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Representation of Jewishness in Richard Cumberland's Writing
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Zásady pro vypracování

Autorka se ve své práci zaměří na vybrané dílo britského autora Richarda Cumberlanda (1732-1811). Jejím úkolem bude zmapovat jeho prózu s důrazem na zobrazování židovských postav a židovství v rámci britské společnosti. V úvodní části práce se autorka pokusí načrtnout nejčastější rysy a tendence, které se ve vykreslování židovských postav v britské literatuře objevují (např. u Shakespeara, Dickense, atd.). Na tomto základě provede detailní rozbor vybraných Cumberlandových děl s cílem zjistit, jaký obraz židovství jeho próza vytváří. Tato zjištění následně využije pro určení míry a způsobu Cumberlandova souznění či odklonu od dřívější a následné typizace židovských postav a židovství v britské literatuře.

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis deals with the representation of Jewishness in selected works of Richard Cumberland. The theoretical part is divided into two chapters. The focus of the first chapter is on the history and culture of the Jewish minority in Britain. The second part contains an introduction to the traditional way Jewish characters are represented within British literature. The differences between the representation of Jewish characters in Richard Cumberland's writing and the Jewish stereotypes within English literature are analysed in the practical part of the thesis.

KEYWORDS

Jews, Richard Cumberland, antisemitic stereotypes, Anglo-Jewish literature, representation of Jewishness

NÁZEV

Obraz židovství v díle Richarda Cumberlanda

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zobrazování židovských postav ve vybraných dílech britského autora Richarda Cumberlanda. Teoretická část je rozdělena do dvou kapitol. První kapitola se soustředí na historii a kulturu židovské menšiny v Británii. Druhá kapitola představuje tradiční způsob zobrazování židovských postav v britské literatuře. V praktické části bakalářské práce je zobrazování židovských postav v dílech Richarda Cumberlanda porovnáno s tradičním způsobem zobrazování židů v britské literatuře.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Židé, Richard Cumberland, antisemitické stereotypy, anglo-židovská literatura, zobrazování židovství

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Introduction

The history of the Jewish nation has always been challenging. It is full of religious clashes, persecution, conflicts, and prejudices. The Jews were exiled from their homeland and spent centuries as uninvited guests in many countries around the world. They established Jewish communities all over Western Europe and struggled to live as common citizens. Still, they always differed from locals due to their customs, habits, language and lifestyle. The Israelites were commonly known for their ability to accumulate wealth. They were traders, merchants and often usurers. Consequently, people marked them as people who earn money at any cost. Later, with the rise of Christianity, interfaith clashes started to appear followed with the period of the Christian Crusades against other religions. Consequently, millions of Jewish people were massacred because, according to the New Testament, they were the killers of Jesus. Later, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Jews were labelled as the cause of the Black Death, a plague that killed about half of the European population. They “were accused of poisoning food, wells and steams” around the whole world and were “exterminated in masse”.¹ Since that time, they have been persecuted and unwelcomed all over the Europe. During the 18th century, more favourable migration policies were adopted, which created an opportunity for Jews to settle down. Over half of them did so. The most tragic event for the Jewish population was the Second World War, in which about six million Jews died during the Holocaust. To conclude, living within Europe, where the attitudes towards Jewish minorities frequently changed, Jews became accustomed to moving from one place to another and often found a shelter in England.

The history of the Jews in Britain is not as dramatic as that in continental Europe. Endelman claims that there were no pogroms or any other persecution against Jews in Britain, even though these things happened in other European states.² Roth agrees that “Jews attained a measure of freedom” in Britain.³ Consequently, when Jews were exiled from other European countries, they moved to England, which represented the promised land for many of them. Hyamson labels the Jewish stay in England as the happiest period in Jewish history.⁴ However, it is not precisely known when Jews came to England. According to British historian Hyamson regarding the Jewish stay in England, periods of prosperity were always

¹ Samuel K. Cohn, “The Black Death and the Burning of Jews,” *Past & Present*, no. 196 (2007): 4.

² Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

³ Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 270.

⁴ Albert M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto, 1908), vii.

followed by periods of persecution.⁵ At some point, the Jewish minority was completely expelled from the kingdom, and they were not allowed to return for over four centuries. After their gradual return, they continued where they left off. They lived in small colonies on the outskirts of cities. They sold goods, lent money and received insults from people whose judgements were based on prejudices.

Needless to say, certain stereotypes about Jews were strengthened by writers. They were influenced by the general opinion about Jewish temper, which generally came from fantasy, imagination and rumours, not experience. After the Jews were expelled from England in the thirteenth century,⁶ there was not a high number of Jews in England to serve as character templates for authors, which sometimes led to additional negative pictures of Jewish characters. Since 1290, Jewish characters were displayed as a heartless moneylenders, wicked murderers or rotten thieves who were unable to show compassion or sympathy. Chaucer's Jews from ghetto in *The Prioress's tale*, Marlowe's Barabbas in *Jew of Malta*, Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and Dickens's Fagin in *Oliver Twist* have something in common—they are relentless antagonists who reinforce the antisemitic mood in Britain. These characters may have negatively influenced the likelihood for the Jewish minority to become a part of society, because even if they did so unintentionally, the authors shaped reader's minds.⁷

On the contrary, there were authors who experimented a little and created Jewish characters who contrasted with common prejudices. One of them is Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), an English writer, playwright, philosopher and philanthropist who tried to challenge generally-accepted stereotypes and worked with them in a different way. Cumberland came from a family devoted to teaching and serving others.⁸ He personally said that he was “descended from ancestors illustrious for their piety, benevolence, and erudition”.⁹ His family background strongly influenced his benevolence and understanding of minorities. He came from a family in which helping others was a matter of course. His great-grandfather was the Lord Bishop of Peterborough, a scholar and a philosopher, and he served as a great inspiration for his grandchild,¹⁰ who mentions this in his memoirs. Cumberland felt

⁵ Albert M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto, 1908), vii.

⁶ Edward N. Calisch, *The Jew in English literature: As author and as Subject* (Richmond Virginia: The Bell Book and Stationery Co, 1909), 41.

⁷ David Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Co., 1903), 6.

⁸ Stanley Thomas Williams, *Richard Cumberland, his life and dramatic works* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1917), 2.

⁹ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, vol.1*, (London: A.Lackington, 1806), 2.

¹⁰ Stanley Thomas Williams, *Richard Cumberland, his life and dramatic works* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1917), 2.

as though his grandfather's benevolence and kindness was a family heirloom, and it played a vital role in his writings. Cumberland focused on discrimination against minorities, religious groups and people who were somehow different than others and, thus, refused by society. His interest in these topics was not initially appreciated, but he was not discouraged. His early writing was probably also influenced by his diplomatic career and travels to Spain, Ireland and so on. Later, he started to write "sentimental comedies" and used them as a tool to describe the struggles of people, including their experiences of racial, religious and cultural prejudices.

This bachelor thesis focuses on analysing the representation of Jewishness in works of Richard Cumberland. The aim of the analysis is to observe the way Cumberland presents Jewish characters within his writings and explain the differences. The research will cover following works: *The Fashionable Lover*, *The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape from the Inquisition Madrid*, *The Jew of Mogadore* and his masterpiece, *The Jew*.

The first theoretical chapter of this thesis will provide a crucial cultural and historical context with a focus on the living conditions of the Jewish population in England. It starts with a history of Jews in England from the first settlements through Medieval England to 19th century progressive Britain, focusing mainly on Richard Cumberland's century. The most important events that negatively or positively influenced the mindsets of people about the Jewish community are listed. In the second part of the theoretical chapter called Jewishness in English literature, authors who reinforced the ever-present antisemitism by creating Jewish characters as antagonists and cold-hearted moneylenders who just care about money and have no mercy, such as Chaucer's Jews from ghetto in *The Prioress's tale*, Marlowe's Barabbas from *Jew of Malta*, Shakespeare's Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice* are examined.

The second and the third practical chapters are focused on the analysis of Richard Cumberland's works in detail, moving from his first work, *Fashionable Lover*, in which the Jewish character is rather in the background, through a short tale called *The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape from the Inquisition Madrid*, where the antagonist's Jewishness is hidden to *The Jew of Mogadore*, in which a Jew is a main character. The most influential piece of Richard Cumberland's drama, *The Jew*, is covered in the third chapter.

1 History of Jews in England

When exactly the Jewish minority settled in England is still unknown. There are just a few legends and records about it, and the earliest mentions come from diaries from the time of Roman colonization. However, the diaries are not considered to be reliable historical sources. Nonetheless, the history of the Jews in England is complex and long. The earliest date suggested by Hyamson is around 1000 BC.¹¹ This period is not about permanent settlement but rather about seeking trading opportunities, where Jewish traders visited the king to sell him goods. The first part of the theoretical chapter mainly focuses on changes in attitudes towards Jews based on financial liabilities. These liabilities to Jews ranged across the whole society from kings, middle classes, monasteries, to the whole kingdom.

The first historical evidence of a Jewish presence in England appears in the collection of laws from the time of Edward the Confessor who reigned from 1042 to 1066. In “The Laws of Edward the Confessor”,¹² it is stated that Jews and their money are under the king’s protection and belong to him. William the Conqueror was another king dependent on the Jews. They brought coins and trade to his empire, so they basically enabled the economic growth of the country¹³ and created the middle class. That was typical throughout their stay on the British Isles. They served with their money as a bankers or usurers. Consequently, Jews had a significant influence on the economy, development, and happenings in Britain. Unfortunately, this mutually-beneficial relationship was occasionally interrupted with persecution, expulsions and discrimination. Rosenberg nicely concluded this paradox: “Good Jew or bad, rich Jew or poor, tyrant or slave, money was almost bound to be at the root of his problem”.¹⁴

After a century-long period of peace came difficulties. In the 12th century, the Soldiers of the Cross appeared, and the period of the Blood Accusations began, during which the crime of murder was committed, and without a single piece of proof, it was blamed on the Jews¹⁵ and other religious groups. This event caused many troubles and shaped the first bias against the Jewish minority. People started persecuting Jews, and many members of the Jewish

¹¹ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 1.

¹² Bruce R. O’Brien, *God’s Peace and King’s Peace: The Laws of Edward the Confessor* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 185.

¹³ Edward N. Calisch, *The Jew in English literature: As author and as Subject* (Richmond Virginia: The Bell Book and Stationery Co, 1909), 34.

¹⁴ Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Literature* (Stanford: UP, 1960), 262.

¹⁵ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 24.

community were slaughtered. Hyamson suggests that all this antisemitism arose when the Royal Treasury abruptly needed a large income.¹⁶

Moving to early Medieval England, the Jews served an economic function. They worked as moneylenders and a “treasury” for the English nation. They were welcomed because they provided the Crown with money, which consequently improved their position in society. However, when debtors, especially the English monasteries, were not able to pay their debts, the Jewish moneylenders needed to be removed.¹⁷ People either accused them of ritual crimes or labelled them as the causes of various tragedies, killed them in the name of justice and, together with the Crown, confiscated their fortunes and destroyed their notes about debts. Alternatively, in the worst cases they were murdered. It was recently revealed that the leaders of these massacres were indebted to massacred Jews.¹⁸ The statement from D’Blossiers Tovey perfectly describes the fragile relationship between the King and the Jews at that time: “Quod nullus Judaeus maneat in Anglia nisi servicium Regis faciat”.¹⁹ This statement can be translated as “No Jew should remain in England unless he serves the King”. This quote shows that the Jews were expected to serve others with their money. In 1290, a document entitled the *Edict of Expulsion* was published by King Edward I. All Jews were entirely exiled from England,²⁰ and they were not “legally” allowed to reside there until 1655.²¹ Elderman opposed this idea and suggested that there were about two thousand Jews in England during the expulsion.²² According to the official Anglo-Jewish history, there were no Jewish people in England until 1655.²³ During the resettlement, which occurred in the 17th century, the Jews were “buying protection from the great across Europe since the late sixteenth century, by franking the wars and expeditions of emperors, popes, archdukes”.²⁴

At the beginning of the 18th century, the differences between the Jews and the British started to diminish. The Jews began to increasingly adapt to British customs. Endelman observed the following changes: They were less strict in their religion, customs and their traditions were weakened. Jewish men copied the fashion, style, values, desires and even

¹⁶ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 24.

