

Paper

“When Shall We Laugh?”:
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE AS A FESTIVE COMEDY,
PART 2

Hisashi JIKEN

Liberal Arts-English, Nagaoka National College of Technology

This article is the latter part of “When shall we laugh?": *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE AS A FESTIVE COMEDY*". You can read the former part in *Research Reports of NNCT*, 40, No.1 (2004).

In Chapter I, I've tried to show that *The Merchant of Venice* is a kind of festive comedy consulting Bakhtin's idea of carnival. In Chapter II, if we examine the characters of *The Merchant of Venice* from the point of view of carnival, it may be seen that their behavior that seems problematic from the point of view of people of today is actually normal in the world of carnival. By analyzing Bassanio and Portia, Lorenzo and Jessica, and the episode of the rings, I'd like to show that the more the images of carnival characters have, the more they are rewarded. Then we will also investigate the reasons for such treatment of the characters.

Key Words: Shakespeare, comedy, The Merchant of Venice, Mikhail Bakhtin, carnival.

CHAPTER II
THE CHARACTERS FROM THE POINT
OF VIEW OF CARNIVAL

In this chapter, we will examine the characters from the point of view of carnival. In Act 5, Antonio and three couples: Bassanio and Portia, Gratiano and Nerissa, and Lorenzo and Jessica gather at Belmont and all of them have a party to celebrate their marriages. Generally speaking, they are all winners, but many critics have cast down questions on their success. They think some of them have results that aren't compatible with winners. For instance, Antonio attends the party alone. Where will he go after the party when the other newly married couples go to their wedding-beds?¹ It seems that each of them has a different degree of success. If so, what makes such differences among winners? It is quite obvious to think that those differences come from Shakespeare's intention. Why does the author provide them with a variety of endings instead of giving them the same endings?

As mentioned in Introduction, the carnivalistic elements play an important role at a symbolic level of the play. If we examine the characters supposing they are in carnival, we can solve not only the problems which some critics have presented but also the problem of unity in the play.

Bassanio and Portia

First of all, we will examine Bassanio because he is the most successful of all the characters. He gets almost everything by marrying Portia who gives him

inexhaustible wealth. Many critics have said that he is not worthy of his success because he is a lavish spender.² However, the waste of money is rather praised in carnival as discussed before.

It can be said that Bassanio's success depends on his ability to understand carnival sense. Let's look at the casket scene that changes his life dramatically. The way of choosing Portia's husband was decided by her dead father. This means that he probably wrote the scroll in the lead casket. And Nerissa says he "was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations" (1.2.27-28). It is natural to think that such a great father had to know his daughter's character very well. We know what kind of man he wants as his daughter's husband from it. Her husband should be a man "that choose [s] not by the view" (3.2.131). The most important thing to choose the right casket is to know "the outward shows be least themselves: / The world is still deceiv'd with ornament" (3.2.73-74), that is, to know the difference between appearance and substance. Bassanio is able to penetrate the pairing of the most humble lead and Portia and select the right casket. Actually, this insight has a lot to do with carnival sense. We are reminded of the third category of carnival. One of the features is carnivalistic mesalliance, that is, to unite both members of antithesis. To get along with Portia, the ability to accept ambiguity is necessary because she is a woman that has many carnivalistic aspects in her character, as we will examine later.

In the casket scene, the inscription on the leaden

casket which may also have been written by Portia's dead father, says: "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath" (2.7.9). Bassanio is a man that is suitable for that inscription. When Bassanio asks Antonio to lend him money, Bassanio tells Antonio an episode of his boyhood: "In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft, / I shot his fellow of the self-same flight / The self-same way with more advised watch, / To find the other forth, and by adventuring both, / I oft found both" (1.1.140-144). The episode shows his adventurous character. In the play, this spirit is praised, in contrary to the way the usurer, Shylock is attacked. As Bassanio has nothing, it is easy for him to hazard all he has, but his traveling to Belmont is another example of how adventurous he is.

Moreover, the historical fact that the second record of this play is of a performance at the court of James I in 1605 helped the author make Bassanio be successful.³ The ruling class of the Shakespearean era was the aristocracy. Especially, it protected all of the theater companies of that time. This condition didn't allow Shakespeare to show aristocrats in a bad or unsuccessful light, even though Bassanio isn't so good as to deserve the success he achieves.

