jacket, his collar turned up against the prevalent coldness.

Framed at a high angle – we get Salerio's and Solanio's condescending point of view - Shylock charges them with luring his daughter away, and he starts his famous soliloquy (*Figures 57 and 58*). However, when asked, what he needs the pound of flesh for, Shylock answers "to bait fish withal" (01:08:35-01:08:37) he is shot in a medium close-up and full front and the audience takes in his entire desperation as well as menace, which mainly due to lack of lighting (*Figure 59*).

Three-shots of Salerio, Solanio and Shylock are staged in depth (*Figures 60 and 62*). Although one would expect Shylock to appear trapped between the Christians during his monologue, he is not presented boxed in. Shylock is framed in-between Salerio and Solanio, who occupy the left and right side of the frame respectively; however, Shylock dominates the shot by means of selective focus, Solanio has his back on the audience and Salerio's face is blurred in the background and seems out of reach. In addition, Shylock occupies the right, intrinsically dominant side of the frame.

Unpredictably, Shylock attacks Salerio with his walking stick<sup>115</sup> and both Christians move tightly in on Shylock leaving him no space for movement (*Figure 63*). However, Tubal arrives and the Christians let go of Shylock. Tubal brings him news of Genoa - how his renegade daughter spent his money and the trading of his ring he had had from his wife when he was a bachelor. Several medium close-

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<sup>115</sup> Likewise in Sichel's version, Olivier also symbolically uses his cane as a weapon.

ups show his pain at the material and personal loss, and the audience feels with him (*Figures 61, 64, 65, 66*). When Tubal exists, Nunn provides another modification of the original play text; by rearranging lines from Shylock's first aside<sup>116</sup>, Shylock provides an overt threat to Antonio (*Figure 67*). Lighting reinforces the air of his menace: lit from the side, one half of his face is plunged in darkness, which symbolises Shylock's sinister intentions. In addition, due to lighting effect and low camera angle, audience's response to him changes; although he confides in the audience – facing it full-front - he elicits little sympathies and simply seems threatening. Shylock has been wronged too often and now his personal vendetta will begin.

### **Shylock at the Trial**

The trial is established via a very long high angle tracking shot, which provides an overall view of a brightly lit courtroom with a group of Christians already there (*Figure 68*). Costume links the members of the opposing groups: Shylock and Tubal wear black (*Figure 79*), Antonio and Bassanio navy (*Figure 73*) and the rest of the Venetians wear light grey suits (*Figure 77*). Portia wears a dark grey suit (*Figure 94*), which might suggest her impartial stance - costume-wise Portia does not take sides.

The entrances of Tubal, Shylock and Portia are presented via point-of-view shots. For example, when Tubal enters, we share his perspective and feeling of displacement, as the Christians examine him suspiciously (*Figure 69*). Shylock's entry, on the other hand, is presented from a Christian point of view. By using a hand-held camera the audience is forced into the position of a member of the Christian group rushing towards Shylock to block his entrance (*Figure 70*). Portia's arrival is also viewed through a subjective shot and serves to capture her inexperience in terms of legal business (*Figure 76*); shot at a high angle, four Christians look expectantly and piercingly at her (*Figure 77*). In addition, her inexperience figures when she asks who the merchant and who the Jew is –

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. "If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!" (01:15:20- 01:15:24)

obviously confusing their identities and the Christians lower their heads in despair fearing that Shylock will have his bond (*Figure 79*). To enforce her lack of self-confidence Portia is shot at a high angle when talking to Shylock (*Figure 81*).

At the beginning, Shylock is not presented as a weak character. Even though he is mainly placed on the left side of the frame, which might indicate his imminent downfall Shylock gains prominence through size (*Figures 72, 74, 83*)<sup>117</sup>, foreground position (*Figure 71* and *75*) and a low angle medium close-up shots (*Figures 78, 80, 82, 87*). Antonio, on the other side, is presented as a weak and victimised character; for example, he remains sitting and is frequently shot at a high angle, which stresses his powerlessness (*Figures 73, 86, 88*).

When Shylock insists on the execution of the bond Tubal is so repulsed by Shylock's determination to have Antonio's flesh that he walks up to Shylock, looks at him, averts his eyes in shame (*Figure 84*), turns and leaves the courtroom. Obviously, Tubal does not want to be associated with the appalling crime against a Christian. Shylock is abandoned by his brother in faith and left alone amidst the Christians, which is visually enforced with a very long high angle shot in *Figure 85*.

Like Mitchell, Goodman's Shylock is settled to harm Antonio; for example, the way he holds the knife (*Figure 86*) as well as close-ups of the knife at Antonio's breast (*Figures 89* and *90*) clearly indicate his resolution. Nevertheless, at one moment he seems conflicted and hesitant to perform the deed (*Figure 91*). Eventually, Shylock recollects his courage, cleans the blade of his knife with a white cloth (*Figure 92*) and forcefully attacks Antonio. Just in time, Portia prevents the carnage; for example, *Figure 93* shows how Portia interrupts Shylock's surge. Although Portia is placed in the background, she literally stands between Shylock and Antonio and prevents the attack.

When Shylock is charged with the attempted murder of a Christian he is seated on Antonio's former place of accusation and near execution (*Figure 94*). By positioning Shylock on this very place, the outcome of the trial becomes already

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<sup>117</sup> Shylock's size is visually stretched by the vertical lines of the columns behind him.

clear: he will be the only one who gets punishment. Although on the right and more powerful side of the frame, Shylock's power is clearly diminished by his sitting posture. In addition, his loss of power is visualised by low angle shots of the duke, for example, in *Figure 96*. Silently and isolated via close-ups (*Figures 95 and 97*) – the audience witnesses closely his final humiliation, Shylock bears the verdict, which does not come as a surprise to him: who else than the Jew has to be punished after all?

Defeated in the end, Shylock violently tears his skull cap off his hair and drops his prayer shawl and skull cap on the scales before he leaves the courtroom (*Figure 98*). Shaking but still managing to preserve his dignity he exits. After Shylock has left the courtroom, business goes on as usual and the duke invites the Christians to dinner. No shaken Christians and no remorse characterises the atmosphere in the courtroom. On the contrary, the Christians seem rather relieved and as long as only a Jew happens to be deposed of, there is no need to bother. The lights go down on the courtroom as well as on justice, and the colour scheme turns from colour to black and white (*Figure 99*).

## **Ending**

At the end of the play, Jessica, who has adopted the voguish style of the Christians, breaks into a Hebrew song - the one she sang with her father - after reading the letter describing her father's fate (*Figure 100*). In *Figure 101* her half-lit face suggests her split identity: on the one hand, she is an elegantly dressed Christian wife, but on the other hand, she is still connected to Shylock and Judaism; she will stay Shylock's daughter in blood and manners and realises that she will always be an alien in Christian society. The Christian couples stare at her, then Portia notes that it is already morning, and the film does not end with Gratiano keeping safe Nerissa's ring, but with a group of people shivering at dawn as thunder begins to roll. The sense of coldness is reinforced by cold, bluish colours that pervade the last image of the film (*Figure 102*) and might refer to a bleak future prospect.

## **Conclusion**

By setting this version of *The Merchant of Venice* in this particular time – overtly expressing anti-Semitic tendencies - the play is presented with a sense of premonition and foreshadows the horrific events to come due to Hitler's regime. According to visual style, the film follows characteristics from film noir; for example, the characters often appear confined and isolated within the mise-en-scène; low key lighting and a bleak and sheer colour scheme in setting and costumes underscore the pessimistic atmosphere.

