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The Merchant of Spain: Coins and Commodities in *Othello*

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Few critics have examined *Othello*'s commercial language. Robert B. Heilman, for example, pointed out that Iago 'has a marked penchant for terms from business but also operates literally on the financial front', and connected his vicious economic history to what Coleridge had called 'motiveless malignity'.¹ More recently, and taking a more historicist approach, Patricia Parker has ingeniously associated Iago, 'the "accountant" who manipulates the credit market of the play', with the 'dishonest or unfaithful accounts' of the early modern period, which were stigmatized because of the use of the new arithmetic's Arabian 'infidel numbers'.² Laura Kolb has similarly discussed the play's engagement with early modern commercial calculation, and argues that Iago wickedly teaches Othello 'to understand human value as both inwardly rooted and outwardly conferred—while making him view these two modes of reckoning worth as fundamentally incompatible', and by this falsely rigid binary succeeds in making him believe that his and his wife's reputations are in 'circulation'. Kolb eloquently illustrates the way in which Iago materializes 'good name' in order to bring the stability of its innate value into question.³

In what follows, in contrast with Kolb and others, I shall demonstrate the fact that Desdemona's inwardly-rooted virtue is materialized and commodified in the form of her handkerchief. In Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1565), its embroidery is focused on only as a one-off means of the Ensign bringing 'the Moor and ma[king] him see' the Corporal's woman making 'a similar one ... near a window where she could be seen'.⁴ In Shakespeare's play, however, the transference of the handkerchief is notably amplified and the reference to the act of taking the pattern out of it is curiously insistent. In attending to Desdemona's handkerchief in a mercantile context, I shall draw on two established, and in fact related, strands of criticism on *Othello*: a Marxist reading to the effect that Shakespeare wrote his work in the early stage of capitalism in which economic parameters were shifting, and a historicist reading based on the contemporary significance of the Spanish elements of the play. I shall argue thereby that *Othello*, like some of Shakespeare's other economically orientated plays, thematizes, or at least reflects, the conflict between domestic economy and market economy in the early modern period, before concluding with a consideration of Shakespeare's own career contrasted with that of his father, John, in order to explain the dramatist's conflicting stances regarding economic liquidity.

In his study of the relationship between the market and the theatre, concerning the shift of the ground of commodity exchange in the early modern period, Jean-Christophe Agnew states: 'From the

dissolution of the monasteries to the Restoration, between a quarter and a third of England's total landed area entered the private market, with sales peaking by the second decade of the seventeenth century'.⁵ The shift from the mediaeval economy based on landholding to the burgeoning capitalist economy paralleled the decline not only of papal rule in England but also of the aristocracy and the landed gentry in general. That is, capitalist tenancy and the sale of rents facilitated the liquidity of the land, the change which the villain of Philip Massinger's drama described as 'the acres melting',⁶ and besides, those unable to own or rent land, and those dismissed from the households of the armigerous classes, inevitably joined the swelling ranks of wage labour. Accordingly, the feudal relationship of master's favour and servant's loyalty, too, changed to a monetary contract: from that of the *gemeinschaft* to that of the *gesellschaft*.

If the aim of the drama was 'to show', as Shakespeare's Hamlet says, 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure',⁷ it is scarcely surprising that the dramatists of the early seventeenth century reflected these economic phenomena of the time. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600), for example, according to the irony of Carlo Buffone, a jester, a young man cannot claim to be 'an accomplished gentleman, that is, a gentleman of the time' unless he has sold 'four or five hundred acres of your best land' to buy 'two or three trunkes of apparell'.⁸ And John Webster in *The White Devil* (c. 1612) has Flamineo complain of his poverty: 'My father prov'd himself a gentleman, / Sold all's land'.⁹ In John Marston's *Histrion-Mastix* (1610), Mavortius, a noble, is accused of the dismissal of his feudal retainers: 'For service, this is savage recompence. / Your Fathers bought lands and maintained men: / You sell your lands, and scarce keepe rascall boyes'.¹⁰ Shakespeare, too, has John of Gaunt lament Richard's venality and war debts in *Richard II* (1595): 'this dear dear land [of England] // Is now leased out ... / Like to a tenement or pelting farm' (2.1.57-60). Likewise, Timon, deeply in debt, says to Flavius: 'Let all my land be sold', and his steward replies, "'Tis all engag'd, some forfeited and gone' (*Timon of Athens* [1605-1606], 2.2.145-146). And in *Othello*, Iago urges Roderigo ten times to 'Put money in thy purse' (1.3.340), and to have a supply of cash at his disposal. The Venetian gentleman decides: 'I'll sell all my land' (1.3.380).

Iago, who says 'I know my price, I am worth no worse a place' (1.1.10), believes that military 'service' (1.1.34) is no longer (as presupposed by the 'old gradation' [1.1.36]) a relationship determined by natural ties of 'love and duty' (1.1.58) but a species of commercial contract. Iago, therefore, envies the success of Cassio, denigrating the latter as 'a great arithmetician' (1.1.18). He also regards 'this counter-caster' (1.1.30) as an epitome of the mercenary world of 'debtor and creditor' (1.1.30) in which the key to all relationships is cash. In characteristic self-contradiction, however, as Michael Neill has suggested, 'it is actually Iago himself who is the perfect denizen of that world'.¹¹ It does not seem to be a mere coincidence that Iago's hiding place, when he tries to kill Cassio in conspiracy with Roderigo, is 'behind this bulk [=stall]' (5.1.1). There, his plot is calculated so as to benefit him regardless of the victims of this 'removing' (4.2.229): Cassio, Roderigo, or both. Iago says 'Every way makes my gain' (5.1.14). And that is why Roderigo realises from the beginning of the play

that a phenomenon such as Iago's friendship with him is based on the relationship in which '[thou, Iago] hast had my purse / As if the strings were thine' (1.1.2-3). When Iago spits out that 'I follow but myself ... for my peculiar end' (1.1.57-59), he almost seems to anticipate Marx's description of how the bourgeoisie annihilated 'the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", [leaving] no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment"'.¹² When Iago tells Brabantio to 'Look to ... your daughter and your [money] bags!' (1.1.79), when he persuades Roderigo to 'put money in thy purse', and especially when he deceives Othello, what he tries to draw them into seems to be the world of a greater liquidity, to borrow Agnew's words once again, 'a society surcharged with meanings and intentions, ... that only contract could render tangible, realizable' (p. 99). Contracting parties resort to oaths, witnesses, and/or visible tokens because all contracts attest to their concern to frame the market within the governing structure of authority and power. In this context, 'the ocular proof' (3.3.363) Othello demands aggressively can be seen as a physical symbol of his transactions with Desdemona.

It may be assumed that the tragedy of Othello happens when he has been dragged into the market economy. It is true that Othello uses mercantile words before Iago has trapped him, showing that he is also involved in the marriage market dominated by the patriarchal society of the time: he says to his wife, 'The purchase made, ... / That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you' (2.3.9-10).¹³ It should be recalled, however, that since their marriage is not approved by the patriarch Brabantio, his daughter is not provided with proper dowries, through which she could have been an economic asset so as to create symbolic capital in the form of family alliances. Desdemona herself, however, seems to be proud that the fact that she did love the Moor might be proclaimed to the world all the more loudly because of her 'scorn of fortunes' (1.3.250).