¹⁷ Hyamson, *A History of the Jew*, 51-52.

¹⁸ Sholom A. Singer, *The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290* (Pennsylvania: University Press, 1964), 117-26.

¹⁹ D’Blossiers Tovey, *Anglia Judaica: Or the History and Antiquities of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Theatre, MDCCXXXVIII), 147.

²⁰ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 115.

²¹ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 41.

²² Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 16.

²³ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 115.

²⁴ Eve Tavor Bannet “Cumberland’s Benevolent Hebrew in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* (1981-) 33, no. 1 (2014): 97.

sexual habits of aristocrats. Jewish women lost their modesty by showing their hair and more skin.²⁵ This period is labelled as a “modern era in Jewish history”.²⁶ It was, perhaps, influenced by a sense of freedom, thanks to the revolutions in France and America and the approaching Enlightenment philosophy. Jews created their Jewish streets, which were situated in the east part of the City of London, and with population growth in 18th century, they expanded further east.²⁷ According to Endelman, the London Jewish population was made up of a “few wealthy merchants, humble traders, peddlers and vagabonds”.²⁸ Some of them were so poor that they were inclined to commit crimes. There’s a bit of antisemitism surrounding the 1888 Jack the Ripper case in London. The killer was first known as “leather apron,” which was supposedly associated with Jewish tradesmen. There was also antisemitic graffiti found near one of the murder locations which has been removed before public noticed in order to prevent an unnecessary violence against Jews.²⁹ Endelman also describes that some of the Jews focused on trading imported goods. They offered special, usually not easily-accessible commodities, such as lemons, candies, cakes and inexpensive jewellery, with a main focus on second-hand clothing.³⁰ By the middle of the century, there were about 7,000 to 8,000 Jews in the country. The Jewish population gradually grew to 15,000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century due to immigration.³¹ This immigration wave was caused by unhostile conditions in Central Europe, where Jews were limited in their number and trading activities and relocated to ghettos or even banned completely from some cities.³² Author Richard Cumberland, who will be introduced later, experienced this tension first-hand during his diplomatic visit to Spain, where Jews were suppressed by the Spanish Inquisition. Even though the relationships between the Jews and Christians were relatively relaxed, Jews were still unwelcomed guests in Britain. For example, in 1722, when “the Act of Parliament required all persons in possession of real estate to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration”, everybody had to vow “on the true faith of Christians”³³ Therefore, the Jews naturally declined. Rabi Philipson David describes that despite the pettiness, the latter half of the 18th century was a time of freedom and humanity. He emphasises the American and French

²⁵ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 54-5.

²⁶ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 59.

²⁷ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 49.

²⁸ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 41.

²⁹ Paul Begg, and John Bennett, “Jack Strikes,” in *Jack the Ripper: The Forgotten Victims* (Yale University Press, 2013), 66-71.

³⁰ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 43.

³¹ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 41.

³² Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 41.

³³ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 262-3.

Revolutions as an example of a new beginning of an advance era and the end of Medieval times.³⁴ This leads us to an overview of important events from 1750 to the end of the century. In 1750, England led a series of wars with France. The first efforts were also made to include Jews in English society through The Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1753. This act was intended “to emancipate Jews” “and enable them to a live in Britain as a citizen with all rights”. The act was passed in Parliament, but it was annulled the following year because of disagreement among the British public.³⁵ The Brits were afraid that the Jews would become too powerful and influence all of Britain with their money: “in short, Judaism would become the fashionable religion of the land”.³⁶ According to Gedalia Yogev, the Jew’s position in society was eventually straightened thanks to commerce. He also claims that this commercial partnership between Jews and Christians was not one-sided because Jewish merchants could not officially join the East India Trading Company because they were not Christians, and Christian merchants took an advantage of the Jewish merchants’ international connections.³⁷

Between 1793 and 1815 there was a revolution. England was engaged in the French Napoleonic Wars, where the Jews served as a bankers and as usual “they helped to supply the state with the funds it needed to fight its wars and to provision its armies”.³⁸ As in previous centuries, the Jews were accused of being the cause of the financial crisis in Britain. Therefore, during the paranoid 1790s, “fear that the French Revolution’s levelling principles would be reimported into England had created a Tory backlash, and prompted passage of the Alien Act of 1793”.³⁹ The main idea of the act was to regulate the numbers of aliens and immigration from whole the European continent. Moreover, this paranoia served as a tool for political parties. The Tories even produced propaganda in which all financial difficulties and the corruption of Britain were blame on the Jewish minority.⁴⁰ A few years later, the Jewish community started fighting with unemployment and poverty within their ethnic group. It was caused by “sustained immigration from the continent”⁴¹ claimed Hyamson, adding that due to discrimination, the Jews were not accepted to work in factories, which resulted in an increase

³⁴ David Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Co., 1903), 54.

³⁵ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 55.

³⁶ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 274-5.

³⁷ Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester: Leicester UP, 1978), 148.

³⁸ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 49.

³⁹ Eve Tavor Bannet “Cumberland’s Benevolent Hebrew in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* (1981-) 33, no. 1 (2014): 86.

⁴⁰ Bannet “Cumberland’s,” 87.

⁴¹ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 304.

in the number of Jewish criminals. Even though the 18th century was period of revolutionary wars, it brought a sense of freedom and encouragement.

The 19th century, influenced by the sense of freedom from the previous revolutionary century, is called the *century of emancipation* for Jews.⁴² Their population increased and reached 20,000. Consequently, there were six synagogues in London.⁴³ The Jews had their own district and lived without any other serious problems. Moreover, since the 1830s, several bills were passed that slowly enabled the Jewish minority to be part of society. Specifically, they were granted the right to complete civic emancipation.⁴⁴

⁴² Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 121.

⁴³ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 300.

⁴⁴ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 46-8.

2 Jewishness in English literature

Stereotype can be defined as a set of images or ideas about a particular thing or person that are usually learned from one's family or the surroundings of a person who believes in them. Ehrlich further characterizes stereotypes as "the language of prejudice" and adds that they "provide the rationalization for prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior".⁴⁵ Obviously, stereotypes are usually connected to negative connotations or prejudices and negatively influences one's mind. Stereotypes concerning the Jewish minority are presented in almost every classic in which a Jewish character appears. Thomas Witherby exhibits one stereotype about Jewish people in his *Dialogues*. One of the speakers describes Jews as "a hard-dealing, hard-hearted people, taking all manner of advantage of the necessities of others... so dexterous in bargaining that it is impossible for Christians to expect any advantage in their dealings with them".⁴⁶ That is exactly the traditional way of displaying Jews in British literature. The Jewish character even explains why he thinks so, "What every body says must be truth."⁴⁷ In my opinion, this is an ideal way to describe the absurdity of prejudices. In *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Literature*, Edgar Rosenberg studied stereotypes about Jews in British literature. He claimed that prejudices against Jews are embedded deep in the consciousness of people, and figures such as Shylock and Fagin are stereotypical characters, who possess identical patterns in behaviour, appearance, moral code and so on.⁴⁸

One of the first mentions of the Jews comes from the *Bible*. *The Old Testament* was amiable regarding Jews. On the contrary, in *The New Testament*, "The Jews are no longer normal human beings. They are accursed despisers, tormentors, and crucifiers of the Saviour".⁴⁹ They represent evil, as those who contributed to the crucifixion of Jesus. Consequently, the Church and its followers considered Judaism to be devilish, and therefore, they banned it and harassed Jews. Because the literature at that time was produced by monks, all literary sources from that time are not objective. For instance, one of the pamphlets quoted in *Antisemitic-Stereotypes* by Felsenstein contains a claim that Jews are usually described as follows:

⁴⁵ Howard J. Ehrlich, "Stereotyping and Negro-Jewish Stereotypes," *Social Forces* 41, no. 2 (1962): 171.

⁴⁶ Thomas Witherby, *An Attempt to Remove Prejudices Concerning the Jewish Nation by Way of Dialogue* (London: Stephen Couchman, 1804), 2.

⁴⁷ Thomas Witherby, *An Attempt to Remove Prejudices Concerning the Jewish Nation by Way of Dialogue* (London: Stephen Couchman, 1804), 3.

⁴⁸ Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Literature* (Stanford: UP, 1960), 13.

⁴⁹ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 54-5.

a most rebellious, disobedient, gainsaying, stilt-necked, impenitent, incorrigible, adulterous, whorish, impudent, froward, shameless, per-verse, treacherous, revolting, back-sliding, idolatrous, wicked, sinful, stubborn, untoward, hard-hearted, hypocritical, foolish, sottish, brutish, stupid, ungrateful, Covenant-breaking Nation or People; a Seed of Evil Doers, a Generation of Vipers, doing Evil greedily with both Hands, according to all the Nations that were round about them;⁵⁰

This is also how Jews are depicted in *The New Testament*. At this time, the predecessors of Elizabethan dramas also appeared. These cycles of mystery plays were written by clergy⁵¹ and their purpose was to help uneducated people understand Holy Writ. Jewish characters were displayed according to *The New Testament*, so the plays might be why people hated Jews so much in the Middle Ages.

After the Expulsion of the Jews in 1290, Jewish characters were still depicted unflatteringly,⁵² or at least the word “Jew” was used to connote somebody who is miserly and only cares about money. As Calisch suggested in *The Jew in English Literature*, the general attitude towards the persecution of Jews in England is reflected in literature. Some people announced the difficulties of the Jews as something positive. “William of Newbury tells of the massacre of York with not a word of sympathy for the unfortunate victims...John Speed says that the coronation of Richard I. was ‘auspicated’ by the massacre of the ‘enemies of Christ’”.⁵³ Others even contributed with their authorship:

Chaucer devotes one of the Canterbury Tales to a repetition of the charge of ritual murder. There is no villainy which Marlowe makes impossible for Barabas. The very genius of Shakespeare has given the widest currency to the false characterization of the Jew as a sordid and merciless usurer.⁵⁴

Indeed, some of the authors might have even strengthened the bitterness towards the Jewish minority by exaggerating when creating Jewish characters. Famous authors, such as Shakespeare, Marlow and Dickens, were the biggest influencers, creating the idea that if one needs a villain in a story who is wicked, by adding some Hebrew phrases, fortune and few distinct customs that vary from the common ones produces an ideal antagonist. Moreover, the characters in their stories seemingly served as templates for other authors, and all such works gave a new generation of readers a distorted view of Jews. In *The Jew in English Fiction*, David Philipson describes the enormous power of writers as follows:

No worse enemy of the Jews exists; these novels are hidden thrusts; they are in truth as pernicious in their tendency as any anti-Semitic sheet ever published; they rest on a little superficial knowledge; they present not the Jew, but a caricature; they introduce

⁵⁰ Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830* (Baltimore: JHU press, 1999), 14.

⁵¹ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 54.

⁵² Louis I. Newman, *Richard Cumberland: Critic and Friend of the Jews* (New York: Bloch, 1919), 3.

⁵³ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 20.