Notably, a few scenes have been cut, rearranged and interpolated to strengthen this effect. In addition, particularly interpolations are instrumental in stressing Shylock's marginal role. Right from the beginning in the opening credits - even before Shylock's first appearance - Jews are visually victimised and represented as the subjugated other; melancholic music and images in hues of cool blue symbolise the Jews' bleak situation. In analogy, elements of mise-en-scène, such as tight framing and high camera angle, function to reinforce Shylock's victim status. Moreover, he often appears trapped and isolated, which is emphasised via single and close shots. But not only Shylock is singled out; Antonio appears secluded too, which may be based on his feelings of desire for Bassanio. Alternatively, repeated use of close-ups takes the audience close and personal with Shylock and makes his reasoning obvious: he is mocked by the Christians, ostracised due to the customary anti-Semitic attitudes of the society he lives in, and finally betrayed by his only daughter. Shylock is not reduced to stereotypes; rather, he is presented humanely: a man who suffers, loves, hates, and, eventually longs for revenge.

However, Shylock is not entirely de-villainised and at times presented as a rather powerful character who explicitly poses a threat. Particularly at home, in his asides and during the court sequence, Shylock's authority is apparent by means of low angle shots, character placement, screen size and low key lighting. As a consequence, the power relation between Christians and Shylock is not straightforward; this adaptation offers an ambiguous Shylock: on the one hand, he

is the victim of anti-Semitism and a representative of a minority who is discriminated against, on the other hand he is regarded as menacing to Christian Venice.

### **3.4. Al Pacino: “[f]or suff’rance is the badge of all our tribe” (Merchant, 1.3.105)**

The first cinematic adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* is the first big-budget feature film placed in period setting and costumes.<sup>118</sup> Shot on location in Venice as well as set designs in Luxembourg, the Hollywood adaptation unites a mixture of Hollywood film stars and British and American stage actors. Except for the rather unknown American actress Lynn Collins (Portia), the big-screen version features film stars like Al Pacino, Jeremy Irons (Antonio) and Joseph Fiennes (Bassanio).<sup>119</sup>

#### **Beginning**

The film starts with a long shot of men standing in a gondola in one of Venice’s canals.<sup>120</sup> The men are Franciscan monks, and the gondola features a huge, wooden cross at the rear. The boat as well as its passengers are directly facing and approaching the camera (*Figure 1*). In addition, the image is accompanied by ominous music. At the bottom of the screen the words “Venice 1596” (01:15) fade in, setting the historical background of the film. The year also refers to the date the play was probably written, setting the play in context.<sup>121</sup> By specifically locating time and place, Radford seeks to represent the play in its historical and authentic context and, thus, tries to establish a distance between the audience and the things to come, i.e. the anti-Semitism prevalent in 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. Crowl, *Norton*, 93 as well as Pittman 57

<sup>119</sup> Cf. DVD cover

<sup>120</sup> Actually, the first thing the audience experiences of the film is the sound of rippling water, while the opening credits feature on the screen.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Hindle 64

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Coursen 161

What follows is a visually powerful introductory sequence, which basically functions to illustrate the tense relationship between Christian and Jews and the ill-treatment of Venice's Jewish citizen at the hands of the Christians and reflects feelings of hatred and tension; Jews are reviled for religious and economic reasons - embodied in the practice of usury - and forced to live in a ghetto and suffer from insults and persecution. Shylock comes to represent the fate of Jews in Venice and is singled out from the crowd via a medium close-up and close-up respectively (*Figures 7 and 9*). Within a couple of minutes, Radford sets the context, establishes the setting and the atmosphere and presents the main characters and their relations to each other. In addition, the audience is provided with the main characters' names as they mention each other's names when they meet. The first name mentioned in the film is "Antonio" (04:34) spoken by Bassanio; "Bassanio" (04:36) spoken by Antonio; "Signor Lorenzo" (05:04) spoken by the gate keeper; "Jessica" (06:20) spoken by Lorenzo. Interestingly, Shylock's name is not mentioned by any character in the introductory montage. Instead of address, Shylock gets a full-bodied spit from Antonio.

The introductory sequence is presented in form of "a historicist-inspired scroll [...] providing details of anti-Semitism and usury and sumptuary laws in Renaissance Venice" (Crowl, *Looking*, 113). Intercut and emphasised with corresponding visuals and a wailing song by a Hebrew singer, superimposed texts start to appear from the bottom of the frame running to the top: the words on the screen, "Intolerance of the Jews was a fact of 16<sup>th</sup> century life even in Venice, the most powerful and liberal city state in Europe" (1:27-1:38) are juxtaposed with the image of monks in a gondola moving from left to right looking at something off-screen. Presented in a medium long shot, it seems as if the audience watches the monks passing (*Figure 2*). "By the law the Jews were forced to live in the old walled foundry or 'Gheto' area of the city. After sundown the gate was locked and guarded by Christians" (1:42-1:53), is underscored with a close-up of a bolting gate shot at a low and tilted angle (*Figure 3*). "In the daytime any man leaving the ghetto had to wear a red hat to mark him as a Jew" (1:56-2:05), is followed by a shaky hand-held medium close-up of a Jew, whose red cap is torn off his head. In addition, someone yelling the word "usurer" (02:10) can be heard from off-screen.

Presented in slow-motion, the violence and agony of the situation is stressed (*Figure 4*).<sup>123</sup> “Jews were forbidden to own property. So they practiced usury, the lending of money at interest. This was against Christian law” (2:14-2:22), is visually reinforced with an extreme close-up of an upturned palm and outstretched fingers, snatching golden coins (*Figure 5*). After the lines, “The sophisticated Venetians would turn a blind eye to it but for the religious fanatics, who hated the Jews, it was another matter...” (2:24-2:34), the monk from the gondola is shown in medium close-up and from a low angle perspective preaching ardently against the sinful habit of usury, which is evil and should be punished by death (*Figure 6*). A reaction shot and close-up of Shylock creates the impression that the monk’s ongoing diatribe has been directly addressed to him and Shylock, consequently, turns around as if he were called (*Figure 7*). Parallel to the monk’s hate speech, shaky hand-held images of a jostling, shoving and out-of-control crowd hunting down Jews are shown. First his belongings then one of the Jews himself is thrown head-first off the bridge (*Figures 8, 11 and 12*). Among the witnesses are Shylock, Tubal (*Figure 9*) and Antonio (*Figure 10*), who bumps into Shylock and upon seeing him (*Figure 13*) spits him in the face. A close-up of Shylock shows him with head slightly cast down wiping his humiliated face afterwards (*Figure 14*).<sup>124</sup>

The whole sequence clearly demonstrates the general hostile Christian attitude towards Jews and makes clear their powerless status as the marginalised ‘other’; red hats serve as a visual marker for their Jewishness and underline their difference. Before the story even unfolds, Jews, and in particular Shylock, are conceptualised as victims and scapegoats. As a consequence, they are presented as outsiders, which are ostracised and subject to humiliation and scorn. Their powerlessness is reinforced by images of their immobility. For example, in several shots (*Figures 3, 17, 44*) the bolting and unbolting of iron gates suggest that “the Christian majority controls entrance into and egress from the ghetto” (Burnett 88).