In early modern economic practice, as Craig Muldrew has explained, most market relations were informal and 'done on trust, or credit, without specific legally binding instruments'.¹⁴ In other words, what really kept trade going was the practice of sales on credit. What Shakespeare often thematises, however, is the crises of this credit system. The expanding circulation of money, that is, the infiltration of society by the market economy, disrupts the fragile networks of exchange built upon trust and credit. In reality, as C. W. Brooks has illustrated, there was a spectacular rise in the absolute and relative frequencies of actions for the recovery of debt in Common Pleas and King's Bench from 1560 to 1640.¹⁵ In the case of *Othello*, too, it should be emphasized that at the beginning Othello's marriage contract with Desdemona was based 'upon her faith' (1.3.295) and fulfilled by their mutual love. *Othello* itself is literally filled with the language of 'credit', 'reputation', and 'trust'.¹⁶ Iago's strategy, however, is that when Desdemona pleads for Cassio's reinstatement, 'by how much she strives to do him good / She shall undo her credit with the Moor' (2.3.353-354).

Their marriage-trade pact has been precarious from the beginning, because it is exogamous. In Shakespeare's day, daughters were commonly used as commodities of transaction in marriage suits. For Brabantio, therefore, his daughter's 'credit' (1.3.98) has already gone after he discovers her love

for Othello. As Iago says, she has rejected ‘many proposed matches / Of her own clime, complexion and degree’ (3.3.233-234), and he intimates that, going beyond the endogamous bounds, she is easily transferred: ‘’Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands’ (3.3.161). Moments in which items or persons of value change hands are not easily made into stable ideological markers; they have an unsettling tendency to upset ordered categories. Desdemona, with the liquidity injected into by Iago, seems to move as if a coin or a commodity in communities increasingly permeated by market relations. To the deceived Othello, Desdemona appears to be fluid: ‘She was false as water’ (5.2.132). He says to her sarcastically, ‘I took you for that cunning whore of Venice / That married with Othello’ (4.2.91-92), because women as commodities in prostitution demonstrate well the very principles of liquidity and exchangeability in a market economy, where — as Bellafronte, the eponymous heroine of *The Honest Whore*, complains — ‘shallow sonne & heir ... / Would waste all his inheritance, to purchase / A filthy loathd disease’.¹⁷ Correspondingly, Othello becomes fluid as the stigma of cuckoldry deprives him of his public reputation, which has given him a stable identity. Deceived by Iago, he comes to exclaim: ‘O curse of marriage / That we can call these delicate creatures ours / And not their appetites!’ (3.3.272-274).

In order to provoke Othello’s jealousy, Iago takes advantage of prevailing male anxieties about cuckoldry. One way of explaining this cultural phenomenon is that it was animated by material desires for pure lines of inheritance and noble reputations among men. In other words, there were growing fears that the traditional aristocratic order was disintegrating in the early modern period. For our concern, however, I would like to highlight another way of understanding it, that is, as Douglas Bruster has argued, that ‘the connection with marriage and cuckoldry resides, at root, in the problems of ownership’. If Bruster is right, cuckoldry is considered to be a fear associated with merchants, who must accustom themselves to allowing wealth and commodities to pass from their hands into those of another, and to risking loss and leaving the value of commodities to chance. Bruster’s argument is convincing when he says: ‘cuckoldry acted as a kind of metonymic double for the cash marketplace, a symbol that, like money, worked to eradicate the distance and difference between the sexual and economic terms’. Cuckoldry, which is feared and laughed at in many early modern dramas, including *Othello*, may be seen in this context: ‘the dramatists of Renaissance London saw cuckoldry as not only a natural but perhaps *the* natural collective metaphor with which to gloss a thematics of nascent capitalism’.¹⁸ And if it is possible to see Iago as a prototype of a merchant in nascent capitalism, it may be natural for him to expand his business and think that because he was cuckolded, he must make Othello cuckolded, too (1.3.386-403). It should be remembered, however, that his sales talk depends retrogressively on kindling a vestigial horror derived from ‘Medieval misogyny’.¹⁹ Othello himself, therefore, has not succumbed to a new regime of exchange value, but only to an old order which contains its own internal contradictions.

Othello, thinking he was cuckolded, begins to look at himself from a hostile outside viewpoint. Then, his identity becomes unstable, while his ‘solid virtue’ (4.1.266) also becomes fluid, and

eventually he calls himself ‘he that *was* Othello’ (5.2.281, my emphasis). In Act 4, he sarcastically says aside to Cassio, ‘Have you stored me? Well’ (4.1.127). *OED* cites as the first instance of the noun ‘Store, 7. b’, which means ‘The stock of a tradesman’, from a work by Francis Bacon (1605). If it is possible for this nuance to be conveyed by the verb Othello uses here, it is an earlier instance of the word as a mercantile term.²⁰ After being dragged into this fluid world by Iago, and himself made, as it were, another merchant, almost until the end of the drama, Othello continues to be in the market for his wife. When Othello as a victim of cuckoldry denounces the perpetrators by saying that Cassio ‘hath — ud’s death — used thee’ (5.2.69), for him, having sexual intercourse with his wife (*OED*, 10b) is synonymous with expending, or consuming her as a commodity (*OED*, 12). And Othello, taking on the roles of God’s judge and a jewel merchant at the same time, looks back on his transaction:

Ay, with Cassio. Had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I’d not have sold her for it.

(5.2.139-142)

According to early modern lapidaries, chrysolite was associated with, specifically, female chastity.²¹ Here, it should be noted that in Othello’s mind, not only the green gemstone but also Desdemona’s chastity is treated as alienable. Perhaps, desperate about the fact that they all have been sucked into the whirlpool of the market economy, the outraged Emilia, defending Desdemona, condemns Othello in commercial terms: ‘She was too fond of her most filthy bargain!’ (5.2.153). Here, a commercialised relationship has replaced a more meaningful kind of affective bond between man and wife. The alienating pressures of mercantilism have transformed the relationship based on *gemeinschaft* to that of *gesellschaft*.²²

Commodifying female desire by effectively mobilizing it, Iago is, as it were, a merchant. Jordi Coral is right to find the ‘continuities between Shylock and Iago’,²³ because both are usurious in that they inject liquidity: Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* says, ‘I will go and purse the ducats straight’ (1.3.174), and Iago repeats, ‘fill thy purse with money’ (1.3.348). Furthermore, what is noteworthy for our concern is that throughout late Elizabethan and early Jacobean drama, merchants were often portrayed as brokers of their wives’ sexuality. For example, Corvino, a merchant in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* (1606), belongs to this commonplace of characterization when he attempts to use his wife ‘Bright as [Volpone’s] gold! and lovely as [his] gold!’ for his benefit, saying ‘if you be / Loyal and mine, be won, respect my [business] venture’.²⁴ And ‘Curtezan’ in Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Terme* (1606), alluding to marriage as ‘hole-sale’, i.e., prostitution, asks, ‘Is not hole-sale the chiefest merchandize? Doe you thinke some Merchants could keepe their wiues so braue, but for their hole-

sale?²⁵ In *Othello*, using a variation on this convention, Shakespeare has Iago's wife work for her husband's benefits voluntarily: 'But for all the whole world? ud's pity, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't' (4.3.73-76).