⁵⁴ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 20.

to us some coarse, loud individuals as Jews, and hence, as will be inferred from this, as types; they strengthen that widely prevalent notion of a peculiar people, and are to be denounced as falsities, as misrepresentations, as calumnies.⁵⁵ He also claims that even if there were few shady people among the Jews, the authors should not have made them representative examples of the Jewish community.

Examples of the most influential Jewish characters can be used to illustrate how authors presented Jews in British literature. In this part, classics like *The Prioress's tale*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Oliver Twist*, which shaped people's minds and perceptions and left a bitter taste in readers' mouths and minds for centuries, are introduced. Moreover, the authors created a template for others.

Starting with the most famous writing of Medieval British literature, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, which was written in the 14th century, namely *The Prioress's Tale*, in which the Prioress tells a story about Jews from a ghetto in Asia:

Ther was in Asie in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristene folk, a Jewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vileynye,
Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye,⁵⁶

Living in ghettos or so-called Jewries was typical for members of the Jewish community. They lived there voluntarily or by force and cut themselves off from the outside world, and that provided space for fantasy and rumours. The main topic of this tale is, from its beginning, a viciousness of Jews. The main reasons why Jews were hated also appears in the text. One of them was money, and the other the incomprehension of their customs and culture. There were many matters that British people were not able to digest about the Jewish minority. Firstly, "it was the strange language in which they practiced their rituals".⁵⁷ According to Calisch, the Jews in England combined French, Latin and Hebrew⁵⁸ and practise usury, which irritated people, Koretsky explained that "Since the Catholic Church forbade Christians to practice usury, this activity was left to the Jews...and then they were abused by Christians for doing so".⁵⁹ Further, the rumours about ritual murders were still engraved in people's minds, and the ritual murder of a little Christian boy is the climax of *The Prioress's Tale*. In this tale, Jews

⁵⁵ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 14.

⁵⁶ C. M. Drennan, *Chaucer Prioress's Tale* (London: University tutorial press, 1914), 37.

⁵⁷ Allen C. Koretsky, "Dangerous innocence: Chaucer's Prioress and Her Tale," in *Jewish presence in English literature*, ed. Derek Kohen, Deborah Heller, (Montreal: MQUP, 1990), 15.

⁵⁸ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 58.

⁵⁹ Allen C. Koretsky, "Dangerous innocence: Chaucer's Prioress and Her Tale," in *Jewish presence in English literature*, ed. Derek Kohen, Deborah Heller, (Montreal: MQUP, 1990), 15.

are described as bloodthirsty creatures who kill a boy just for singing the Christian song *Alma Redemptoris*:

Oure firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jues herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, ‘O Hebrayk peple, allas!’⁶⁰

According to last verse, *The Prioress’s Tale* is likely a reference to the Hugh of Lincoln, the little boy who was allegedly murdered by Jews in 1255,

O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,⁶¹

These “cursed Jewes” supposedly needed the blood of innocent children for their rituals. Moreover, the Jews in the tale are executed in the same way as the Jews who allegedly murdered little Hugh:

“Yvele shal have that yvele wol deserve”;
Therefore with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem, by the lawe.⁶²

Koretsky objected, stating that Chaucer’s intention was not to create a negative picture: “The Prioress speaks of Jewish ghettos and usury, and, at the conclusion of her tale, she refers to the libel concerning Hugh of Lincoln. All of these things—ghettos, usury, the libel of ritual murder—are facts of history”.⁶³ On the contrary, due to the Expulsion Act from the 13th century, there was not many Jewish inhabitants in England in the 13th century. Thus, it can be said that the Prioress never really met any Jews. Therefore, her tale was not based on empirical knowledge but, rather, generally-accepted stereotypes about Jews and strengthened by a well-known “leather-shocking” story about Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln. The next notable thing is that Christianity is put in contrast to Jewish belief, where the miracle of a dead boy singing a liturgical song is used to show the power of Christian belief and its saints. From that, it may be seen that Chaucer’s mind was influenced the belief that was most fashionable in England in Medieval times—Christianity.

Continuing on, in *Jew of Malta*, which was written by Christopher Marlowe in 1588 or 1589, the main character is a Jewish Merchant in Malta, Barabbas. The name might have been picked strategically by the author, claimed Philipson, believing that there is a connotation with “a thief in whose stead Christ was crucified”. He also labelled the play as “one long

⁶⁰ C. M. Drennan, *Chaucer Prioress’s Tale* (London: University tutorial press, 1914), 39.

⁶¹ Drennan, *Chaucer Prioress’s*, 43.

⁶² Drennan, *Chaucer Prioress’s*, 41.

⁶³ Koretsky, “Dangerous innocence,” 19.

recital of the wickedness and the monstrosities of the Jew”.⁶⁴ Marlowe introduces the wealthiest Jew of Malta in this drama, and portrayed all stereotypes about Jews through him. He is an evil, heartless and cruel usurer who loves his money more than everything else. Moreover, he shifts from being an evil Jewish usurer to a Jewish monster. In the following lines, Barabbas describes himself to Ithamore, a Turkish slave he bought to help him with his plans:

As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights
And kill sick people groaning under walls
Sometimes I go about and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'em go pinioned along by my door.

...

Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
Then after that was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I filled the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang himself for grief,⁶⁵

...

We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please
And when we grin we bite, yet are our looks
As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.⁶⁶

Murderer, beast, poisoner full of hate and lust for revenge, that is Marlow's idea of Jews. Marlowe might have been inspired by stories about Jewish “devils” like *The Prioress's Tale* and rumours from history, judging by the reference to the poison wells connected to the Black Death that Jews were said to have caused. Then he created a picture of such a wicked

⁶⁴ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 23.

⁶⁵ Christopher Marlowe, A. H. Bullen, and R. H. Horne, *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. II (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), 48.

⁶⁶ Christopher Marlowe, A. H. Bullen, and R. H. Horne, *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. II (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), 41.

character with all those negative features that it seemed overexaggerated. However, it left a negative impression in reader's minds for a long time. Glassman claimed that this was not the author's intention. According to him, "He wanted to construct an image of evil incarnate to show the hypocrisy of those who claimed that they were good Christians, but who failed to live up to the ideals of their faith".⁶⁷ This theory might be supported by the fact that not all Christians in this story are innocent lambs and not all Jewish characters are evil-doers. Abigale, Barabbas daughter, is an example of a Jewish character who is generous and kind. The only positive trait associated with Jews at that time, was, allegedly, their religious and family cohesion,⁶⁸ as seen when Barabbas speaks about the love towards his only daughter Abigale at the beginning:

I have no charge, nor many children,
But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear
As Agamemnon did his Iphigen:
And all I have is hers.⁶⁹

One may be confused that he is not so atrocious when he has at least feelings for somebody. Then when his money and possessions are taken away from him by Maltans, who need to clear their debt to the Turkish, readers may still feel the injustice and have sympathy for the poor Jew who has been robbed by Christians. However, he decides to recover his money at all costs. Even if this is labelled as self-defence at the beginning, it transforms into revenge, and the character goes over the edge. Firstly, he causes the death of two young people when he incites them to fight with each other. Secondly, he poisons the whole nunnery along with his own daughter and finally betrays all of Malta and helps the Turkish seize the island. Moreover, his deeds and words are proof of his depravity, especially when he speaks with Ithamore and they brag about their crimes, showing no mercy.

Itha.: Do you not sorrow for your daughter's death?
Bar. No, but I grieve because she lived so long.⁷⁰

After that, the initial sympathy and understanding of the audience just vanishes when readers find out that Barabbas is cruel by nature. The only moment when the reader feels a sense of justice is presumably when Barabbas dies. Barabbas does not loathe poisoning his daughter, killing innocent youngsters and nuns and nearly destroying Malta just to get his

⁶⁷ B. Glassman, *Anti-semitic Stereotypes without Jews: Images of the Jews in England 1290-1700* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1975), 66.

⁶⁸ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 24.

⁶⁹ Marlowe et al., *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 16.

⁷⁰ Marlowe et al., *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 75.

money back. That is the image of Jews Marlowe created in Medieval times. Calisch challenges the authenticity of the main Jewish character because “No Jew would ever employ his child as Barabas did Abigail, to lure two lovers on to their death. Nor would a Jew have had the inhumanity to poison a houseful of human beings”.⁷¹ However, in Marlowe’s era, the play was extremely popular, and violence was desired to be seen on stage. Calisch explains that “Its cruelty, its coarseness, its vulgar horrors suited the age”,⁷² and because there was no example of a benevolent Jew from his literal predecessors, the author made a Jewish character according to a view that was popular in his era. However, when reading this play, an attentive reader may notice that Marlowe wanted to point out the moral decay of all society.

Another important influential playwright William Shakespeare can be discussed. It should be mentioned that during Shakespeare’s time, the atmosphere in Britain was still very antisemitic. Moreover, there was an incident that has strengthened the antisemitism, namely, the trial with Roderigo Lopez, Queen Elizabeth’s physician, a Jew that converted to Christianity. He was one of the most trusted courtiers. He allegedly attempted to help the Spain conquer the kingdom by poisoning the Queen, but he failed and was later executed for high treason.⁷³ Whether he was guilty is still unclear. One way or another, this trial helped to strengthen the unflattering picture of Jews as poisoners and murderers in minds of members of British society. Even Shakespeare was influenced with this anti-Jewish mood. For instance, in *Macbeth*, he used a “liver of blaspheming Jew”⁷⁴ as a main ingredient in poison, and in *Much Ado about Nothing*, one character says the following: “If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew”.⁷⁵

Shakespeare used negative connotations about Jews in many other plays, usually presented in insults. However, Jewish characters are absent in all of them. He was most likely inspired by Christopher Marlowe when he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, which is another crucial work that formed bias about the Jewish minority in England. The topic of this play is a conflict between Shylock, a Jewish usurer, and Christian merchant, Antonio, who is a protagonist of the story. However, with his insults and cruel words toward the Jew, Antonio is, rather, an example of Christian hypocrisy. The character of Shylock is an embodiment of stereotypes about Jews. He is a calculating, money-gathering usurer. He is asked to lend the

⁷¹ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 64.

⁷² Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 65.

⁷³ Peter Berek, “The Jew as Renaissance Man.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1998): 149-153.

⁷⁴ William Shakespeare, W.G. Clark, W.A. Wright, *Macbeth* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1871), 45.

⁷⁵ William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012), 30.

money to Antonio, who needs it for his friend Bassanio to enable him to marry a heiress, Portia. Shylock is a hated Jew, and he is filled with hate for Christians:

Shylock. I hate him for he is a Christian:
But more, for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

...

He hates our sacred nation;⁷⁶

However, he seizes the opportunity to take a revenge on one of the people who called him a dog and spat on him in the past:

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe:
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:⁷⁷

From these lines, the difference between Shylock and Barabbas is recognizable. Shakespeare's Jew is not so hideous or a murderer, so there is a certain change for the better. According to Phillipson, he is the most notable Shakespeare character. Moreover, he holds that Shakespeare created this character as "the incarnation of wickedness on the one hand, as the injured party seeking redress on the other".⁷⁸ Compared to Marlowe's Barabbas, Shylock is not a cruel by nature. He appears more like a human, a victim of people's cruelty and insults towards him for being a Jew. His relationship with his daughter, Jessica, resembles that of Barabbas and his daughter. He loves her, and then she betrays him by converting to Christianity because she hates her father and calls their house hell. However, in this case, he did not take her life. Moreover, he was predestined to become the usurer as other professions were unachievable for him, and he even was not able to choose a place to live. The expression "For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe", in which Shylock highlights the misfortune of

⁷⁶ William Shakespeare, A. W. Verity, *The Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge: The University press, 1931), 13.

⁷⁷ William Shakespeare, A. W. Verity, *The Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge: The University press, 1931), 14-15.

