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Venice at the Globe

Venezia al Globe

SOMMARIO | ABSTRACT

Elizabethan England viewed Venice as in many ways a model of an equitable society, an ideal to be emulated. But *Venice at the Globe* is concerned with the far less idealized versions of Venice as imagined for the English stage. If Venice is seen as a model for England, it is not a mirror, but an alternative, or even a mirror of England's least admirable aspects.

L'Inghilterra elisabettiana guardava a Venezia, per molti aspetti, come un modello di società equa, un ideale da emulare. Ma *Venice at the Globe* riguarda una Venezia, come immaginata per la scena inglese, molto meno idealizzata. Se vista come un modello per l'Inghilterra, Venezia non è uno specchio, ma un'alternativa, o perfino uno specchio degli aspetti meno ammirevoli dell'Inghilterra.

PAROLE CHIAVE | KEYWORDS

Venice, London, Capitalism, Audiences, Marriage
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Venice at the Globe

Elizabethan England viewed Venice as in many ways a model of an equitable society. William Thomas's *Historie of Italie*, published in 1549 under Edward VI, holds up Venice as a model for good government, not least in the ways it resembles England, with its impartial legal system, and its Great Council as a parallel to Parliament. Thomas's optimistic view of the fairness of the English system was not borne out under Mary Tudor, when he was implicated in Thomas Wyatt's rebellion and was executed for sedition. But especially in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, when the succession remained unsettled and aristocratic republican ways of determining the future seemed increasingly attractive, the Venetian model as described by Thomas was often invoked for comparison. There is no evidence that Shakespeare had read Thomas's *Historie*, though he would certainly have known about it; but by the time he was writing *The Merchant of Venice* he may have read Lewes Lewkenor's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice* in ms – the book was published in 1599, but it was a translation of a 1549 Latin treatise by Gasparo Contarini.

The influence of these works on Elizabethan and Jacobean England has been widely appreciated and well treated elsewhere¹.

Here I am concerned less with historical sources than with the way Venice is imagined for the English stage. Judging from the drama, if Venice is seen as a model for England, it is surely a very ambiguous one; and as a mirror, it primarily reflects England's fears and vices. For example, Portia's confounding of Shylock and rescue of Antonio is a dramatic climax in *The Merchant of Venice*, a triumph of both romantic ingenuity and legal strategy; but neither Portia's methods nor her arguments would have passed muster in an Elizabethan court (to say nothing of a real Venetian one), and later audiences have generally found the scene more disturbing than celebratory.

The Venice of Antonio and Shylock is a burgeoning early capitalist economy, a world of merchants, importers and exporters, investors, and those largely invisible but nevertheless essential figures who make the whole system work, the suppliers of risk capital, particularly moneylenders – Antonio's money comes from trade, Shylock's from what the Elizabethans pejoratively called usury, and we would call simply banking. Neither can prosper without the other, and the system requires both. Antonio claims there are moneylenders in Venice who charge no interest, but clearly none of them will deal with him: given his investment in Bassanio, he is obviously a bad risk. Shylock takes the risk – he is essential, both to the plot and to Antonio's and Bassanio's enterprise; and his decision not to charge interest in this case is intended only as a way of ensuring future business from Antonio, another kind of investment. The people in this society who are not dependent on the system, who do not make their money but simply *have* it (for example, rich heiresses) live somewhere else – significantly, the somewhere in this case is a geographical fantasy, Belmont: the name is adopted from the source story in *Il Pecorone*, and it is the only invented place-name in Shakespeare.

Ben Jonson's Venetian play *Volpone* is about a clever scoundrel who fleeces his equally unsavory associates by pretending he is dying, and persuading them that he will make one of them his heir. They each give him increasingly rich gifts in the hope of being confirmed as the favorite. Though the names – Volpone, Mosca, Corvino, Corbaccio, etc. – suggest a moralizing beast-fable, this Venice is a thoroughly capitalistic world, full of merchants, investors, lawyers, notaries. Corbaccio, 'big crow', who disinherits his son in favor of Volpone, is a miser – in a capitalist economy, that is as bad as being a thief. Only Corbaccio's son, the soldier Bonario, and Celia, the merchant Corvino's wife, are declared by their names to be human, humane, virtuous, in a world that allows them very little space. Even the miser is in his way an investor, risking his money in the interests of a significant return. Venice in the play is an object of envy to the English; its obsessions are parodied by the traveler Sir Politic Would-Be, who arrives full of impossibly grandiose moneymaking projects, and his wife, Lady Would-Be, who is as grasping and flirtatious as any Venetian courtesan. The only disinterested voice is that of the one other English traveler, Peregrine, who stands outside the action as an amused observer of his compatriots' follies in pursuit of Italian vices – in effect, his voice is Jonson's.

