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Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, QAnon and Blood Libel

Anti-Semitism, particularly the perpetuation of the blood libel, the claim that Jews used the blood of Christian children for ritualistic purposes, traverses' history creating a link between William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and the twenty-first century conspiracy theory of QAnon. Both stereotype and demonize the racial "other" in the pursuit of appeasing the white Christian demographic during a time of change and unrest. Conspiracy theories were also as much a part of the world Shakespeare lived in as they are today. In one play in particular, *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare uses the anti-Semitic trope of the blood libel in an attempt to appeal to Christians while promoting anti-Jewish rhetoric the same way QAnon uses the trope today in order to manipulate the political and religious landscape.

The Jewish blood libel conspiracy dates back to a story told by Socrates in 415 C.E. about a group of Jews at Inmestar, Syria, during the Festival of Purim. The story claims they took a Christian child, bound him to a cross, and hung him up. They mocked and ridiculed him for a time before losing control resulting in the death of the child. It is unknown if this story is true, as Socrates was known to talk in parables and riddles, but the story persisted. By the eleventh century there was a firm belief that "Jews crucified living children during the four-week

interval between Purim and Passover and consumed their blood” (Ehrman 84). In 1144 this fantastic rumor resulted in the accusation of the Jewish population committing a ritualized killing when the body of a Christian boy was found in the Jewish ghetto. A Christian monk accused local Jews of tormenting the child in the same way that Socrates described more than 700 years before (ADL, *A Brief History of Anti-Semitism*). The outcome of similar incidents involving the unexplained murders of Christian children resulted in the execution of entire Jewish populations if they did not convert to Christianity (Ehrman 84).

The blood libel conspiracy theory endures today with the QAnon movement, a far-right group of Q followers. Surfacing in 2017 on the 4Chan image board as an anonymous user who called themselves “Q Clearance Patriot”, later shortened to Q. The username misled people to believe that the information that was being shared was coming from a high ranking member of the government. “Q” stands for the Q level security clearance in the United States Department of Energy allowing government workers to access top secret restricted data (LaFrance). Q would release bits of information, known as “Q drops”, that were vague at best, hinting that something big was going to happen. People believed it and QAnon became a cult among the far right with roots in anti-Semitism. The conspiracy grew into a set of claims that center on several outlandish ideas. According to Washington Post writers Paul Djupe and Jacob Dennes, more than half of republicans believe there are two main points of the QAnon Conspiracy Theory. The first, a cabal of Satan-worshipping cannibalistic pedophiles, made up of Democrats and Hollywood elites are running a global child sex-trafficking ring. The purpose of this sex-trafficking ring is to harvest adrenochrome, the chemical compound brought into fruition by Aldous Huxley in *Doors of Perception*, as a modern-day fountain of youth to prevent aging. The second point involves a Democratic “Deep State”, headed by prominent Jewish philanthropist and investor, George

Soros, plotting against former U.S. president Donald Trump. QAnon has this Democratic “Deep State” as the inventors of SARS-CoV-2 as a way to reorganize, or reset, global societies and economies in order to create a global totalitarian regime. Surveys indicate that more than half of Republicans believe the conspiracy theory is real (Djupe and Dennes).

Research by social scientists show that conspiracy theories are not just for the paranoid and delusional; they are common and a product of everyday cognitive processes during a crisis situation. “Research in social psychology has shown that lay people are indeed prone to anthropomorphic thinking ...this happens because the brain is hard-wired to be hypersensitive to agency in the environment. According to this perspective, it is necessary for people to be sensitive in case they face danger or threat, so this tendency is somewhat evolutionarily driven” (Douglas and Sutton 260) and are “attempts to explain the ultimate causes of significant social and political events as secret plots by powerful and malicious groups” (Douglas & Sutton 256). In short, people believe that big events have big causes resulting in flawed thinking as individuals attempt to make sense of and understand traumatic events, such as a fires, terrorist attacks, and pandemics, in society.