Portia has generally accepted good reputations from critics except for her racism. It is true she is a racist from the point of view of modern audiences, but racial discrimination was the least moral matter of that time.⁴ In addition, she is accused of being two-faced when she meets Morocco.⁵ She says to his face that she won't dislike him because of the color of his skin, but she reveals to Nerissa later that she dislikes him because of his black skin. However, this two-facedness is really a part of her bilateral nature that is remarkable. Another sample of her two-faced character is also seen between her and Bassanio. When he chooses the right casket, she promises she will obey him completely from then on, but shortly after that, she keeps her husband under her thumb eventually, using the rings trick. As I mentioned before, she plays the role of a trickster in the play. In fact, it is she that has the most carnivalistic character in the play.

We will examine her other features that are related to carnival. Firstly, she disguises herself as a man. Secondly, her insult to her noble suitors is a kind of degradation as we have examined. Thirdly, she plays the role of a trickster especially in the court scene. Originally, she has nothing to do with not only the city of Venice but also the law, but she easily breaks the barriers of differences of sex and occupation, and finally gains the position of the judge in the flesh bond trial. As discussed before, the court is filled

with carnivalistic elements. Finally, she can discover the meaning that nobody else can discover. The reason Bassanio is able to get married with Portia is because he doesn't judge a book by its cover. As a result of that, he can choose the right casket. Like Bassanio, Portia has the ability to discover another meaning in the bond: "This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood, / The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh'" (4.1.301-302). No other person in Venice can see this interpretation of the bond because they interpret it literally. In both of these cases, Portia and Bassanio understand the bilateral or equivocal character of a thing, and this ability has something to do with carnival sense. Only in this sense is there a possibility to interpret the bond not literally.

As a trickster, Portia makes a spectacular showing in the last half of the play. However, before Bassanio liberates her from her father's bond, she lives in Belmont obeying her dead father's will. It is true she is always regretting her misfortunes and that she is tiresome of her life with Nerissa, yet she abides by her father's will after all. Patriarchy was one of the most important social systems of the Shakespearean era, so in sharp contrast to Jessica, she follows the moral code of conduct of that era. From the view of both carnival sense and morality, she deserves to be successful and live happily ever after.

Lorenzo and Jessica

Critics have cast some questions concerning Lorenzo and Jessica. Firstly, Jessica has too many moral problems to be admired. Secondly, they are treated differently from Portia and Bassanio. For instance, in Act 5, they talk about famous ancient lovers whose love ended in tragedy. Why does Shakespeare have them talk about tragic lovers?

Lorenzo is one of the Venetians that belongs to the carnival side as was mentioned before. Lorenzo is the organizer of the masques and leads it when he helps Jessica to escape from Shylock's house. The masques play an important role in giving the stage an atmosphere of carnival, and he seems to be suitable for the position because he is knowledgeable about music:

But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.
(5.1.82-88)

After he talks about the benefits of music, Lorenzo mentions people that don't love music. He apparently implies here that Shylock is "the man that hath no music in himself," because when Shylock hears masques coming to his house, he says: "But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements; / Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter / My sober house" (2.5.34-36). Shylock shows a hatred of music and rejects it, putting his hands over his ears. On the other hand, Lorenzo's attitude to music is completely different from Shylock, "Mark the music" and "Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music." Such an attitude of openness to music shows that he belongs to the people that understand the sense of carnival. He is also as adventurous as Bassanio. The structure of the plot in which a young man liberates a daughter from her father is the same as that of Bassanio and Portia. As mentioned before, this spirit is praised in the play.

Many critics have accused Jessica of some problems;⁶ firstly, she steals money from her father and wastes it; secondly, she is a Jew; thirdly, she breaks the rules of patriarchy.⁷ From the point of view of carnival sense, the first problem, wasting money isn't to be admonished but praised in carnival. It is true that her exchanging her mother's ring for a monkey seems to be overdone, but spending the money she steals is the event that shocks Shylock the most. The problem is which bond is stronger for Jessica, that with her father which means Judaism or that with Lorenzo, which is Christianity. We should recognize that when she quits her father, she becomes a Christian and she discards her father and Judaism: "I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian" (3.5.17). It seems natural to accept her claim, and admit that she completely belongs to the Venetians from then on. On the other hand, as her dead mother was a Jew, it would seem that she belongs to Shylock. Therefore, we should regard Jessica as one of Christians that defeats Judaism. The greater sorrow Shylock felt, the happier the contemporary audiences became. Even though she becomes a Christian, the third problem is too great for her to bear. She recognizes the seriousness: "Alack, what heinous sin is it in me. / To be asham'd to be my father's child" (2.3.16-17). These lines show the general morality of the era, that is, to betray one's father is a sin.

