# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE OMNIPRESENT OF THREATS AND CHAOS – A LITERARY NARRATIVE ON *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* AND *ROMEO AND JULIET*

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*Abstract:* **An Aristotelian tragedy includes many different characteristics. It is a cause-and-effect chain and it contains the elements of catharsis, which is pity and fear, and hamartia, which is the tragic flaw embedded in the main characters. *Romeo and Juliet* is often thought to be such a play; a play that encapsulates enduring love alongside threats, violence, and chaos that always encompass the streets of Verona. Likewise the *Merchant of Venice* whose central theme could be identified as selflessness and self-interest, with greed and cyclic increase of hatred that cause threats and chaos is not far from societal mayhem though with *a happy ending*. Shakespeare's wish to show that generosity and giving freely bestows blessings on those that do so whereas disaster awaits those who are tight-fisted and lack mercy is also one of the profound insights into the complexities of the human mind and emotions. It was within the context of the above viewpoints that this study was rationally constructed to be a necessary academic exercise for investigation. The inquiry was therefore on a detailed understanding of the omnipresent of threats and chaos – a literary narrative on The *Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet.* The study also sought to establish the presence of the spirit of Anti-Semitism in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, explored how Shakespeare presented the power of love and hate in *Romeo and Juliet*, and reconnoitre the relevance of Shakespeare's literary works in modern-day society. The study employed a case study approach which underpins an interpretive qualitative research orientation. Data were generated through document analysis and watching the *Romeo and Juliet* movie directed by Bazman Luhrmann produced in 1996.The analysis of the document was done using the theoretical underpinning of Mukarovsky & Felik Vodicka Dynamic Structuralism Theory. The findings of the study revealed that the two plays display incredible amount of threats and chaos from the part of characters, that Shakespeare's work is still very relevant in modern day society, that the *Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet* possess the power of love and hate with the results of threats, and chaos being effects on the central themes in the two plays under review. Chaos and threats are the abysmal darkness that scotches all forms of human dignity as revealed from the findings.**

*Keywords:* **Threats, chaos, love, hatred, death, dynamic structuralist approach, anti- Semitism.**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Deceptive appearance and disguise not only cause chaos and threats in the two plays under review, but are important themes in the plays as well. This chapter provides the contextual background to the study that gives the context in which the problem is situated. It further describes the problem that is to be researched in the statement of the problem. Research questions that the study found answers to are also expressed in this chapter alongside the aims that the study had achieved. The chapter also brings to light the catalyst behind the researcher's interest to embark on the study. Suffice to say, the significance of the study and the structure of this dissertation are also discussed therein.

The Merchant of Venice is considered one of Shakespeare's more problematic and disturbing plays. The controversy that primarily surrounds the dramatist's treatment of Shylock and the related question of anti-Semitism are duly noted and have been since the play's first showing. The importance of the play is deep and its questions can be answered mostly through its main players.

A literary critic such as Harold Bloom in his narratives sees the play as a ―profoundly anti-Semitic work‖ (Bloom, 1966). And Shakespeare scholar Harry Goddard asks: ―How could one of the most tolerant spirits have written a play that is centred on one of the degraded prejudices of the ages?‖ (Goddard, 2015). However, Goddard concluded that the play must first be broken down within its characters devices.

Professor A. C. Bradley, who in 1904, published his *Shakespearean Tragedy*, sums up the nineteenth-century tradition of ―character analysis." He puts special emphasis on the fact that the hero's fall proceeds mainly from his own actions. The hero, generally a man in "high degree or public importance" and the owner of an exceptional nature, shows a marked "one-sidedness," a pre-disposition in some particular direction, and a total incapacity to resist this force. The "ultimate power of the tragic world" is, for Bradley, a moral order which, though not regardless of human weal, determines the character's native dispositions and, consequently, his actions. For these, the hero is morally responsible; and he must be so, Bradley says, if we are not to lose the central meaning of tragedy. It is human action itself the main tragic fact, the cause of catastrophe. It is then not surprising that, centring his criticism on character—analysis and on action, Bradley's discussion of madness should also follow this trend. Through detailed comparison and dissection of the characters, Bradley leads his analysis to the discovery of those peculiar pre-dispositions in each of them which determine their respective states of mind. Therefore, Romeo and Juliet peculiar madness in characters for love sake are responsible for their deaths, causing reflectiveness and irresolution on their part to end not in the graves; this is what the Elizabethans would called a melancholic temperament. But Bradley emphasizes that it is melancholy, not insanity.

