



William Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice'

By Warren L. CHERNAIK.

Northcote House, Tavistock, 2005. Paperback. Condition: New. 1st Edition. 140pp Writers & Their Work Series [In stock in Australia now for immediate despatch] No play by Shakespeare is more problematical and subject to controversy than The Merchant of Venice. Its portrayal, in its most memorable figure, of a Jewish money-lender who is full of bitterness and hatred, unrelenting in his pursuit of revenge against those he considers his enemies, can stir up feelings of unease and guilt in Jews and non-Jews alike, confronted in performance or in the printed text with this threatening embodiment of the Other. By examining the critical and stage history of the play, this study shows how directors, actors, and literary critics have sought by various strategies to exorcise the demon of anti-semitism. As the many different versions of Shylock, of the no less problematical figure of Portia, and of the contrasting locations of Venice and Belmont illustrate, there can be no single correct interpretation of a literary text, especially of a dramatic text which must, over and over again, be realised in performance. The Merchant of Venice is a play which speaks directly to a 21st-century audience in its treatment of the Jew as 'stranger'...

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