Jessica has some carnivalistic characteristics, for instance: she disguises herself as a man, and is wasteful with money. However, she is not described as being so carnivalistic. Whereas Portia is willing to cross-dress, she hesitates to wear men's clothes: "I am glad 'tis night... / For I am much asham'd of my

exchange" (2.6.34-35). Moreover, she doesn't like music so much in contrast to Lorenzo: "I am never merry when I hear sweet music" (5.1.69). In addition, this couple seems to realize their incompleteness. Jessica criticizes Lorenzo for his love of her being doubtful: "In such a night / Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well, / Stealing her soul with many vows of faith, / And ne'er a true one" (5.1.18-21). These things indicate she may be on the way to becoming a real Christian. Shakespeare seems to describe them as being less carnivalistic to distinguish them from the real winners, Bassanio and Portia.

The episode of the rings

Both Bassanio's love for Portia and Lorenzo's love for Jessica is suspect. Lorenzo's love for Jessica is doubtful as the previously quoted lines indicate. In addition, when he is late for the arranged meeting with Jessica, Gratiano implies that he has already tired of her: "That ever holds: who riseth from a feast / With that keen appetite that he sits down?... All things that are, / Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd" (2.6.8-13). As he talks with Salarino in Lorenzo's absence, his opinion seems trustworthy. The problem of Lorenzo's love for Jessica is never solved, while Portia seems to solve the problem through the episode of the rings.

In the case of Bassanio, the top priority of his intention to marry Portia seems to be her money: "To unburthen all my plots and purposes / How to get clear of all the debts I owe" (1.1.133-134). "In Belmont is a lady richly left" (1.1.161). When he explains his plan to go to Belmont to Antonio in these lines, we notice the fact that he always begins his words with a money matter.⁸ Such an attitude is not suitable for a hero of a romantic comedy. However, on the other hand, Portia is devoted to her husband:

This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord. I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.
(3.2.163-174)

We have the impression from her lines that she is too devoted to her unfaithful husband, but Portia seems to gain revenge on him through the episode of the rings in Act 5. As the young doctor who helps Antonio is revealed to be Portia, he would not be able to look her in the eye. Portia and Nerissa force their husbands to swear that they will never "part from, lose, or give away" the rings. The husbands swear

they will never betray their wives from then on. In addition, they threaten their husbands by insisting on their right to betray their husbands if they lose the rings. The most remarkable thing is that this rings trick seems to be arranged primarily by the wives, for the wives give their rings to them just after Bassanio chooses the right casket.

This plot has some carnivalistic elements. Firstly, we can see some sexual expressions that have a lot to do with carnival through the episode. I'd like to show Gratiano's lines as an example: "Why this is like the mending of highways / In summer where the ways are fair enough!" (5.1.263-264). Here the characters "bring the conversation down to a strongly emphasized bodily level of... sexual life."⁹ This belongs to Bakhtin's third category. In fact carnival was the high season of weddings and open to sexual activities: "Carnival was a time of particularly intense sexual activity... Weddings often took place during Carnival."¹⁰ Secondly, what the husbands feared the most was to be cuckolded: "What, are we cuckold ere we have deserv'd it?" (5.1.265). For the "images of the cuckolded husband assumes the role of uncrowned old age, of the old year, and the receding winter. He is stripped of his robes, mocked, and beaten."¹¹ The underlying structure of carnival can be seen here.

Antonio

Antonio is a Venetian, but is described as being different from the other Venetians throughout the play. Especially, he seems to be excluded from his friends in Act 5. Such treatment is unusual for a winner. Why does the author treat him like this? It is Antonio who sacrifices himself for his friend, and confronts a life-threatening situation, but he gets nothing in the return for this. Only his ships with goods that are said to be shipwrecked return safely, but this is not because of his sacrifice, but because of his luck.