Indeed, it must be emphasized that, for Bradley, abnormal conditions of mind such as insanity, somnambulism hallucinations and the like, are only additional factors to the tragic action. This means that deeds issuing from these factors are not expressive of character, and free the hero from moral responsibility whenever they are introduced. This is why Romeo and Juliet, though probably not very far from insanity, are never, for Bradley, mad. Though not mad characters, their love relationship has been characterized by threats and chaos. Similarly, *The merchant of Venice* also presents not only hypocrisy, anti-Semitism, but also hate that emanates from threats of death and deceit.

It is in the context of all these that the researcher embarked on this present study: *An investigation into the omnipresent of threats and chaos – a literary narrative of The Merchant of Venice and Romeo and Juliet.* This research is not only carried out to investigate the omnipresent of threats and chaos in the two Shakespearean plays under review but provide a freshness of thinking and willingness to consider efforts to mitigate conflicts between human relations and to enhance through the study of Shakespeare's works, themes that are valuable to foster ethical behaviour and social decisions that are congruent to provide respect and significant confirmation to our own human conclusions.

## 2. ANTI-SEMITISM AND CARNIVALIZATION IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

Anti-Semitism, often called ―the longest hatred,‖ is both an age-old problem and a current challenge. For centuries Jews have been accused of treacherous acts, including the murder of Jesus, poisoning wells, the ritual murder of Christian children, and the Bubonic plague and controlling the media and the banks. Many of these falsities have roots in historical circumstances, and longstanding fear and misunderstanding. Tragically, these lies continue to be launched against Jews. Recently, Jews have been blamed for everything from the attacks on September 11 and the Iraq War to the tsunami that devastated Asia. The continual demonizing and scapegoating of the Jews as ―other‖, highlights the need to analyse and discuss the depiction of Jews in literature. Without an examination of both historic and contemporary anti-Semitism, students may be left with stereotypical and negative conceptions of Jews and Judaism.

Certainly one of the most characteristic and troubling aspects of The Merchant of Venice is that the depiction Shylock reinforces the stereotype of Jews as money-hungry and greedy. This stereotype has been around for centuries, and continues to be perpetuated today. Having students learn about some the historical roots and causes of anti-Semitism, as well as some extremely deadly consequences of this hatred, gives them a background for a discussion of the play.

It is impossible to definitively know what Shakespeare's intent was in creating the character of Shylock. Was Shakespeare drawing on the anti-Semitism of the time and using Shylock as an archetype to get laughs and evoke revulsion? Or, was Shakespeare turning this stereotype on its head to force his audiences to look at and question their own prejudices and fears? While it is likely that Shakespeare never visited Venice, it is also quite possible that he never met a Jew. Nevertheless fears and myths about Jews were ever-present.

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

Elizabethan theatre-goers would have recognized Shylock as a Jew immediately. His red wig, bulbous nose and huge cape immediately label him as ―the other‖ and as an outsider. Even though Jews were not living in England (at least not openly), they represented a stereotype – evil, cunning, greed and at the very core, heartlessness. Shylock is spat upon by Antonio, reviled even by his servants, abandoned by his daughter, Jessica, and ultimately undone by Portia. The characters continually mock him and it is hard to imagine that the theatre-goers in Shakespeare's time would not have shared the feelings of disdain conveyed by the players in *The Merchant of Venice*

Since much of the tension in the play comes from the issue of usury, it may be helpful to explore the topic with your students. Money lending was a key political issue in Shakespeare's time, as the economy shifted from an agricultural to a market economy. A troubled relationship was forged between money-lenders and borrowers. Stephen Greenbatt writes,

*"... though officially the English declared by statute that usury was illegal under the law of God and had driven out only the people who were exempt, by reason of being Jews, from his prohibition, the realm's mercantile economy could not function without the possibility of money-lending...Christian usurers, even though there were not directly called by that name, occupied a position roughly comparable to the one held by Jews: officially, they were despised, harassed, condemned from the pulpit and the stage, but they also played a key role. A role that could not be conveniently eliminated..." (Greenbatt, pp. 271-272)*

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare exposes the increasing reliance on credit and money-lending in European society. Shylock, the money-lender, while reviled by the Venetians in the play, is a necessary evil as he makes it possible for Christian's customers to conduct both their business and ―romantic‖ pursuits. The play explores the relationship and tension between love and commerce. Without Shylock's services, Bassanio could not win the ―lady richly left,‖ Portia, and the Venetian businessmen could not finance their ventures. The conceit of usury as money ―breeding‖ is a critical one for the play, and is based on Aristotelian teachings. Throughout the play there are puns confusing sexual and romantic references to money as Shakespeare asks his audience to consider both Shylock's and the Christian's passion and lust for money. While Shakespeare may be highlighting Christian hypocrisy about greed and money lending, it is also important to remember that money-lenders were despised in Shakespeare's time and that his audiences would have surely laughed at Shylock's ultimate ruin at the end of the play.