Placing the blame of a societal crisis on a group of people, most commonly a minority, is a way of maintaining some kind of control over one’s environment in order to make sense of the situation. When applied to an ethnic minority, conspiracy theories result in stereotypes, racism and violence against those minorities. Jewish populations have been the scapegoat over the centuries for nearly all the ills of the world. They have been accused of the ritualistic killing of Christian children and using their blood to make unleavened bread, as the reason Germany lost WWI, setbacks during the Crusades, for causing disease epidemics, being loyal to only Israel, and now, a plot to achieve world domination.

The blood libel was promoted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries among Christians thanks to Cardinal Odo of Chateauroux and Thomas de Cantimpré, the first Christian writers to give literary expression and credence to the belief in the Blood Libel. Odo claimed, based on the writings of pagan historian Dio Cassius, “Jews eat the blood of the uncircumcised. For thus did Balaam prophecy: And drinks the blood of the slain” (Ehrman). De Cantimpré wrote on the Jews being responsible for Christ’s death and that “Jewish men have been afflicted with a secret malady often appearing as a form of a male menstruation [believing] that relief from this secret ailment could only be obtained through Christian blood” (Ehrman). De Cantimpré also wrote that Jews shed Christian blood whenever they could in order to recover from their malady. The end result of their writings was every mysterious and horrible murder would be blamed on the Jews.

The mid to late 1200’s witnessed the Jews being removed from England. Under William the Conqueror Jews were not allowed to own land. This forced them to do jobs that were forbidden to Christians, such as moneylending. By the time Henry II was on the throne, the Jewish community was well established both politically and financially, and were favoured by Henry, more than people believed proper. As long as the Jews were able to bring money to the throne, they were allowed to stay. When Richard I took the throne, much of the Christian population was indebted to the Jews. The Crusades provided an opportunity for the slaughter of over 500 Jews by Christian mobs, believing they were doing honour to God by defeating their enemies. All records of usury were destroyed in attempt to erase their debts and more importantly free themselves from the oppression of the Jewish usurers. In the years that followed, the Jews were exploited by the crown while living in unsafe conditions, always worried about the general populace turning on them. They were also subjected to higher taxes

than Christians in order to help fund the crusades. When they couldn't pay, they were jailed. The signing of the Magna Carta in 1210 put the first restrictions on the Jews that would tighten over the next 80 years. "The cumulative effect of the Petition of Oxford in 1258, the Petition of Jewry in 1269, the Mandate of 1271, the Prohibition of Usury in 1275, and Regulations of 1284 was to deprive the Jews of their economic mobility and importance" (Singer126). These laws culminated in the Edict of Expulsion by King Edward I of England 1290, removing all Jews from England.

In the fourteenth century Geoffrey Chaucer continued to promote these ideas through his fiction. *The Canterbury Tales* contain a story called "The Prioress's Tale" about a Christian woman whose seven-year-old was killed by Jews. His inspiration for this story was an alleged blood libel killing at Lincoln in 1255. The child was found in the Jewish section of town in the cesspool of a house, the owner a Jew named Copin. He confessed to the crime under torture and was as later executed (Zago 38). In order to pit Christian against Jew in a religious and moral battle of good versus evil, Shakespeare took creative liberties with the anti-Jewish English backdrop, juxtaposing it on Venice, a city with much more cultural diversity that included Jews (Greenblatt).

### **Shakespeare and Anti-Jewish Conspiracies**

*The Merchant of Venice* follows the Jewish moneylender, Shylock, and the Christian merchant, Antonio. Despite their mutual hate for each other, Antonio, who has a history of abusing Shylock, seeks him out in order to procure a loan to help his friend Bassanio win a bride. Shylock agrees to the transaction, but under the condition that if Antonio defaults on the loan,

Shylock will be compensated with a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio accepts the condition and a bond is drawn up. Despite being the subject of abuse, Shylock is far from perfect himself. He abuses his position as a moneylender in order to commit what would amount to legalized murder, as per the terms of the bond. As readers we are supposed to accept Shylock's want of revenge as evil, thereby casting him as the villain while ignoring the acts committed against him. Jessica, Shylock's daughter, steals a large sum of money for him as she is leaving to marry a Christian.

It must be noted during Shakespeare's time the plague caused the rampant spread of fear, superstition, and ignorance. People were looking for someone to blame for it. Myths and stereotypes about the Jews were already in circulation making it easy to believe the Jews were poisoning wells thus responsible for the spread of disease. A Jewish merchant was a likely and believable villain for Shakespeare in the 1600's.