The other Venetians are described as carnivalistic. On the other hand, Antonio has some anti-carnivalistic tendencies, some of which are rather suitable for Lent. Firstly, he sinks into a spell of melancholy from the opening of the play. The Venetians including himself think he is different from the others. For instance, one of his friends Gratiano complains to him of his attitude: "But fish not, with this melancholy bait, / For this fool-gudgeon, this opinion" (1.1.101-102). In addition, he admits his heterogeneity: "I am a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit / Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me" (4.1.114-116). There are some examples of

sullen-tempered individuals being ostracized from carnival. For instance, Burke says "it was natural to represent Lent as emaciated ...as a kill-joy."¹² Secondly, He doesn't take part in the masques that the other Venetians participate in. We should notice that it is he that comes to tell Gratiano of the abrupt termination of the masques: "'No masque to-night-- the wind is come about--'" (2.6.64). Thirdly, he is also described as a person who is "one in whom / The ancient Roman honour more appears / Than any that draws breath in Italy" (3.2.294-295). These lines show that he is a serious person. The ancient seriousness was that which carnival sense challenged.¹³ From the point of view of carnival, he belongs to Lent, that is, Shylock.

Shylock

First of all, Shylock is an old man while the Venetians are only as old as his daughter, except for Antonio. As mentioned before, one aspect of the conflict between him and the Venetians is that of age versus youth. In the paintings under the title of the "Battle between Carnival and Lent," Lent is painted as an old lean figure.¹⁴ Shylock's loss means a transition of power between generations, that is, death and rebirth.

Secondly, Shylock is a Jew. Jews are persecuted in carnival in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance for mainly religious reasons.¹⁵ As we have seen, Shylock shows his antipathy to festivals.¹⁶ One of the reasons Jews are ostracized from carnival is that they can't eat pork because their religion doesn't allow them to eat pork. As mentioned before, the word "carnival" comes from a Latin word "carne" which means meat.¹⁷ Therefore carnival is originally a time to eat meat, but Jews are prohibited to eat pork, so they are automatically excluded from carnival. In the play, Shylock mentions pork several times when exhibiting an aversion to Christians. He expresses his hatred to them as pork eaters.

There is another reason Jews are persecuted in carnival. That is because they are believed to be misers.¹⁸ Carnival was a time to spend money, so stinginess wasn't suitable for it. As mentioned above, an action proper to the occasion is extravagance, therefore, the waste of money was considered good in carnival.¹⁹ We can find the description that shows Shylock is a miser in Lancelot's lines: "my master's a very Jew: -- give him a present? give him a halter! -- I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs" (2.2.100-103). Lancelot criticizes Shylock for being the cause of his thin body because Shylock doesn't give him enough food even though he is very rich. On the contrary, Bassanio's

generosity is exaggerated. Even though he is poor, he hires Lancelot and gives him clothes.

From the examination before, behavior that seems problematic from the point of view of people of today is actually normal; on the contrary what seems to be praised is actually to be mocked in the world of carnival. Carnivalistic elements play an important role at a symbolic level in deciding who is rewarded and who is rejected. We notice that different characters have different degrees of carnival elements, and the more carnivalistic a character is, the more reward he or she receives, on the contrary the less carnivalistic a character is, the more problematic he or she is.

The story ends as Portia wishes. She is released from her dead father's chain. She is able to marry a man she loves. It is true that Bassanio seems a little faithless in his love of her, but she succeeds in not only getting him to swear not to betray her but also in controlling him through the rings episode. She achieves freedom from her husband's chain. Bassanio succeed in clearing his debt, which was his primary purpose, and getting married with Portia. They are the most rewarded, and described as the most carnivalistic figures. Their other characteristics, which are seen as celebrated are being adventurous, faithful to patriarchy, and in being a member of the aristocracy.

Lorenzo and Jessica travel around Europe spending money they stole from Shylock. They will also get Shylock's inheritance after his death. However, their future seems dubious; for instance, Lorenzo's love of Jessica remains suspicious, and their conversation is filled with ominous tragic lovers. Though Lorenzo is very carnivalistic because he is knowledgeable about music and he organizes masques, Jessica is described as less carnivalistic than all the other players except for Antonio. She can't understand music very well and doesn't like cross-dressing. Generally speaking, as they have some problems, they are described as not so being carnivalistic. Another characteristic is Lorenzo's spirit of adventure that should be celebrated, but Jessica's Jewishness and breaking of the rules of patriarchy seem to be disliked.

Antonio gains nothing through the play. What is even worse, he loses Bassanio. The images around him are not carnivalistic but anti-carnivalistic, even though he is such a faithful Christian that he lends money without interest, he is an adventurous merchant, and these characteristics are celebrated in the cases of the other Venetians. As we have examined, a less carnivalistic person has problems to

some extent, then, what are his problems?