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. Giannetti 125

<sup>124</sup> This image seems to anticipate Shylock’s lines in the original: “Signior Antonio, many a time and oft / [...] You that did void your rheum upon my beard [...]” (*Merchant*, 1.3.101-112)

The wailing Hebrew song, which captures the miserable mood and fate of the Jews, turns to Latin choral music and the audience observes Antonio and Shylock in their respective places of worship. First, scenes of Antonio attending a Catholic mass, later, Shylock praying in his synagogue are shown – religion seems important to both men. Although their different approach to religion has established a crucial line of difference between Christians and Jews, by juxtaposing images of Antonio and Shylock in their respective places and rituals of worship their similarities are illustrated. In addition to the similar worship scenes, the same lighting and colour scheme also function as linking devices (compare *Figure 15* and *Figure 18*)

### **Introduction of Shylock**

*Figure 7* is the first image of Shylock in the film; the close-up only features Shylock's face and reveals an elderly bearded man with prominent black eyebrows wearing a red cap. In addition, his worn face and bags under his eyes convey an impression of weariness – probably due to years of experiencing humiliation. His advanced age is underlined by his stooping shoulders and wobbling gait. Moreover, Shylock needs spectacles when checking the interest rates or when rereading the bond in the trial scene (*Figures 29* and *82*). Although clearly marked as other, Shylock in Radford's adaptation does not assume an accent. With regard to height, Shylock's short size is often accentuated by a high-angle perspective as illustrated, for example in *Figures 28, 52, 76, 83*.

The bargain scene is staged at a slaughterhouse inside the ghetto. Introduced with a cruel image of a goat being killed – its throat is slit with a blade (*Figure 23*) – Bassanio entreats Shylock to lend Antonio the money. By inserting images of a slaughterhouse and a freshly cut pound of flesh, Radford provides a visual explanation for Shylock's proposal of a pound of flesh as forfeiture. After buying a lump of meat, Bassanio and Shylock set forth to his house and move through the ghetto, which is visualised as a dark, packed and narrow space, in which its many inhabitants are literally crammed. Shaky hand-held medium close-ups convey the claustrophobic and crowded impression characterising the ghetto (*Figures 24-27*).

Bassanio, upon seeing Antonio arrive in the ghetto, is rushing towards him. Shylock stays behind and warily observes Antonio from a distance; although many people are moving through the frame, Shylock is singled out by focus and full-front position. Consequently, the audience witnesses how Shylock gazes at Antonio. Although Shylock does not express his hate verbally – the lines with regard to Shylock's hostile feelings for Antonio are excised<sup>125</sup> - his piercing look says more than a thousand words.

### **Shylock and Antonio**

Antonio is, like Shylock, an elderly, weary man and bags under his eyes characterise his face, too (*Figure 13*). In *Figure 19* he is introduced within a subdued atmosphere and pale colour scheme, which indicate his wearing condition of melancholy. In terms of physical appearance, Antonio looks tight and haggard and often displays a rigid facial expression. While his friends are often depicted feasting or succumbing to their sexual desires, ascetic Antonio seems never to drink or eat, let alone notice women.<sup>126</sup> Consequently, Antonio is frequently presented isolated or separated from other characters by the mise-en-scene; for example, *Figures 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 47* emphasise Antonio's isolation and separation. His devout Catholic faith is illustrated by the cross around his neck. In addition to the worship scenes, *Figures 19* and *20* show Antonio with his hands crossed as if praying.

During their meeting and in terms of power relations, Shylock is visually undermined via high angle shots (*Figures 28* and *31*); correspondingly, Antonio is shot at a low angle (*Figure 30*). Another instance of Shylock's visual inferiority is illustrated in *Figure 29*: Antonio is standing on the right side of the frame and his head is close to the top part of the frame. In addition to his size, his placement wields more authority than Shylock's, who is sitting at the bottom left side of the frame. However, when Shylock suggests a pound of Antonio's flesh as forfeiture,

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<sup>125</sup> Shylock only mutters the line, "How like a fawning Publican he looks" (17:09-17:12)

<sup>126</sup> This version suggests a homosexual relationship between Antonio and Bassanio.

Shylock is shortly in control and his temporary power is correspondingly visualised: due to centre position and framed by the door behind him Shylock attracts the attention more easily than Antonio, who additionally has his back on the audience (*Figure 32*).

### **Shylock and Jessica**

Shylock's rooms inside his house are presented through a cold, blue filter, which might assume coldness prevalent in his house and even in his conduct with Jessica (*Figures 33-38*). However, his dealings with Jessica are far from gruff; for example, he calls her name gently and touches her tenderly on the cheek when he leaves for dinner (*Figure 40*).

Although some interior scenes are photographed in warm brown colours, which might indicate intimacy and protection<sup>127</sup>, his house, like the ghetto, is presented as narrow, crammed and dark - due to low key lighting –and moving space seems confined. Respectively, Jessica and Shylock repeatedly appear framed by doorways, doors, bed curtains or walls (*Figures 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 45*). Since Shylock's house is characterised by confinement, it comes as no surprise that Jessica feels locked in by her father. *Figure 41* provides a visual reference to Jessica's locked-in state, as Shylock's hand in close-up locks the house with Jessica inside. Evidently, Jessica wants to escape Shylock's confines and speaks the lines of her becoming a Christian wife to her projected self in a mirror.<sup>128</sup> In addition to being framed by the mirror, Jessica is shot at an oblique angle, which might suggest anxiety<sup>129</sup> with regard to her plan of betraying her father (*Figure 34*). Although, her words "become a Christian and [Lorenzo's] loving wife" (30:38-30:40) are underscored by romantic music, they are followed by roll of thunder and lightning. Again, this could mean that by abandoning her father and religious identity she will be ill-fated. As will be shown later in the film her anxiety will prove true; Jessica will not feel light-hearted in Belmont. On the contrary, when the

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. Burnett 90

<sup>128</sup> According to Werner Faulstich, mirrors often denote an identity crisis. (152)

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Giannetti 15

camera focuses on Jessica she seems sad and melancholic - underscored by hues of blue - and the audience is able to observe the beginnings of her remorse (*Figure 92*).

When Jessica watches her father leave, the audience observes how Shylock gives a beggar a hand-out, which obviously serves to stress Shylock's sympathetic and generous character (*Figure 42*). As opposed to the original play text, in which Shylock is presented as a miser, Radford's version reveals a Shylock who is altruistic.

### **Shylock's Loss and Defence**

While Jessica is escaping her father's house, Shylock is having dinner with the Christians (*Figure 43*). Visibly established as the outsider, the audience can sense his misplacement and isolation. Shylock can be distinguished from the rest not only by his red cap but also by his gestures. His body language suggests disgust at the sight of such decadent and prodigal behaviour and consequently he neither smiles, talks, eats nor drinks wine.<sup>130</sup> Inviting him to dinner does not make Shylock a member of society but stresses the fact that he does not belong in this Christian world.

Interpolated scenes, which show Shylock returning to his empty home after Jessica's elopement and desperately seeking his daughter mainly function to create compassion and pity for Shylock. Shaky hand-held point-of-view shots display his emotionally extreme disorder and force the viewer to share his perspective (*Figure 45*). While Shylock repeatedly calls out her name, the camera follows Shylock closely as moves through the narrow space of his house and the audience gets the impression of frantic searching, too (*Figure 46*). These images are underscored by ominous music and lit by flashes of lightning outside the window. Apparently, the bad weather outside mirrors his emotional turmoil inside.