⁷⁸ Phillipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 34.

all Jews, should also be noticed. Going back to the plot, Shylock lends money on condition that Antonio returns it within 3 months with money or flesh. At this point, Shylock's beloved daughter is introduced. She is the only person he trusts, but she betrays him, leaves the house and marries a Christian. This brings Shylock great pain, which further hardens his heart. Consequently, getting revenge on Antonio is worth more to Shylock than money. When Portia offers to pay the debt, Shylock refuses because he wants his pound of flesh. However, at the end, he is outwitted with Portia and his property is confiscated by Antonio, who offers Shylock the possibility to live in his stolen house if he converts to Christianity. Whether Shakespeare's intention was to insult Jews is debatable because Shylock seems to be a victim of the shabby behaviour of Christians. A reader might be confused about which character is good and which is bad, one may feel compassion and then hatred as Shakespeare did not made the plot completely black and white. Calisch implies that some people believe that Shakespeare even intended to defend Jews,⁷⁹ but even if it was not his plan to do so, he strengthen the unflattering picture of Jews as bloodthirsty usurers, and this image settled in people's minds for three centuries. Particularly, it has to be repeated that there were legally no Jews in England or Spain during Shakespeare's or Marlowe's time. Jews were even exiled from all Spanish islands. Both Marlowe and Shakespeare created Jewish characters inspired by image and fantasy wrapped in generally known stereotypes and stories and implanted them in demanding environments, creating the most famous Jewish antagonists of all time. On the contrary, both also pointed out the fact that Christians preach water and drink wine. The main difference in writing between Shakespeare and Marlowe is that Shylock is more like a victim of a society than Barabbas.

The 18th century was a breaking point for displaying Jewish character.⁸⁰ It was the beginning of the Age of Reason, in which progress, logic and the rational began to suppress old-fashioned ideas about the world and people wanted to understand everything. In the new Enlightenment Era, some authors started to experiment with common truth, which could finally be challenged. Authors in France, such as Mirabeau and Gregorie, and Germany, such as Lessing, supported the idea of the emancipation of Jews in their works. There was a similar idea in England. However, it took a relatively longer time and more effort. At the beginning of second half of the 18th century, Barabbas and Shylock were still "the representative characters," claims David Philipson in his *The Jew in English fiction*.⁸¹ The first drama

⁷⁹ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 71.

⁸⁰ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 106.

⁸¹ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 55.

written in Britain in favour of Jews was *The Jew* by Richard Cumberland,⁸² which is examined in great detail later in the thesis. The author created the benevolent character Hebrew Sheva, who is not the antagonist of the story. His dramatic attempt was later imitated by several authors. For example, Charles Dibdin wrote *School for Prejudices*, Leman Rede came up with *The Skeleton Witness* and other authors created Jewish characters influenced by Sheva, and some of them recreated the famous Shakespearean drama. For instance, Talfourd wrote *The Merchant of Venice Preserved*. At the end of 18th century, Jewish literature even flourished, the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) was translated into English⁸³ and a book about Hebrew grammar was published. Moreover, even if prejudices and negative tales about Jews from the past still influence the attitudes of people towards Jews, the enormous power of the negative stereotypes about Jews in literature was gradually weakened.

The 19th century is considered to be the most cheerful period for Jews. It was a century of their emancipation in British society. Even if literature on the Jewish topic is not desired anymore, Jewish characters appear relatively often,⁸⁴ both positive one and negative ones. One example of a negative one is Fagin, who was created by Charles Dickens for the *Oliver Twist* story. He is another Jewish character based on prejudices. In this case, he is a leader of pickpockets in London. In Victorian England, the Jewish community had representatives in all social groups, including the criminal class. The author described the character as “a very old shriveled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair, he was dressed in greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare”.⁸⁵ This view is also the stereotypical description of Jewish appearance in many other novels. However, Fagin himself is not a Jew regarding his belief, he just has Jewish origin and, again, is nothing more than a wicked thief and murderer. It is probably not necessary to describe whole plot of *Oliver Twist* or analyse the Fagin. However, he is an example of Jewish stereotypes appearing in British literature, even in the 19th nearly-fully-emancipated century.

To conclude both parts of the theoretical chapter, Jewish presence and life were always tightly connected to the financial situation of the Crown and the British Kingdom. The everyday lives of Jews in England were not easy. Jews were not accepted by local inhabitants and were expelled. This animosity was probably caused by superstitions, gossip and accusations made by people and, undoubtedly, strengthened by literature. As a Philison

⁸² Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 107.

⁸³ Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, 301.

⁸⁴ Calisch, *The Jew in English literature*, 121.

⁸⁵ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Collector's library, 2003), 92.

claimed, “the stage is one of the pulses of the popular life”.⁸⁶ The ignorance of authors probably brought centuries of hate, incomprehension, fear and prejudices towards the Jewish minority. On the contrary, some authors tried to write differently and experimented with century-lasting prejudices. The period from 1655 to 1830 was an era of not only discrimination but also emancipation for the Jews. British people gradually reconsidered century-long prejudices against the Jewish communities by living with them. They learned to accept Jews as a humans little by little and not as enemies anymore. This slight progress can be also observed in the above-mentioned books, where complete negative picture of Jews in the *The Prioress's Tale* gradually change into the relatively less negative picture of Shakespeare's Jew, who is like a victim of bullying by Christians. This acceptance was likely caused by Enlightenment philosophy. As Bannet described in her essay, “Benevolence was the great Enlightenment virtue in eighteenth-century England, and public philanthropy the expression of it. Eighteenth-century Britons founded ‘hospitals’ for orphans, poor women lying in, magdalens, old soldiers”.⁸⁷ This implies that people became increasingly benevolent and sought reasonable explanations for everything, including Jewish nature. However, it was not an easy path. Antisemitism was so deep-set in England and British literature that it took more than a century, and antisemitism is still present today. Now that we understand where the stereotypes about Jews came from and what events influenced them, we can move on to the analysis of Richard Cumberland writings.

⁸⁶ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 57.

⁸⁷ Bannet “Cumberland's,” 84.

3 Richard Cumberland's writings

In this chapter, Cumberland's first literary attempts to work with Jewish stereotypes are introduced. The author used a different technique than other authors by going deep behind the characters, completing the background and working with a choice. Richard Cumberland's works are analysed in detail, moving from his first early books in which the Jewish characters are in the background to his most famous drama with a Jew as the main character.

3.1 Fashionable lover

Even if Richard Cumberland attracted audiences' attention as a playwright before in the sentimental comedy called *Fashionable Lover* or *The Faithful Highlander*, he introduced his first Jewish character. The idea for this play was suggested to Cumberland at a gathering at the British Coffee House, and it differs from Cumberland's later attempts at displaying Jewish characters. In this comedy, Cumberland focuses less on the Jewish character, and places him in the background. Thus, the Jewish character of Naphtali is not the most significant character. However, the Jewish usurer does slightly influence the story through his deeds. Even though Naphtali is not the most significant of Cumberland's Jewish characters, it is important to mention him because it helps to create a complete picture of Jewishness in Cumberland's writing.

The story is about a young orphan named Augusta Aubrey who is trapped with Bridgemore's aristocrat family and is later banished from the house because Lord Abberville lusts for her. The Scottish servant, Colin Macleod, who represents the "defended minority" in this play, helps Augusta and saves her from Lord Abberville's impure intentions, allowing her to marry Tyrell, her secret lover. In the end, Augusta reunites with her long-lost father and finds out that Bridgemore, together with the Jewish usurer, falsified the documents stating that he was her guardian and the owner of the house. August is the lawful owner.

The character of Naphtali appears in Acts IV and V, where Lord Abbeville asks him to lend him some money to pay his gambling debt. Louis Newman describes the character as a "little ugly fellow with a broken accent-rather a rogue".⁸⁸ This description corresponds with the usual description of Jewish appearance at that time. Moreover, Naphtali's behaviour is Shylock-like. He helps Bridgemore, one of the main villains in the play, create false bills; even though Naphtali is not the ringleader, he has no problem falsifying the documents that cause Augusta's problems in exchange for a bribe. A good example of Naphtali's nature is the following line from Act V. Scene I., where he says, "I work as others; - I do nothing below

⁸⁸ Louis I. Newman, *Richard Cumberland: Critic and Friend of the Jews* (New York: Bloch, 1919), 16.

market-price.”⁸⁹ According to Newman, Cumberland may have later regretted creating Naphthali because he does not mentioned the character in his *Memoirs*.⁹⁰

The main reason for which Cumberland wrote this drama was to surpass his most famous drama, *The West Indian*. Unfortunately, his previous success was not overcome. Like his previous drama, the main purpose of this sentimental comedy was to reform public opinion. In this case, the author attempted to challenge the popular conceptions of Scotchmen.⁹¹

Challenging prejudices and traditional conceptions is typical of Cumberland’s writing style. His reasons and intentions are explained in his *Memoirs*:

When I began therefore, as at this time, to write for the stage, my ambition was to aim at writing something that might be lasting and outlive me;...I perceived that I had fallen upon a time, when great eccentricity of character was pretty nearly gone by, but still I fancied there was an opening for some originality, and an opportunity for shewing at least my good will to mankind, if I introduced the characters of persons, who had been usually exhibited on the stage, as the butts for ridicule and abuse, and endeavoured to present them in such lights, as might tend to reconcile the world to them, and them to the world.⁹²

The author was obviously interested in defending minorities who were seen as laughing stocks.

In most of his writing, he attempts to show minorities in a different light. In each of Cumberland’s works, there is a misunderstood and ridiculed character who is usually a representative of a minority. Cumberland tries to convince the reader or the audience to put themselves in the character’s position, thereby bringing understanding and, perhaps, sympathy, which helps to fight racial biases. However, this bias challenge did not concern the Jewish minority yet. Consequently, his first Jewish character is displayed according to traditional conceptions about this race, and thus, it is just another character of a Jewish usurer.

3.2 The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape to Inquisition Madrid

In addition to writing dramas, Cumberland wrote essays, which he later gathered and published in a collection of essays called *The Observer: Being a Collection of Moral, Literary and Familiar Essays*.⁹³ One of them was the short tale *The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape from the Inquisition Madrid*. The main character, a Jewish doctor named Nicholas, experiences bullying during the Spanish Inquisition. Later, he is asked to poison a lady. In

⁸⁹ Richard Cumberland, *The fashionable lover* (London: J.Bell, 1793), 87.

⁹⁰ Newman, *Richard Cumberland*, 16.

⁹¹ Williams, *Richard Cumberland*, 102.

⁹² Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*, vol. 1, (London: A.Lackington, 1807), 274.

⁹³ Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 1:361.

this story, the main character is Jewish. While Nicholas never explicitly says that he is Jewish, he is treated as such. In this short story, as in many others, Cumberland focuses on the possibility of choice.

In this story, the author introduces Nicholas, a Portuguese Jewish barber and surgeon living in Madrid. One day, he is in a hurry because a woman in the city needs his help. This time, Cumberland did not create a usurer, but the character of a physician, which was another typical occupation for Jews. On his way to help the ill lady, his stubborn mule decides to take an alternate path to the city. To persuade the mule to go another way, he cudgels it. Unfortunately, a group of people notice Nicholas doing this, and the following day, he receives an order to go see the inquisitors. However, Nicholas's Jewish identity is secret, as we learn in the following line: "There was however another thing, which a stouter heart than Nicholas's.—He was a Jew.—It was a secret to all the world but Nicholas, and Nicholas's conscience did not just then urge him to reveal it; he now began to overhaul the inventory of his personals about him, and with some satisfaction".⁹⁴ Therefore, Nicholas is afraid that the inquisitors will find out. Nicholas is given an iron collar and is torched for being a blasphemer. Then he is tried in court, which seems to be an overly-serious consequence for beating the mule. However, Nicholas has a letter in his pocket that mentions Donna Leonora. One of the inquisitors stops the trial and tells Nicholas to follow him. He gives Nicholas a poisonous vial that he claims will cure Lady Leonora. Nicholas does not believe that the substance in the vial is a cure, so he escapes with the crew of a British ship. On his way, he meets Donna Leonora's husband. With the captain of the ship, Nicholas persuades him not to go back to Spain because the inquisitors want him dead. After a while, the husband receives a letter from Leonora, that says she is dying from being poisoned by the Inquisitor General. They all leave for England, where they are free. Nicholas can finally stop hiding his religious beliefs.

