



## THE SUBALTERN'S FAILURE OF RECOGNITION IN SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* (1599): POSTCOLONIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS STUDY

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### Abstract

This study seeks to find the struggle of self-recognition from the subaltern group by using the postcolonial psychoanalysis perspective. Shylock and Prince Morocco, considered to be inferior, are dealing with the recognition to make themselves as superior as the dominant class. From the analysis, supported by Fanon's *Black Skin White Mask* (1952), recognition is one of the ways for the Other to enter western society. In doing this study, close reading is applied to analyze the following discussion: (1) the racial issue portrayed in *The Merchant of Venice*; 2) the struggle of the marginalized to gain the recognition; 3) The failure of recognition. Throughout the analysis, both Shylock and Prince Morocco fail to obtain recognition as a way to cross in western society. The constructed society based on western domination does not enable the subaltern to gain their recognition.

## INTRODUCTION

Regarded as the literary canon, many of Shakespeare's works are greatly known as classic writings that influence the world of literature nourished for years. However, Shakespearean writings, set in the Elizabethan era, arguably echo the idea of racism. In a broader scope, the term race is not only limited to the skin color race but also linked to the issue of religion, gender, and complexion (Dutta, 2013). One of the Shakespearean plays entitled *The Merchant of Venice* is chosen to uplift the struggle of the inferior group or subaltern dealing with discrimination in the society. In this play, Jew and people of color have been persecuted among the people. As the subalterns are mistreated by society and they are considered to be lacking, the subalterns see themselves as not fully human. In consequence, they are trapped in the feeling of an inferiority complex. Feeling less, the subalterns need recognition from others to make them feel like fully human.

*The Merchant of Venice* is a comedy published around 1599. Considered to be the Anti-Semitic play, it presents the religious issue between Christian and Jew and racial issues between black and white (Marcus, 2005). Throughout the play, Shakespeare portrays how Jew has been oppressed in the predominantly Christian society.

Shylock, as a Jew, is described as a cunning, bloody-thirsty, and greedy person. This description comes for a reason because he insists on having a pound of flesh from Antonio, who borrows three thousand ducats for Antonio's best friend, Bassanio. In contrast, Shakespeare characterizes Antonio, the Christian, differently from Shylock. Shakespeare portrays Antonio as the center of admiration due to his generosity to help Bassanio, his best friend. Knowing that there is a fair, beautiful lady named Portia who is looking for a husband, Bassanio aims to join himself in the casket lottery for winning Portia's heart. By the end of the story, Shylock loses all his money. He is betrayed by his daughter, who converts herself as a Christian to marry Lorenzo. Ironically, at the end of the story, Shylock cannot take his revenge on Antonio that has kicked him, spat on him, and called Shylock a dog (Shakespeare, 2009). The majority of people in Venice will not let a Jew threaten and take over Christian power. As a Jew, Shylock has been outcasted from society and labeled as evil due to his religious view. The same thing happens to Prince Morocco, who is stereotyped as lower than Bassanio because of his dark-skinned color and his Non-European-originated-country. Coming from a part of North Africa, Prince Morocco is stereotypically portrayed as lacking in appearance and carrying sexual threats for white women. Considered to be inferior, both Shylock and Prince Morocco crave to be recognized by the other to raise their worth as equal as the dominant group.

Throughout this study, the focus of the analysis is how the marginalized tries to gain recognition from the dominant group. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the society constructs the stereotype, which devalues the representation of Shylock as a Jew and Prince Morocco as a man of color. Feeling alienated and seen as lacking, both characters are trying to achieve recognition. The recognition, to some senses, obtains the essence of fully human. This study discovers various ways for Shylock and Prince Morocco to get self-recognition from others. Tracing back to the Elizabethan epoch, most people are Christian. In this play, Shylock is alienated in a Christian-dominated society because he is a Jew (Manggong, 2010). Being treated unfairly by the Christians, Shylock aims revenge to show that he is also powerful, and Christian people cannot take him for granted. He can be as fierce as the Christian would be.