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<sup>130</sup> This image refers back to Shylock saying, "I will buy with you, sell with you, walk with you, talk with you, and so following: but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." (16:49-16:58)

Finally, when realising that Jessica has left him, Shylock clings to the bed curtains, drops to his knees, moans and cries out her name in despair (*Figure 48*).

Next, an exterior very long shot shows a desolate and isolated Shylock who, drenched in rain, frenetically wanders the dock in search of Jessica (*Figure 49*). A voice-over, spoken by Solanio, tells of the Jew's search for his lost daughter. However, Solanio's comic report is cut short and replaced by the image of Shylock in the pouring rain and the experience of pain and loss.

Shylock seeks out Salerio and Solanio in a brothel and confronts them with Jessica's flight. Although the Christians are photographed at a low angle (*Figure 53*), which stresses their moral superiority over Shylock - correspondingly shot at a low angle (*Figure 52*) - images of bare-breasted prostitutes emphasise their decadent, amoral and hypocritical behaviour<sup>131</sup> (*Figures 50, 51*). Salerio and Solanio follow him outside and during his monologue on the sameness of Jews and Christians the camera mainly focuses on him (*Figure 54-56*). Shylock appears trapped on a narrow passageway between Salerio and Solanio and a canal. Shot with a hand-held camera, the shaky medium close-ups of Shylock reinforce the emotional side behind Shylock's speech and anger. Foggy shades of blue add to the depressing atmosphere and define Shylock visually and emotionally. Lack of lighting renders Shylock's hat and gabardine almost black, which underlines Shylock's plea for equality. Passers-by are pausing to listen to Shylock's raging self-defence. On the verge of losing his mind, Tubal arrives on a gondola and Shylock regains control. Tubal is, like Shylock in the beginning, spit at by Salerio and Solanio (*Figure 57*). Tubal tells him of Jessica's fraudulent transactions as well as the trading of the ring in Genoa, which Shylock can vividly imagine; accordingly, in a short flashback, Jessica and Lorenzo are depicted in vivid colours showing how they spend Shylock's money (*Figure 58*).

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Pittman 64

## **Shylock at the Trial**

Before the trial starts Portia consults a legal expert, which means that Shylock's defeat is well-planned in advance (*Figure 59*). This extra knowledge provides Portia with superiority, as will be illustrated in subsequent shots. For example, during the trial and in terms of character position, Shylock is for the most part placed on the left side of the frame (*Figures 62, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 80, 81, 84*), whereas Portia occupies the more dominant right side (*Figures 69, 70, 81*). In addition, these visuals illustrate that throughout the courtroom sequence Portia is shot at a slightly low angle increasing her stature, while Shylock is correspondingly photographed at a high angle (*Figures 73, 76, 80, 82, 83*). Radford repeatedly places Portia in a position of visual dominance; she mostly occupies the centre of the picture frame, and when she moves to the margins of the frame, she remains in focus, something not true of Shylock (*Figures 69 and 70*).

In this version, the trial is staged as a public event with Christians and Jews present. The Christians, however, outnumber the Jews – recognisable with their red caps - which might refer to the Jews' minority status in Venice (*Figure 60*). When Shylock enters, the crowd is forced to form a circle, with Shylock in its centre (*Figure 61*). Shylock's central position could be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, Shylock can be regarded as the focal point of interest. On the other hand, his central placement emphasises the imprisonment by the Christian mob. The constantly moving crowd, which comments the trial with cheers and taunts, is photographed with a hand-held camera, which captures the emotionally anxious, claustrophobic and volatile atmosphere at the trial (*Figures 63, 64, 65, 68*).

According to costume, Shylock has exchanged his red coat and cap – his marker of otherness - for a black tunic and cap, the one he wears at home. This might imply that he comes to stand in court as an equal citizen of the state of Venice and not as a member of a despised alien minority. This is stressed by the fact that Jessica and Shylock are dressed in a similar way (*Figure 70*).

Upon the sight of scales, which Shylock has taken out of a case, Antonio faints (*Figure 74*). A large stool, which is reminiscent of an electric chair, is brought in (*Figure 75*). While Antonio is gagged and tied to the chair, Shylock is whetting his huge knife. In *Figure 76* Shylock focuses on the act of killing Antonio: Shylock occupies the right side of the frame – an indication of his short-lived power over Antonio; photographed in a medium close-up Shylock is in focus, whereas the background is blurred, which reinforces the impression that Shylock is oblivious of his surroundings and only concentrates on Antonio. When Shylock is about to stab Antonio in the chest (*Figure 77*) a reaction shot of Tubal and fellow Jews with eyes closed in shame is shown (*Figure 78*). Introduced with a beat of a drum Portia cuts in her retaliation and Shylock as well as the audience let out shrieks of shock (*Figure 79*).

In the last section of the sequence Shylock is not only ruled over but crushed. Portia launches Shylock's defeat and the crowd has moved in tighter around Shylock. Shot from a high angle perspective Shylock seems helplessly captured within (*Figure 83*). Disbelievingly and with his mouth gaping Shylock listens to his verdict - the crowd behind him is out of focus and all attention is on Shylock and his face, which is depicted in a full-front medium close-up (*Figure 85*). A low angle shot of the duke puts emphasis on Shylock's humiliation (*Figure 86*); he visually hits bottom and crouches between Portia's feet and a chest of ducats (*Figure 87*). Antonio is still on chair, which looks like a throne now and rules over Shylock's fate. Finally, Shylock is crushed and reduced to a mere black bundle at the bottom of the frame (*Figure 88*).

When Shylock departs from the court in silence, he is further humiliated and victimised: his cap is violently torn off his head and he is spit on by a bystander (*Figure 89*). Portia watches him leave and her facial expression suggests pity (*Figure 90*). Ultimately, Shylock disappears into the crowd: he is simply gone like his wealth and religious identity (*Figure 91*).

## **Ending**

The film ends with a shot of a totally dispossessed Shylock standing alone in the street without his distinctive red cap (*Figure 93*). He is viewed from the perspective of his synagogue and his former fellow Jews close the doors of their synagogue upon him. Being locked out of the synagogue Shylock is not only an alien for the Venetian Christians but has also become an alien for his fellow Jews due to his forced conversion.

Next, Jessica running to the waterside is shown; on the banks she fingers the ring that she had supposedly traded for a monkey. Significantly, the close-up of her hands stresses the importance of the ring and refers back to Shylock (*Figure 94*); she, like her father, would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys. Finally, Jessica's sadness is displayed in a medium close-up as she gazes longingly off the frame (*Figure 95*). She comes to regret the choice to abandon her father and religious identity. The last image of the film features the silhouettes of Jessica and two lonely archers on boats shooting arrows at fish, which might refer to the pain she feels piercing her heart (*Figure 96*). The audience is left with a melancholic visual and again the question if justice has really been done lingers in the air.

## **Conclusion**

Although this version of *The Merchant of Venice* is presented in an "attractive use of [...] painterly textures" (Hindle 63), Venice is rendered as a bleak, dark and depressing place; the tones of lighting are muted and indicate coldness which is prevalent in a blue and grey colour scheme. Moreover, repeated scenes of heavy raining and thunder contribute to the overall murky atmosphere. Visually, the atmosphere reflects the hostile and icy attitude towards the Jewish population of Venice in 1596. In the opening sequence Radford provides the historical context of the play, in which he outlines the mistreatment, ostracism, persecution and humiliation of Jews at the hands of the Christian citizens of Venice. Jews are religiously and morally condemned by the Christians for their practice of usury;

however, by depicting the Christians decadent and hypocritical behaviour, their moral superiority is questioned, too.

