

SHELTERS: CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS THROUGH THE EYES OF SHAKESPEARE.

NEW FACES PARTICIPANTS (SPAIN)
Erasmus+ IP (University of Murcia)

UNIVERSIDAD DE
MURCIA

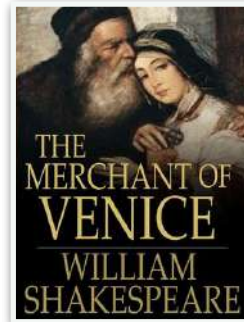


INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's society is not that different from Murcia's contemporary society as far as immigration is concerned. For instance, alienation, ethnic differences or the concept of "the other" appear in our society and they did as well in Shakespeare's. As he reflected already 400 years ago in his plays such as *The Merchant of Venice*, many times these problems are based on the grounds of traditions and are not easy to solve.

.....

While speaking to one of the volunteers working for the organisation Jesús Abandonado, we were made aware of the fact that the most noticeable problem within the organisation has to do with the different groups of people receiving their help. As Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* states, most of these people find themselves alienated from the society they have come to live in as they have abandoned their former environments, backgrounds and lifestyles. Also, immigrants are sometimes treated with prejudice by the new environment. In fact, according to an NGO volunteer, most problems come from disputes between different ethnic groups and the religions they practice (or, in many cases, are believed to practice by others).



In other cases, many conflicts arise because native Spaniards living in their shelters often show resentment against immigrants because they believe them to be outsiders and, therefore, that all help available should be given to the former residents. In many cases it causes a counter-reaction among the immigrants. As Shylock states: "The villainy you teach me, I will execute" (Act 3, Scene 1). Because of these instances, Jesús Abandonado has reached beyond their Catholic faith and, in their mission to help people who share different beliefs, hosts workshops in which the people they help are allowed to share activities, a common purpose and the opportunity to learn a trade. Therefore, they promote equality through equal opportunity, equal help and creating an atmosphere of shared experience and goals that will help make everyone involved feel as part of a community. Furthermore, advisors specialized in these conflicts are always at their disposition to talk and discuss.

CONCLUSION

From this look at our contemporary reality through the eyes of Shakespeare and Jesús Abandonado, it could be argued that the essential underlying conflicts of human coexistence have not changed since Shakespeare's times. The reluctance humans feel towards one another when sharing a living space is still part of our society. However, along the last centuries, ideas that used to be present only in the artistic world have created space for organisations like Jesús Abandonado to appear. It is through their work that we can see a nexus between this literary work and reality and use this connection to think of new approaches that will help us solve these old issues.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CENTRO DE ACOGIDA

Crta. St. Catalina, 55

30012, MURCIA

Phone numbers: 968 345 001

659 538 516