Meanwhile, Prince Morocco is trying to marry Portia to make him enter the white man's world. However, with his dark-skinned color, Prince Morocco cannot match the white heiress. As a man of color, Prince Morocco cannot win Portia's heart because black or people of color should not marry any whites. Through the analyses, it can be revealed how the marginalized group, such as Shylock and Prince Morocco, demand a recognition to obtain the certainty of oneself. To investigate the problem of the subaltern's recognition, the study divides the discussion into three parts covering: 1) the racial issue portrayed in *The Merchant of Venice*; 2) the struggle of the marginalized to gain recognition; 3) the failure of recognition. Applying the postcolonial psychoanalysis, the research aims to show the process of subaltern's attempt to claim their worth as a result of the inferiority complex imposed on the marginalized. Struggling to get the recognition, the marginalized group has the obstacles because society has been constructed and framed by the oppressor's perspective.

Dutta (2013), in his research, affirms that the question of race is relevant to analyze the four Shakespearean plays. The variety of races, religions, genders, ethnicities, and cross-cultural contacts influence how the issue of race has become so close to human beings. Besides, the legitimacy of colonial power over the *Other* remarks the struggle of the inferior group in society. By examining the four works: *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, he concludes that the idea of the race presented in the plays colors up the story inside (Dutta, 2013). Unlike Dutta's object of study, this study focuses only on Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. To be more precise, it applies the psychological analysis in the construction of racial discrimination supported by Frantz Fanon's theory of postcolonial psychoanalysis. However, the previous research from Dutta and the current study have similarities about how Shakespearean work is perceived as racist from the representation of its character. Similar to Ngestirosa and Fitratullah (2018), who

discuss minority voices in the Power Rangers movie, this study also upbringings the issue of discrimination, including the racial tension between non-European people and western folk. In the previous research, Ngestirosa and Fitratullah found out that the Power Rangers movie gives the subtle glance of accepting people of color and the right for the LGBT. Also, this study shows the dream of the minority group to be seen as equal to the White-Americans (Ngestirosa & Fitratullah, 2018). Although Ngestirosa and Fitratullah have a similar goal with this research, to voice the minor characters, both studies apply different approaches to answer the problem. Theory representation by Hall is used to find the characterization of the minor characters in the previous study. Meanwhile, this study puts its core of the analysis on the recognition in postcolonial psychoanalysis context supported by Fanon's theory.

This research surveys how inferior groups, such as people of color and Jew, have been struggling with the stereotype in society. Fanon explains further in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) that the application of psychoanalysis in a postcolonial context is needed to re-investigate racial phobias based on dark-skinned color. Essentially, he does not only mention people of color but also Jew that has been discriminated against as well in western society. Fanon's postcolonial psychoanalytical view befits to explain the process of subaltern's inferiority complex, passing through a desire to claim their worth by gaining recognition. The projection attached to the people of color and Jew is merely the strategy of the colonizer to create the framework of false representation and internalize it as if a reality (Fanon, 2008). Once the Europeans have set the re-representation of the non-European as lacking, inferior, and secondary than the western countries, it will give the privilege for western society to maintain their authority and purity as the center of civilization. With this condition, there will be no other way for the subaltern to gain recognition in the western society.

Examining the issue of racial discrimination, this study aims to give a reflection for the readers to live hand in hand peacefully in the middle of the diversity. As it has been portrayed in *The Merchant of Venice*, the various identities, such as religions, cultures, and races, are seen as the border which limits people and separates one group from another. Hence, through this research, the author encourages not to see differences as a limitation in society. Instead, diversity is perceived as something enriching and complementing to celebrate numerous identities and create a better environment without stereotypically judging others severely.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term postcolonial concerns with the marginalized, subaltern (inferior group), the exploited that is stigmatized in the society. As the product of the colonial power, the *Other* or