Works of literature, written hundreds of years ago, may contain viewpoints that seem stereotypical and that offend modern sensibilities. While it is natural to want to protect mankind from these harsh sentiments, it may be counterproductive to omit controversial texts from teaching rather than using them as a vehicle of raising awareness and sensitivity about issues of prejudice. When teaching *The Merchant of Venice*, then, it is important to raise the issue of anti- Semitism as a precursor to examining the text, and to explore this type of prejudice as both a historical and contemporary phenomenon.

Throughout the play, Shylock, and by extension, all Jews are presented as money-hungry, conniving, and cruel. Shylock – ―the Jew,‖ as he is called by everyone in the play – is compared with a dog, a cur, and a demon, and is referred to as ―the very devil incarnation.‖ Teachers should be aware of the negative impact these words and ideas could have on students without a thorough examination of the history and the context of this language. It is important to consider how

Jews may feel after reading *The Merchant of Venice*, and equally essential to take into account how the play might reinforce stereotypes of Jews among students. When negative and stereotypical portrayals of ―minorities‖ are read in class with no examination or critical analysis of these stereotypes, students may assume that these depictions are accurate and true. It is therefore critical to contextualize these stereotypes and offer students an opportunity to examine and deconstruct them.

*Merchant'*s ―strangely joyless‖ finale, as Jerry Lopez appropriately describes is ―replete with the markers of triumphant comic resolution‖ Nevertheless, Lopez also observes, ―[T}they are *merely* markers. Although Lopez's observation shore up the specific argument of early modern plays' potential for failure, I draw upon his study in order to illustrate how markers of what is often viewed as a network of opposed systems are but a set of superficial signifiers: usury versus charity, justice versus mercy, oath swearing versus untrustworthiness, and Judaism versus Christianity in *Merchant* are representation of systems that lack integrity. Here are a few events that demonstrate how fragile these markers are in relation to the systems they mark: in order to do his normally Christian charity, Antonio, Shylock dispenses with usury; Portia requires mercy from Shylock, but she does not offer any in exchange when it is clearly her turn to do so; the use of words that rhyme with ―lead‖ in the song that serves as moral support for Bassanio's choice of the casket in (3.2) suggests that Portia might be breaking her promise to abide by her father's will; Bassanio's and Gratiano's Vows of fidelity to Portia and Nerissa are flagrantly broken; and Shylock's acceptance of the court's deal clearly shows that he breaks his ―oath in heaven, lay[ing] perjury upon [his] soul‖ (4.1.225-6).

The recurrent flawed semiotic of the systems that move the play forward brings us t a crucial debate regarding *Merchant* nowadays: *Does the play take an anti-Semitic stance?* This discussion is essential for my study because assumptions that *Merchant* originally staged an ant- Semitic representation of Jews may fashion the horizon of expectations of viewers nowadays. For example, many ―anti -Semitism‖ may at times, be interchangeable with the portrayal of ethnic or religious intolerance of Jews, it is necessary to problematic the anachronism of the term ―anti-Semitism‖ applied to the early modern societies. It is also important to recognize the extent to which *Merchant*'s anti-Semitism is a construct because this topic has bearing on the play's trans-historical dimension.

The application of the concept ―anti-Semitism‖ to the modern period is anachronistic. This does not discount the intersection between the intolerance that early modern Christian Europeans harbored with respect to Jews and the antagonism known as anti-Semitism, which was manufactured by European intelligentsia in the nineteenth century. I draw upon Hanna Arendt to affirm that the continuity between religious Jewish hatred and anti-Semitism is deceitful because is attenuates an incomparable phenomenon. According to Arendt, the fallacious idea of continuity between Jewish Hatred and anti-Semitism perniciously masks a Machiavellian scheme that entrapped European Jewry: the very assimilation of aliens as citizen who had financed the development of the nation-state was the decisive step in converting them into the social scapegoats of body politic that had never been very promising and was disintegrating. Thus, as Arendt states, ―[B]y attacking the Jews, who were believed to be the secret power behind governments, they [anti-Semites] could openly attack the sate itself‖. Anti-Semitism is a nineteenth- century opportunist racialization of Jews, orchestrated with precise political goal: the creation of exceptionally convenient social scapegoats with the appropriation of their estates. In making this point, I do not at all propose an unfeasible totalizing schema of the perception of race for early modern Europe. I indicate how particular discriminations exist in their personal contexts.

