A NEW TEXTUAL STUDY OF OTHELLO

A Thesis

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PREFACE

Hardin Craig has stated that no Shakespearean scholar would discount the importance of textual criticism. R. B. McKerrow has asserted that no other area of Shakespearean scholarship is as demanding as textual criticism. Challenged by these comments, I chose to undertake a close textual study of Shakespeare's Othello. Although much has been written on the textual history of Othello, I discovered that many problems involving its sources, composition date, and printing history remain. Consequently, the aim of this thesis has been to re-evaluate the available textual scholarship on Othello and to re-examine the Q_1 and F_1 texts of the play. Hopefully, the conclusions of this new textual study of Othello reflect, above all, mature thought and careful research.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Charles E. Walton for his scholarly advice and friendly assistance. I also wish to thank Dr. James F. Hoy, who served as second reader, for his many helpful comments. In addition, I want to offer a special note of appreciation to my wife, Linda, whose confidence in me made the completion of this thesis possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES OF *OTHELLO*

To determine the sources of Shakespearean drama, one must consider the following: the possible main plot sources; Shakespeare's general reading as it manifests itself in the particular drama; and the influence of contemporary drama and contemporary events. The aim of the first chapter of the present study is to furnish a thorough and accurate account of these aspects for Shakespeare's *Othello*.

A

The Main Plot Source

Most scholars conclude that the main plot source of *Othello* is Giraldi Cinthio's *The Hecatommithi*, the Seventh Novel of the Third Decade (*ca.* 1566).[1] They also think that Shakespeare probably read an original Italian version of the

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[1]Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources*, I, 122. These scholars are in agreement with Muir: E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, I, 462; Hardin Craig (ed.), *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, p. 943; R. R. Ridley (ed.), *Othello*, p. xv; H. C. Hart (ed.), *Othello*, p. xxiv; Sir Sydney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 363; Raymond M. Alden, *A Shakespeare Handbook*, p. 114; and Joseph Satin, *Shakespeare and His Sources*, p. 427.

work since no English translation of the novella at that time is known.[2] Although it is possible that Shakespeare consulted Gabriel Chappuy's French translation of the work in 1584, the evidence for such an assertion is meager.[3] On the other hand, evidence that Shakespeare utilized an Italian text is apparent in his use of the word, acerbe, which means "bitter" in Italian.[4] Scholars have noted that Cinthio employs a similar phrase in acerbissimo odio.[5] Furthermore, Muir contends that at least one of Othello's speeches more closely parallels Cinthio's original wording than Chappuy's translation of the same speech:

> Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
> Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof,
> Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,
> Thou had'st been better have been born a dog
> Than answer my waked wrath! (III.iii.359-363)[6]

Cinthio's Moor delivers a similar speech:

> Se non mi fai, disse, vedere cogl' occhi quello,
> che detto mi hai, viviti sicuro, che ti faro'

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[2]Muir, op. cit., p. 122.

[3]Evidence that Shakespeare used Chappuy's translation is advanced by Ned B. Allen, "Othello and Cinthio: A Neglected Head-Link," N & Q, VIII (April, 1961), 138-139.

[4]Muir, op. cit., p. 123.

[5]Loc. cit.

[6]All references to Othello are taken from The Complete Works of Shakespeare edited by Hardin Craig, unless indicated otherwise.

> conoscere, che meglio per te sarebbe, che tu fossi nato mutulo.[7]

Chappuy's translation is not as closely parallel:

> Si tu ne me fais voir ce que tu m'as dit, assure toi que je te ferai connoistre, que mieux t'eut valu etre ne muet.[8]

Thus, current evidence clearly suggests that Shakespeare consulted an Italian version of Cinthio's novellas and converted the Seventh Novel of The Hecatommithi into the tragedy of Othello.

The case for Cinthio's Hecatommithi as the main plot source of Othello is, indeed, sound despite a scholarly controversy over the nature of the particular version of the work that Shakespeare used. In short, one needs only to read the following plot summary of Cinthio's narrative to discern the many similarities between the two works:

> The Moor of Venice marries Disdemona despite her family's disapproval. The couple lives happily in Venice until the Moor is commissioned to command the Venetian troops in Cyprus. Disdemona accompanies the Moor to Cyprus as does the Moor's Ensign and

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[7]Quoted in Horace H. Furness (ed.), A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, Othello, VI, 381. The translation of this passage in the Furness Variorum is as follows, "Make thou these eyes self-witnesses of what thou tell'st or on thy life I'll make thee wish thou hadst been born without a tongue," 381.

[8]Quoted in Muir, op. cit., p. 123. Author's translation of this passage, "If thou does not make me see what thou tells me, be sure that I will make thou know, better were thou to be born mute."