Another characteristic of merchants which Shakespeare often exhibits is their dishonesty. For example, Autolycus, a rogue in *The Winter's Tale* (1610), says 'A lie; ... It becomes none but tradesmen' (4.4.722-724). Disguising himself as a 'pedlar' (4.4.181), he is obviously most closely associated with the social mobility of a market economy in which the activities of selling and stealing are integral parts. In using words that have multivalent and improvised meanings to achieve his end, and especially stating that 'My traffic is sheets' (4.3.23), referring to cloth, bed linen, and sex, he is remarkably consanguineous with Iago. The impelling motivation of Iago's 'sport and profit' originates in his suspicion that 'twixt my sheets / He's done my office' (1.3.385, 386-387), and, significantly, the tool with which he deceives Othello is 'a handkerchief / Spotted with strawberries' (3.3.437-438), which is, as Lynda E. Boose cogently argued a long time ago, 'a visually recognizable reduction of Othello[']s and Desdemona's wedding-bed sheets'.²⁶

Stating that 'stained wedding sheets might be communally displayed as evidence of the sanctified marital blood pact', Boose adduces several examples, which will emerge as meaningful, given the recent studies on the Spanish connection of *Othello*.²⁷ She cites William J. Fielding's observation that 'this formality prevailed in the exalted royal circles of Spain', and Edward J. Wood, who notes that "'The early Spaniards had a custom, which they learned from the Moors," of hanging "evidences of the bride's purity" out of the wedding chamber window'. Furthermore, in the '1529 divorce deliberations of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon', according to Boose, 'Cardinal Wolsey maintained', in order to prove that the previous union with Henry's elder brother, Arthur, had been consummated, 'that "the counsailers of *Fardinando* being resident here for that purpose, dyd send the sheets thei ley in, spotted with bloude into *Spaine*, in full testymonie & prouf thereof"'.²⁸ In this context, the Spanish-named Iago convinces himself that 'Trifles light as air' can be 'strong / As proofs of holy writ' (3.3.325-327).

Moreover, given that Iago and his accomplice Roderigo 'embody what the members of Shakespeare's audience ... recognized as "Spanish spirits"',²⁹ and that Desdemona's handkerchief is, as Ian Smith has argued, black,³⁰ Iago may represent a Spanish merchant, who dealt in Spanish black handkerchiefs. As Parker has noted, 'black silk in the period was associated with Spain, and Antwerp in [Spanish-held] Brabant was the principal locus of the transmission of silk to England'.³¹ According to Schneider, 'Ambassadors from the Spanish court of Philip II flaunted silk ... in black'. For the 'Hapsburg court of Philip II' was influenced by 'the political economy of other renowned "black courts" — [including] the fifteenth-century Burgundian court of Philip the Good'.³² The meaning of the colour black, however, is ambiguous. If the blackness is connected with Iago, it is the colour of 'Diabolo' (2.3.157), and, as Ian Smith has further noted, it renders 'a visible, material manifestation of Iago's mental monstrosity unpacked'.³³ However, considering that the handkerchief 'dy'd in mummy' should

be aligned with the black body of the Moor, its blackness may suggest his inner resistance to economic pressure from outside. The same essay by Schneider explains that Elizabeth's court was also a black court since her father was influenced by the court of Philip the Good, and that 'black and white were thoroughly intertwined with England's determination to hold its own in the lively textile rivalries of the time. Above all, these colors served to repel the brilliantly dyed silks and wools originating in the expansionist city-states of Italy and carried around Europe by precocious Italian merchants'.³⁴ It may be argued, then, that the blackness of the handkerchief is compounded by the fear of Spain and the antipathy to capitalism.

Othello has repeatedly been linked to the controversial peace treaty the new Anglo-Scottish king made with Spain in 1604, the same year as its performance at James's court. Eric Griffin, for example, has argued that 'Placed at the moment of *Pax Hispanica*, *Othello* appears to counter the new Stuart openness with Tudor discrimination'.³⁵ Furthermore, considering *Othello* in the broad context of contemporary European politics, Patricia Parker has perceptively pointed out that the sounding of the alarm bell which prompts a strikingly Spanish oath from Iago's — 'Who's that which rings the bell? Diablo, ho! / The town will rise' (2.3.157-158, my underlining) — can be connected with the Spanish sacking of Antwerp and the consequent threat of Spanish Invasion. The strategic location of Spanish power in the Low Countries just across the English Channel made it a repeated source of invasion fears in England. The relevant anti-Spanish literature includes *A Larum for London, or the Siedge of Antwerpe*, 'the play performed by Shakespeare's own company and published in 1602', and Ralph (or Rafe) Norris's ballad *A Warning to London by the Fall of Antwerp* (1577), which 'warned ominously not to trust the Spaniard's Machiavellian "craft" or guile, "fine flatter" or "fair face"'.³⁶ In addition, the unknown painter of *The Summerset House Conference, 1604* depicted the tapestry, which represents a scene commonly associated with deceit or betrayal: David, intending to steal the wife of Uriah the Hittite, is handing to him the sealed message in order that he should be killed on a battlefield (2 Samuel, 11:14-15). The delegates from Spain and the Spanish Netherlands who sit on the left in front of the tapestry must have been regarded as representatives of duplicity.³⁷ Given this historical background, it is fairly reasonable to assume, I think, that Shakespeare's audience received similar warnings from Iago's machinations, and from the 'sword of Spain' (5.2.251), with which Othello stabs Iago.

Literature that attacked Spain's aggressive Catholicism frequently complained about the hindrance that Spain caused to the British economy. In *Royall Exchange* (1597), for instance, John Payne says 'Now ... your traffyke ys hindered navigation restrained and your former gaynes greatly Impayred'. From the Protestant's point of view, however, he foresees the rival country's political, religious and economic decline: 'so can neyther the second spanishe flete the power of papists w[i]th the indian Gould be able to stand but rather flee and consume from the Quene of England and her religiouse subjects'.³⁸ The strong association between Spain and gold is also evident in one of Theodore de Bry's most striking images from his virulently anti-Catholic volume of travel engravings,

America (1594), that of Amerindians taking revenge on avaricious Spaniards by pouring molten gold in their mouths.³⁹ And John Donne alludes to the prevalence of Spanish gold coins in 'Elegy 1. The Bracelet': 'Spanish Stampes, still traailing, ... are become as Catholique as their king' (lines 29-30).⁴⁰ Here, considering that Shakespeare's was the time when more and more people came to trust in the objective, real existence of money, the time when the ultimate factor which led the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella to negotiate the treaty with James in 1604 was 'the ongoing cash crises',⁴¹ Marx's analogy might seem curiously apposite: 'The monetary system is essentially Catholic, the credit system essentially Protestant'.⁴² At least to the Protestant audience, then, *Othello* might convey the notion that just as it is faith that brings salvation, so it is the lack of faith in love that brings damnation to Othello. He wants to have the objective, real existence of 'the ocular proof'.