As mentioned in the Introduction, the problem to solve is to unify the plots of *The Merchant of Venice*, mainly Bassanio's courtship and Antonio's flesh-bond story. Midgley suggests a resolution by interpreting that both of them are rejected from the society they belong to because they are aliens in their society. This framework of the play gives us a feeling of unity. Midgley's interpretation seems convincing, but too weak to give us the feeling of unity.

I'd like to suggest that the elements of carnival play a role in integrating the plots of *The Merchant of Venice*. We have already found that the Venetians have many elements related to carnival; on the contrary Shylock is filled with the image of anti-carnival. The conflict between Shylock and the Venetians has been interpreted in various ways at a symbolic level. For instance, Christians vs. Jews, old men vs. young men, usurers vs. merchants, and fathers vs. daughters, and so forth.²⁰ Other than those examples, I'd like to point out that there is also a feeling of "Battle between Carnival and Lent." This theme was so common to the people of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance that famous painters such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Hieronymus Bosch painted under this title.²¹ On this theme, usually Lent attacks Carnival because Lent thinks Carnival is emaciated, but he is eventually defeated.²² In this play, Shylock plays a role of Lent, and the Venetians a role of Carnival. I think the contemporary audience easily noticed the allegory in the conflict. However, it seems strange that Antonio belongs to Lent even though he is a Venetian and the title of the play indicates him as a hero of *The Merchant of Venice*. Why is Antonio treated in the same way as Shylock at a symbolic level?

Midgley explains the reason he suffers from melancholy and is left alone in Act 5 is because Antonio is homosexual. I admit that his interpretation is convincing enough to get support from many critics.²³ Besides this, I'd like to suggest that there is another aspect in his rejection from the society. It is his aspect as an emerging capitalist. Shylock and Antonio come into conflict with each other because Shylock is a usurer who lives on interest from his debtors; on the other hand, Antonio is an adventurous merchant that is faithful enough to lend money without interest. It is true that they are completely different from each other, but they have similar ways of dealing with large amounts of money. Both of them live in Venice, which was the center of world trade, with business partners all over the world. To say nothing of Antonio, Shylock engages in worldwide business. We know this from his

conversation with Tubal (3.1.73-105). Shylock and Antonio were both so called emerging capitalists. Portia also indicates their similarity when she meets them at the first time: "Which is the merchant here? And which is the Jew?" (4.1.170). The contemporary people had to fear their power of money, but it doesn't mean they respected the emerging capitalists. Barber explains the historical background of antipathy towards them: "the 1590's were a period when London was becoming conscious of itself as wealthy and cultivated, so that it could consider great commercial Venice as a prototype. And yet there were at the same time traditional suspicions of the profit motive and newly urgent anxieties of power of money to disrupt human relations."²⁴ The author's unkind treatment of Antonio may reflect these anxieties of power of money.

Barber thinks the author tries to show in *The Merchant of Venice* how to cope with the anxieties concerning money: "It was in expressing and so coping with these anxieties about money that Shakespeare developed in Shylock a comic antagonist." Even when the economical power of Antonio and Shylock is considered, their abilities are doubtful because their money is limited. The money Antonio has with him is less than three thousand ducats. This is why he has to borrow money from Shylock, but even Shylock doesn't have enough money in hand, so he must borrow the rest of money from Tubal. Moreover when Antonio is bankrupt, we know he has "creditors" (3.1.103-105). His self-financed fund isn't enough to run his trading business. On the other hand, Portia's financial power is far above that of Antonio and Shylock. She can give Bassanio "the petty debt twenty times over" immediately (3.2.306). Shakespeare tried to overcome the anxieties about money by giving Portia infinite wealth.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the courtship of Bassanio is the main plot and the flesh-bond story of Shylock and Antonio is the subordinate plot.²⁵ Antonio and Shylock play roles of people that are rejected from their society because of their religious and sexual problems. I have suggested their financial power is one of the reasons. The anti-carnivalistic images of Antonio and Shylock give the audience the scheme, "Battle between Carnival and Lent," to follow.

CONCLUSION

As we have examined, *The Merchant of Venice* is full of carnivalistic elements. Shakespeare seems to give carnivalistic elements to both characters and acts he thinks valuable consciously or unconsciously,

and such categorization of the characters is done at a symbolic level. From such symbolic information, the contemporaries of Shakespeare understood which people or what acts were celebrated or mocked. Those who were carnivalistic were men of virtue (in carnival) and those who were not carnivalistic had problems to some extent from the point of view of Elizabethans. Moreover, the carnivalistic elements play an important role in giving the feeling of unity in the play. From the point of view of carnival, the characters are divided into two groups: Carnival and Lent. Elizabethans must have enjoyed *The Merchant of Venice* as a consistent story because they noticed the popular story of "Battle between Carnival and Lent" in the play.