the marginalized is often treated unequally (Popa, 2013). Throughout *Black Skin White Mask* (1952), Fanon, the father of postcolonial psychologists, investigates how colonialism is internalized, how the inferiority complex is manifested in the society, and how the colonized ends up emulating the oppressor. Through the alienation and the inferiority complex label, the black people are intentionally made to have a desire to be white. Consequently, the inferiority complex of the marginalized, Fanon explains, possesses the desire to gain recognition. At the climax of its anguish, people of color aim to claim their worth by proving their whiteness to others and, above all, for their own self (Fanon, 2008). However, despite the subaltern's struggle to gain recognition, the concept of liberty and justice is still determined by the white people. Feeling inferior, the people of color want to be as seen or recognized as the superior race. Through the alienation and the inferiority complex, the subaltern is intentionally made to have a desire to gain power the as same as the dominant group. Fanon points out that there is a problem in constructing the *Other* by substituting fear of real to a real fear (Marriot, 2000). By creating fear towards the marginalized, it is easier for the dominant to make the subalterns feel inferior and reinforce the superiority of the oppressor.

The struggle of recognition can be understood as the hope rising from the historical violence happening in the past. The marginalized who strives upon the recognition promises the open horizon that may redevelop or redefine the undesirable history (Schaap, 2004). In further analysis, Fanon asserts that the relation between master and slave plays an essential role in recognition. Interpreting Hegel, Fanon points out, "man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him" (Fanon, 2008, p. 168). Fanon argues that being fully human can be obtained through the recognition of another being. Regarding the recognition from others' validation, the measure of humanity is scaled through the imposition of one's existence on another human being (Villet, 2011).

Fanon's theory about recognition is used to investigate how the process of recognition arises as to the form of resistance to discrimination. This study examines how the racial issue is portrayed in the representation of Jew and people of color. In opposition to European qualities, Jew and people of color are exposed to the negative characteristics to make the subaltern feeling inferior. Since the society treats Jew and people of color as the outsider, there is an urge from the marginalized to raise from the persecution by showing that they are also valued and demanding recognition from the western society.

## DISCUSSION OF MAIN THEMES

### The Racial Issues Portrayed in *The Merchant of Venice*

Gupta states that Jews have been persecuted from the community since the Elizabethan era (2019). The exclusion of Jewish in the Christian community is also reflected in the play where Shylock is presented as anti-Semitic. The majority of people in Venice are Christian. Living as a Jew in a predominantly non-Jew society makes Shylock the outsider and oppressed by the Christian community.

At the beginning of the play, Shylock is mistreated by Antonio because of his identity as a Jew. "Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last; you spurn'd me such a day; another time you call'd me dog; and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much moneys" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 10). With the majority of Christian people in Venice, Shylock is treated unfairly. The imagery of a dog is attributed to him. Moreover, people disrespect him knowing that a Jew is such an evil person. Therefore, people call him 'dog.' In the play, Antonio also spits and kicks him because Shylock is a Jew. "The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke, who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.—As the dog Jew did utter in the streets: My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 18). Mistreating Jew seems to be a common thing for most Christians. When Shylock lost his daughter and money, Shylock's heart breaks into pieces, and he yearns for help. Feeling devastated, no one pays attention to him. One of the Christians even mentions Shylock as a villain and a dog without having sympathy for him. The Christian thinks that Shylock deserves to put into despair due to his evil characteristic. At this point, the label of cunning Jew in Shylock's representation has manifested the oppression towards Shylock.