Despite Christianity having Jewish roots, Jews were believed to be evil and aligned with the devil due to the rejection of Jesus. Shakespeare uses this interpretation of the Jew as a devil throughout *The Merchant of Venice*. Antonio tells Bassanio (about Shylock), "The devil can cite scripture for his purpose! / An evil soul producing holy witness" (1.3.106-107). Lancelet, Shylock's Christian servant, also refers to Shylock as a devil, "to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly, the Jew is the very devil incarnation" (2.2.22-27). The merchant, Solanio shares the same opinion of Shylock. "Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil / cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew." (3.1.21-23) and later Bassanio. "To do a great right, do a little wrong, / And curb this cruel devil of his will. (4.1.224-225). The idea of Shylock being the devil

incarnate is reiterated multiple times in order to reinforce that he is the villain of the story. The reader is not surprised when Shylock uses his cunning in order to persuade the court to honour the bond that would allow him to kill Antonio.

Initially the reader feels empathy for Shylock when he lists the abuses Antonio has delivered upon him. “You call me a misbeliever, a cutthroat dog, and spet upon my Jewish gaberdine...You that did void your rheum upon my beard, and foot me as you spurn a stranger cur over your threshold” (1.3.121-122, 127-129). Shylock was treated with the utmost disrespect. Yet, this list of abuses serves to set Shylock up as the play’s antagonist when he later seeks retribution in court under the guise of a defaulted loan. Antonio never denies having mistreated Shylock, and admits that he would do it again. Antonio thus serves as the anti-semitic archetype of the time.

Shylock agrees to lend Antonio money regardless of their past. Shylock does not hate Antonio for these transgressions. He has previously stated why he dislikes Antonio eliminating any confusion on the part of the reader. “I hate him for he is a Christian” (1.3.42). He elaborates further, explaining how the two of them view things differently because of their differing religions. “He lends out money [without interest] and brings down / The rate of usance here in Venice...He hates our sacred nation, had he rails / Even there where merchants most do congregate / On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift” (3.1.44-45, 48-50). Jewish and Christian money lending practices were different. Christians would not lend out money with any kind of interest, whereas Jews would. Shylock was convinced that Antonio lending money without interest was hurting his business. Antonio also spoke badly of Shylock to other merchants, possibly chasing away potential business. It was not so much that it was a rivalry of businessmen, as it was a rivalry of religions. The Christians did not like how the Jews conducted

themselves and disapproved of their business practices. The Jews felt the same way about the Christians.

Today we read *The Merchant of Venice* in terms of an anti-Semitic Antonio and the Jew who has been the victim of hate crimes. However, we fail to acknowledge that Shylock hated Antonio just as much for being a Christian as Antonio hated Shylock for being a Jew. Nichole Coonradt points out “many [critics] acknowledge that the current view of the term “anti-Semitism” becomes limiting given that this was not necessarily part of the Elizabethan vocabulary” (Coonradt 77). Esther Zago asserts that, “the distinction between the two terms is important, since “anti-Semitic” is a nineteenth century term which shifted the focus of the entire Jewish question from religion to race” (Zago 36). Judaism is both a religion and ethnicity. In Shakespeare’s time, this differentiation was not yet in place. Coonradt claims that any racism by Shakespeare is only part of the English nationalist ideology (Coonradt 77). John Klaus sees Shakespeare approach to religion in *The Merchant of Venice*, in part as “creedal and political: the “faith” that divides orthodox from heterodox and makes them enemies, demands exclusive allegiance, and insists that only the truth can save. In Shakespeare’s Venice the religious division is between Christian and Jew” (Klaus 67). Stephan Greenblatt sees the play more in terms of England’s “Jewish Question,” the place of Jews in an English society and that society is essentially established by who hates who. He draws attention to Carl Schmidt, “Every religious, moral, economic, ethical, or other antithesis, into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy” (Greenblatt. *SF*. 52-53). This plays out in *The Merchant of Venice* in the idea of Christians verses Jews and who is and is not “acceptable” by the standards of society. As mentioned previously, the Jewish population of England was ejected in 1920. Only those who converted to Christianity were allow to remain in