By the time Shakespeare wrote *Merchant*, Jews had intermarried with gentiles to the point of being frequently indistinguishable from the continent's original inhabitants. As Alan F. Corcus concludes, ―the conditions for the formation of a distinct race never arose.‖ in addition, on account of proselytism, long before antagonistic feeling towards Judaism started spreading with Crusades, there were a large number of Jews who were not even Semite descendants. It is virtually impossible to determine what physiognomic aspects Elizabethans had in mind when they imagined Jews, who, estimated as a couple of hundreds in London, might never be seen by most people. It is sensible, however, to state that the reasons for intolerance were not repugnance to a biological category such as ―Jewish race‖ - a concept engineered by political initiative three and a half centuries later. Moreover, the early modern European inconsistency in defining Jewish physiognomy suggests that Jews were genetically heterogeneous; it also implies that the *portmanteau* term ―race ― was even more imprecise as regards the variety of European complexions than it is nowadays, when , for example, a South European such as myself, with the olive skin inherited form ancient Middle Easterners and the lineaments characteristic of Caucasians, may be difficult to classify even in time of elaborate racial categorization.

Forms of ethnocentrism have always existed. Before the eighteen century, however, the justifications for defining the self in opposition to the other were either religious or cultural. The concept of ―race‖ marks a new epistemology in terms of hegemonic claims. What distinguishes ―racism‖ form preceding manifestations of ethnic intolerance is the rationalization of self- importance by an ethnic group through ―the concept of race‖ which, according to Bruce Baum, ―provided a means for eighteen-century and Anglo-American elites to reconcile emerging egalitarian ideals with the new and pervasive source of inequality of a complex topic. Nevertheless, it provides evidence that the assumption that *Merchant* takes an anti-Semitic stance is, to say the very least, highly debatable.

The debate surrounding *Merchant'*s alleged anti-Semitic stance has been particularly relevant for post-holocaust audiences because the play was indeed manipulated as an anti- Semitic cultural icon by Nazi propaganda. As a case in point, Werner Krauss‘ performance in Lothar Müthuel‘s 1943 production for Vienna‘s Burgtheatre, as Andrew G. Bonnell tell us, ―had been announced as a complete break with the representation of Shylock for 50 year‘, indeed correcting the interpretations since Novelli that had suggested that Shakespeare had intended a psychological or even sentimentalized representation of Jewishness — ―We cannot assert that these manifestly biased theatre practitioners were conscious of inventing the ―correct‖ mode of Shylock‘s ―oversized comic presentation of loathsomeness.‖ nonetheless, as this account suggests, the Nazi, who ultimately staged reality itself as it had never been done previously, made *Merchant'*s malleability fit their aims. Nazi stagings were totalizing and therefore cynical. For this reason, historical factuality obliquely supports the claim that the play takes an anti- Semitic stance.

Beyond academia, this perspective has had a particular influence on the delineation of *Merchant'*s horizon of expectations because it is particularly usual among viewers acquainted with a kind of popular Shakespearean scholarship; this source of commonly held beliefs about Shakespeare may be emblematized by Harold Bloom‘s best seller, translated into numerous languages, *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human,* in which he claims that *Merchant* is ―a profoundly anti-Semitic work‖ and that ― we tend to make [it] incoherent by portraying Shylock as being sympathetic.‖

What Bloom desires as incoherently compassionate may be viewed as potentially dangerous from a perspective inspired by New Historicism. Despite his failure to recognize formal consistency in early modern characterization, Peter J. Smith claims that *Merchant* is careful to manoeuvre its audience into a position of complicity with normative Christian value.‖ from Smith‘s perspective, Shylock‘s open-endedness serves the play‘s framework, designed to undermine the public‘s sympathy for the Jew. According to this view, the original audiences could easily identify Shylock as ―a Jewish Machiavel‖ because of the staging conventions deployed by the original players, who purportedly were not concerned with ―interiorization.‖ In addition, Smith claims that Shylock is effective for conveying malevolent ideologies if one is interested to do so, and that naturalistic staging after the Holocaust exacerbates a problem that is always potential with *Merchant.* Thus, this reasoning implies that the horizon of acting, which perpetuates anti-Semitic as a form of legitimate social behavior through the staging of Shylock as a believable human being: ―The illustration of Shakespearean theatre with its humanization of stereotype may be finally responsible, not only for a misreading of renaissance drama, but for the implicit communication of a malevolent ideology.‖ The thesis that *Merchant* propagates a malevolent ideology, which can be insidiously communicated by realism, the prevailing mainstream perfomative idiom of our time, sounds contradictory. If we accept that *Merchant* is designed to manipulate the audience to sympathize with Christian and condemn Shylock by means of its structural mechanisms, then we must also accept that the play foregrounds an opposition of subjectivities. These subjectivities are constituted by representational conventions that can only become communicable on stage through the embodied performance of actors, who ultimately give substance to characters. That characters have contradictions does not prevent the audience from perceiving the as depictions of human beings, regardless of the acting styles. Moreover, if one admits that structure is a valid analytical category, one should consequently admit structure‘s formal consistency; it follows that characterization, as an analytical category interdependent with structure, should also be regarded as a germane parameter of textual analysis. Theatre is action in time and space. For this reason, no dramaturgical structure can despite with actions carried out by characters- even the most abstract of Samuel Becket‘s solos of dismembered body parts. The formal consistency of characters does not depend on interiorization and can be achieved even by skilfully manipulated puppets.