The sudden influx of New World gold had caused massive inflation. Between 1530 and 1650 European prices approximately tripled, while between 1500 and 1640 English food prices rose by 600 percent. Europe experienced what has come to be known as the 'Price Revolution', which meant that gold coins became part of commerce at a local and humble level. Furthermore, adulterated Spanish coins and their wide circulation beyond national boundaries accelerated a consumer economy wherein consumption could not keep up with inflated prices and devalued specie. England, too, had already gone through the 'Great Debasement' of 1542-1551, when Henry VIII lowered the specie content of England's coins as a means of raising revenue, and then Elizabeth's 'Great Re-coinage' of 1560. Hence, it is not surprising that 'Of the many tracts on trade that appeared in the early seventeenth century, the majority fretted ... about the debasement of money'.⁴³ One way in which this economic situation of the time was reflected in Shakespeare's drama was through the contemporary alignment of adultery with adulterated coin. Adulteration makes both coins and women light, i.e., devalued and sexually licentious. In *Othello*, dragged into the contemporary market economy by Iago's wife, the Moor has depreciated the precious value of Desdemona drastically. He has regarded his wife as, as it were, an adulterated coin that has circulated widely, and has underestimated her true worth. It may be significant that the last favour Othello asks of Lodovico in relating his own tragedy is to 'Nothing extenuate' (5.2.340).

And conversely, Othello has estimated the value of the handkerchief at an inflated rate, 'More than indeed belonged to such a trifle' (5.2.226). In Act 3, Scene 4, while he obstinately orders Desdemona to bring him the handkerchief, she tries to divert his attention by reminding him of Cassio's unresolved plight.

OTHELLO

Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak, is't out o'the way?

DESDEMONA

Heaven bless us!

OTHELLO

she has not lost the virginity it signifies. Ironically, Othello's reiteration of the word 'handkerchief' seems to fuel in the audience's mind its tragic inflation, and emphasises its actual insignificance. If the handkerchief could be regarded as 'a trifle', the audience, like Thomas Rymer, would have said 'So much ado, so much stress, so much passion and repetition about an Handkerchief! Why was not this call'd the *Tragedy of the Hankerchief*?'⁴⁴ For both Othello and Desdemona, however, it is not a mere trifle because its value is somehow literally incarnated in the physical matter of the handkerchief. Emilia says that Desdemona 'so loves the token // That she reserves it evermore about her / To kiss and talk to' (3.3.297, 299-300). On the material level, the handkerchief is a token, a sign that represents Othello. And if it is, as Ian Smith has demonstrated, a black handkerchief, this is even more appropriate. However, it is likely that Shakespeare's Protestant audience regarded the way in which Desdemona treats it as idolatry, a mode of thought that condemns the autonomy of representation. It is similar to Volpone's worship of gold as 'the dumb god': 'let me kiss, / With adoration, thee' (*Volpone*, 1.1.22, 11-12). Here, it may still be an anachronism to apply the Marxist concept, commodity fetishism, the term Marx uses to describe the erasure of the human energy that has wrought an object so that it seems to have an entirely independent existence. However, the handkerchief can clearly be said to be a fetish in the psychological sense. When Desdemona claims that if she lost it, 'I had rather have lost my purse / Full of crusadoes' (3.4.25-26), her remark not only suggests that its value is privatized and incomparable, but also reveals that the handkerchief and money exist in the same cerebral area of her brain, thus indicating the possible exchanges of gold for trifles that were so common in fetish discourse. Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* presents a comic version of fetishism when, selling all his 'trompery' (4.4.597), he says 'They throng who should buy first, as if my trinkets had been hallow'd and brought a benediction to the buyer' (4.4.600-602). It is worth noting, as David Hawkes has explained, that 'the market economy and the worship of idols are similar (we might say "homologous") forms of psychological fetishism that result from the displacement of *telos* by "the works of men's hands"'.⁴⁵

The tendency of the market economy to evaluate an object's exchange value over its use-value results in an ethically unacceptable fetishization of commodities. In *Othello*, the handkerchief is referred to as having a natural, intrinsic use value when Desdemona first attempts to bind Othello's aching forehead with it, only to be rebuffed: 'your napkin is too little' (3.3.291), when Iago claims to have seen Cassio 'wipe his beard with [it]' (3.3.442), and when Othello says as an excuse to demand it of Desdemona that he wants to wipe his nose because 'a salt and sullen rheum offends' him (3.4.51). It is well known among critics that Shakespeare has added to Cinthio's 'handkerchief embroidered most delicately in the Moorish fashion' the deliberate pattern of strawberries sewn onto the handkerchief.⁴⁶ It is true, as Natasha Korda has argued, that Shakespeare domesticates it as household stuff, because 'the strawberry plant ... is among the most frequently occurring of such objects represented in English domestic embroidery surviving from the period'.⁴⁷ Yet at the same time, when Emilia says 'I'll have the work ta'en out' (3.3.300), the audience's attention almost inevitably moves from the domestic use-value of the handkerchief to the emblematic meaning of the decorative

embroidery on the surface of it.⁴⁸ As Marc Shell reminds us, the history of representation can be characterized by the progressive independence of signs, whether words, money, or visual images, from things.⁴⁹ For Emilia, Cassio, and Bianca, who are successively involved in the business of ‘taking out’ (or copying) the pattern, the value of the embroidery design is obviously separated from that of the handkerchief itself, and then the representation independently circulates, as it were, as a detached and manipulable commodity in the market exchange, even if its emblematic meaning is not realized by those who handle it: Cassio says, ‘I like the work well: ere it be demanded, / As like enough it will, I’d have it copied’ (3.4.189-190).

In this context, Othello’s exoticising and occult explanation of the provenance of the handkerchief not only makes it fetishised (especially as opposed to another, apparently contradictory, explanation of it as ‘an antique *token* / My father gave my mother’ [5.2.214-215, my emphasis]),⁵⁰ but also might be taken as expressing a desire and effort on his part to stress the importance of material production, so that he may go against the system of market exchange and the early modern tendency towards the de-materialization of Western consumer economies into a structure of signs that lack any necessary referent in the material process of production.

OTHELLO

’Tis true, there’s magic in the web of it.
A sibyl that had numbered in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,
And it was dyed in mummy, which the skillful
Conserved of maidens’ hearts.

(3.4.71-77)

Here, whether his story is true or not, Othello frantically tries to impress Desdemona with the uniqueness and the irreplaceability of the handkerchief, thus implying that value arises from production rather than circulation. Consequently, however, the cloth attains a purely imaginary, fetishistic status, departing from its natural use-value, and becomes an end in itself. ‘To lose’t or give’t away were’, as Othello fears, ‘such perdition / As nothing else could match’ (3.4.68-69). It seems that after it is dragged into the world of the market economy, Othello’s handkerchief has become what Korda perceptively called a ‘composite artifact’, and it may justifiably be compared to ‘the quasimonetarized use of gold in West African societies after their contact with gold-seeking European traders, for while gold began to function as a measure and store of value within these societies, it was simultaneously fashioned into fetishes and worn as “charms or amulets to bring good fortune or to preserve the wearer from harm”’.⁵¹ Alternatively, in terms of the economic history of seventeenth-

century England, in which, as Hawkes has explained, ‘the economic attitude known to posterity as “bullionism” was challenged and defeated by thinkers who achieved the conceptual breakthrough of separating financial value from gold bullion’,⁵² Othello may be regarded as a bullionist who superstitiously believed that gold is value incarnate. He mistakes the sign for the referent, the handkerchief for his wife’s chastity.