Regarded as a bloodthirsty person, Shylock is described as evil. For wanting a pound of flesh from Antonio, Shylock becomes the antagonist character who craves for Christian's blood, "the pound of flesh, which I demand of him, is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 29). It is depicted in the play that Shylock is offended, and he aims to take revenge on Antonio because he has kicked and called him 'dog.' In this play, Shylock struggles a lot upon the racial issue. The experience of being persecuted by society arises Shylock's desire to make Christians payback their cruelty. For this reason, people see Shylock as a cunning Jew who attempts to take his revenge. With the representation of a devil Jewish, Shylock is oppressed by the Christian community. From the perspective of other characters, Shylock is nothing except a Jew. Most of the time, other characters address him by not calling his real name. Instead, they prefer to call Shylock a Jew, "go one, and call

the Jew into the court” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 28). When the Duke invites Shylock to the court, he does not address him directly by name. Instead, the Duke calls him a Jew (Sierra, 2013). Taking Fanon’s explanation of this case, identifying the marginalized is understood as the image of totality (Fanon, 2008). In which, it means the name or personal identification is no longer important. It is enough for the dominant society to know that he is a Jew, then the rest is not a matter.

As the subaltern, there is a time when Shylock laments how Christians mistreat him very severely. Shylock argues that all human beings should have the same right and equal opportunity, among others. However, being a Jew has disadvantaged him, “He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation—and what’s his reason? I am a Jew. –If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 20).

From Shylock’s dialogue, he mourns the circumstances which give no room for the *Other* such as the subaltern to speak. He asserts in his speech that being a Jew should not make things different. It does not change any fact that he is a human being as same as the Christians. Unfortunately, even when Shylock laments the unequal treatment given to him, no one listens to him. Shylock is unable to speak neither express himself freely because he is considered a subaltern and the minority. The society will never listen to what comes from the marginalized side.

Besides Shylock, Prince Morocco has also been stereotyped due to his dark-skinned-color. The casket game or the lottery for winning Portia’s heart implies the racial issue. After her father died, the king said that only the man who can choose the right casket among the three caskets containing Portia’s photograph could marry her. Many princes have tried their luck but fail to select the right one. In the play, Shakespeare tells how Prince Morocco is unable to marry Portia. In the representation of Prince Morocco, racism appears. He is described as a man of color and non-European. At the beginning of his arrival, the prince feels sorry for his appearance. As a prince from a part of North Africa, Prince Morocco doubts his physical outlook compared to the other white princes who come for winning Portia’s heart. The prince is portrayed as ugly and physically abhorrent, thus makes him feel inferior, “Mislike me not for my complexion, the shadow’d livery of the burnish’d sun—” (Shakespeare, 2009, p.11). There is guilt inside when the prince introduces himself to Portia. Taken from Fanon, he explains through the projection of the bad side to the people of color that black is purposely formed to have guilty within themselves. With this condition, when black people are in contact with the white world, they are intentionally made to be inferior by

manifesting the feeling of guilt for being lack. In contrast, the white man is depicted in more positive qualities, possessing the beauty and virtue that has never been found in the figure of black (Fanon, 2008). In this play, Prince Morocco is brave enough to try his luck, but he is not confident enough about his physical appearance.

Unlike Prince Morocco, who has an inferiority complex because of his dark skin color, Bassanio is depicted the other way around.

“Do you not remember, lady, in your father’s time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?”—“Yes, yes, it was Bassanio— I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 8)

Based on the dialogue between Portia and her maid, Bassanio is presented as someone noble. He is characterized as both scholar and soldier, closely related to virtues such as brave, intelligent, and civilized. At this point, Bassanio is more likely to be praised because of his lively appearance and qualities. Compared to Prince Morocco, who is enslaved by his inferiority, Bassanio is admired and superior. Under this circumstance, the parameters of ‘beauty’ and ‘purity’ are standard for white people only. It is intentionally made as to the basic construction so that the white man can easily subjugate the black people. The white civilization regularly imposes black folk with the negative attribution to make them believe that they are not good enough, thus, feeling inferior.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the casket game has intrigued the pros and cons of racism. The three caskets implicitly indicate the characterization of each character who chooses the casket. Prince Morocco is amazed by the golden casket; therefore, he chooses the casket.