This view of early modern characterization is positivistic in its evolutive concept of history, which implies that the original practices could not have developed their own versions of expression for psychological identity. Furthermore, this reasoning is at odds with the traditions upon which Shakespeare drew: whether or not *merchant* indeed harbors a tragedy within a comedy, it still has romantic overtones. As Helen Cooper assert, ―romances are rarely interested in defining

their precise metaphysical or theological status except in terms of what they are not: it is frequently insisted that they are not diabolic.‖ the fact that Shakespeare was his own deconstructivist, instead of invalidating romance's impartiality, authenticates his own impartiality even if it harbors a political agenda, as I will demonstrate later in this dissertatio n.

The view that *Merchant* contains an anti-Semitic ideology is countered by current scholarship with a variety of compelling arguments. As a case in point, Steven Marx observes that ―through Jew-baiting rivalled bear-baiting as a form of entertainment in the Bankside where stage Jews were help to opprobrium and ridicule, the presence of Shakespeare's Shylock did as much to tarnish as to burnish the image of the Christian he was meant to foil. Marx's observation reveals how *Merchant* subverts the ―official culture‖ not by victimizing the other, but by exposing the indignity of self. Because Antonio is not treated as a stereotype either, *Merchant*'s critique of self is subtle. Marx's view corroborates with this study in that *Merchant*_s potential critique in not assertive, but suggestive, like every other aspect of the play text.

More optimistically, Yaffe argues that Shakespeare wrote *Merchant* drawing upon the idea espoused by Baruch Spinoza and Francis Bacon that the state should take the responsibility for fostering religious freedom. According to Yaffe's examination, *Merchant* contains an understated anti-discriminatory plea for political tolerance of religious minorities living in absolutist England. Irrespective of the lack of historical supportability of this thesis, Yaffe's view is fundamental to his dissertation because it adds important insights to a dialogical reading of *Merchant*. Correspondingly, Yaffe recognizes that Shylock is not a credible representation of Jewishness: ―Shakespeare qualifies Venice's harsh Judgment against Shylock by indicating how Shylock might have avoided his legal catastrophe simply by sticking to the moral teachings of his own religion- its dietary laws‖.

From this standpoint, Shylock is a tragic character because he neglects most fundamental Jewish principles. While he persistently clings to Judaism as an institutional background that defines him as being distinct from Christians, he brings his own destruction upon himself by acting like the Christians. For this reason, Yaffe argues that Shylock could be viewed as ―a helpful guide to the self-understanding of the modern Jew.‖ once more, a marker (Judaism) is identified as an empty signifier with intricate consequences: the tragedy of voluntary cultural uprooting of the other.

Differing from the study's view that Shylock is a unique tragic character in Shakespeare's body of work, Jay L. Halio sees Shylock as a comic character. Nonetheless, Halio's view of *Merchant* indirectly corroborates my perspective of the play's open-endedness for two reasons: in agreement with Yaffe's thesis, it postulates that ―many in Shakespeare's audience would have been well aware of scriptural as well as legal injunctions against personal vengeance‖; and also in conformity with Yaffe's study, in Halio's essay states that ―[I]n creating Shylock, Shakespeare was not creating a typical Jew, one designed to be representative of his race or religion, as has sometimes been represented, most notoriously in Germany under Hitler.‖ Hence, although Halio argues that *Merchant* is a ―full comedy,‖ he does not regard it as anti-Semitic: he view Shylock as a deliberate depiction of a Jew who does not represent Jewishness in a play that does not claim to be serious about anything in any case. Halio's interpretation also foregrounds *Merchant*'s open-endedness in reminding us that a play is only a play, especially a play written to be staged for playing playgoers who craved for entertainment and would intensively manifest disproval if they were bored. Nonetheless, considering Halio's perspective, there still seems to be an ingeniously transgressive agenda underneath the surface of *Merchant's* interplay between laughter and religion, license and power.