During the opening montage the audience witnesses Antonio's derogatory treatment of Shylock, who is being spat in the face. Further visually interpolated moments, such as Shylock desperately seeking Jessica in his house and on the streets of Venice or Shylock being locked out of his synagogue obviously support Shylock's tragic victimisation and are decisive in defining Shylock's outsider role. Additionally, cuts in the play text reinforce his sympathetic traits; for example, Shylock does not express his hate for Antonio verbally; he treats Jessica fondly and gives money to a beggar. His loss and pain are emphasised, which renders him vulnerable and pitiable. Consequently, these visualised instances of humiliation and injustice shift the play's premises accordingly: Shylock's hostility and revenge is fuelled by Jessica's betrayal and elopement as well as the Christians' ill-treatment and provide the basis for Shylock's justification for his relentless behaviour at the trial.

Shylock and his mistreatment are the focal points of this version. Consequently, the *mise-en-scène* of this version mainly functions to portray Shylock as a sympathetic and marginalised victim and underscores his status as an essentially powerless victim of Venetian society. For example, Shylock is repeatedly photographed from a high angle perspective, which reduces his size and, consequently, power; he is often shown at the left – less powerful – side of the frame. Moreover, Shylock is marginalised and stigmatised by means of costume and setting: for example, the ghetto and his house are cramped, which underscores the feeling of entrapment and he has to wear a red cap outside the Jewish confines. Several close-ups of Shylock's suffering and torn face makes the audience identify and sympathise with him.

#### 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to analyse how the figure of Shylock is presented on screen. In particular, this thesis has tried to tackle the task as to how Shylock's visual presence is affected by means of visual style, i.e. mise-en-scène. Four films of *The Merchant of Venice* with different years of publication were taken under consideration and analysed thoroughly.<sup>132</sup> Although the respective filmic adaptations differ in terms of their production types ranging from televised adaptation to cinematic version, neither assessment in quality nor personal preference has been claimed and the films in question were treated equally with regard to their analyses.

This paper consists of a two-part structure; Part I has focused on *The Merchant of Venice* in the light of theoretical and historical concerns, whereas Part II has concentrated on practical matters, i.e. screenshot analyses of Shylock in the films under consideration. In particular, Part I has introduced fundamental theories of postcolonial criticism which have functioned as the bases on which this paper rests. Renowned representatives of postcolonial studies, i.e. Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, have drawn attention to the position of minorities in our societies in their respective works. Since the Jewish character of Shylock is a member of a minority, which has suffered from various forms of abuse and oppression, a link between the play and postcolonial theory is thus established. Although Said's and Bhabha's ideas mainly deal with Oriental cultures and peoples their underlying concepts are fundamentally important to any discourse of otherness and can be applied to other subject matters as well. More specifically, Kalmar and Penslar have applied Said's concepts of *Orientalism* and argued that although Said's study might seem to be out of place when it comes to Jews, they were and have been categorised alongside Orientalist dichotomies.

Bhabha's theories on the distinction between the coloniser and the colonised have been taken up by Bartels. She works on the premise that early modern

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<sup>132</sup> A careful selection was not necessary because only the four films in question were available.

conceptions of the Jew provide an illustrative example of how stable notions of colonial discourse expose themselves as baseless. This assumption has led to the historical part of this research paper; *The Merchant of Venice* emerged at a time when the English empire came into being. At that time, different kinds of foreigners and aliens were regarded suspiciously and it was vital to the English to set themselves off from others in terms of “religion, race, nationality, and even sexuality” (Shapiro 3) or some other sort of defining category – notions of “us” were fostered and consolidated by discriminating against “them”. However, Jews, although regarded as ‘the other’, were indistinguishable from the English and proved to be difficult to be identified as such. As a consequence, widely differing early modern conceptions of the Jew posed a latent threat to the established categories of difference. The Jew, thus, came to be seen as an ambivalent and unknowable figure.

Taking the theories posed in Part I into consideration, the following hypothesis has then been suggested: it has been assumed that Shylock - a member of a suppressed group - will be represented stereotypically and negatively in the four chosen filmic versions. If this hypothesis proves right, moments in which these stereotypical representations crack and Shylock poses a threat will surface, too.

Consequently, the second part of this research paper has taken a closer look at Shylock’s filmic representations and explored the ways in which the films constructed Shylock visually. Mise-en-scène and its components have provided the guidelines along which the statuses of the different Shylocks are described. Elements of mise-en-scène such as setting, costume, lighting, the frame with its effects on the characters as well as and the distribution of space and character placement within the frame have been explained in order to gain an understanding as to how Shylock is presented visually. As a consequence, a variety of questions as to how Shylock would figure within the mise-en-scène have been raised in the introductory section of Part II.

The respective screenshots of the same situations, i.e. the beginning, the introduction of Shylock, the relationship between Shylock and Antonio as well as

Shylock and Jessica, Shylock's loss and defence, Shylock at the trial and the ending, have been analysed in each film and revealed the following results: that the outcome would not offer a clear-cut answer was to be expected; however, against the assumptions, Shylock is not entirely represented stereotypically in terms of *mise-en-scène* and sometimes seems to be a conceivably dominant as well as ambiguous character. In particular, Laurence Olivier's Shylock is often put into focus via lighting and repeatedly occupies the intrinsically dominant centre or right side of the frame. Time and again, his Shylock covers more space within the frame than other characters. In addition, he is given more single shots and close-ups than other characters. In terms of appearance, Shylock is not constructed on binary oppositions and does not appear as 'the other'.

In contrast, Warren Mitchell's Shylock is built on binary division and is Venice's quintessential 'other'. For instance, features of physical appearance, as well as mannerisms and accent are not repressed but visibly emphasise his otherness. The stereotypical image of the Jewish moneylender with stereotypically derogatory qualities, such as greediness, viciousness and mercilessness is reinforced. Correspondingly, with regard to the *mise-en-scène* he is often represented as inferior and powerless. For example, high angle perspectives emphasise his smaller size as well as his subordinate position within society. This Shylock frequently appears confined in three-shots and framed by the set or characters. What is more, he mainly occupies the left - less powerful – side of the frame. However, there are subversive moments in which Shylock poses a menace and, accordingly, intrudes into the space of the Christian Venetians.

Due to the choice of time and setting Henry Goodman's Shylock is presented in the context of emerging antisemitism prevalent in Europe, which led to the Holocaust. The plight of the Jews as subjugated 'other' is shown in the opening credits. Shylock's bleak situation is mirrored in the *mise-en-scène*; tight framing and high camera perspectives additionally reinforce Shylock's victim status. Additionally, he regularly appears trapped and isolated, which is emphasised by means of single and close shots. Goodman's Shylock is not built on stereotypes but presented rather humanely. However, this Shylock has also villainous traits

and at times explicitly poses a threat to the Christians. Particularly at home and at court Shylock's potential for threat is underscored by means of low angle shots, character placement, screen size and low key lighting. Consequently, Goodman's portrayal yields an ambiguous Shylock: on one side he is the victim of anti-Semitism and discrimination, on the other a menacing force.