“The first, of gold, who this inscription bears, *who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire*—here an angel in a golden bed lies all within. Deliver me the key: Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 17)

Prince Morocco chooses the golden casket implies the sexual threat associated with the figure of a black man. Choosing the one with *who chooseth me shall gain what many men desires* inscribed, Prince Morocco is subtly described as putting the desire for why he aims to marry Portia. Fanon, in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), points out if one talks about psychopathology and negro, the term Negrophobia is closely connected to be discussed as well. Fanon asserts, the term phobia refers to the neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object or situation. For negrophobic, negro has a strong attachment to sexual power and desire. Whenever someone sees the black man, they would symbolize him with the genital organ. Thus, taking the point from Fanon about Negrophobia, Prince Morocco, in this play, is



indeed seen as a sexual threat for Portia. He chooses the golden casket for the sake of his desire to marry the white woman.

For this reason, it causes a kind of phobia for white women to avoid black men. As a symbol of biological danger, black people should stay away from white women. In white's perspective, the desire of the black man should be castrated (Fanon, 2008). Centering on his desire, Prince Morocco is represented as someone who strives for the white woman's body. In the story, Prince Morocco intends to breed with the fair lady and fulfill his sexual desire. The way how Shakespeare presents a black man reveals how racism is portrayed in the play.

Unlike Prince Morocco, who chooses the golden casket, Bassanio is fascinated by the lead casket, leading him to win Portia. Selecting the lead casket, Bassanio is described to lose his interest in either gold or silver. He prefers to choose the least favorable one which says *who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath*. "Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead, which rather threatenest than dost promise aught, thy paleness moves me more than eloquence; And here choose I; joy be the consequence!" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 22). The way Bassanio decides to choose the lead casket implicitly shows that he is a brave man who is eager to take a risk despite the consequences it may have. From its appearance, the lead casket seems to be threatening, but still, Bassanio takes it. His choice leads him to the right casket that contains Portia's photograph. The final result of the lottery casket to win Portia somehow suggests the racial discrimination presenting white closely connected to the hero figure who deserves victory and nobility.

From the parchment written in the leaden casket, it is said that the one who chooses the lead casket would not attract by the view or its cover. "You that choose not by the view, chance as fair and choose as true! Since this fortune falls to you—Turn you where your lady is and claim her with a loving kiss" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 22). By this means, Bassanio is described as someone who has the courage and nobility to take a risk choosing the casket, not by its appearance or its color. This representation is apparently in contrast to the figure of Prince Morocco. Racism is subtly portrayed in how the author narrates Bassanio and Prince Morocco; in the description between a black man and a white man.

The black man is centering himself on the desire or sexual drive, which seems to be a threat to the white woman. On the other hand, the white man is more desirable since he symbolizes purity, nobility, and intelligence. Taken from Fanon, the negroes have tremendous sexual power (2008). At this point, a black man is genitalized through western civilization. The representation of the black man is devalued both by white men and white women. The racism portrayed in the play defines how the *Other* has been in the position as

the canvas for the distinction to the colonizer (Spanakos, 1998). The colonizer is advantageous to set the standard and representation for themselves and others based on white's perspective. Cultivating hegemonized power, the dominant group easily sticks the low characteristics to the subaltern to distinguish power and social status.

### **The Struggle of the Marginalized to Gain the Recognition**

In this play, Shakespeare includes racism and prejudice towards the Jew and non-European such as Prince Morocco. Reflecting the anti-Semitic, Shylock is subjected to be the antagonist and the marginal character. Historically, Jew has been alienated because of their acquisitiveness. Many investments, such as banks and stock exchanges, are invested in Jew. They are well known for their intelligence as well as their pernicious behavior (Fanon, 2008). Getting afraid of Jew, western society alienates Jew people. They try to limit the Jew and impose them with negative attribution and mistreat them. It is illustrated from the play that the dominant Christian society manifests their authority to establish their power dominating the Jews. From *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare, this play depicts how the Jew has been persecuted. As a subaltern and the *Other*, Shylock is unable to get the same rights equally as the Christians. Nevertheless, if readers see this play from another perspective, the Jew character inside of the story has an important role in the economy of Venice. Being a moneylender who charges the interest, Shylock helps the economy of the city. Without his contribution, the economy of Venice would be stagnant (Manggong, 2010).