the city. Even so, these converts were not trusted and still subjected to the anti-Semitism of the time. During Shakespeare's time it was believed that the refusal of Jews to convert was delaying the salvation of humankind. Furthermore, Christians had not let go of the idea that Jews killed Christian children as part of religious practices. Even with the lack of trust that was part and parcel of being a convert, Jessica decided it was better to be a Christian. As an English citizen, it is assumed Shakespeare would be on the side of his Christian characters, and he may as well have been as Shylock is forced to convert in the end. However, Shakespeare has a point to make in those traits such as cruelty, greed, pain, and suffering are human traits found in everyone regardless of religious loyalty.

Shakespeare turns to the trope of the blood libel as a long-held representation of Jewish hate for Christians in Shylock's attempt at legalized murder. "Let the forfeit / be nominated for an equal pound / of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken / In what part of your body pleaseth me" (1.3.160-163). When Antonio defaults on the loan, Shylock takes him before the Duke, demanding his bond. Cutting out a pound of flesh near Antonio's heart would almost guarantee he slowly bleed to death. Gratiano tells Shylock that he is cruel, "...for thy desires / Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous" (4.1.139-140). A Jew bestowing a Christian with a slow and bloody death has echoes of the original blood libel. Antonio is no child, and Shylock is not collecting blood. However, Shylock would still own a bloody piece of Christian flesh that would, as argued by Portia, result in his death. Antonio would die a Christian martyr. When questioned by the court as to why the bond should be honoured, Shylock answers "So can I give no reason, nor will I not / more than a lodged hate and a certain loathing / I bear Antonio" (4.1.60-62). Shylock has admitted it is not about the money, but it a more personal matter. Shylock has stated previously "I hate him for he is a Christian" (1.3.42). He does not admit this to the court but he

does imply that he is exacting a blood libel. “And by our Holy Sabbath I have sworn / To have the due and forfeit my bond” (4.1.37-38). He has stated plainly that he does not want the money, he wants Antonio’s flesh.

Stephan Greenblatt points out that Venice, with its wide-ranging trading partners, depended on “the liberty of strangers” (Greenblatt, *Shakespeare’s Cure for Xenophobia*). Everyone needed to be treated equally in the legal system in order to preserve the economy. This meant treating Christians and non-Christians equally. Shylock argues his legal right to Antonio’s flesh as a matter of property rights. “You will answer “The slaves are ours!” So I do answer you: / The pound of flesh which I demand of him / Is dearly bought; [‘tis] mine and I will have it” (4.1.98-101). Revenge in the form of Christian blood and flesh is more important than money. He is defending legal ownership to a chunk of Antonio, an argument the court is willing to entertain until Portia escalates a civil matter to a criminal one. She reads the bond to the letter of law, “Shed thou no blood nor cut thou less nor more / But just a pound of flesh” (4.1.399-340) Portia informs him that he will have to forfeit everything because of a legal loophole. Shylock is allowed his pound of flesh, but he cannot shed blood in the process. His attempt to enforce the contract makes him guilty of conspiring against a Christian. His goods will be seized and distributed equally between Antonio and the state. (4.1.363-371) Shylock’s sentence demonstrates that Venetian law treats Christian citizens and non-Christians differently. Shylock is technically a citizen of Venice, as it is where he lives, but he is also Jewish, and the place of Jews in society is suspect. They are still seen as outsiders and “othered”. The Duke describes Shylock as “A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch / Uncapable of pity, void and empty / From any dram of mercy” (4.1.4-6). In contrast to Shylock’s “evil Jewishness”, Antonio is willing to die a martyr. “[I] am armed / To suffer with quietness of spirit / The very tyranny and rage of

his” (4.1.12-14). While not wanting to lose his life, Antonio recognizes and accepts that he is probably going to die at the hands of Shylock and will do so with the “quietness of spirit”. This is a phrase that is often used in religious hagiographies when describing the martyrs and their death. Antonio believes that he will go to Heaven and be with Jesus.