The opening montage of the last *Merchant of Venice* film under consideration displayed the negative malevolent attitude towards the Jews in Venice in 1596. By providing the historical background to the play, in which ostracism, persecution and humiliation of Jews are shown, Shylock's victim and marginal status within Venetian society is emphasised. Interpolated scenes of humiliation and injustice and cuts of Shylock's unfavourable lines stress his tragic fate as well as his sympathetic traits. Al Pacino's Shylock and his mistreatment at the hands of the Venetians are at the centre of this version. Accordingly, the mise-en-scène, thus, mainly works to portray Shylock as a tragic, sympathetic, marginalised and dominated victim of Venetian society. That is, Shylock is often shown from high angle perspectives, in order to accentuate his lack in size and power. Moreover, he mainly occupies the left – less powerful – side of the screen. In addition, costume and setting also blemish Shylock visually: the ghetto he lives in is brimmed with people, his house seems like a trap and his clothes set him off from the Venetians. Close-ups of Pacino's face marked by humiliation and suffering makes the audience feel for Shylock.

It goes without saying that different productions and actors yield different manifestations of Shylock. However, all four films show one common characteristic: although Shylock is a marginal figure in the original play text, he and his fate have come to be the focal points of the screen adaptations of the play. This assumption is consolidated by the fact that Shylock in each film version is personified by a famous stage/film actor displaying a strong screen presence.

Another trend which has surfaced in the course of this research paper is the victimization and redemption on behalf of Shylock. In general, Shylock is presented as a tragic and sympathetic figure that is more victim than villain. In all

adaptations Shylock repeatedly appears framed, isolated or confined either by other characters, props or set. Despite few moments in which Shylock poses a threat, he nevertheless stays the victim of Christian society. Perhaps except for Mitchell's version of Shylock, the films in question are largely received as Shylock's tragedy. In particular, by means of close-ups and inserted moments which reinforce a pathetic characterisation of Shylock the audience highly sympathise and identifies with Shylock which makes his thrive for revenge to some extent reasonable. Interestingly, the most recent version of *The Merchant of Venice*, i.e. the cinematic adaptation by Michael Radford, renders the most victimised of all Shylocks. One probable explanation could be to make Shylock's tragedy palatable to contemporary tastes and audiences.

These pages have tried to trace Shylock's manifestations in four films. Although the working hypothesis has not been affirmed as such, that is, Shylock is not exclusively presented in a stereotypical and derogatory manner in terms of mise-en-scène in the respective film adaptations, but is generally regarded as a victimised and tragic character. If these victimised depictions display another form of stereotypisation is left open to debate. Moreover, this paper has aimed to align contemporary literary theory with the original play text of *The Merchant of Venice* written over 400 years ago as well as its modern filmic versions. This paper closes with a quotation taken from Ania Looma which has provided the stimulus for the title of this thesis. She writes the following: "[a]s we trace the history of race, particularly as it animates literature, we get a sense of not just the distance, but also the very powerful connections between then and now" (*Race*, 4).

Hopefully, this thesis has shed some light on the character of Shylock. Undoubtedly, *The Merchant of Venice* – be it the play, the film and/or its riveting protagonist Shylock– will continue to provoke arguments and will not cease to spark interest in scholars, students and the like in the future.

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## **6. Appendix**

### **6.1. Plot Outline**

Antonio, a merchant of Venice, is melancholic and does not know why; his friend Bassanio asks for a loan of 3, 000 ducats in order to travel to Belmont to woo Portia, a beautiful and rich heiress. Antonio consents, but says that he must lend the money from a moneylender because all of his ventures are at sea. As a consequence, Antonio and Bassanio go to Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, to ask for money. Shylock, who hates Antonio because he is a Christian and lends money without charging interest, tricks the merchant into a bargain; if Antonio defaults on the bond, Shylock will be given a pound of Antonio's flesh. Shylock's daughter Jessica abandons her father's house and faith and elopes with Lorenzo, a Christian. Bassanio, together with his friend Gratiano, leaves for Belmont. In the meantime in Belmont, Portia meets a couple of suitors. Her father's will demands that she must marry the one man who chooses rightly between three caskets – the one holding her picture. Both, the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Aragon do not succeed. Bassanio chooses correctly and the couple is happily united. However, bad news arrives at Belmont: Antonio's ships are wrecked and he will not be able to meet the bond in time. Shylock, distressed and angry that his daughter has escaped with a Christian, demands his pound of flesh, which will surely kill Antonio. Portia and her maid Nerissa conjure a plan to rescue Antonio. Disguised as men they travel to Venice. Shylock wants justice and the case is brought to court – supervised by the Duke of Venice. The Duke and Bassanio insist on Shylock to show Antonio mercy. However, Shylock refuses and demands his bond. A young legal expert, Balthazar (Portia in disguise) and his assistant (Nerissa) arrive in order to settle the matter. Portia confirms that Shylock is entitled to Antonio's pound of flesh, but pleads to Shylock's mercy. He refuses again and Portia has Antonio's life-saving idea: according to the bond, Shylock must only have a pound of Antonio's flesh. So if Shylock sheds a single drop of Antonio's blood while taking the pound of flesh, he threatens a citizen of Venice. According to Venetian law, if an alien threatens the life of a Christian, he will be sentenced to death. Consequently, Shylock relents and agrees to accept the repayment of the

loan. However, Portia now argues that he should not only get his money but also face a punishment to death for threatening the life of a Christian. The Duke shows mercy and spares Shylock's life only if he gives half his wealth and Antonio decrees Shylock to become a Christian. Disguised Portia demands a ring by Bassanio, which was a present from Portia and which he vowed not to part with. Bassanio hands over the ring and Gratiano does the same with Nerissa's ring. Back in Belmont, Portia and Nerissa charge their husbands with adultery - having given their rings to other women. Eventually, Portia reveals the truth. While the couples enjoy their happy endings, good news of Antonio's ships arrive.

## 6.2. Screenshots

### Laurence Olivier:



Figure 1 (0:49)



Figure 2 (1:02)



Figure 3 (2:07)



Figure 4 (17:15)



Figure 5 (17:28)



Figure 6 (17:47)



Figure 7 (18:23)



Figure 8 (19:26)



Figure 12 (22:07)



Figure 9 (19:37)



Figure 13 (22:21)



Figure 10 (21:32)



Figure 14 (22:37)



Figure 11 (21:53)



Figure 15 (22:45)



Figure 16 (22:59)



Figure 20 (24:46)



Figure 17 (23:25)



Figure 21 (25:16)



Figure 18 (24:06)



Figure 22 (28:16)



Figure 19 (24:35)



Figure 23 (28:18)



Figure 24 (29:52)



Figure 28 (31:59)



Figure 25 (30:33)



Figure 29 (32:11)



Figure 26 (30:40)



Figure 30 (32:37)



Figure 27 (30:48)



Figure 31 (32:48)



Figure 32 (33:04)



Figure 36 (48:09)



Figure 33 (46:05)



Figure 37 (48:25)



Figure 34 (47:07)



Figure 38 (48:44)



Figure 35 (47:51)



Figure 39 (49:03)



Figure 40 (49:11)



Figure 44 (51:16)



Figure 41 (49:15)



Figure 45 (51:51)



Figure 42 (49:43)



Figure 46 (52:34)



Figure 43 (50:57)



Figure 47 (53:18)



Figure 48 (53:43)