The tale appeared so "Spanish" that some of the reviewers accused Cumberland of plagiarism. He responded as follows to this accusation:

I have been suspected of taking stories out of Spanish authors, and weaving them into some of these essays as my own without acknowledging the plagiarism...To this I answer with the most solemn appeal to truth and honor, that I am indebted to no author whatever, Spanish or other, for a single hint, idea or suggestion of an incident in the story of Pedrosa...I collected on the spot, is a mere fiction to give an air of credibility

⁹⁴ Richard Cumberland, *The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape from the Inquisition Madrid* (Glasgow: J. & M. Robertson, 1799), 5.

and honor to the tale: the whole, without exception of a syllable, is absolute and entire invention.⁹⁵

The History of Nicholas Pedrosa was authentic because of Cumberland's diplomatic visit to Spain in 1780.⁹⁶ During this visit, he experienced the tension between the Jews and the Inquisition first-hand. In Cumberland's memoirs, he mentions that he met many Jews who were conforming to the Christians' lifestyle so that they could live there. However, they secretly practised Judaism. Cumberland gained comprehensive knowledge about the Jewish minority during this trip, and that knowledge influenced the way he portrayed the Jewish characters in his later writings. Cumberland focus on choice. The character of Nicholas was Cumberland's second Jewish character, and compared to his first one, Napthali, the author made developments in displaying Jewish characters. The focus of the story is not Nicholas's Jewishness. Rather, it is the Spanish Inquisition and its power over people in Madrid. It can be believed that Cumberland, as well as Shakespeare and Marlowe, intended to point out that there were also villains among the Christians. In this case the author introduced inquisitors and showed that they had great power over all of Spain. Moreover, even if Nicholas's religion does not seem important here, it was the first time Cumberland showed interest in the struggles of the Jewish community.

3.3 The Jew of Mogadore

In this comic opera with music, the author placed a Jewish character in a unique, challenging and exotic environment. Nadab, the Jew living among Muslims, is still endangered because of the emperor's belief that Jews cause all troubles. The tension between Jews and Muslims is obvious, such as in Act I, when one of the Jew's servants says the following to his master: "The Emperor Muley Ishmael has gibbeted two hundred Jew to pacify the prophet, because he has sent no rain these forty weeks".⁹⁷ Therefore, the main character, Jew Nadab, has the undoubtedly uneasy task of living there. However, despite being persecuted, he does not lose his faith and charity. Cumberland situates the Jewish character in an exotic Oriental setting, where he is surrounded by Muslims. How can the inhospitable environment possibly influence the Jewish character?

At the beginning of this story, Arabs speak about selling slaves from a wrecked ship. The captain starts speaking with Abdullah, trying to say that travellers from the wrecked ship are not their enemies. The sheikh states that they wrecked on his shore, so they are his

⁹⁵ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*, vol. 2, (London: A.Lackington, 1806), 201-2.

⁹⁶ Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 1:416.

⁹⁷ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore: A Comic Opera, in Three Acts* (London, S. Tipper, 1808), 17.

people's slaves. The Arabs are not displayed as friendly; Cumberland shows them as cruel, heartless creatures. In addition to Nadab, there is another Jewish character, Palti. Palti is the owner of the wrecked ship. He cannot return the money Nadab lent him because his ship was wrecked. Nadab first refers to Palti as "an honest Israelite, innocent as a lamb."⁹⁸ However, later, he adds, "I should be sorry to trust him with a sight of my monies".⁹⁹ In my opinion, the author used the phrase "innocent as lamb" on purpose. It is probably taken from Marlow's *The Jew of Malta*, in which Barabbas says it in a speech. Even though Nadab knows that Palti is not a flawless person, he is still disappointed when he finds out that Palti is trading slaves. Later, in Act II, Palti even tries to bribe Nadab's servant Rooney to betray his master and claims that the wrecked ship was Nadab's. Nadab finds out, but instead of delivering Palti to the emperor for justice, he says, "Ah, Palti, Palti, perjury is no jest, and piracy is no compliment... let us be perfect strangers, even in the synagogue—farewell!"¹⁰⁰ Despite being disappointed, he pleads for Palti's pardon before Emperor Selim. This lesson changes Palti into a generous and kind person who is willing to sacrifice his life to save Nadab during the invasion of enemies at the end of a story. This change may appear to be too simple, but it is Cumberland's way of showing everyone's opportunity to make things right and change destiny. Once again, the author works with stereotypes about the Jewish population and creates a Jewish character who only cares about money. However, he emphasises the possibility of choice.

The opera also has a Christian woman named Mammora. She is a servant, and she sings about her Jewish master, Nadab:

Ah, where is the pride
Of the gem, if you hide
Its elegant form from our sight?
But see it display'd
On the beautiful maid,
It shines, and we gaze with delight.
Gentle friend, I atn thy- slave,
Send me hence, and set me free,
More than that I do not crave,

⁹⁸ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore: A Comic Opera, in Three Acts* (London, S. Tipper, 1808), 14.

⁹⁹ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 61.

More thou can'st not do for me.¹⁰¹

These lines show that Mammora cares about her master. He bought her and saved her from slavery, so she considers him to be a kind and gentle person. However, she does seek complete freedom. Upon a close look at the main character, Nadab, we can see that this character embodies all Jewish stereotypes connected to the love of money. When Nadab sings, he mentions “monies” as his comforters. He says, “Well, honest Nadab, amidst all thy sorrows, thou hast one comfort—monies; yes, thy monies are thy comforters; thou hast no son, no daughter... but thou bast monies, Nadab, and that makes my heart so merry”.¹⁰² However, there is a slight deviation from Shylock and Barabbas. Nadab claims that he is not using them for himself, but for the good of other people:

It gives the sweet pow'r to impart
What fortune denies to the brave,
It lightens the care-loaded heart,
And redeems the disconsolate slave.
My money-bags safe and secure,
I hoard, that the poor may partake,
Reproach and contempt I endure,
And starve for humanity's sake.
Let them freely enjoy their abuse,
And call me a miserly elf;
I confess it—but 'tis for their use
I'm a miser—and not for myself’.

In fact, he buys slaves and sets them free. He also saves Jovanni, the Sicilian captain of a wrecked ship. That is another thing that Nadab has in common with Barabbas, who also bought a slave. However, the difference is that he used him for his plan and killed him at the end. Within the lines above, Cumberland illustrates Nadab's temper. He uses the image of a rich Jew, but the difference is that Nadab cares about others and uses his money to do good. Another example of Nadab's pure character is the line, “My prince, old Nadab's heart is at your feet. From Muly Ishmael I will hide my monies, and rather leave them buried in the earth, nay die the death, than give them up to him; but if you want me in a noble cause, and none but such I'm sure you will abet, to the last ducat I am Selim's banker”.¹⁰³ Apparently,

¹⁰¹ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 12.

¹⁰² Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 13.

¹⁰³ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 34.

Nadab refuses to lend money because it would be used in villainous ways. Instead, he offers his fortune to the emperor's son, Selim, who wants to bring a peace to their land. At the end of the story, Nadab frees all his servants and sends them to England, which he describes as "the asylum of the whole suffering world".¹⁰⁴ With these words, the author emphasises that enlightened England is much more tolerant than other countries.

Even if the main idea was to emphasise the struggle of the minorities and contribute to pro-Jewish literature, the opera was not as successful as his previous comedy, *The Jew*. According to Newman, the English stage was flooded with plays from the Oriental environment at that time.¹⁰⁵ That might have been why the play was unsuccessful. Furthermore, the opera was negatively reviewed by critics. For example, the *The London Examiner* of May 8, 1808 read, "Upon the whole, the lovers of literature will always remember with respect the earlier classical taste of Mr. CUMBERLAND, but they cannot help lamenting that his pen still outlives his genius. If this tenaciousness of quill proceeds from old age",¹⁰⁶ and the author did not attract either audience's attention because the musical parts required actors who were gifted in singing. After a few performances, it gradually disappeared.

Despite being bullied and hated, Nadab does not lose his faith and charity, and he uses his money for good things. The difference can be observed between the character of Nadab and other Jewish characters, such as Shakespeare's Shylock. Both characters are placed in challenging environments, treated badly and threatened by members of other religious groups. Thus, it can be said that they have the same destiny. However, when Shylock is given an opportunity to show his mercy and forgive Antonio and other Christians, he refuses to do so, and that is the main difference between Cumberland's characters and the character created by other authors. In this case, Nadab chooses to be an antagonist, unlike the other Jewish characters from classics. The same thing applies to Selim, the Arab prince, who is brought up to be a cruel and strict ruler, but he decides to be better than his father. Cumberland may imply that even if a person is predestined to behave in some specific manner and lives in an environment that forces him to only care about himself, they can choose whether to be good or bad. The author also plays with the clash and contrast of three cultures: Muslim, Christian and Jewish. Unfortunately, Cumberland wrote *The Jew of Mogadore* after he has already finished his *Memoirs*. Thus, there is no commentary on the opera from the author. Nadab

¹⁰⁴ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 75.

¹⁰⁵ Newman, *Richard Cumberland*, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Williams, *Richard Cumberland*, 294.

resembles Sheva, the main character in Cumberland's *The Jew*, in many ways. Cumberland likely wanted to repeat the success of his previous play. As for *The Jew*, the main motives of this comic opera are minorities, discrimination and the fight against predestination. These motives are visible in Nadab's following line: "Children, you see there is a power above us, and whether we be Christians, Mussulman or Jew, a good man's prayer will find its way to Heaven".¹⁰⁷ This is a main difference between Cumberland's style of displaying Jewish characters compared to that of Shakespeare and Marlow. Shakespeare and Marlow mainly pointed out negative things about certain minorities, even if they did not intend to offend them, while Cumberland has his own way of defending them, by creating a highly positive picture of them.

¹⁰⁷ Cumberland, *The Jew of Mogadore*, 73.

4 Cumberland's Jew

When going through the Richard Cumberland works, one can notice that the author gradually moves the Jewish characters to the front line of the story. That is why Cumberland's last and the most significant book, *The Jew*, is the most noted regarding the topic of Jewishness. *The Jew* is certainly his most thoughtful attempt to challenge biases about the Jewish minority, using deep-seated prejudices and stereotypes about this race. Before writing *The Jew*, Cumberland published a similar story about a benevolent Jew in his collection of essays called *The Observer: Being a Collection of Moral, Literary and Familiar Essays*. The name of the main character is different, but the short story serves as a template for Sheva. *The Jew* is remarkable as one of the first plays in the canon of English drama that depicts a Jewish moneylender as the main character and stage hero. How can one possibly force an audience to think about the absurdity of prejudices? Richard Cumberland did so in a sophisticated way. He created a story about two young people in love who cannot be together because they come from different classes. Moreover, the woman does not have a substantial dowry that would enable her to marry her lover. Moreover, Cumberland added a Jewish broker character to this unhappy setting to create a denouement. The author, again, plays with prejudices and shows the other side of the coin. Sheva describes his sorrows about being a Jew, the discrimination people show him and the ever-present insults that should cause bitterness in Sheva's heart.