The play opens with Volpone worshipping at the shrine of his gold. But where does Volpone's money come from? Jonson is quite explicit: his wealth does not derive from the mercantile economy in any way:

VOLPONE: [...] I gain
 No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
 I wound no earth with plough-shares; [...] [
 [...] have no mills for iron,
 Oil, corn; or men to grind them into powder [...] [
 I turn no monies in the public bank,
 Nor usure private (Jonson 2011: I. 1. 30-38)

and much more of the same sort of thing. As far as capitalism is concerned, Volpone is not involved. Why the insistence on this, with such specificity? When Stefan Zweig did his brilliant adaptation of the play in 1926², he added a prologue to account both for where Volpone's money came from (imports and exports; one of his ships has just returned laden with riches) and for how he and Mosca know each other (they met in jail, while Volpone was briefly imprisoned for debt). These are matters which Jonson leaves significantly unexplained. Zweig's version humanizes, rationalizes and simplifies: it is an easier, nicer play. But Jonson's Volpone is not simply a very successful merchant. He does not make money, he gets people to give it to him. To produce money in the way Volpone boasts of doing, you have to start with money. The play insists, however, that Volpone's hands are clean; his money is the product of his wit, of his ingenious scheming – as Iago says of Roderigo in another Venice, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse" (*Othello*, Shakespeare 2002: I. 3. 375).

It cannot be irrelevant that the witty devising of plots is the source of the playwright Jonson's income too. Volpone the master-manipulator is the heart of this comedy and the source of our pleasure in it – as an appreciative audience, we are just as surely implicated in his schemes as Jonson is; and in the dramatic economy, here as in Jonson's even more popular play *The Alchemist*, no sympathy at all is elicited by the victims, who are by turns gullible and rapacious, and are represented as deserving what they get. The exceptions in *Volpone* are Celia and Bonario, but they serve more as foils than as agents – Bonario, the honest soldier, the man of action, is singularly ineffective; and all the play can offer Celia as a reward for her patience and virtue is to be sent home to her father with her dowry tripled, presumably only to find an even more covetous husband.

Volpone is all about money, and about using money to make more. Jonson's Fox is a scoundrel, but he is surely as much hero as villain – indeed, it is not clear that he is a villain at all. He is thoroughly amoral, certainly, but there is no suggestion that the gold he worships at the play's opening is ill-gotten – indeed, as we have seen, it is explicitly denied that he has even been touched by the necessary evils of trade. Nor has he anything against his victims, no scores to settle, no revenge to exact: he cons them for the pure pleasure of the game; he lays out the bait, and they take it willingly, eagerly. The bait is the promise of an inheritance, of being Volpone's heir – being the surrogate son, brother, widow, the best beloved. In Jonson's Venice, affection and family ties have a cash value – Corvino is willing to prostitute his wife to Volpone; Corbaccio to disinherit his son; Lady Politic Would-Be abandons her husband for Volpone: the purpose of these outrageous acts is precisely to prompt a reciprocal act of what in this society counts as love.

This is a world in which love is money. We could call it particularly Jonsonian because it is particularly blatant; but it is in fact no different from the Venice of Shakespeare's merchants and lovers. At the opening of *The Merchant of Venice*, the first thing Bassanio says about Portia is that she is "a lady richly left," and will be the means of getting him out of debt (Shakespeare 2002: I. 2. 161 ff.). Romance is doubtless an element, but the money is essential – however beautiful, witty or charming Portia is, she is nothing to Bassanio, or to any of her other suitors, without her money. She is, moreover, curiously like Volpone, in that she is in no way implicated in the acquisition of her wealth – this is obviously a fundamental element in her attractiveness. She does not *make* her money, she *has* her money. Moreover, her father's will stipulates that for a suitor to fail in choosing the correct casket requires forswearing marriage entirely. This practically ensures that only desperate fortune-hunt-

ers will come to woo her: who else would take so great a risk; why else would Bassanio do it? There is a great deal of talk about love in the play, but money is always a part of it. When Jessica elopes with her lover Lorenzo, she comes to him with a box of Shylock's gold; and later Shylock is observed alternately lamenting his daughter and his ducats, unable to decide which loss he regrets more. Surely in this world, the two are not separable: daughters *are* ducats. Lorenzo does not woo Jessica in the expectation of being poor but happy, any more than Bassanio considers proposing to Portia that they forget about the caskets and just run away together.