Figure 52 (56:30)



Figure 49 (54:58)



Figure 53 (01:20:58)



Figure 50 (55:15)



Figure 54 (01:21:20)



Figure 51 (55:59)



Figure 55 (01:21:56)



Figure 56 (01:22:16)



Figure 60 (01:30:34)



Figure 57 (01:22:53)



Figure 61 (01:37:47)



Figure 58 (01:25:48)



Figure 62 (01:40:30)



Figure 59 (01:26:33)



Figure 63 (01:40:30)



Figure 64 (01:41:02)



Figure 68 (01:44:47)



Figure 65 (01:43:28)



Figure 69 (01:44:50)



Figure 66 (01:43:43)



Figure 70 (01:44:54)



Figure 67 (01:44:41)



Figure 71 (01:45:29)



Figure 72 (02:05:39)



Figure 4 (18:14)

**Warren Mitchell:**



Figure 1 (0:33)



Figure 5 (18:50)



Figure 2 (17:15)



Figure 6 (19:41)



Figure 3 (17:24)



Figure 7 (19:56)



Figure 8 (20:32)



Figure 12 (23:06)



Figure 9 (21:42)



Figure 13 (23:16)



Figure 10 (22:21)



Figure 14 (23:34)



Figure 11 (22:48)



Figure 15 (24:14)



Figure 16 (24:35)



Figure 20 (42:44)



Figure 17 (25:57)



Figure 21 (42:28)



Figure 18 (26:48)



Figure 22 (44:38)



Figure 19 (41:30)



Figure 23 (44:49)



Figure 24 (44:55)



Figure 28 (01:09:39)



Figure 25 (45:27)



Figure 29 (01:09:44)



Figure 26 (47:19)



Figure 30 (01:10:01)



Figure 27 (47:33)



Figure 31 (01:10:13)



Figure 32 (01:10:19)



Figure 36 (01:11:50)



Figure 33 (01:10:55)



Figure 37 (01:12:00)



Figure 34 (01:11:22)



Figure 38 (01:12:29)



Figure 35 (01:11:31)



Figure 39 (01:14:33)



Figure 40 (01:15:02)



Figure 44 (01:33)

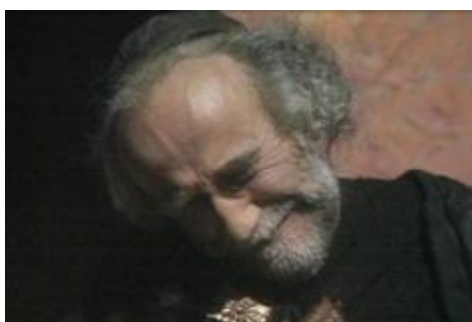


Figure 41 (01:16:01)



Figure 45 (01:38)



Figure 42 (0:13)



Figure 46 (02:15)



Figure 43 (01:29)



Figure 47 (02:51)



Figure 48 (04:00)



Figure 52 (08:23)



Figure 49 (06:17)



Figure 53 (14:05)



Figure 50 (07:36)



Figure 54 (14:34)



Figure 51 (08:00)



Figure 55 (15:20)



Figure 56 (15:50)



Figure 60 (20:11)



Figure 57 (17:54)



Figure 61 (20:34)



Figure 58 (18:59)



Figure 62 (22:41)



Figure 59 (20:04)



Figure 63 (22:50)

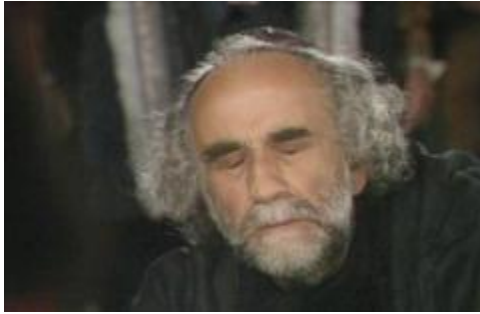


Figure 64 (23:03)



Figure 68 (25:48)



Figure 65 (23:58)



Figure 69 (25:52)



Figure 66 (24:56)



Figure 70 (29:11)



Figure 67 (24:51)



Figure 71 (47:49)



Figure 72 (48:26)

**Henry Goodman:**



Figure 1 (0:10)



Figure 2 (0:20)



Figure 3 (01:22)



Figure 4 (01:16)



Figure 5 (01:44)



Figure 6 (02:01)



Figure 7 (02:37)



Figure 8 (04:25)



Figure 12 (07:14)



Figure 9 (04:43)



Figure 13 (07:24)



Figure 10 (04:54)



Figure 14 (14:42)



Figure 11 (06:41)



Figure 15 (15:11)



Figure 16 (15:38)



Figure 17 (16:08)



Figure 18 (16:48)



Figure 19 (17:08)



Figure 20 (17:31)



Figure 21 (18:18)



Figure 22 (18:20)



Figure 23 (19:06)



Figure 24 (19:32)



Figure 25 (20:18)



Figure 26 (21:40)



Figure 27 (21:47)



Figure 28 (21:54)



Figure 29 (22:24)



Figure 30 (22:34)



Figure 31 (22:54)



Figure 32 (23:16)



Figure 33 (23:31)



Figure 37 (31:57)



Figure 34 (24:14)



Figure 38 (38:30)



Figure 35 (24:53)



Figure 39 (38:43)



Figure 36 (31:37)



Figure 40 (39:40)



Figure 41 (39:47)



Figure 45 (40:58)



Figure 42 (40:16)



Figure 46 (41:20)

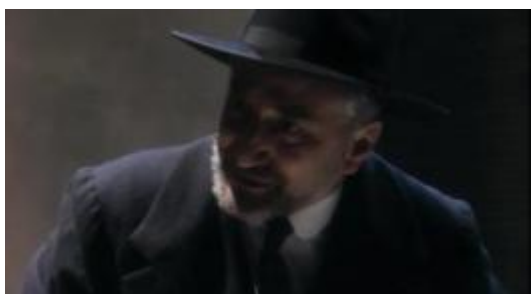


Figure 43 (40:19)



Figure 47 (42:34)



Figure 44 (40:33)



Figure 48 (42:57)



Figure 49 (46:04)



Figure 53 (50:32)



Figure 50 (46:10)



Figure 54 (50:34)



Figure 51 (46:26)



Figure 55 (50:37)



Figure 52 (46:51)



Figure 56 (01:07:14)



Figure 57 (01:07:58)



Figure 58 (01:08:06)



Figure 59 (01:08:36)



Figure 60 (01:09:24)



Figure 61 (01:09:37)



Figure 62 (01:10:16)



Figure 63 (01:10:35)



Figure 64 (01:10:56)



Figure 65 (01:11:47)



Figure 66 (01:14:36)



Figure 67 (01:15:23)



Figure 68 (01:40:34)



Figure 69 (1:41:35)



Figure 70 (01:41:48)



Figure 71 (01:43:20)



Figure 72 (01:44:23)



Figure 73 (01:45:11)



Figure 77 (01:50:58)



Figure 74 (01:46:50)



Figure 78 (01:50:48)



Figure 75 (01:48:46)



Figure 79 (01:51:34)



Figure 76 (01:50:56)



Figure 80 (01:53:34)



Figure 81 (01:53:56)



Figure 86 (02:03:49)



Figure 82 (01:54:39)



Figure 87 (02:04:22)



Figure 83 (01:54:54)



Figure 88 (02:04:29)