4.1 Abraham Abrahams

It is generally believed that the character of the Jewish fellow Abraham Abrahams was a template, or at least a source of inspiration, for Cumberland's Sheva in *The Jew*. The character of Abraham Abrahams first appears in *Observer* vol. XXVI, no.38 as the author of a letter sent to Cumberland. It is not quite clear whether Mr. Abrahams really existed and was simply an instrument of Cumberland's intention. Newman claims that the character could have been inspired by some of the many Jews Cumberland met during his diplomatic career. He points out the names of Abraham Israel Ricardo and John Abrahams, whose names are similar to the name of the character.¹⁰⁸ Cumberland writes about Mr. Abrahams: "I take credit to myself for the character Abraham Abrahams, I wrote it upon principle, thinking it high time that something should be done for a persecuted race",¹⁰⁹ which may imply that the character is certainly made up.

¹⁰⁸ Newman, *Richard Cumberland*, 46.

¹⁰⁹ Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 2:202.

At the beginning of the Essay *no. 38*, Cumberland informs the reader about the persecution of the Jewish nation. Later, he writes about a letter he allegedly received. In the letter, Mr. Abrahams complains that he cannot fulfil the deepest wish of his wife to visit a theatre because there was always a problem with discrimination when he attended the theatre himself:

You must know, Sir, I am a Jew, and probably have that national cast of countenance, which a people so separate and unmixed may well be supposed to have: the consequence of this is, that I no sooner enter a playhouse, than I find all eyes turned upon me, if this were the worst, I would strive to put as good a face upon it as I could; but this is sure to be followed up with a thousand scurrilities, which I should blush to repeat, and which I cannot think of subjecting my wife to hear...—*Smoke the Jew!*—*Smoke the cunning little Isaac!*—*Throw him over*, says another, *hand over the smutch!*—*Out with Shylock*, cries a third, *out with the pound of man's flesh.*¹¹⁰

After being publicly humiliated, Mr. Abrahams is forced to leave theatre while being hit with rotten apples. It should be noted that many of the insults to Mr. Abraham originate from famous dramas, confirming Philipson's theory "that the influence of these productions is shaping the popular conception about the Jew", thus leaving a deep and lasting impression on "the mind of a reader".¹¹¹ Namely "Out with Shylock" comes from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and "the cunning little Isaac" may be inspired by Richard B. Sheridan's drama, *The Duenna*. The author of the letter probably also wanted to emphasise the importance of the playwrights who strongly influenced the common attitude towards the Jewish population. His intention is further clarified in the postscript of the letter, where Abrahams suggests that if drama loaded with prejudices about Jews can influence people's minds in an unhealthy way, then somebody should try the opposite and write a pro-Jewish play. Cumberland's response to the letter mentions a common, even the Biblically-present truth—that everyone is equal and should be treated in the same way. Moreover, he quotes Act III of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, where *Shylock* says, "Hath not a Jew 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 summer and winter, as a Christian is?"¹¹² This quotation is followed by a description of Cumberland's pity for the foolishness and ignorance of the British nation. However, he believes that it is just a matter of disinformation and that it can be fixed by showing the other side of the story. His attempt to challenge prejudices started with a few other short stories about Abrahams that were published in *The Observer*. In the short story entitled *Ned Drowsy*, Ned is a character of

¹¹⁰ Rob Lynam, *The British Essayists, Observer. Vol. XXVI-XXVII* (London: J. F. Dove, 1827), 194.

¹¹¹ Philipson, *The Jew in English fiction*, 5.

¹¹² Rob Lynam, *The British Essayists, Observer. Vol. XXVI-XXVII* (London: J. F. Dove, 1827), 196.

Abrahams developed. He is described as a “little swarthy old man with short gray hair and whimsically dressed; having on a dark brown coat with a tarnished gold edging, black figured velvet waist-coat, and breeches of scarlet cloth with long gold knee bands, dangling down a pair of black silk stocking”,¹¹³ and as a charitable man who resolves the situation. Once again, Cumberland includes his experience from Spain and makes Mr. Abraham a refugee from Spain who finds shelter in England. Later, the author inferred that a drama would have had a stronger impact on audience’s feelings than the essay. At this point, Cumberland decides to provide a little enlightenment about the Jewish minority with his sentimental comedy and creates “characters whose words and actions are carefully designed to motivate members of the audience to change their behaviour in the theatre and on a daily basis”.¹¹⁴

The character of Abraham Abrahams served as a tool to change the common conception about Israelites entrenched deep in people minds. Cumberland illustrates the feeling of Jews to fill readers with compassion, and then he allows the Jewish man to show his kindness and solve the problem to strengthen readers’ feelings of delight. Moreover, the postscript of the letter mentioned at the beginning of this section was likely author’s way of justifying the creation of his masterpiece—*The Jew*.

4.2 The Jew

In this section, I analyse Cumberland’s most significant piece, the comedy entitled *The Jew*. The play opened at Drury Lane Theatre in 1794. According to James Boaden, it was Cumberland’s longest-living masterpiece, and it became popular all over the islands.¹¹⁵ The play was so successful that it spawned several editions, and it has been repeatedly performed in in London, Dublin, Germany, Vienna, Stuttgart, Paris and even in Philadelphia, Boston, Virginia, Charleston and South Carolina. It has also been translated into several other languages,¹¹⁶ such as Hebrew. After creating the character of Abraham Abrahams, Cumberland decided to use him as a template for this drama, making a few changes to his life story. He also placed the character in a story about forbidden love, thereby strengthening his impact on audiences’ emotions.

¹¹³ Lynam, *Observer*, 209.

¹¹⁴ Jean I. Marsden. “Richard Cumberland’s *The Jew and the Benevolence of the Audience: Performance and Religious Tolerance*.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48, no. 4 (2015): 463.

¹¹⁵ James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.* (Philadelphia: Robert H. Smali, 1825), 329.

¹¹⁶ Bannet “Cumberland’s,” 84.

Whether the main character of *The Jew*, Sheva, was inspired by Abraham Abrahams or by Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* or as an attempt to reverse the character of Shylock can be speculated about. Cumberland was always interested in defending minorities and victims of bias. He explains the following in his memoirs:

I thereupon looked into society for the purpose of discovering such as were the victims of its national, professional or religious prejudices; in short for those suffering characters, which stood in need of an advocate, and out of these I meditated to select and form heroes for my future dramas, of which I would study to make such favourable and reconciliatory delineations, as might incline the spectators to look upon them with pity, and receive them into their good opinion and esteem.¹¹⁷

Therefore, *The Jew* may be just another one of Cumberland's attempts to do something for a misunderstood minority. In the prologue, the author describes the comedy as a "school for prejudice" and describes his attempt to change the general opinion about Jews held by British society with his sentimental moral play.¹¹⁸

Frederick Bertram, the son of Sir Stephen Bertram, argues with his father about his friend, Charles Ratcliffe. Sir Bertram wants to dismiss Charles from his company because Frederick loves Charles's sister, Eliza, who is fortuneless. Thus, it is not appropriate for her to marry Frederick, the wealthy son of a powerful British merchant. However, a secret wedding has already taken place. At this point, Sheva appears for the first time. Frederick describes him as follows: "Hold!—Here comes one that supersedes all other visitors—old Sheva, the rich Jew, the merest muckworm in the city of London. How the old fellow casts about for prodigals to snap at I'll throw him out a bait for sport".¹¹⁹ Obviously, Frederick does not like him. He is influenced by prejudices, believing that Sheva is a rich Jewish usurer who cares only about his money. However, Charles does not take these stereotypes in his consideration and claims that Sheva does not have to be a villain just because he is a Jew: "I contemplate them with pity... he is as much in poverty as I am, only it is poverty of another species".¹²⁰ Cumberland uses the dialogue between Frederick and Charles to show the clash between the old-fashioned, deep-seated attitude of prejudice and the new, open and enlightened approach to the unknown. Cumberland uses self-pity, another tool of sentimental comedies, to force the audience to feel sympathy for the Jewish character. Sheva sorrowfully describes being Jewish as a curse: "I live sparingly and labour hard, therefore I am called a miser—I cannot help it—

¹¹⁷ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 1:274.

¹¹⁸ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew performed on theatre royal, Drury Lane*, vol. 6, (London: C. Dilly, MDCCXCVII), prologue.

¹¹⁹ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew or the Benevolent Hebrew* (Dublin: T. M'Donnel, 1794), 8.

¹²⁰ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew or the Benevolent Hebrew* (Dublin: T. M'Donnel, 1794), 8.

an uncharitable dog—I must endure it—a bloodsucker, an extortioner, a Shylock”.¹²¹ He claims that the Jewish minority has no home in the world and that people ridicule them and treat them with barely-disguised contempt. Sheva’s self-pitying monologue ends with a rhetorical question: “How can you expect us to show kindness. When we receive none”.¹²² With this statement, the author likely intends to force the audience to feel pity. Even though Frederick does not like Sheva, he notices his sympathy for Charles. Because Frederick considers Sheva to be a Jewish usurer, he asks him to help Charles with his family’s upcoming financial problems after Charles is made redundant. When Charles is fired by Sir Stephen Bertram, being irritated with rich Christian merchant behaviour, he says the following to Sheva: “I’ll call you a Christian then, and this proud merchant, Jew”,¹²³ and Sheva thanks him for the compliment.

In Act II, a second Jewish character is introduced. Frederick’s servant, Jabal, constantly complains that he is hungry and that his master wants to starve him to death. However, after listening behind the door during Frederick’s visit, he realises that his master is not a villain as he assumed: “he is no Hebrew, no more a Jew than Julius Caesar; for, to my certain knowledge, he gives away his money by handfuls to the consumers of hog’s flesh”.¹²⁴ Sheva invites Charles to his house. Meanwhile, Frederick goes to Sheva’s house and, in another room, reveals to Sheva that he has secretly wed Charles’s sister, Eliza, who is too poor to be approved by Frederick’s father, Sir Bertram. Hearing that, Sheva gives him money without hesitation, and Frederick is astonished that the Jew does not expect to see them ever again; he only hopes that the money will be used for good.

When Charles finds out about Frederick and Eliza’s marriage, he is furious. The situation becomes even more complicated when Sir Bertram hears whispers that Sheva has lent money to his son, Frederick. However, he does not trust the rumours; he claims that he is too much of a Jew to help. Sheva shows up at his apartment and confirms that he did give money to Frederick. Sir Bertram thinks that Sheva has a hidden agenda and confronts him: “Wretch, miser, usurer! you never yet let loose a single guinea from your gripe, but with a view of doubling it at the return. I know what you are”.¹²⁵ He accuses Sheva of being a miser, but he calms down when Sheva shows him papers stating that he owes Eliza Ratcliffe-

¹²¹ Cumberland, *The Jew*, 9.

¹²² Cumberland, *The Jew*, 10.

¹²³ Cumberland, *The Jew*, 13.

¹²⁴ Cumberland, *The Jew*, 25.

¹²⁵ Cumberland, *The Jew*, 35.

Bertram ten thousand pounds for her fortune. Even though Sir Bertram is not against the marriage anymore, he still doubts that the money came from Sheva.