Daughters are ducats not only in drama, but in the England of Shakespeare and Jonson too. Women are provided with dowries in early modern society because no one will marry them otherwise; daughters are their fathers' property, and, provided they are furnished with sufficient wealth, they can be exchanged for alliances, influence, property, position. That is why elopement is so highly charged an issue in the early modern world: children are commodities; they do not own themselves. Elopement is a form of theft. *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* would have looked quite different to Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences from the way they look to us. *Romeo and Juliet* is about a 13-year-old girl eloping with a 15-year-old boy: the parents in Shakespeare's audience would certainly have found the romance of the play tempered by some quite realistic apprehension – was the play acceptably romantic only because it was set in Italy, and Italians were notoriously sexually precocious? Could such a play have been set in England? When Juliet's father tells her prospective suitor Paris that Juliet is too young to marry, Paris replies, "Younger than she are happy mothers made" (Shakespeare 2002: I. 2. 12): how did this go over in England? It cannot be the case that there were many 12-year-old mothers in the Elizabethan experience – would this in fact have

been an alienating moment, another index to how different the Italians are? We elide and ignore this aspect of the play by casting mature, sexually secure actors in the roles – in the famous 1936 film, the Juliet, Norma Shearer, was 36 and Leslie Howard, Romeo, was 41. But Shakespeare's Juliet was 13, played by a 13-year-old boy – for us, a historically authentic production would probably bring charges of pedophilia.

As for the elopement of Desdemona and Othello, the degree to which it must have been disturbing to Shakespeare's audiences can be measured by the play's efforts to account for and justify it. Though Brabantio denies that he ever had any intention of making Othello his son-in-law, Desdemona's love for the Moor is clearly an extension of her father's, "Her father loved me, oft invited me" (Shakespeare 2002: I. 3. 128 ff.). Othello, moreover, is presented as genuinely irresistible: even the Duke says of his account of the wooing, "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (I. 3. 171). What is irresistible is his narrative, his command of language and plot – and just as Volpone's power is Jonson's power, Othello's power is Shakespeare's.

But Shakespeare's power is also Iago's, the ability to invent plots and stage scenes, and especially the ability to create entirely plausible fictions. Nor do we know that Iago is the play's only liar: Othello's narratives are beautifully crafted, but are they true? Consider the handkerchief: in the course of the play, he tells two entirely different stories about it. In the first, his mother had it from an Egyptian sorceress who wove it out of sacred silk dyed in mummy conserved of maidens' hearts (III. 4. 69-75); but in the second, much more mundanely, it was simply a gift his father gave his mother (V. 2. 216-17). Both stories cannot be true; is the invented one Othello's only lie? Audiences are necessarily trusting souls, and only the playwright can tell us what to believe – are the two handkerchief stories hints that we are being too trusting? Are the stories of Othello's he-

roic past, the exotic tales that Desdemona fell in love with, true or false? We know that the men whose heads do lie beneath their shoulders are fables, but did Shakespeare know it, and in that case, did Othello know it? Such questions really do get to the heart of the play: the corollary to the question of whether Othello is telling the truth is the much more highly charged question of whether Desdemona is really innocent. Not even Iago believes she is sleeping with Cassio, but maybe Iago's lies are true to some deep dubiousness in the play itself, some deep ambivalence on Shakespeare's part.

There really is some evidence for this, some significant loose ends: in Act II, Othello tells Iago that Cassio was involved in his wooing of Desdemona from first to last, yet at the beginning of the play, when Iago tells Cassio that Othello is married, Cassio is surprised, and claims not to know who the woman is. Is Cassio lying, and is the lie covering something up – is Othello's marriage to Desdemona really a surprise to Cassio? How could it be, if he was in on the wooing? What would make Othello's marriage unexpected? And in that case, might Iago's great lie, the lie on which the whole plot depends, in fact be the truth? Or shall we say that Shakespeare's plotting is always inconsistent, that he likes loose ends, as when Cassio is initially described as "A fellow almost damned in a fair wife" (I. 1. 20), but is thereafter unmarried. And do those inconsistencies then perhaps reveal something about Shakespeare's creative imagination: that any narrative contains within it a world of alternative narratives? Might Shakespeare be suspicious of Desdemona and Cassio, too?