Shylock has, for all intents and purposes, conspired to commit legalized murder by cutting a piece of flesh closest to Antonio’s heart. As Portia points out, Antonio will bleed to death. Shylock’s argument is that he has bought that piece of flesh, as the loan was in default and it was no different than members of the court having bought slaves. “...You will answer / “The slaves are ours!” So do I answer you / The pound of flesh which I demand of him / is dearly bought; ‘tis mine and I will have it.” (4.1.99-101). In this way the Jew has attempted to take the life of a Venetian Christian. The Venetian court has, up until this moment, given Shylock full legal standing but his contract with Antonio takes it away. Shylock is once again the Jewish “other” and no longer has the rights of a full citizen in the eyes of the court. The Duke takes half of Shylock’s estate for the court and the other half he awards to Antonio.. He is also required to become a Christian convert himself. This “does not reflect the contemporary practices of Venice, which preferred that Jews remain Jews and live in the Jewish ghetto, but that of the Spanish Inquisition...[converts] were routinely found guilty of heresy by the Spanish Inquisition, which was self-funded through the confiscation of the property of those it found guilty.” (O’Rourke 386). The reality of the time was that Shylock would not have been court ordered to convert to Christianity. Instead he is being treated as one who is under question by the Spanish Inquisition including the confiscation of property, the Duke standing in for the Inquisition, and forced conversion.

### ***The Merchant of Venice* as Anti-Jewish Nazi Propaganda**

Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* became a touchstone for anti-Semitic propaganda in Nazi Germany. In the 1930's and 1940's Hitler portrayed the Jews not as a religious group but as "colonizers who had entered Germany to Judaize it" and through this colonization German was degenerating (Heschel 418). Jewish conspiracy theories were a large and important part of Hitler's speeches and a potent force in inspiring the Holocaust (Douglas & van Prooijen 326). Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in WWI, accused them of being hoarders and war profiteers, disloyalty to Germany, a security threat, and for the rise of Soviet communism. Ironically, Stalin blamed Jews for the rise of Nazism. The Nazi Party made all attempts to remove Judaism from Christianity, thus purifying Christianity and making it acceptable on nationalist terms. The Old Testament was removed from canon, the New Testament was purged of all Jewish reference, and Jesus officially declared Aryan.

*The Merchant of Venice* held a unique popularity within Nazi Germany. The play was shown over 59 times in the course of six years where extra emphasis was placed on the anti-Semitic aspects of the play. "[During the Final Solution], it was repeatedly shown in occupied territories on the eve of roundups to intensify anti-Jewish feeling and dispel any possible sympathy for the victims" (Gross, *Theater, Shylock, and Nazi Propaganda*). The hostilities toward the Jews were projected upon Shylock in order to reinforce, through the work of Shakespeare, that Jews had always been "evil." In 1935 a newspaper in Königsberg ran an essay to coincide with one of the productions of the play. The author was initially worried about how Shylock was portrayed until the court scene. This scene makes it clear that Shylock, and by extension all Jews "desires are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous" (4.1.140). Shylock is the clear villain demanding a blood libel. Meanwhile Antonio and his Christian friends are depicted

as selfless and loyal. Not only was this viewed as a depiction of Christianity verses Judaism, but to the Nazi's it was the white Aryan race against the Jewish invaders who must be exterminated. Shakespeare may not have intended to incite Jewish hatred, especially centuries after his death, however, *The Merchant of Venice* has been used to promote anti-Semitic propaganda. While *The Merchant of Venice* is no longer used to incite Jewish hatred, the blood libel is relevant today.

### **QAnon and Blood Libel**

It is difficult to separate nationalism and Christianity. As Carter was leaving office and the Reagan Era was coming into fruition, “conservatives banded together. Evangelism began morphing from a purely religious movement into a political one” (Campbell & Putnam). This was the start of Christian Nationalism, a world view that the United States was created for Christians by Christians. It strongly favours Christian Protestantism to the exclusion of other religious groups. As the country tries to slowly move away from these ideas as an act of inclusion toward non-Christian citizens, Christian Conservatives have complained that the nation is moving away from the Christian values it was founded on, calling for a return to God. Religious political action groups such as The Moral Majority and The Christian Coalition lobbied for laws based in Christian doctrine blurring the lines of separation of church and state. They lobbied to overturn the Equal Rights Amendment concerned it would curb religious freedom, allow abortion, and promote a “gay agenda. Christian Nationalism and its accompanying racism persist. Furthermore, “Christian Nationalism, anti-Semitism, and support for QAnon are linked. 73% of Christian Nationalists agree with the substance of the QAnon conspiracy (Djupe and Dennen).