More significantly, however, despite his effort to resist the market economy, the inflated words Othello employs in his explanation indicate that he has already been enmeshed by it. Othello’s strange tale with which he tries to attach added value to the handkerchief might have reminded the contemporary audience not so much of the importance of chastity it represents to the jealous husband as of the materiality of the handkerchief itself. During the early modern period, handkerchiefs were signifiers of wealth and status, and ‘the demand for [them], along with similar luxury items, must be set against the economic and cultural background of a new consumerism’.⁵³ Since England was several steps removed from the luxury fiber, silk, ‘Lionel Cranfield, a major London merchant’, for example, ‘engaged in the importation of Italian silks in the 1590s and tripled his wealth between 1598 and 1601’.⁵⁴ James I also promoted the English silk trade. In 1607, as the first stage in establishing a silk industry, he required landowners to buy and plant 10,000 mulberry trees, the leaves of which were the food of the silkworm.⁵⁵ In addition, dyestuffs and dyers were involved in the market economy of London. As Jane Schneider has noted, for instance, Philip Henslowe, who built the Rose Theatre in Southwark in 1586, was ‘a dyer and moneylender’.⁵⁶ Judging from Othello’s explanation that the high-quality silk material was ‘dyed in mummy’ (line 76), it is perfectly reasonable to assume that, as Ian Smith has argued, Othello’s handkerchief was dyed in ‘the black pitchy substance known as bitumen’, which was extracted from mummified bodies.⁵⁷ As bitumen was also considered highly medicinal, there was a growing European demand for mummies from as early as the twelfth century. E. A. Wallis Budge says of the trade in mummy, ‘In the year 1564 a physician called Guy de la Fontaine made an attempt to see the stock of the mummies of the chief merchant in mummies at Alexandria’.⁵⁸ And according to Karl H. Dannenfeldt, the bitumen extracted ‘from embalmed virgins was deemed especially effective and sold for a higher price’.⁵⁹ In Shakespeare’s day, too, there was an established trade in powdered mummy because of the presence of bitumen in it. When Mosca in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* says of Corbaccio, an old gentleman, ‘Sell him for mummia, he’s half dust already’ (4.4. 14), he refers to one of the types of commodified mummies, which is ‘flesh taken from fresh corpses (usually those of executed felons, and ideally within about three days) and then treated and dried by Paracelsian practitioners’.⁶⁰

According to this explanation of Othello’s, the handkerchief, prior to his possession of it, has circulated in an all-female circuit of exchange: ‘That handkerchief / Did an Egyptian to my mother give / She was a charmer’ (3.4.57-59). Cloth had, of course, long been connected with a normalizing concept of domestic conduct. Domestic industry and feminine qualities of patient production such as weaving and spinning emblemized chastity. That is why Othello appears to praise his wife when he

describes her as 'so delicate with her needle' (4.1.184-185). In the drama, however, the handkerchief's bodily and narrative displacement and relocation go beyond the boundary of female domestic economy: it has passed from Othello's parents to Othello, from Othello to Desdemona, from Desdemona to Emilia, then from Emilia to Iago, from Iago to Cassio, and finally from Cassio to Bianca. Given that the foreign silk handkerchief was one of the 'sought-after commodities' in Shakespeare's England,⁶¹ it may be argued that its transfer from one person to another replicates a capitalistic circulation in the market economy. 'Because textiles', as Dymphna Callaghan has noted, 'could be recycled and refashioned, they were a medium of exchange, almost as fluid as money'.⁶² The tragic potential of the handkerchief in *Othello* lies in its economic fluidity, and it becomes a libidinated commodity at the pivotal moment during this circulation: when Othello, suspecting himself a cuckold, complains allusively that 'I have a pain upon my forehead, here' (3.3.288). This is the very point where the handkerchief's use value begins to change to its exchange value.

In Shakespeare's time, embroidery, magical or otherwise, could well belong to the arena of the market economy. Concerning the production of embroidery, Lawrence Stone wrote that it 'really ran away with the money': the material could be expensive and 'the labour involved [was] prodigious'.⁶³ Therefore, the 'work', by which Emilia and Cassio mean the pattern of the handkerchief, signifies industrial and commercial labour. In *Othello*, however, the basic anxiety about the transaction of the handkerchief is clearly sexual as well as commercial. Working on socially structured male jealousy, Iago hints at the sexual nature of it when he goads the Moor, 'if I give my wife a handkerchief — // She may, I think, bestow't on any man' (4.1.10-13).⁶⁴ Accordingly, in the drama, the 'work' also has a sexual sense, alluding to copulation. In Iago's rhetoric, just as needlework, often shortened just to 'work', connotes not only a dutifully chaste, silent and obedient woman's labour, but also a female sexual activity involving the use of phallic implements. Iago, condemning sexual pleasure in marriage (an attitude typical of the Catholic misogyny), says to Desdemona, 'You rise to play, and go to bed to work' (2.1.115).⁶⁵ And later Othello claims that Desdemona rewarded Cassio's 'amorous works' (5.2.211) with the gift of her handkerchief. The 'work' of Desdemona's handkerchief, then, not only suggests the virtue of the patient feminine labour of housework, but also clearly demonstrates the irony of commercial transaction and prostitution. The handkerchief encodes, through the matrix of its 'work', the erotic basis of labour, and the fact, or at least the implication, that its 'work' can be copied, by analogy with Othello's sexual act. Another irony, however, is that while Desdemona and Emilia come to be abused as whores, it is Bianca, a Venetian courtesan, who emphasizes her inability or unwillingness, either to copy, or 'take out the work': 'I'll take out no work on't!' (4.1.153,154). Boose is correct in noting that "'The work" stained upon this symbolic token, the act between one husband and one wife, exists as a unique absolute and is therefore not subject to duplication or eradication'.⁶⁶

The point is, however, that the tragedy of the drama is created by Iago, who, to extend the mercantile metaphor, has put this not-for-sale commodity in the shop, producing the illusory world in which Desdemona is on the verge of circulating. This is an imaginary world of signifiers that slip

without referring to the signified. When woken up to Iago's half real and half fictional story of Desdemona's marriage, Brabantio exclaims, 'This accident is not unlike my dream' (1.1.140). Iago creates what Guy Debord has called 'the spectacle', in which 'the principle of commodity fetishism' is fulfilled, and 'where the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images which are superior to that world yet at the same time impose themselves as *eminently* perceptible'. Or alternatively, Iago draws Othello inextricably into the 'world the spectacle holds up to view', that is, 'the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience'.⁶⁷

In Shakespeare's drama, the irresistibly invading fluidity of the market economy seems to be set against the ideal stability of the domestic economy. For example, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff, a city outsider in rural Windsor, attempts to capitalize on the wives of two wealthy citizens, and colonize their home territory. Of Mistress Page he not only says 'She bears the purse ... she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty' (1.3.68-69), but, seeing her and Mistress Ford as his 'East and West Indies', he also insists, 'I will trade to them both' (1.3.71-72). And this merchant-colonizer sends his page with his love letters to them both: 'Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores' (1.3.80). Rather expectedly, however, Falstaff's assaults on their domesticity fail in farcical ways. One of the ways in which these chaste wives drive back his invasion seems significant: in order to escape from Mistress Ford's jealous husband, Falstaff is concealed in a basket of dirty linen and carried out to be thrown in the Thames. His sexual and economic invasion is repelled by a symbol of orderly domestic economy: his filthy body is identified as foul laundry. Thus, Mistress Ford says, 'he will have need of washing, so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit' (3.3.182-184).