As the inferior or the subaltern, both Shylock and Prince Morocco attempt to gain recognition to arise from the oppression. Feeling uncertain towards oneself, Shylock and Prince Morocco try to escape the inferiority complex by obtaining the recognition. In Shylock's case, he uses Antonio's critical moment when Antonio begs to borrow money from Shylock. With this condition, Shylock demands Antonio's flesh if he cannot meet the agreement, "if you repay me not on such a day, be nominated for an equal pound of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken in what part of your body pleaseth me" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 10). At this point, Shylock presents his desire to escape from the inferiority complex. By demanding Antonio's flesh, Shylock shows that people cannot take him for granted. Indeed, he has power, and he would like to position himself as the superior one.

The similar thing is also depicted in the figure of Prince Morocco. As a colored prince, he is presented for wanting to marry Portia, the white heiress of Belmont. Compared to Bassanio, Prince Morocco is more prosperous than Bassanio. Money might not be the reason why Prince Morocco would like to marry Portia. Applying the postcolonial psychoanalysis

from Fanon, when one is having the blackest soul, the mind is having the desire to be white (2008). Under this circumstance, the man of color is trying to elevate himself in the range of color by marrying the white woman. Through interracial marriage or choosing a partner from a different race, it will cause denaturalization or deracialization. Opposing the idea of racialization, deracialization refers to an active attempt to eliminate the hierarchical status among races. Besides, it means to stand for the uneven social relation which foregrounds based on race (Stevens, 2014). Therefore, marrying a white lady can be understood as a way for the black man to enter the white man's border. Eventually, this is the process where Prince Morocco is trying to gain recognition through interracial marriage.

The same case has happened to Shylock's daughter, who converts herself as a Christian to marry Lorenzo. It is quite heartbreaking for Shylock to know that his daughter betrays him. It does not take any longer for Jessica to leave her father and take all his money to Lorenzo, "I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian" (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 27). For Jessica, she would instead convert herself as a Christian than become a Jew. Even if she betrays her father, this will be worth the price because she can uplift herself to the dominant group. Marrying a Christian has become the open gate for Jessica to leave her miserable life as a Jew.

It has been culturally constructed in the society that the marginalized struggle upon the recognition from the others to claim their worth (Fanon, 2008). Labeled as non-being, the marginalized are suffering from an inferiority complex entailed with negative representation about them. The oppression done by white supremacy has developed the inferiority complex in the figure of marginalized such as Jew and people of color. After a long time, the marginalized have been persecuted by the western authority; there is a time when they want to stand for themselves and fight for equality. By gaining back the recognition in the society, it helps them to be a fully human as same as the white European people. Since the marginalized are historically presented as weak, gaining recognition is an essential act for the marginalized to free themselves from the inferiority complex.

### **The Failure of Recognition**

Despite the struggle to obtain recognition as a fully human, Shylock and Prince Morocco fail to gain the recognition. As a product of western civilization, both Jew and negro have been intentionally made to be lacking and inferior (Fanon, 2008). The western-centered society has managed the sum of myths, prejudices, and collective attitudes in society. Treating Jew and people of color unfairly is one example of how western society performs

collective attitudes. Other beings, besides whites and Christians, are recognized as secondary. Meanwhile, the primary is always connected to white and Christian. As a subaltern, Shylock and Prince Morocco cannot fulfill their desire to gain recognition by crossing the western society. The constructed society controlled by the dominant power does not enable them to cross the racial border of religion and color.

When Shylock aims to get Antonio's flesh, he is accused as the criminal, and there is a cost for him to do that.