White Supremacy, which has its roots in Christian Nationalism, has proliferated since the Covid-19 lockdown. On March 20, 2020, the FBI sent an alert to all major news outlets and police stations stating that “extremists want their followers to try and use spray bottles to spread bodily fluids to cops on the street. The extremists are also directing followers to spread the disease to Jews by going to any place they may be congregated, to include markets, political offices, businesses and places of worship” (Margolin). According to the ADL, “Extremists hope the virus kills Jews, but they are also using its emergence to advance anti-Semitic theories that Jews are responsible for creating the virus, spreading it to increase their control over a decimated population, or they are profiting off it” (ADL). Once again, blame has been placed on the Jews. The 1200’s had the committing ritualistic murders of children. The 1600’s they were poisoning wells causing the plague and were at fault for holding the human race back from salvation. During WWII Hitler blamed them for Germany’s WWI defeat and the rise of communism. Now, in the 2020’s they are blamed for starting the Covid-19 pandemic to achieve world domination.

QAnon has built on these conspiracy myths and anti-Semitic tropes. The Anti-Defamation League Reports a 12% increase of antisemitic incidents with a 56% increase in violent attacks in 2019. The ADL also reports the American Jewish community suffered the highest level of anti-Semitic incidents in 2019 since tracking of such incidents began in 1976 for a total of 2,107 attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the country. There is a correlation between in the rise of these attacks and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories being propagated by QAnon. Vegas Tenold, an investigative researcher at the ADL’s Center on Extremism states, “You’re going to find very few global conspiracy theories that don’t touch on anti-Semitic tropes” (Greenspan). This implies that several global conspiracies have their roots in the history of anti-Jewish sentiment.

Much like Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, QAnon followers believe the “Jewish Elites” are corrupt, control the financial system, and are responsible for the financial hardships experienced by white Americans. QAnon has specifically targeted prominent Jewish people including the Rothchild family, who supposedly controls the Vatican, the London Central Bank in London, and the CIA. George Soros, financier and philanthropist, is believed by QAnon to be not only the head of the “Deep State” but also funding Antifa, Black Lives Matter, illegal immigration and fraudulent voting schemes. Likewise, Scott Wiener, the openly gay and Jewish senator from California, is charged with worshiping Moloch, a bull-headed Canaanite god similar to the Minotaur that demands child sacrifices. QAnon links Jewish bankers, philanthropists, and politicians to the cabal of Satan-worshiping pedophiles who are harvesting blood from children for adrenochrome. Adrenochrome, a product of the decomposition of adrenaline used in medicine to slow blood loss by promoting clotting in open wounds, is touted by QAnon to be a psychedelic harvested from the fear of tortured children and used in drug crazed satanic rites. It has become the new Blood Libel.

Shakespeare’s time was rife with plague, fanaticism, and accusations against Jews. So far the 2020’s have not been much different, only “Jews” has been replaced by “global elite” and “Satanists”. The idea of the “blood libel” began in 415 CE and has taken on different faces over the decades, but in each of its faces it has been used as an excuse to persecute the Jewish people. Adrenochrome harvesting is only the latest representation of these forms of conspiratorial thinking.

While much about society has advanced since Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have not. The rise of the internet has made it faster and easier to spread misinformation, personal beliefs, hate speech, recruit people

to a cause, and organize them to take action. The world witnessed this as QAnon and various white supremacist groups converged in DC during the Capital Riots on Jan 6, 2021. Both Shakespeare, just by being a popular and prolific playwright, and QAnon, by what can be called a successful internet marketing scheme, have added their own anti-Semitic footnotes to history accepting and promoting its myths. From Shakespeare to QAnon, the Blood Libel has been used as an attempt to appeal to Christians, promote anti-Semitism, and manipulate the political and religious landscapes.

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