In Act IV, Cumberland shows Sheva's kindness towards his servants. Even though Jabal listens at Sheva's doors and reveals the secret about the money to everybody, Sheva forgives him and keeps him as a servant. Another important happening in this act is the visit from Mrs. Goodinson, Sheva's friend. She offers the astonishing fact that old Mrs. Redcliffe's dead husband saved Sheva's life from the inquisition of Cadiz. This moment is another reference to the author's life when he visited Spain as a diplomat and experienced the tension between Jews and the Spanish Inquisition. Meanwhile, Charles, Frederick, and Eliza argue. Consequently, Charles and Frederick agree to sword fight later in the day, but when Frederick hurts Charles, they realise that they love each other and stop fighting. Sir Bertram meets Eliza, and he likes her a lot, even though she claimed she was poor and had no knowledge of having money, as Sheva claimed before. In the final scene, Sheva reveals the fact about Mr., Ratcliffe saving his life in Cadiz. As a thank-you, he makes a will stating that Charles Ratcliffe is his heir: "I leave it to a charitable heir, and build my hospital in the human heart".¹²⁶ Sheva's final statement that he will leave all his possession to the next generation, making the most generous gesture.

4.3 Sheva, the Benevolent

According to many critics, Sheva is one of the most impressive and influential Jewish characters and the complete antithesis of Shylock, who was the pattern for making a Jewish character until Cumberland's time. It might be said that *The Jew* is a reversal of *The Merchant of Venice*. The roles of the merchant and the Jew are completely switched. Also, both Antonio and Sheva want to help the young couple. Sheva's nature is described as benevolent, kind and generous. However, most of his speech is about him feeling sorry for himself. He calls himself "poor", "defenceless", "old Jew", "Jewish dog", "imp of Beelzebub" and "usurer". The author wanted to emphasise Sheva's misery, so he inserted self-piteous moans in nearly all of Sheva's lines. In some passages, it may seem as though the author is exaggerating, but this was necessary to create the opposite picture of the Jewish characters created by Shakespeare and Marlow; they did the same thing in a negative way and created overly-wicked characters. Marsden claims that Cumberland intended to display the character of Sheva the Jew as authentically as possible. However, there was a difference in the way he

¹²⁶ Cumberland, *The Jew*, 60.

behaved to gain the audience's acceptance.¹²⁷ The description of Sheva's appearance is non-existent in the edition of *The Jew* used for this thesis. There are just a few mentions that he is old has a grey hair and beard and, as a Jew, looks like a miser. Despite all the offences Sheva receives from others, he is a good person who cares more about the good of other people than about his own. Contrastingly, Shylock, who shares a similar destiny as Sheva, focuses on his revenge on people who vilified him. Sheva is generous but modest and claims that he has "monies" only so that he can give them to people who need than more than he does.

Even though there are more characters than just Sheva, he is a central figure. The other characters "introduced exclusive of the Jew are insignificant or merely foils to him",¹²⁸ as Elizabeth Inchbald notes in her remarks on the play. Sheva is not the only Jewish character in this comedy. There is also the character of Jabal, the always-hungry servant, who constantly complains about being hungry. He adds amusement to the story and resembles Truffaldino from *The Servant of Two Masters* in his temper. According to Marsden, he "enhance the overall impact of the play" by providing laughter.¹²⁹

Each character who gets to know Sheva highlights his kindness. The characters who believes that Sheva is a miser gradually changes their mind after witnessing his generosity. His role in this story slightly resembles that of a *Deus ex machina* in ancient drama because every time he appears on the stage, he resolves the situations and comes up with a solution.

The author was not only challenging prejudices against Jews but also questioning the common opinion that "Christian man" means "good man". As a complete opposite to Sheva, the author created the character of Sir Bertram, who is a rich British merchant and Orthodox Christian man who considers money to be the top priority. Cumberland emphasises that whether a deed is good or bad is not determined by one's religion or roots but by demonstrating that one has the courage to do the right thing without expecting something in return.

4.4 Impact of the Play

The fact that the play was received favourably is proof that times of blind prejudice were about to change. In an earlier time, it would not have been possible to expect a positive reaction from the audience. However, in the second half of the 18th century, people had much more tolerance of others due to the ubiquitous Enlightenment philosophy. *The Jew* upholds

¹²⁷ Marsden, "Richard Cumberland's *The Jew*", 466.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Inchbald, *The British Theatre: Or, A Collection of Plays, which are Acted at the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, and Lyceum*, vol. XI, *The Jew* (London: Hurst, Robinson, 1824), 4.

¹²⁹ Marsden, "Richard Cumberland's *The Jew*," 471.

the Enlightenment ideas of toleration and benevolence. Therefore, it is clear that the author intended to resolve the tension between the Jews and British society. In Cumberland's *Memoirs*, he agreed: "The benevolence of the audience assisted me in rescuing a forlorn and persecuted character, which, till then, had only been brought upon the stage for the unmanly purpose of being made a spectacle of contempt and a butt for ridicule. In the success of this comedy, I felt, of course, a greater gratification than I had ever felt before on a like occasion".¹³⁰ He emphasized the benevolence of the audience because he knew that if the play had not been published in the Age of Reason, then it would have never been accepted by such an orthodox audience.

Critics all over the world praised Cumberland's masterpiece. Marsden reports that American critics labelled *The Jew* as both a comedy and a tragedy. It is loaded with fun as well as touches the heart. It was an enormous success with audiences, and such a positive reaction shows that people the United States were more tolerant than those in Britain.¹³¹ However, the play also had a positive reception in Britain. For example, Mudford stated, "though I do not believe that the notions of my countrymen have been much softened by this comedy, or by the character of Abraham Abrahams in the Observer, yet every praise must be conceded to the author's intention".¹³² The play achieved such success that inspired many other authors. Specifically, the character of Sheva was later used as a template.¹³³ Mr. Williams collected several reviews in his book *Richard Cumberland, His Life and Dramatic Works*. They mainly came from magazines. For example, a writer for *The Analytical Review for December* appreciated Cumberland's effort "to rescue an injured and persecuted race of men from the general reproach which has fallen upon them" by creating the protagonist Jewish character of Sheva.¹³⁴ Other reviewers from *May Universal Magazine* and *The Monthly Review for February* appreciated Cumberland's endeavour to do something for a persecuted race.

Even though critics and British audiences complimented Cumberland's play, he complained that he was never appreciated by any Jew for his effort to enhance understanding of the Jewish minority. In his memoirs, he expresses his disappointment as follows:

The public prints gave the Jews credit for their sensibility in acknowledging my well-intended service; my friends gave me joy of honorary presents [...]. I will speak plainly

¹³⁰ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*, vol.2, (London: A.Lackington, 1806), 279.

¹³¹ Marsden, "Richard Cumberland's *The Jew*," 473.

¹³² William Mudford. *The Critical examination of the writings of Richard Cumberland*, vol. II (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1812), 549.

¹³³ Newman, *Richard Cumberland*, 56.

¹³⁴ Williams, *Richard Cumberland*, 232.

on the point. I do most heartily wish they had flattered me with some token, however small, of which I could have said, this is a tribute to my philanthropy [...], but not a word from the lips, not a line did I ever receive from the pen of any Jew, though I have found myself in company with many of their nation;¹³⁵

However, Louis Zangwill later expressed his gratitude for Richard Cumberland in his “Richard Cumberland Centenary Memorial Paper”. He appreciated the author’s determination to defend justice and expresses gratitude for giving the Jewish minority the ability to integrate into British society. He added, “Cumberland’s effort on our behalf have passed into Jewish history, and will not soon be forgotten”.¹³⁶

In her article about Richard Cumberland’s comedy, *The Jew*, Jean I. Marsden wrote that the play served as a moral teacher for the British.¹³⁷ The main purpose of the play is to make the audience feel sorry for the Jewish character and, consequently, increase understanding of the Jewish minority. That was exactly the aim of the author, as previously noted. Cumberland wanted to do something for a persecuted race and tried his best to do so. Whether he succeeded or not is debatable. It cannot be said that he changed bias immediately, but he made a significant contribution to pro-Jewish literature. It is certain that he is now known as the author who revolted against antisemitic prejudices. *The Jew* “represented a revolution in the representation of Jewish identity on the English stage”, claims Michael Ragussis.¹³⁸

To conclude, reading this drama, one also receives a moral lesson, even nowadays. Richard Cumberland wanted to show the reader that everyone can decide which path to take. Some critics appreciate Cumberland’s effort to create a different image of a Jew. However, some argue that he is exaggerating and that he made Sheva too “non-Jewish”. Perhaps, it was necessary for creating the opposite picture than Shakespeare and Marlow, who did the same thing in a negative way and created overly-wicked Jewish characters. Whether he succeed is disputable. It cannot be said that he immediately changed bias, but he made a significant contribution to pro-Jewish literature. One can only speculate about the actual impact the play had on people. However, many people appreciate Cumberland’s effort to make something for a persecuted race, and exaggerating was possibly the only way to change people’s minds.

¹³⁵ Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 2:202-203.

¹³⁶ The Jewish Historical Society of England, *Transactions* 6 (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1915), 169-70.

¹³⁷ Marsden, “Richard Cumberland’s *The Jew*,” 457.

¹³⁸ Michael Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation: Jews and other Outlandish Englishmen in Georgian Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 79.

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis aimed to map the representation and portrayal of Jewishness in Richard Cumberland's writing. By analysing each of his writings this thesis examined the difference between the author's Jewish characters and the general stereotype of Jews in English literature, represented by Shylock, Fagin and Barabbas. An analysis of the author's technique was conducted in two dimensions. The first one was focused on the detailed analysis of his books, starting with the background of the story, continuing to the plot with a main focus on the Jewish character and his or her deeds, manners, interactions with surroundings and the overall picture. The second involved contrasting Cumberland's characters with the most popular Anglo-Jewish characters created by Shakespeare and Marlow. It has been shown that the author had a unique way of working with stereotypes about Jews. He imported the bias about Jews in his characters. Therefore, at the beginning of the plot of writings mentioned, the Jewish characters resemble stereotypes. However, he gradually refutes the stereotypes one by one by letting the character to show his true nature hidden behind the veil of prejudices.

In the theoretical part, crucial background information was provided. The historical and cultural parts revealed the extent to which historical events and common bias influenced the representation of the Jewish minority in the British literature. Consequently, it has been discovered that history, indeed, partly influenced the judgement of British authors. However, they completed the picture themselves using the ideas from society. The literal part included a basic analysis of the classics, served as a model for creating the contrast with the Cumberland's writings, which was further analysed in the practical part of the thesis. In the first part of the theoretical chapter, *The Fashionable lover*, *The History of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape from the Inquisition Madrid* and *The Jew of Mogadore* were analysed. The order of analysis was methodical, based on the importance of the presented Jewish character to plot development. Through this analysis, it was confirmed the assumption that Cumberland gradually and systematically moved Jews to the centre of the story and book by book, he improved the image of the Jewish character, which was exceptional at that time. In fact, Cumberland even started his writing career by creating a Jewish usurer character who indirectly robs a poor girl. However, he gradually improved the picture of his characters. Nicholas is a man focused on discrimination and religious clashes. Compared to other characters, Nadab is much more elaborated, and his resemblance to Sheva is conspicuous. Unfortunately, the comic opera was not successful thanks to the author's unhappy choice of setting and literal form. The analysis ends with *The Jew*, author's the most influential drama,

which even reached the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean. In it, the main character of Sheva embodies all human virtues. The analysis of Cumberland's last piece was just the tip of the iceberg. The author, once again, used deep-seated prejudices about Jewish longing for money and then overwhelmed them with the desires of the characters to do good and serve others. The author also used self-pity to illustrate the feelings Jews experienced as a result of the discrimination against them in British society. Moreover, the author challenged the fact that every Christian is pure. The fact that Sheva is the most influential character is proven by the positive reactions from both audience members and critics.