This work depends on Mikhail Bakhtin's studies. He insists on the importance of our understanding how ordinary people of Renaissance felt and thought in their everyday lives to understand Shakespeare and Rabelais because their ways of thinking and feeling were completely different from those of people of today. According to Bakhtin, what we, people of today, have forgotten is the "carnival sense of the world" which is indispensable in understanding the works of Renaissance. According to Bakhtin, the people of Middle Ages lived "two lives: one was the official life that was monolithically, serious and gloomy, subjected to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence, and piety; the other was the life of the carnival square, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything."²⁶ Both of the lives were completely legitimate, and the carnival lasted three months of the year. However, we, people of today, can only understand the official aspect of their lives and have forgotten the carnivalistic aspect of them. That is the reason we have examined *The Merchant of Venice*, one of the texts of Renaissance, from the point of view of carnival consulting Bakhtin's studies: "If we fail to take into consideration this two-world condition, neither medieval cultural consciousness nor the culture of Renaissance can be understood."²⁷

Finally, I'd like to point out some problems of examining *The Merchant of Venice* from the point of view of carnival. Firstly, this play is not as carnivalistic as works of Rabelais or Shakespeare's *The First Part and The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*. For instance, while there are lots of grotesque descriptions of the body, food and sex concerning Falstaff, we can find few examples related to flesh in *The Merchant of Venice*. On top of

this, most of the characters of the play are bourgeois and aristocrats. Only old Gobbo, Launcelot, and probably Nerissa are common people. Therefore, the world is turned upside down between the highest class, that is, the Venetians and an outcast, that is, Shylock. We can't find common people that should be leading characters of carnival in *The Merchant of Venice*. The reason this play hasn't been regarded as a festive comedy is as Bakhtin points out that the play represents masques which are a weakened form of carnival.

NOTE

- 1) Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London: Methuen, 1973), 148-149.
- 2) Nevo, 127; Auden says: "Bassanio seems to be one of those people whose attitude towards money is that of a child."; W. H. Auden, "Brothers and Others." *Dyer's Hand* (Faber and Faber Ltd and Random House Inc, 1963); rpt. in *A Casebook: The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Wilders (New York: St. Macmillan, 1969), 237.
- 3) Halio, 59.
- 4) Rob Smith, *Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*, Cambridge Student Guide (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 67.
- 5) Halio, 32.
- 6) Nevo, 117.
- 7) "Jessica's flight presents therefore itself as betrayal in contrast with the other daughter's good choice." Nevo, 131.
- 8) "Even Bassanio's wooing to Portia, 'a lady richly left', has a clear financial base, for all his praise of her beauty." Leggat, 122.
- 9) Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 20.
- 10) Burke, 186.
- 11) Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 241.
- 12) Burke, 188; Barber, 8, 163-165.
- 13) "Behind the sanctimonious seriousness of all exalted and official genres, Rabelais saw the receding authority of the past" Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 285.
- 14) Burke, 185.
- 15) *Ibid.*, 200.
- 16) Anyone that is killjoy is ostracized from carnival. See Barber, 8, 163-165.
- 17) Burke, 186.
- 18) "Hatred against the Jews at carnival time was further motivated by their potential association with the forces of Lenten abstinence." Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), 54.
- 19) "the Jew could be seen within early capitalism as a calculating enemy of carnival, a repressive bearer of cold rationality and profiteering individualism which run counter to the communal spirit of free expenditure and careless exuberance characteristic of the festival." *Ibid.*, 55.
- 20) "*The Merchant of Venice* is built around a series of decisive structural conflict-Old Low vs. New Low, Justice vs. Mercy, Revenge vs. Love, Calculation vs. Recklessness, Thrift vs.

- Prodigality." Greenblatt, 42.
- 21) Rhodes, 276; Barber, 166.
- 22) Burke, 185; Rhodes, 103-104.
- 23) Auden is one of them. Auden, 234.
- 24) Barber, 167.
- 25) Ryan says most critics that examine *The Merchant of Venice* from the historical point of view agree with this interpretation. Kienan Ryan, "Re-reading *The Merchant of Venice*." *Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Prantice-Hall, 1995. 17-24; rpt. in *New Casebooks: The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Martin Coyle (New York: St. Martin's Press), 37.
- 26) Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky*, 107-108.
- 27) Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 6.

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