

# Shylock as a tragic hero in shakespeare's merchant of venice

[Literature](#)



There is an indication in the play about the general marginalization that Jews faced at this point in time in parts of Europe. This can be seen in these lines, I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew's eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? (Shakespeare). This is then a heroic moment where Shylock makes a radical humanist statement. In spite of this, one cannot call Shylock a tragic hero as he does not display hubris that is the cause of his downfall. He is always humiliated and hence does not display pride that is characteristic of the tragic hero. Apart from this, Shylock's actions do not indicate the passing of a world order into another in the way that the death of a tragic hero does. One can then say that Shylock's life within the play is one that is caused by discriminatory practices within Europe. He is not, however, a tragic hero.