To conclude, the analysis of Richard Cumberland's writings with Jewish protagonist showed the great ability of the author to play with bias. Of course, Cumberland's masterpiece, *The Jew*, does not rid the whole of Britain of prejudices and anti-Jewish tendencies, but the author was the first to greatly contribute to their alleviation. Even though the emancipation of the Jewish minority was a long-term and demanding process, they finally toppled Shylock from his throne and, consequently, brought the possibility of changing the attitude towards the Jewish minority in Britain. Thanks to the effort of pro-Jewish authors, the gradual emancipation of Jews was enabled. By changing people's minds step-by-step, they modified collective consciousness and finally suppressed the notion of purely wicked Jews.

Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce je provést detailní analýzu zobrazování židovských postav ve vybraných dílech britského spisovatele Richarda Cumberlanda – jednoho z prvních autorů, který nezobrazoval židovské postavy podle tradičních stereotypů. Jeho eseje, krátké příběhy a dramata pracují s tématem diskriminace náboženských, etnických či národnostních skupin, kde se autor ve svých dílech snaží vytvořit lichotivý obraz o příslušnících vybrané utlačované minority a tím alespoň částečně přispět ke změně celkové náhledu společnosti na menšinu.

Úvod práce začíná stručným přehledem historie židovské menšiny na evropském kontinentu, kde je přiblížena cesta židovského národa, nepříznivé historické události a také negativní postoj evropských států vůči Izraelitům. Úvod se poté zužuje na stručný přehled anglo-židovské historie, kde je Anglie vyzdvihnuta jako útočiště v dobách persekuce ve zbytku evropských států. Pokračuje krátkým nastíněním zobrazování židovských postav v rámci britské literatury, kde jsou poprvé zmíněni stěžejní autoři jako Marlow, Shakespeare, kteří jsou považováni za průkopníky onoho negativního trendu ve vytváření nelichotivého obrazu Židů v britské literatuře. Jako protiklad k tradiční typizaci Židů je uveden autor, jehož díla jsou zároveň předmětem zkoumání v praktické části. Richard Cumberland, pocházející z rodiny, kde pomoc druhým je považována za samozřejmost, se vydal stejnou cestou jako jeho předci, tj. cesta proti proudu, v tomto případě literárnímu, která se může místy zdát trnitá, leč záslužná. Úvod uzavírá stručný přehled obsahu kapitol, kde je načrtnut jejich základní obsah a účel.

Teoretická část je rozdělena do dvou kapitol. První kapitola se zaměřuje na důležité milníky historie židovské menšiny v Anglii a také na základní kulturní rysy této minority. Tato kapitola je důležitá pro získání souvislého obrazu o životě Židů v Británii, aby tak čtenář mohl lépe porozumět problematice, na kterou je tato práce soustředěna. Dějepisná část začíná úplnými počátky, tedy příchodem Židů do Británie, kteří na tento ostrov přijeli za obchodními záležitostmi, zda-li zde zůstali není historicky podloženo, ale důležité je, že první zmínka o Židech v Británii vůbec, je spojena se slovem obchod. Přítomnost Židů v Británii je poprvé potvrzena v zákonech panovníků, kde je uvedeno, že Žid i s jeho financemi náleží králi, což nebylo nic neobvyklého. Během 12.století byla židovská populace významně zredukována vlivem křižáckých výprav a hromadného vyvražďování během morové epidemie. Postavení a role Židů v britské společnosti se nemění ani počátkem středověku, kdy jsou Židé finanční jistotou panovníků a celé Anglie, objevuje se zde také důležitý milník, a to je rok 1290, kdy Eduard I vykázal židovské obyvatelstvo z Anglie na necelá čtyři století. První kapitola dále pokračuje klíčovým osmnáctým stoletím, které je zároveň stoletím Richarda Cumberlanda.

V tomto období se objevuje velká vlna migrace z ostatních evropských států a Židé opět zaujmají roli obchodníka, kdy se někteří z nich uchylují k lichvě, jsou ale také zastoupeni v nejnižší vrstvě společnosti. Z počátku jsou vztahy mezi Brity a Židy ne příliš přátelské, dochází na protižidovské zákony i na bojkot pro-židovských zákonů, ale později vlivem osvícenské filozofie a revoluční nálady, která přišla z Francie a Ameriky, dochází k rozvolnění napětí a koncem 18.století i k postupné emancipaci Židů do společnosti. Na konci historické části je také krátká podkapitola, které je soustředěna na židovskou kulturu. V ní se dozvídáme, že věci jako jazyková odlišnost, půjčování financí a izolace v ghettech poskytli nebezpečný prostor pro lidskou fantazii. Postupem času ale dochází k „míšení“ kultur a Židé se začínají přibližovat anglickému stylu života ve všech směrech. Druhá kapitola teoretické části je soustředěna na vykreslení tradičního způsobu zobrazování židovských postav v britské literatuře, role této kapitoly je utvořit pozadí, se kterým pak může být srovnávána autorova tvorba. Na začátku kapitoly je definován stereotyp i s malým příkladem typizace židovských postav v britské literatuře. První židovské postavy se objevují v církevních představeních, kde hlavním tématem byly příběhy z bible. Dokud se jednalo o adaptace starého zákona, tak Židé byli zobrazováni pozitivně, poté, ale s příchodem Zákona nového a role zrádců a ukřižovatelů došlo ke změně, která se na jejich literárním obraze usídlila na několik století. Jako příklad tohoto negativního obrazu jsou zmíněny *Canterburské povídky*, konkrétně povídka *Abatyše*, kde je Žid zobrazen jako krvelačná, nelítostná a ďábelská zrůda, která vraždí i malé děti. Což lze označit jako typický způsob zobrazování Židů v té době. Podle mnohých kritiků k posílení tohoto negativního obrazu nejvíce přispěli Marlow a Shakespeare. Marlow ve své knize *The Jew of Malta* vytvořil postavu Barnabáše (Barabbas), která se kvůli penězům neštítí zavraždit ani vlastní dceru a půl kláštera k tomu. Jeho postava odpovídala představě o Židech v té době, nicméně tím, že jej promítl ve své tvorbě utvořil literární typ, který později inspiroval další autory, včetně Shakespeara. Ten inspiraci využil při tvorbě svého dramatu *The Merchant of Venice*, kde je postava Shylocka, vypočítavého lichváře, který chce všem jen škodit. Oproti Marlowovi zde ale došlo k posunu, zatímco Barnabáš je zlý z podstaty, u Shylocka se jedná o pomstu křesťanům za křivdy a bolest, kterou mu způsobovali právě proto že byl Žid. Díky historické části, víme, že během života Marlowa a Shakespeara, Židé v Británii oficiálně nepobývali, a ti kteří zůstali nebyli viditelní, natož aby zde provozovali lichvářské řemeslo, tudíž byl jejich obraz vytvořen na základě fantazie, pověr a domněnek, které se tradovaly v období tvorby výše zmíněných autorů. S příchodem osvícenských myšlenek v osmnáctém století, se začínají v celé Evropě objevovat díla, která zobrazují židovské postavy věrohodněji a v některých případech i

pozitivně. Některé z nich mohlo inspirovat i Richarda Cumberland, který se rozhodl udělat něco pro perzekuovanou rasu a jako první v Anglii vytvořil pozitivnější židovskou postavu.

Praktická část se zabývá rozbořem vybraných autorových děl, které jsou systematicky seřazeny podle důležitosti židovských postav, co se týče ovlivňování ostatních postav, příběhu ale také způsobu, jak je autor vykreslil. Rozbor začíná dílem *The Fashionable Lover*, kde je židovská postava v naprostém pozadí a na scéně se objeví pouze jednou, hlavním důvodem pro zařazení tohoto díla je fakt, že se jedná o první autorovu židovskou postavu a také to, že Naphthali je lichvář, jenž se nestydí podvodem připravit nevinnou dívku o majetek. Tato postava byla tedy načrtnuta v souladu s tradicí britské literatury, na což se autor později snažil zapomenout, soudě podle toho, že ji ani neuvedl ve svých *Memoárech*. Další dílo v rozborové části je *The history of Nicholas Pedrosa and his Escape to Inquisition Madrid*, jedná se o krátkou povídku, kde autor líčí utrpení Žida, žijícího ve Španělsku, který se stane terčem Inkvizice. Autorova inspirace zajisté pochází z jeho diplomatických cest do Španělska, kde na vlastní kůži zažil napětí mezi Židy a španělskou církví. Tato židovská postava je dalším schodem v autorově tvorbě, kdy je Nicholas zobrazen pozitivně a je zde i demonstrováno jeho utrpení, avšak jeho „židovství“ zůstává světu skryto. Autor také zmiňuje Anglii jako útočiště pro všechny Židy. Dále je analyzována opereta *The Jew of Mogadore*, která je sice novější než autorovo nejvýznamnější dílo *The Jew*, ale rozhodně nesklidila takový úspěch. Postava Žida Nadaba je tentokrát zasazena do exotického orientálního prostředí, kde žije mezi muslimy, kteří mu usilují o život. Nadab je vetchý stařík, který nejvíc na světě miluje své peníze, ale používá je pouze pro záležitosti, které jsou podle něj správné, jako je kupování otroků, které následně osvobozuje a posílá do Anglie, nebo podpora muslimského prince, který chce svrhnout svého tyranského otce a nastolit tak mír v zemi. V tomto případě už lze pozorovat charakteristický autorův styl ve vykreslování židovských postav, kdy Cumberland zobrazí postavu jako obchodníka, který se zdá být lichvářem, ale pak ukáže čtenáři, že vše je jinak, než se na první pohled zdálo být. Také si v tomto příběhu hraje s předurčením a možností voby, kdy Nadab namísto zahořknutí a nenávisti vůči ostatním, nastavuje druhou tvář a ještě pomáhá druhým a muslimský princ, ač vychováván tyranským otcem, si vybral cestu míru. Poslední autorovo dílo *The Jew*, je zlomovým dílem, jak pro autora, tak i pro zobrazování Židů v britské literatuře. Hlavní postavou sentimentální komedie je Žid Sheva, který je natolik benevolentní, že se chvílemi zdá naprosto nereálný, ale jelikož autorův úmysl byl vytvořit naprostý protiklad Shylocka, tak zřejmě musel přehánět stejně jako Shakespeare. Tato postava je zasazena do prostředí Londýna a nejenže je postavou hlavní, ale také je vždy zachráncem celé situace. Autor opět využil svůj charakteristický

přístup a vykreslil Shevu jako bohatého Žida, který stále mluví jenom o penězích, velkou roli zde také hraje jeho sebelítost, kdy neustále opakuje všechny křivdy, které se mu kdy staly, opět je zde reference na Shylocka. Ovšem za rouškou této domnělé chamtivosti se skrývá stařík s dobrým srdcem, který nakonec všechny své peníze věnuje mladší generaci. Tímto způsobem autor vzbuzoval v tehdejší publiku lítost, soucit a porozumění, které byly tolik potřebné pro rozptýlení staletí přetrvávajících stereotypů. A zřejmě to fungovalo, protože hra sklídila obrovský úspěch po celé Evropě, ale i za oceánem a její postava inspirovala i další autory.

Po analýze všech Cumberlandových židovských postav bylo zjištěno, že autor se při zobrazování svých postav nechal inspirovat stereotypy, které poté vyvracel. Vytvořil tak naprostý protiklad k tradičnímu zobrazování židovských postav v britské literatuře. O tom, do jaké míry byl autor úspěšný v podpoře židovské emancipace skrze sentimentální komedii, můžeme pouze spekulovat, nelze mu přisoudit veškeré zásluhy, ale svým úsilím rozhodně odstartoval novou tradici ve vykreslování Židů v literatuře.

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