Many years ago a deliberately provocative critic named Howard Felperin made a similar suggestion about *The Winter's Tale*: do we really know that Hermione is not guilty?³ Her innocence is confirmed by an oracle, but for a Renaissance Christian audience, the deceptiveness of oracles was a given; to believe

in them was to believe in a discredited faith. So at the Globe in 1610, the oracle might have actually seemed evidence confirming Leontes's suspicions. Felperin's suggestion was not intended to rewrite the play, but to unsettle our notions of what we think we know in Shakespeare. After all, the entire resolution of *The Winter's Tale* depends on Leontes's willingness to believe in the miracle of a statue coming to life, a miracle that we know is a lie. Do satisfactory resolutions, then, depend on gullibility, whether the heroes' or the audience's? In *Othello*, we know Iago is not telling the truth, but we only know because he keeps admitting it: how do we assess the veracity of anyone else in the play? This is a continuing issue in *Hamlet*: is the Ghost telling the truth? Hamlet's doubts about the Ghost are both well-founded and culturally justified – Protestant theology denied the existence of ghosts; apparitions were diabolical temptations. The only surprise for an Elizabethan audience might well have been that the ghost turns out to be honest. Much of the action of the play involves setting up a test of the Ghost's story, the production of some credible evidence.

But evidence in Shakespeare is at many critical moments unreliable – tell-tale letters, for example, often turn out to be forged. Should we not expect some of Hamlet's scepticism in *King Lear*, from Gloucester, when presented with a threatening letter purporting to come from his son Edgar, or in *Twelfth Night* from Malvolio finding an extremely unlikely love letter from his mistress Olivia? Why, at the end of *Othello*, is there that litany of documentation, the notes found in Iago's handwriting, the letters found in Roderigo's pocket, that prove Iago's villainy? For whom, by this time in the play, is the issue in doubt? The answer can only be, for Shakespeare. But do the letters really prove anything? Suppose, like Olivia's love letter to Malvolio and Edgar's conspiratorial letter to Edmund, the notes found on Roderigo had been forged by Cassio – not an

inconceivable plot twist, given the surprise endings of *King Lear* or *The Winter's Tale*. Suppose, without knowing it, Iago was on to something.

Audiences take a great deal on faith, and dramatic plotting, especially in comedy, depends heavily on gullibility. The brief scene in *The Merchant of Venice* in which the clown Launcelot Gobbo persuades his old, blind father that the son he has come to Venice to find is dead might be a touchstone for the play's dramatic strategy. Abstracted from its context, the situation is exceedingly painful. The fact that it is here a comic routine says much about the play as a whole. It is no news that sixteenth-century comedy included a good deal of cruelty, but the comedy here seems especially forced. The scene is over almost before it has begun; it is singularly pointless except as an index to family relations in the play's world. The old father is easy to deceive, being blind; the deception leaves him believing he is bereft of the person he cares most about. His situation is a grotesque version of both Shylock's and Antonio's, the only difference being that Gobbo's tragic loss is almost instantly reversible – and even then, Gobbo has difficulty believing that his son Launcelot is not only alive but has actually been the one playing this painful joke. But compare the moment in the trial scene when Portia and Nerissa hear their husbands declare that they would wish their wives dead if that would preserve Bassanio's beloved Antonio – this is presented as both a joke and a justification for Portia's ring trick. Marriage is always a dangerous business in Shakespeare, but it is rarely so openly a power game. There is surely something chillingly cold-blooded about Portia, more than a vestige of her original in *Il Pecorone*, in which the character is a widow who drugs her suitors and then robs them, and only accepts the Bassanio character on his third try.

Let us return to Venice: why are these plays set there? Is Shakespeare's and Jonson's Venice even recognizably Venice?

Shakespeare's source for *The Merchant in Il Pecorone* is set in Venice, which is reason enough for preserving the locale; but Antonio's and Shylock's Venice could easily be London. The only local color, the only place name in the play, is the Rialto, which Shakespeare, like all American tourists, thinks is the name of a bridge, rather than the name of the district in which the bridge is located. Shakespeare's Venice, moreover, has a significant Jewish population, but no ghetto – the Venetian ghetto had been in existence since 1506. In what sense is this Venice?