The conflation of the comic and the spiritual in the West is rooted in pre-Christian Greece. As Anthony gash points out, Erasmus Desiderius ―synthesized the Socrates of the Phaedrus who affirms _the superiority of heaven-sent madness over man-made sanity' with St Paul's numerous references to be _foolishness' and _madness' of Christianity‖. In deconstructing institutional religiosity to the point of denouncing its hypocrisy- with respect to both Christianity and Judaism-*Merchant* actually engages with a subversive tradition that was almost two millennia old in the West when Shakespeare wrote it. From this vintage point, it is possible to understand what Maslen means by his bombastic statement: _'Shakespeare's Venice is a society founded on comedy, its religion, even, is comic, since it involves the invention by God's son of an ingenious way to circumvent the severe judicial system propounded in the Old Testament, by substituting himself for sinning humanity in a kind of stupendous practical joke.‖ however Shakespeare was aware of Erasmus' work, he was also acquainted with work of Erasmus' friend, Francois Rabelais, whose intertextuality with Shakespeare became a particular object of study when the West discovered Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of carnivalization. In individualizing and locating the emergence of another tradition appropriated by Shakespeare in Backtin's theory of carnivalization, I am not

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applying this theory to delineated where the horizon of expectations of *Merchant* lies; instead, I am demonstrating that it is Shakespeare's body of work which is contiguous with the cultural source that inspired Bakhtin's Criticism. Bakhtin, who considered—carnivalization‖ a form of —artistic thought‖ formulated the concept as a —tension between laughter and unofficial seriousness‖ —unofficial seriousness‖ in Bakhtinian terms, is a form of tragic principle developed in the Christian era: —it is the greatest and best-founded claim there can be to eternity and the indestructibility of everything which has once existed (the refusal to accept becoming).‖ —Unofficial seriousness‖ is therefore a deliberately internalized mode of conservatism.

In measuring *Merchant* against carnivalization in a Bkhtinia fashion, I do not speak —of the influence of individual themes, idea, or images, but rather of the deeper influence of *a carnival sense of the world itself."* the relationship between carnilization and *Merchant* is incongruous with a view of the play as a —full comedy.‖ a point that comprehensively supported by the study's background. Moreover, that *Merchant* harbours ideological, or   (more correctly) counter-ideological convictions, as suggested before, does not mean that the play is didactic. In exploring _a carnival sense of the world,'' Shakespeare created a subversive system of signs protected by the ambitious signs of fantasy. Through these lenses, it is possible to understand *Merchant'*s confluence of neutrality and transgression, as well as its resistance to univocal readings. *Merchant'*s horizon of expectations lies in readings that, as Rabkin summarizes them,

—acknowledge the deep polarities in the comedy while resisting the temptation to see them as conclusively resolved in favour of one character or group of characters, or to see them defined in terms of one issue.‖ Thus, Bakhtin's concept of carnival is vital to approach the relationship between *Merchant* and its stagings because it can help explain a play that resists reductions to monologism, as its performance history attests.

### Social issues in *Romeo and Juliet*

With the four research questions in mind, the researcher found the need to illustrate three social issues as portrayed in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; the patriarchal society, marriage and violence.

The role of the patriarchal society as illustrated in the play is largely shown through Juliet's relationship with her father, Lord Capulet. Juliet is encouraged to be subservient and obedient like her mother Lady Capulet. She also is expected to marry the most desirable suitable Paris despite the fact that she is not even fourteen years old, a practical element which is still rampant today in African society in particular. The systematic arrangements done in the present day society which in some tribe is equal to elopement could be seen in Romeo and Juliet. This form of arrangement where young women are forced into arranged marriages, whether in Shakespeare's day of today has is part of a strategic effort to create mutual benefits between two families. In this case, Paris is a nobleman and kinsman to the Prince; he is handsome, rich, and offers significant financial value and social status for the Capulets. Juliet is a well-mannered and beautiful girl who will make a dutiful and attractive wife for Paris. Such a union would strengthen both families and as such it wasn't for cowards, fools and idiots, as Capulet will say.

This model that follows a patriarchal structure allows a masculine leader to have total control for the good of the subjects who owe unquestionable allegiance to him. Lord Capulet is a practical example of this. He firmly believes that his wife and daughter owe him total fidelity and obedience. Though he is somewhat permissive of Juliet's unwillingness to marry at first, when she finally refuses Paris, his choice for her, he responds with blistering curses:

*Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient Wretch!*

*An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend. An you be not, hang, beg, starve. Die in the streets*

The father threatens to disown her as chaos overshadows the scene. The fact that he is

willing to sentence the daughter to a life of poverty and death rather than accommodate her thoughts and feelings on the impending wedding is conclusion on how skewed the patriarchal values are dominant that time and now.

Duelling plays a pivotal role in Romeo and Juliet as well as our society today. In the past, it permeates English legal history. The practice of deciding social quarrels in the streets with thin swords called rapiers was definitively illegal and yet a number of famous manuals for duelling etiquette were popular among young gentlemen of the time. These rapiers were stabbing weapons just like pocket knives are famous today to inflict threats, chaos and violence. Although there is a deep and genuine love between Romeo and Juliet, the myriad of prejudices, the pride of the families and the struggle

against society and family leaves both youths besieged against their own nightmares and terrors. Their young innocent love is turned into an anxiety filled battle as a result of the prejudices of the Capulets and the Montagues.