Figure 84 (01:59:08)



Figure 89 (02:04:43)



Figure 85 (01:59:17)



Figure 90 (02:04:47)



Figure 94 (02:07:51)



Figure 91 (02:04:55)



Figure 95 (02:09:24)



Figure 92 (02:05:07)



Figure 96 (02:09:29)



Figure 93 (02:05:15)



Figure 97 (02:11:24)



Figure 98 (02:13:10)



Figure 99 (02:17:13)



Figure 100 (02:39:01)



Figure 101 (02:39:16)



Figure 102 (02:40:01)

## Al Pacino:



Figure 1 (01:16)



Figure 2 (01:39)



Figure 3 (01:54)



Figure 4 (02:10)



Figure 5 (02:23)



Figure 9 (02:52)



Figure 6 (02:34)



Figure 10 (02:56)



Figure 7 (02:36)



Figure 11 (02:58)



Figure 8 (02:48)



Figure 12 (03:05)



Figure 13 (03:14)



Figure 14 (03:16)



Figure 15 (04:14)



Figure 16 (04:30)



Figure 17 (04:50)



Figure 18 (05:26)

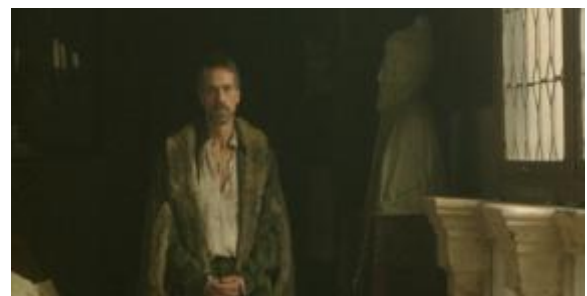


Figure 19 (06:29)



Figure 20 (06:37)



Figure 21 (08:49)



Figure 22 (14:41)



Figure 23 (14:47)



Figure 24 (16:34)



Figure 25 (16:47)



Figure 26 (17:05)



Figure 27 (17:09)



Figure 28 (17:43)



Figure 29 (18:35)



Figure 30 (19:23)



Figure 34 (30:40)



Figure 31 (19:25)



Figure 35 (30:49)



Figure 32 (21:25)



Figure 36 (31:33)



Figure 33 (29:48)



Figure 37 (32:33)



Figure 38 (32:25)



Figure 39 (33:24)



Figure 40 (34:24)



Figure 41 (34:34)



Figure 42 (34:49)



Figure 43 (38:24)



Figure 44 (38:58)



Figure 45 (42:30)



Figure 46 (42:46)



Figure 47 (43:46)



Figure 48 (43:46)



Figure 49 (44:02)



Figure 50 (49:43)



Figure 51 (49:48)



Figure 52 (49:50)



Figure 53 (50:19)



Figure 54 (50:42)



Figure 55 (50:51)



Figure 56 (51:14)



Figure 57 (52:40)



Figure 58 (54:57)



Figure 59 (01:18:45)



Figure 60 (01:21:02)



Figure 61 (01:21:10)



Figure 62 (01:22:07)



Figure 63 (01:22:54)



Figure 64 (01:23:22)



Figure 65 (01:23:34)



Figure 66 (01:25:46)



Figure 67 (01:26:41)



Figure 72 (01:34:06)



Figure 68 (01:27:43)



Figure 73 (01:34:17)



Figure 69 (01:29:39)



Figure 74 (01:34:56)



Figure 70 (01:30:51)



Figure 75 (01:35:23)



Figure 71 (01:32:24)



Figure 76 (01:38:14)



Figure 77 (01:38:48)



Figure 78 (01:38:49)



Figure 79 (01:38:54)



Figure 80 (01:39:07)



Figure 81 (01:39:44)



Figure 82 (01:39:51)



Figure 83 (01:41:33)



Figure 84 (01:42:08)



Figure 85 (01:42:40)



Figure 86 (1:42:43)



Figure 87 (01:44:06)



Figure 88 (01:44:42)



Figure 89 (01:45:20)



Figure 90 (01:45: 21)



Figure 91 (01:45:34)



Figure 92 (01:57:39)



Figure 93 (01:59:28)



Figure 94 (02:00:07)



Figure 95 (02:00:08)



Figure 96 (02:00:26)

## Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit William Shakespeares *The Merchant of Venice*, insbesondere mit Shylock, der jüdischen Hauptfigur, und dessen visuelle Darstellung in vier Filmadaptionen des Stückes aus den Jahren 1973, 1980, 2001 und 2004. Ziel der Arbeit besteht darin, festzustellen, wie Shylock in diesen Filmen dargestellt und wahrgenommen wird.

Die Diplomarbeit besteht aus zwei Teilen. Der erste – theoretische – Teil befasst sich mit Postkolonialismus, insbesondere mit den Arbeiten und Theorien der postkolonialen Literaturkritiker Edward Said und Homi Bhabha. Diese Auswahl ist nicht zufällig, sondern basiert auf der Annahme, dass postkoloniale Theorien sich mit Begriffen und Kontexten wie zum Beispiel Unterdrückung, Andersartigkeit und asymmetrischen Machtverhältnissen arbeiten. Es wird daher angenommen, dass Shylock, als Angehöriger einer Minderheit, in den Filmadaptionen als inferior und dominiert dargestellt wird. Zusätzlich beinhaltet der erste Teil der Arbeit Kolonialismus und die Situation der Juden im elisabethanischen Zeitalter.

Im zweiten - empirische - Teil der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit werden die Möglichkeiten visueller Darstellung im Film erläutert. Hierbei wird der französische filmanalytische Begriff *mise-en-scène* als Mittel zur Visualisierung eingeführt und definiert. *Mise-en-scène* und dessen Komponenten werden erläutert und darauffolgend angewendet. Die Analysen der Filme haben zum Resultat, dass Shylock nicht nur, wie angenommen dominiert wird, sondern auch dominant, manchmal sogar bedrohlich wirkt. Obwohl sich alle oben erwähnten Filme in ihrer Machart unterscheiden und Shylock unterschiedlich visualisiert wird, ist Shylock die zentrale Figur der Filme.

## **Lebenslauf**

### **Persönliche Daten**

Nora Horvath

geboren am 09.11.1979 in Oberpullendorf  
verheiratet, 2 Kinder (Florian, geb. 2005 u.  
Clemens, geb. 2008)

### **Schul Ausbildung**

1986 – 1990

Volksschule Stoob

1990 – 1998

Bundesrealgymnasium Oberpullendorf

seit 1999

Diplomstudium Anglistik an der  
Hauptuniversität Wien

Literaturwissenschaftliche Diplomarbeit:

„The Merchant of Venice – Now and Then“

### **Praktische Tätigkeiten**

07/2001

Ferialpraktikum bei Österreichische Post AG

08-09/2001

Aupair (2monatiger Auslandsaufenthalt bei einer  
Gastfamilie in London)

09/2002 –09/2005

geringfügige Beschäftigung in Trafik in Wien

seit 2010

Nachhilfeunterricht in Englisch

### **Weiterbildung**

08/2002

Intensivkurs Italienisch in Florenz

seit 09/2011

Grundkurs Burgenlandkroatisch

### **Besondere Kenntnisse**

Fremdsprachen

Englisch – fließend in Wort und Schrift

Italienisch – gute Grundkenntnisse

Burgenlandkroatisch – Anfangskenntnisse