In *The Comedy of Errors*, we see the commercial and the domestic spheres struggling for dominance. In Act 2, Scene 1, Adriana, the neglected and disgruntled wife, sends her servant, Dromio of Ephesus, to her husband, but Dromio, having mistaken a Syracusan merchant, Antipholus, for his master, Antipholus of Ephesus, informs her as follows:

When I desir'd him to come home to dinner,
He ask'd me for a [thousand] marks in gold:
"Tis dinner-time," quoth I: "My gold!" quoth he.
"Your meat doth burn," quoth I: "My gold!" quoth he.
"Will you come?" quoth I: "My gold" quoth he;
"Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?"
"The pig," quoth I, "is burn'd": "My gold!" quoth he.
"My mistress, sir," quoth I: "Hang up thy mistress!
I know not thy mistress, out on thy mistress!"

(2.1.60-68)

As the drama progresses, the audience realises that Adriana identifies meals at home with domestic

harmony, and that she employs 'eating and consuming imagery to establish nurture as vital to the household economy'.⁶⁸ This scene seems to present, therefore, a comic clash between household and market, domestic economy and market economy. While Dromio, the spokesperson for the domestic sphere, talks concretely of the burnt pork and angry mistress, Antipholus only repeats, 'My gold!', his mind wholly occupied by money, which partly endorses the possible reason Luciana offers for men's absence from home: 'Because their business still lies out a' door' (2.1.11). The reiteration of the words 'My gold' on Antipholus's part represents his resistance to the household economy. Conversely, when Adriana admits surprise, '[That] he unknown to me should be in debt' (4.2.48), she recognises that the marketplace poses threats to their marital relations. Odd as it may sound, it can be argued that Othello is in the same position as Adriana, his reiteration of the word 'handkerchief', therefore, conveying his desperate desire that it, and his wife, should stay within the household economy. Feminist critics would maintain that Othello's iteration of 'The handkerchief!' and his repetitive order for his wife to 'Fetch me the handkerchief' in Act 3, Scene 4, is a violent manifestation of the patriarch's social desire to confine his wife within the walls and limits of domestic space. At the same time, it may be taken as a word of resistance repeated against the market economy. In Othello's mind, however, the 'handkerchief' has already become different from the 'napkin' Emilia found. When she said, 'I am glad I have found this napkin' (3.3.294), it had remained as yet uncommodified, at least for her and Desdemona, and acquired symbolic capital in their domestic economies, guaranteeing both of their loyalties to both of their husbands.

It is difficult, of course, to ascertain correctly how Shakespeare himself thought of money, because he followed the trade of show business quite successfully, and he was, to use John Wheeler's words, 'one [who] selleth words'.⁶⁹ On the other hand, however, many of his dramatic characters express, or at least suggest, their antipathy towards money and its wicked power. Timon of Athens provides a typical example, condemning gold as 'Thou common whore of mankind' (4.3.43). An evident desire to return to the *gemeinschaft* seems to be found in Shakespeare. Terry Eagleton, quoting Marx's idea that money brings about 'the universal confounding and distorting of things', has noted that, 'confronting with this universal confounding of things, it is possible for Shakespeare to turn back to a more traditional concept of reciprocities, that of feudalism itself'.⁷⁰ This conservative attitude of Shakespeare would be manifested by his staging characters who convey their antipathy to the fluidity of money, and the idea of commerce and commoditization as a source of corruptions. In this context, it may be recalled, Othello in the denouement of the drama tries to leave behind him the valiant figure of himself fighting at the battle of Aleppo. It may be argued that Othello's killing 'a turbaned Turk' (5.2.351) in Aleppo signifies his unconscious efforts to block expansion of the Turkish economic power. Aleppo was captured by the Turk in 1517, and they 'integrated it into the commercial system of their empire as a major center for their silk trade'. Historically speaking, however, transferring the Venetian consulate, 'around which the colony of Venetian merchants gathered', 'to Aleppo in 1548, where it remained until 1675', the Venetians came to dominate the Persian silk trade until the

beginning of the seventeenth century.⁷¹ Othello's 'some service' (5.2.337) as a condottiere to the Venetian state, then, would indicate that he, in spite of himself, helped invigorate the market economy. Othello himself might be, or might not be conscious of this because his job was to fight a visible enemy. It was clear, however, that the significance of the war against the Turks and the reason for the existence of the Venetian army consisted in securing economic bases including Cyprus and Aleppo in Mediterranean trade.

Provided, as I have argued, that the infiltration of the market economy into marriage and familial households at least partly facilitates the tragedy of *Othello* to happen, in what way did Shakespeare experience the economic and social change of his time? Recent studies on the financial situations of his father John and of William Shakespeare himself may give us an illuminating clue to understanding the dramatist's longing for pre-capitalist forms of economy and communality. John Shakespeare was almost constantly in financial difficulties, and was indeed in genuine need of ready cash. During the years 1578 to 1579, for instance, he resorted to mortgaging and selling his freehold estates. According to Robert Bearman, John 'sold his interest in land at Snitterfield which had again come to him on his marriage. The house in Greenhill Street ... may have been parted with at around this time, together with his copyhold land at Snitterfield which his father had farmed'. His son, as Bearman has observed, witnessed in his mid-teens 'the collapse of his father's business, the sale or mortgage of the family's real estate to meet the demands of creditors, and the spectacle of a father fearful of leaving the house for fear of arrest for debt'.⁷² While his father's financial path could not be trodden without realization of assets, William's was a very different one; rather he seems to have made conscious efforts to reverse his father's downward path. After the purchase of New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1597, Shakespeare sought to acquire landed property. 'This', Bearman remarks, 'initially took the form of an attempt to regain possession of the very house and land in Wilmcote which John Shakespeare had mortgaged to his wife's brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert, back in 1578 as security for a loan of £40'. By this recovery of lost land, Shakespeare presumably wanted to have something to support his recently acquired gentry status. Bearman has also discovered that 'Reports, then, were circulating early in 1598 of Shakespeare's serious intention of investing in some further real estate in or near his native town'. He 'had been able at regular intervals to invest increasingly large sums—£120, £320, and then £440—in the purchase of property'. As Bearman has suggested, Shakespeare's purchase of land as a preferred option for the investment of surplus capital was related to his aspiration to enter the rank of the local gentry.⁷³