Prince Escalus announces a forced death penalty over the head of any Montague or Capulet that shed blood in Verona. According to Andrew Dickson, Romeo and Juliet story reflects the violence and chaos of Shakespeare's' London and how more recently, directors have used it to explore conflicts of their own time. Simply contextual, because it deals with more universal themes – young love, bitter hate, feuding communities, tragic and undeserved deaths, an element discussed in this thesis with great impetus. Volatile emotions and passions lived to the extreme so much so that, the streets bustling, swarming, and full of pestilent, are noisy and in a noisome city of Verona.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of the research design is to offer guidelines that direct the research action. Sarantakos (2005) describes the purpose of the research design as being to help introduce a systematic approach to the research process. Research design also helps to identify the type of evidence required to answer the research questions. The design of this study is the case study of two famous Shakespeare plays – *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet* purposively selected to uncover the omnipresence of threats and chaos as portrayed therein. This study employed the qualitative design which underpins the interpretive paradigm.

This study falls within the interpretive paradigm. The researcher in this paradigm took time to study the relevant documents with particular attention to the objectives of the study. He also watched the *Romeo and Juliet* movie where much attention was given on the structural construct of character traits, plot and major themes. The study fits in this paradigm because the researcher intended to uncover mainly the omnipresent of threats and chaos in the two plays. This paradigm regards reality as being subjective. It sees reality as fluid definitions of a situation created by human interactions (Bell, 2005). People are constantly undergoing change in their interactions and society is changing through interactions. People in that paradigm believe that the world is changeable and people define meanings of situation, (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991). This paradigm is based on the idea that human behaviour is rule-governed and that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science. It is characterised by a concern for the individual. It is a trial to analyse and interpret the data having been obtained. The procedure of the technique of data analysis are classifying, verifying, and interpreting the data based on the underlying theories supporting the study under investigation. The paradigm was also helpful to this study because the researcher wanted to establish the presence of the spirit of Anti-Semitism in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice as well as* explore how Shakespeare presents the power of love and hate in *Romeo and Juliet.*

## 4. RESULTS ANALYSIS

In examining *Romeo and Juliet* film directed by Bazman Luhrmann, 1996 the researcher uses the six means that create structure and texture. According to (Kernodle, 1997: 345) structure and texture have six parts. Kernodle also states that structure consists of plot, character, theme and texture consists of dialogue, mood, and spectacle. According to (Mark, 2011) the elements in drama are theme, dialog, conflict, setting, character, plot and the style of language.

According to Kernodle (Kernodle, 1967, 348) plot is the basis for the overall rhythmic pattern of the play. Whether a play is broken up into acts and scenes by intermissions and scene changes, or whether it flows continuously without interruptions, it is organized in time. Scribd (Scribd, 2012) also states that there are seven parts for the plot structure of the play. Those are exposition, exciting force, rising action, climax or turning point, falling action, moment of final suspense, catastrophe.

In discussing Bazman Luhrmann's movie (*Romeo and Juliet)* released in 1996, the researcher observed carefully while studying the structure and the texture of the movie based on the dynamic structuralist approach to the omnipresence of threats and chaos displayed therein.

There are six elements which create structure and texture in a play. Plot is one of them.

The function of plot is to explain the process of the story chronologically.

Referring to the explanation above, the movie showed the audience how hard the struggle of Romeo and Juliet was to keep and to maintain their pure love and why the omnipresence of threats and chaos attributed to the downfall of their relationship.

It from the findings of the study, the revenge ideas that permeate the two plays under review cannot be ignored. From the long lasting vengeance between the Capulets and the Montagues, to Antonio spitting in the face of Shylock publicly over usury could not be underestimated.

Love is a basic emotion for each human being. People cannot understand why and how it happens or comes. People considered that love in an unpredictable thing that it can't be understood scientifically. The film pictures and the film scripts also show that Romeo and Juliet's love concerns with the definition of Romantic Love. According to Zick Rubbin (in Cherry, 2012) the romantic love is made up of three elements: attachment, caring and intimacy. Attachment is the need to receive care, approval and physical contact with the other person. Caring involves valuing the other person's needs and happiness as much as your own. Intimacy refers to the sharing of thoughts desires and feelings with the other persons. Unfortunately, the omnipresence of threats and chaos overshadow these three elements of love both in *Romeo and Juliet* as well as *The Merchant of Venice*.

Romeo himself is very much a threat to his love for Juliet (1.1). He doesn't intend to be, of course, but his immaturity and youthful impetuosity mean that he doesn't yet fully understand what true love is all about.