“It is enacted in the laws of Venice, if it be proved against an alien. That by direct or indirect attempts he seek the life of any citizen, the party 'gainst the which he doth contrive shall seize one half his goods.” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 32)

As a Jew, Shylock is always in a disadvantaged position. His bond is considered to be illicit because he threatens Antonio's life, and the law of Venice considers it a crime. For Shylock, putting Antonio's flesh could be a chance for him to feel superior and gain recognition. Unfortunately, the predominantly Western society does not let the subaltern subjugate the upper class. Through the law of Venice, which is also a form of Western narrative, the subaltern is always on the oppressed side. By mistreating Jew and imposing them with negative qualities, western society attempts to suppress the power of Jew. Jew is generally known as having intellectual threat. What makes Jew persecuted is because they want to own the wealth or take over power (Fanon, 2008). Regarded as a threat to western society, Shylock's failure of recognition is not merely caused by his flaw. It is his intellectual ability that triggers fear for western society. As a result, society produces such destructive quality to Jew to maintain Western domination. Shylock's failure to gain recognition seemingly legitimates fixed identity in the Jew as evil, cunning, and dangerous. However, the legitimation of the constructed Jew's identity infers the hidden agenda by the European to position themselves always in the superior class and suppress the Jew to feel less.

Prince Morocco is the victim of racial discrimination. From society, it is still considered taboo when a black person has the desire to marry a white. The complexity of the black resonates with the idea of sin, devil, and lacking (Fanon, 2008). In consequence, this becomes the reason why Portia rejects Prince Morocco. It is his complexion and all the qualities behind the black figure that makes Portia turn him down. There is no way for the colored people to enter the white man's world by marrying the white lady, “if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me” (Shakespeare, 2009, p. 8). Based on Portia's view, she would not marry Prince Morocco, even if the prince can choose the right casket.

Moreover, Portia describes Prince Morocco's appearance as equal to the complexion of the devil. Prince Morocco loses the casket not because he sees from the exterior appearance of the casket (which is gold) but because of his outward appearance. As a man of color, he is unable to choose the casket containing Portia's picture. When it comes to Bassanio, Portia falls in love with him. The fact that Bassanio chooses the lead casket, which makes him win, is doubted. Quoted from Spiller, she criticizes whether Bassanio could examine what is hidden or invisible, or eventually, Portia has helped him (Spiller, 1998). Portia suspiciously supports his ability to imagine what is inside the right casket. It seems that Bassanio is selected because he is the chosen one or the insider.

Meanwhile, Prince Morocco, as an outsider, will never win Portia's heart. Despite his hierarchal status as a king, being a prince is not worth enough if he belongs to dark-skinned color. Prince Morocco's failure in an attempt to claim his worth by marrying Portia proves that the clear racial border is indeed unbearable for the non-European to cross. Aiming to keep the white European's purity, it is almost impossible for men of color to step into white society.

## CONCLUSION

Categorized as the anti-Semitic play, Shakespeare's work in *The Merchant of Venice* portrays racism throughout the play. The relation between the subaltern and the dominant classes becomes the problematic issue that spices up this play. From the discussion, it can be concluded that both Shylock, as a Jew, and Prince Morocco as a man of color, are trying to escape from the inferiority complex by gaining recognition. As a Jew, Shylock is seen as an intellectual threat who can overthrow western domination. The figure of Prince Morocco is considered to be a sexual threat that desires the white woman's body. The subaltern, Shylock, and Prince Morocco are imposed with negative characteristics to make them feel less and lacking. Besides, by projecting the fear to them, the western domination aims to maintain their power and subjugate the marginalized group.

The inferiority complex results in the desire of the marginalized characters to gain recognition to make themselves as fully human. Taking revenge and marrying a white lady are ways for Shylock and Prince Morocco to gain the recognition. However, from the analysis, both characters fail to obtain recognition from the society. As a product of western civilization, society has been constructed by western standards. Consequently, there will be no other way for subaltern groups such as Shylock and Prince Morocco to cross the western world because it has been constrained within racial discrimination.

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