It should be kept in mind, however, that Shakespeare's capital was raised primarily from the theatre business. Besides, the very existence of the public theatre presupposed a consumer economy, as shown by one of the characters in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, who describes 'this licentious quality' of it as 'the consumption of many a young gentleman' (5.3.66-67). And Thomas Dekker regarded the 'theatre' as 'your poets' Royal Exchange', and 'their Muses' as 'merchants'.⁷⁴ It is not surprising, then, that contemporary dramatists treated words and verses as money or commodities. Autolycus in *The*

Winter's Tale, disguising himself as a pedlar, sells 'songs for man or woman, of all sizes' (4.4.191-192) as well as 'Lawn as white as driven snow, / Cypress black as e'er was crow' (4.4.218-219). On the one hand, then, as a successful show businessman, Shakespeare contributed to the breakdown of the feudal economy and old relations, whereas on the other, wishing to belong to the landed gentry class, he tried to resist the rise of a mercantile, money-based economy which was already overtaking him. Of course, Shakespeare did not live to read William Prynne writing against theatres that 'many of our Spectators are deceived, all cheated ... with shadowes instead of substance: with sinfull, heathenish, unchristian spectacles'.⁷⁵ We must admit, however, the fact that in offering these 'shadowes', Shakespeare engaged in the monetary transactions of the theatre business. Iago, then, plays the role of Shakespeare by selling a commodity in the form of the 'spectacle' of the handkerchief.

Notes

1. Robert B. Heilman, 'The Economics of Iago and Others', *PMLA*, 68, 3 (1953), 555-71, esp. 557, 560.
2. Patricia Parker, 'Cassio, Cash, and the "Infidel 0": Arithmetic, Double-entry Bookkeeping, and *Othello's* Unfaithful Accounts', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance*, ed. Jyotsna Singh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 223-41, esp. 238, 236.
3. Laura Kolb, 'Jewel, Purse, Trash: Reckoning and Reputation in *Othello*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 44 (2016), 230-62, esp. 240, 243.
4. *The Arden Shakespeare: Othello, Revised Edition*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann, Appendix 3 (1997; London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 390.
5. Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (1986; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52.
6. Philip Massinger, *The City Madam* (1632), 3.3.35-40, in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 4: 64.
7. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, 3.2.22-24. All Shakespearean lines exclusive of *Othello* are quoted from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974). Quotations from *Othello* are from the Arden revised edition, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann.
8. Ben Jonson, *The Comicall Satyre of Every Man Out of His Humor* (London: Printed [by Adam Islip] for William Holme, 1600), 1.2.31, 33, sig. Ciiiv.
9. *The White Devil*, 1.2.329-30, in *The Selected Plays of John Webster*, ed Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1983; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 25.
10. John Marston, *Histrio-Mastics, Or, The Player Whipt* (London: [George Eld] for Th: Thorp, 1610), sig. D2v.
11. Michael Neill, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 32.

12. Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Marxists Internet Archive: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>
13. Concerning these lines, Kolb, 'Jewel, Purse, Trash', pointing out that 'the purchase made' does not signify Desdemona, and that 'Othello's conceit is that of a mercantile partnership' (256), suggests that she is not yet commodified because he speaks, arguably, in the tradition of the Renaissance Romance.
14. Craig Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 18, 2 (1993), 163-83, esp. 169.
15. C. W. Brooks, *Pettyfoggers and Vipers of the Commonwealth: The 'Lower Branch' of the Legal Profession in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 69.
16. The sense of 'credit' as the credible is invoked by Iago: 'That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it, / That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit' (2.1.284-85).
17. Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore with, the Humours of the Patient Man, and the Longing Wife* (London: Printed by V[alentine] S[immes and others] for Iohn Hodgets, 1604), sig. F3.
18. Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 55-56, 59, 61.
19. R. Howard Bloch, 'Medieval Misogyny', *Representations*, 20 (1987), 1-24, esp. 1: 'The discourse of misogyny runs like a rich vein throughout the breadth of medieval literature'.
20. Honigmann, *Othello*, 266n, annotates this use of 'stored' as follows: 'could mean to provide for the continuance of a stock or breed, or to produce offspring ... F's *scoar'd* (=wounded) is less likely.'
21. See, for example, Kolb, 'Jewel, Purse, Trash', 254.
22. In early modern comedies, the problem of money in commercialized society is often resolved by the reestablishment of familial bonds, in other words, by restoring the state of *gemeinschaft*, at the end of the play. For example, in *The Faire Maide of the Exchange*, Mall Berry's apparently so 'easy, thoughtless acceptance of love and marriage' with Barnard (see *A Critical Edition of the Faire Maide of the Exchange by Thomas Heywood*, ed. Karl E. Snyder [New York: Garland Publishing, 1980], 14-15) can be explained by the dramatist's intention of cancelling the latter's debt to the former's father by marrying him to her. And in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, the 'thousand marks' Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, has to pay 'To quit the penalty and to ransom him' (1.1.21-22), is to be delivered by his son, Antipholus of Syracuse's 'thousand marks' (1.2.81), and eventually cancelled when the former is discovered to be the husband of the abbess of Ephesus (5.1.391).
23. Jordi Coral, 'Anxious Householders: Theft and Anti-Usury Discourse in Shakespeare's Venetian Plays', *The Seventeenth Century*, 30, 3 (2015), 285-300, esp. 289.
24. Ben Jonson, *Volpone or, The Fox*, 1.5.114, 3.7.36-37, ed. R. B. Parker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 135, 199.

25. Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Terme*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed [by Thomas Purfoot and Edward Allde for A. I[ohnson], 1607), sig. Hr.
26. Lynda E. Boose, 'Othello's Handkerchief: "The Recognizance and the Pledge of Love"', *English Literary Renaissance*, 5, 3 (1975), 360-74, esp. 363.
27. The significant breakthrough in the study of *Othello* in relation to Spain is that in Barbara Everett, "'Spanish' Othello: The Making of Shakespeare's Moor', *Shakespeare Survey*, 35 (1982), 101-12, which pointed out an affiliation of the name Iago to 'Santiago Matamoros, St James the Moor-killer' (103). See also Eric Griffin, 'Un-Sainting James: Or, Othello and the "Spanish Spirits" of Shakespeare's Globe', *Representations*, 62 (1998), 58-99. If we take Iago's words to Othello — 'our country disposition' (3.3.204, my emphasis) — literally, then the Spanish Iago suggests that Othello is a Morisco.
28. Boose, 'Othello's Handkerchief', 363-64.
29. Griffin, 'Un-Sainting James', 69.
30. Ian Smith, 'Othello's Black Handkerchief', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 64, 1 (2013), 1-25. It should be noted, however, that Othello's lines upon which Smith's argument is based can be interpreted as the Moor's fabrication to impress his beloved one, which would signal his gift as a storyteller once again – and still more so to the audience, if the production of the drama uses a *white* handkerchief as a prop.
31. Patricia Parker, *Shakespearean Intersections: Language, Contexts, Critical Keywords* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 270.
32. Jane Schneider, 'Fantastical Colors in Foggy London: The New Fashion Potential of the Late Sixteenth Century', in Lena Cowen Orlin, ed. *Material London, ca. 1600*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 109-27, esp. 115, 122.
33. Quoted in Parker, *Shakespearean Intersections*, 270.
34. Schneider, 'Fantastical Colors in Foggy London', 122
35. Griffin, 'Un-Sainting James', 74.
36. Parker, *Shakespearean Intersections*, 252, 257, 251.
37. See, for example, Eleri Lynn, *Tudor Textiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 161.
38. John Payne, *The Royall Exchange: To Suche Worshipfull Citezins, Merchants, Gentlemen and other occupiers of the contrey as resorte thereunto* (Harlem: Printed with Gulis Romaen, 1597), 12, 13.
39. Theodore de Bry, *America, Part Four. Distinguished and admirable history of Western India, Discovered for the first time by Christopher Columbus in the year 1492* (1594). The original caption is 'Die Indianer giessen den Spaniern zuersattinung ihres Geitzes Goldt in den Mund.'
40. *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne, Volume 2: The Elegies*, ed. Gary A. Stringer, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 5.
41. See Parker, *Shakespearean Intersections*, 238.

42. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. David Fernbach, 3 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 3: 272.
43. David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 37. Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 49.
44. 'A Short View of Tragedy', in *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer*, ed. Curt A. Zimansky (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1956), 164.
45. Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace*, 7.
46. Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957-1975), vol. 7, 246.
47. Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 125. She quotes from Lawrence J. Ross, 'The Meaning of Strawberries in Shakespeare', *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960), 226.
48. See Takashi Yoshinaka, 'The Anxiety of Interpretation: Transformation of the Emblem and *Othello's* Handkerchief', in *The Power of Icons and the Power of Words: British Renaissance and American Renaissance* (Japanese), ed. Minoru Fujita and Fumiko Iriko (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 2007), 131-48.
49. Marc Shell, *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economics from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 180.
50. Jessica L. Malay, *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance: Shakespeare's Sibyls* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 116, does not believe that the former explanation is made up by Othello when she says that 'Othello, despite his detailed description of the handkerchief and its nature, by the end appears to forget its magical significance'. She argues that 'Shakespeare continues to explore the dangerous nature of prophecy and magic associated with Sibylline figures and their acts'.
51. Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies*, 241. See also 128.
52. Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace*, 22.
53. Smith, 'Othello's Black Handkerchief', 6.
54. Linda Levy Peck, 'Building, Buying, and Collecting in London, 1600-1625', in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 268.
55. Margaret Willes, *A Shakespearean Botanical* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015), 126-28.
56. Schneider, 'Fantastical Colors in Foggy London', 113.
57. Smith, 'Othello's Black Handkerchief', 19.
58. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Mummy: A Handbook of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology* (1893; New York: Dover Publications, 1989), 202.
59. Karl H. Dannenfeldt, 'Egyptian Mumia: The Sixteenth Century Experience and Debate', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (1985), 163-80, esp. 174.
60. Richard Sugg, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the*

- Renaissance to the Victorians* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 15.
61. Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies*, 124.
 62. Dymrna Callaghan, 'Looking Well to Linens: Women and Cultural Production in *Othello* and Shakespeare's England', in *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), 53-81, esp. 59.
 63. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 564-65.
 64. For another example of a handkerchief which could indicate (though to a comic character) amorous personal relations, we may take that of Celia in Jonson's *Volpone*, who 'at the window throws down her handkerchief' (2.2.229) to Volpone, 'which he most sweetly kissed in the receipt' (2.5. 41). Corvino, her husband, misunderstands her to be flirtatious enough to the extent of having to say 'I'll but protest myself a cuckold' (2.2.23).
 65. For the 'relation between post-Tridentine Catholicism, misogyny and the condemnation of sexual pleasure in marriage', see Valerie Wayne, 'Historical Differences: Misogyny and *Othello*', in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Valerie Wayne (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 153-80, esp. 156, 166-167.
 66. Boose, 'Othello's Handkerchief', 368.
 67. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 26, nos. 36, 37.
 68. Ann C. Christensen, "'Because their business still lies out a' door": Resisting the Separation of the Spheres in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*', *Literature and History*, Third Series, 5, 1 (1996): 19-37, esp. 30.
 69. John Wheeler, *A Treatise of Commerce* (London: John Harison, 1601), 6. Strictly speaking, Shakespeare did not become rich and successful through writing plays, but, as Sandra Clark has summarized his business interests, 'The money he made through the theatrical profession came from investments — he became a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1594, and in 1599 a part-owner of the new Globe playhouse' ('Shakespeare and Domestic Economy', *Hiroshima Studies in English Language and Literature*, 64 [2020], 1-21, esp. 1-2.)
 70. Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 101-102.
 71. Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 57.
 72. Robert Bearman, *Shakespeare's Money: How Much Did He Make and What Did This Mean?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11, 31.
 73. *Ibid.*, 92, 146. Paradoxically, his efforts to fashion himself into a gentleman did a disservice to the stability of the landowning classes to which he wanted to belong. As is observed by Richard Halpern, 'The dominance of aristocratic culture was threatened not by a clearly antagonistic alternative but by the rearticulation of its own hegemony in such a way as to favor emergent

bourgeois strata. While the proliferation of hybrids corroded the boundaries of the aristocratic signifiers, the multiplying effects of simulacra “inflated” it and debased its value’ (*The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991], 245).

74. Thomas Dekker, *The Gull’s Horn-Book*, in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 5 vols. ed. Alexander B. Grosart (1885; New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 2: 246.
75. William Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix: The Players Scourge, or Actors Tragaedie* (1632; London: Printed by E[dward] A[llede] et.al. for Michael Sparke, 2nd. ed. 1633), 157.

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スペインの商人—『オセロウ』における貨幣と商品

吉中 孝志

『オセロウ』に関するこの論考は、デズデモウナの精神的美德が、彼女の黒い、そして／もしくは白い、ハンカチという形で物質化され、商品化されていることを論証するものである。作品の材源である Giraldi Cinthio の *Hecatommithi* (1565) の中では、ハンカチは、イーゴウの原型にあたる「旗手」からカシオウの原型にあたる「伍長」に渡り、後者の愛人がそれに施された刺繍柄を手本に窓辺で同じような刺繍をしているところを、ムーア人に目撃させるという一度だけの目的のために使われる。ところがシェイクスピアの劇では、ハンカチの人から人への移動が顕著に増幅され、刺繍の柄を写し取るという行為が奇妙なほど繰り返される。この考察は、商業的な文脈でデズデモウナのハンカチに注目しながら、シェイクスピア研究における既に確立された、実は関連する二つの批評理論に依拠することになる。すなわち、劇作家は、経済的規定要因が変化しつつあった初期資本主義の下で作品を書いていたと考えるマルクス主義的読解と、この戯曲のスペイン的要素が有する同時代的な意義に基づく歴史主義的な読みである。これらの批評理論を援用して、『オセロウ』は、経済に関わる側面を色濃く持った他の幾つかのシェイクスピア作品と同様に、初期近代における家政 (domestic economy) と市場経済 (market economy) との衝突を主題として扱っている、少なくとも反映しているということを明らかにする。そして、シェイクスピア自身の経歴を彼の父親の経歴と併せて考察することによって、経済的流動性が急激に増す時代の中で活動した劇作家シェイクスピアの矛盾した姿勢を指摘する。