His infatuation with Rosaline, for example as illustrated in the play, is largely an expression of puerile lust. It is a measure of Romeo's immaturity that he is prepared to pay Rosaline for the privilege of sleeping with her. If that is how he feels about the opposite sex at this stage, then it doesn't augur too well for any future relationship he may have. He waxes eloquent about Rosaline saying,

*''Show me a mistress that is passing fair; what doth her beauty serve but as a note where I may read who passed that passing fair?'' (1.5.54-55).*

But within a few hours, he is saying of Juliet,

*''Did my heart love tin now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night,''*

(1.5.54-55)

The biggest threat to the star-crossed lovers is the biggest threat in the play as a whole. According to the standards of the time, neither Romeo nor Juliet are to be regarded mainly as individuals; they are members of ancient aristocratic families, duty-bound to protect the honour and dignity of the clan. Love is seen as a gross self-indulgence in a social environment where marriages are conceived of primarily as strategic political alliances. The prevailing standards dictate that such marriages are to be arranged and that prospective husbands and wives must yield to the wishes of elders and betters. At the best of times, this would make things hard enough for Romeo and Juliet. But with their respective families at each other's throat, their incipient love faces not only seemingly insurmountable hurdle but chaos and threats from these external forces.

The feud between the Montagues and the Capulet families, which frequently erupts into violence and chaos, produces a bitter divide that threatens their love because it cast the two lovers as sworn enemies. Shakespeare begins the play with one of the major flaws, violence or chaos where the servants of the two household, the Capulets and the Montagues taunting and fighting each other over their name – what scholars have described throughout time that it was human nature to be violent. The drawing of swords and the expressing of hate in public was legitimate; One could hear statements like: ‗'Strike! Beat them down! Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues (1.1.70-3). This love of violence that pervades the city as shown from the play plagues the two families and ultimately causes the deaths of Mercutio, Tybalt and eventually Romeo and Juliet. The abrupt end of the ‗star-crossed' love and their eventual fated demise could be truly in the hands of Tybalt with his penchant for hostility. He is a hateful instigator whose hostility leads not only to the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, but to that of Mercutio as well and eventually his own. Benvolio's attempt to bring the very first altercation of the play to an end, Tybalt replies, ‗'…talk of peace? I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues and thee'' (1.5.74).

Rosaline also threatens Romeo and Juliet. Romeo is heart-broken because Rosaline does not reciprocate his feelings. As a mooning adolescent who fickle with her admiration, he walked through the streets and could even sit under a tree thinking of her. Like any mooning adolescent, Romeo exaggerates his feelings calling out ''alas'' and ''O me'' to his friend Benvolio and then in the next breath will ask, ‗'where shall w dine?'' and at the same time will say, ‗'brawling love

…loving hate'' that he sees everywhere (1.1.174). However, by swearing that she will never love Romeo, Rosaline also paves the way for Romeo and Juliet union, thereby switching his threat into another favourable condition.

Lady Capulet could have stopped all threats and chaos were she more of a mother to Juliet, instead of merely the body that carried her for nine months. Watching the movie used in this thesis for data analysis, Juliet may not have felt that Friar Lawrence's place was her only option if her mother would have stepped in on her behalf when she knew full well that her daughter was not content to marry Paris. Paris provides a threat. The fact that Paris has already asked for Juliet hand in marriage means she would never have the opportunity to be with Romeo and fall in love with him. On the contrary, she was so distant; what mother will be so callous as to chastise her daughter for grieving at the loss of a close family member and then expect her so quickly to move onto happier thoughts of an upcoming unwanted marriage! (3.5.722-23)

According to literary critics, Friar Lawrence also lends his poorer qualities to the mix.

His naiveté leads to poor judgment. He allows a fairly unrealistic hope that these two long- feuding families will be reconciled through the union of their children, to override his concerns about performing the marriage ceremony (Bowling 1949). Bowling accentuates that Friar Lawrence later masterminds a dangerously creative plan involving Juliet taking a drug and being buried in a tomb and Romeo coming to the rescue. Unfortunately, he fails to talk to these two teenagers as most adult would do and instead actually believes with a naïve optimism that going to these lengths will benefit all of Verona in the end.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Bazman Luhrmann as the talented and also the main director has presented Romeo and Juliet characters as the main characters in *Romeo and Juliet* movie. This movie is inspired by *Romeo and Juliet* drama written by the famous English writer William Shakespeare. Although *Romeo and Juliet* drama was written in many years ago, the story is still suitable to enjoy from generation to generation as already mentioned in this chapter.

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher used a dynamic structuralist approach to investigate the omnipresence of threats and chaos as reflected in the *Romeo and Juliet* movie directed by Bazman Luhrmann released in 1996. The researcher used the same lens of the theory to investigate the dramatic structure of the play – *The Merchant of Venice* on how the omnipresence of threats and chaos ushered in the elements of hate and anti-Semitism.

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