Its connection with London is especially striking when we consider Shylock. Despite two centuries of editorial attempts to identify Shylock as a biblical name, it is not Jewish, it is unambiguously English, and had been an English surname since Saxon times. Shylock means 'white-haired', like its more common cognates Whitlock and Whitehead, and has never had anything to do with Jews⁴. The other Jews in the play have obviously biblical names – Tubal, Cush, Leah. Critics have racked their brains over this; but Shylock is, like any number of Shakespeare's clowns and grotesques in exotic locales, onomastically English, and the continuing attempt to confine him in what is surely a critical ghetto, reveals more about us than about Shakespeare. To be brief, there are many parallels to the English Shylock. The Navarre of *Love's Labour's Lost* includes Nathaniel and Costard (the most English of apples); all the Athenian workmen in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have English names – Snout, Bottom, Snug, Quince, Flute, Starveling; the Mediterranean duchy of Illyria, roughly the modern Croatia, is home to the relentlessly English Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek; the servants in the Verona of *Romeo and Juliet* are Sampson, Gregory, Peter and Abraham (and no critic to my knowledge has ever claimed that Sampson and Abraham were Jews); the villain in the Sicily of *Much Ado About Nothing*, a world of Pedros, Leonatos, Claudios, Borachios, is Don John. Shakespeare often wanted his

clowns and grotesques to be recognizably English – why is only Shylock's name a problem for us?

The moneylenders of Shakespeare's England, moreover, were not the Jews, but were anyone with some extra cash – including Shakespeare's father, who in 1570 was indicted for charging excessive interest on a loan, and William Shakespeare himself, who in 1609 was suing for repayment of a loan he had made to a Stratford man. The usury deplored by Antonio may be represented by Shakespeare as Italian, but Shylock's business is as English as his name. If I were hunting for the real Shylock of Shakespeare's imagination, I would look not in Old Testament genealogies, but in the continuing Elizabethan debates on banking and interest – for example, in Thomas Wilson's *Discourse Upon Usury* (1572), and more particularly in Richard H. Tawney's masterful long introduction to the modern edition⁵. The Shylocks of Shakespeare's world were absolutely ubiquitous; by the end of the sixteenth century they began to be localized in a few groups: goldsmiths, mercers, scrivener. None of these had anything to do with Jews – the association of Jews with usury in England was entirely conventional. Wilson, on the contrary, is convinced that the rise of usury was precisely a function of Protestantism, of Reformation morality and the abandonment of canon law. As Tawney says, "Calvin approached [economic life] as a man of affairs, who assumed, as the starting point of his social theory, capital, credit, large-scale enterprise" (Wilson 1925: 111), and therefore considered borrowing at interest essential. Much of Shylock's language recalls Puritan rhetoric. Shakespeare has little sympathy with Puritanism, but his distaste for it is not a distaste for outsiders.

If Antonio's and Shylock's Venice looks very much like London, Volpone's Venice might as well be the London of *The Alchemist*. In fact, one suspects that Jonson set the play in Venice not because of anything Italian but precisely to avoid London. Con-

sider the date: the play was written very quickly early in 1606 – Jonson says it took him six weeks. It was being performed at the Globe in the spring, so it would have been written at the latest in February and March, directly in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot – the trial of the plotters took place on January 27. Jonson was acquainted with the conspirators, and had been present at at least one of their meetings; when the plot was revealed he was arrested and interrogated, and subsequently served as a government agent to prove his loyalty. Obviously he felt deeply threatened: he had already been in trouble with the law several times. He had killed an actor in a duel in 1598, and escaped hanging by pleading benefit of clergy (that is, by proving that he was literate); during his time in prison he converted to Catholicism. He had recently again served prison time over passages deemed offensive to the court in the play *Eastward Ho*, of which he was a co-author; and in 1604 was called before the Privy Council on charges of sedition related to his play *Sejanus*.

Therefore in a new play produced in the spring of 1606, one would expect Jonson to tread carefully. So the play is set in Venice, but London is in the air. The cast, in addition to its menagerie of Italian animals, includes the three English travelers, Sir Politic Would-Be and his wife, who have been in Venice for some time, and Peregrine, who has recently arrived from London. Early in the play, Peregrine and Sir Politic meet in the Piazza San Marco, the only place name mentioned in the play. Sir Politic is eager for news from home; he has heard “a most strange thing reported” (*Volpone*, Jonson 2011: II. 1. 19) and wants details. The strange thing turns out not to be the Gunpowder Plot, the explosive news that is on everyone’s lips both in the audience and throughout Europe, but that a raven has built a nest in one of the English royal ships. Peregrine doubts that Sir Politic can be serious and wonders whether he is being made fun of, but decides that his countryman really is the fool

that he seems, and duly produces a litany of trivia – a lion gave birth in the Tower of London; porpoises were seen near London Bridge; a whale was sighted at Woolwich; accounts of messages hidden by spies in toothpicks and pumpkins are reported; and much more of the same. It is clear that something is being avoided – Jonson's Venice is the London that dare not speak its name⁶.

As for the Venice of *Othello*, it is even less specific about the city than *The Merchant of Venice* and *Volpone*. Iago is sent to an inn called the Sagittary to fetch Desdemona. That is the only place name mentioned, and it appears to be Shakespeare's invention. The only element we could call realistic in *Othello's* Venice is that the city is a melting pot, a world of outsiders. Cassio is early in the play identified as a Florentine – this is one of the things Iago holds against him; moreover, his given name, Michael, is English. Brabantio's name implies a Burgundian or Netherlandish origin; Iago and Roderigo are Spanish names; but the strangest name of all is Desdemona. This is the only name Shakespeare took from his source in Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, where she is the only named character, and the name appears in the form Disdemona. This invented name – it occurs nowhere else – may derive from the Greek Dis, the god of the Underworld, and daimon, spirit, so Hell-Spirit; or, less melodramatically, from the Greek dys-, bad, and daimon, so ill-fated (as Othello sums her up, "O ill-starred wench", Shakespeare 2002: V. 2. 273) – in either case, the implications of the name are more ominous than romantic, an embodiment of all Othello's worst fears.

Why, in a play that includes so many unproblematic Italian names (Emilia, Bianca, Gratiano, Lodovico, Montano) did Shakespeare import so many foreigners and retain Disdemona from his source? Are its ominous overtones perhaps part of the point; is Desdemona there as a warning of what is to come, the personification of the dangers of elopement and of Othello's

love of danger? “She loved me for the dangers I had passed / And I loved her that she did pity them” (I. 3. 171-72) – this circular love revolves around danger. As for the name Othello, it is Shakespeare’s invention, a diminutive of Otho, and that may have some relevance: the historical Otho’s wife, the notorious and dangerous Poppaea, cuckolded Otho with the Emperor Nero, and eventually divorced him to marry the emperor. Otho was sent off to be governor of Lusitania. A decade later Otho briefly became emperor, succeeding Galba in a coup, but reigned only for three months. He was defeated in battle by the invading Vitellius, and committed suicide as Othello does, by stabbing himself.

It is worth noting that Cinthio’s story is not even set in Venice. It takes place entirely on Cyprus; we are only told that Desdemona’s Venetian family had not wanted her to marry the Moorish captain. The play’s Venice, then, relentlessly unspecific as it is, is all Shakespeare. As for Shakespeare’s Cyprus, it is not clear when the play’s action is imagined as taking place, but by 1606 Cyprus had for 35 years been a Turkish possession. Othello’s victorious sea-battle, if it has any objective correlative at all, is an exercise in nostalgia.

Why are these plays set in Venice? It will be observed that there is nothing straightforward about any of these examples – London audiences are not simply being given a glimpse of a favorite stop on the Grand Tour; these are not travelogues. Quite the contrary: foreign places may be dangerous, but the dangers are home-grown. What Shakespeare and Jonson know about Venice is what they know about London.

NOTES

¹ I refer readers to the classic historical studies of William J. Bouwsma and

John G. A. Pocock. For a more specific study of Thomas and Lewkenor in relation to Shakespeare and Jonson, the work of David McPherson is detailed and invariably enlightening. See Bouwsma (1968), Pocock (1975), McPherson (1990).

² Published as *Volpone, Ein Lieblose Komödie*.

³ "'Tongue-tied, our Queen?': The Deconstruction of Presence in *The Winter's Tale*", chapter 3 of Felperin (1992).

⁴ For the detailed argument, see Orgel (2003: chapter 6).

⁵ Wilson (1925).

⁶ The case is made in detail by Dutton (2008).

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