> his wife. The depraved Ensign falls in love with Disdemona, but when she shows no interest, he imagines that she is in love with the Moor's Captain. The Ensign plans to accuse her of adultery with the Captain, but the Moor strips him of his rank for misbehavior before the Ensign can instigate his scheme. Disdemona attempts to return the Captain to his former position of favor with the Moor. The Ensign then steals Disdemona's handkerchief and hides it in the Captain's house. When she fails to produce the handkerchief, the Moor persuades the Ensign to kill the Captain. But the Ensign manages only to wound him, and when the Moor notices her grief for the Captain, he plots with the Ensign to kill her. As was planned, the Ensign beats her to death with a stocking filled with sand. Her death is made to appear as accidental. But the Ensign then tells the Captain that it was the Moor who wounded him. The Captain brings the Moor to the Signiory where he is sentenced to banishment and finally murdered by Disdemona's relation. Later, the Ensign is arrested for still another crime and is tortured to death.[9]

While the surface changes that Shakespeare made are evident, a full discussion of his dramatic remodeling of this plot will be provided later in this chapter. Further evidence of Cinthio's influence is the probability that Shakespeare used one of Cinthio's novellas as a main plot source for Measure for Measure, generally accepted as occurring just before Othello in the canon.

Although it is quite certain that Shakespeare turned to Cinthio's novella for the major plot of Othello, there are other possible plot sources worthy of mention. For example, Praz has speculated that Shakespeare consulted Cinthio's

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[9]Author's condensation of Muir's summary in Shakespeare's Sources, I, 123-125.

play, Altile, in which the villainous nobleman, Astano, brings destruction to Norrino in much the same manner as Iago ruins Othello.[10] Furthermore, Praz contends that several of Astano's speeches are echoed by Iago.[11] For example, Astano makes his "policy" of treachery known early in the play, as does Iago:

> Should this one be purer than a white dove, I would cause him to seem a black raven; and should Lamano be pity itself and clemency, I want you to believe that by my cunning I would make him more cruel than Nero, since he has begun to lend me his ear.[12]

In addition, Astano's speech to an attendant has a more than slight resemblance to Iago's advice to Roderigo:

> Do you want your dissimulation to succeed? Simulate faith, and love, and underneath conceal the knife to inflict the fatal blow on him who trusts you, as soon as occasion lends itself.[13]

As a final parallel, Astano--whose love for Altile was not returned--is void of feeling regarding his treachery, just as is Iago. His line, "I must not bear the blame of this, since he has cut short my hope," could easily have been spoken by Iago.[14] Even though Astano and Iago are similar

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[10]Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart, p. 115.

[11]Loc. cit.

[12]Quoted in Praz, op. cit., p. 115.

[13]Loc. cit.

[14]Quoted in Praz, op. cit., p. 116.

villain types, evidence indicating that Shakespeare utilized Cinthio's Altile is incomplete.

Siegel has offered another source possibility for Othello in the form of a story that appears in Geoffrey Fenton's Certaine Tragicall Discourses (1567).[15] Fenton's work is a translation of Belleforest's French renditions of Bandello's novellas. The story in question has the following headnote:

> An Albanoyse Capteine, beinge at the poynte to dye, kylled his wyfe, because no man should enjoye her beautie after his deathe.[16]

As a general outline, this headnote does not suggest much similarity with Othello, but Siegel has noted several parallel aspects not present in Cinthio's novella:

(1) the heroine of Fenton's story remains steadfast despite extreme humiliation;

(2) the Albanian captain, when about to stab his wife to death, embraces and kisses her;

(3) Fenton's heroine is also cut short by her lover as she offers a final prayer;

(4) the Albanian captain (like Othello and unlike Cinthio's Moor) commits suicide.[17]

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[15]Paul N. Siegel, "A New Source for Othello?" PMLA, LXXV (1960), 480.

[16]Geffraie Fenton (tr.), Certain Tragical Discourses of Bandello, I, 163.

[17]Siegel, op. cit., p. 480.

Siegel's observations are, indeed, interesting, but, once again, the evidence is not significant enough to consider Fenton's story as the main plot source of Othello. One must admit, however, that Shakespeare may have borrowed any or all of the elements mentioned above from Fenton's translation. Possibly, he may even have borrowed from Belleforest's novellas.

Still another source possibility worth considering is the Byzantine epic, Digenis Akritas. Krappe, contesting the theories of those who attribute the source to Cinthio's novella, has defended it as the main plot source of Othello.[18] He asserts that in Shakespeare's time the lack of an English translation of Cinthio discounts the possibility that he dipped into Cinthio's novellas for source materials.[19] Moreover, he points out three major differences between Cinthio's novella and Othello: the couple does not elope in Cinthio's version; the length of the marriage before the Cyprus voyage is much longer in Cinthio's version; and the plot and scene of the murder greatly differ in the two works.[20] Furthermore, he questions Shakespeare's neglect to involve the dagger (part of the original plan outlined by the Ensign) in the murder.[21] He suggests that Shakespeare would not

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[18]A. H. Krappe, "A Byzantine Source of Shakespeare's Othello," MLN, XXXIX (March, 1924), 156.

[19]Loc. cit.

[20]Loc. cit.

[21]Ibid., p. 157.

have overlooked such a dramatically tenable element.[22] But the crux of Krappe's argument is apparent in the following parallels that he draws between Digenis Akritas and Othello:

> (1) Digenis Akritas, the hero of the epic, is the son of a Moorish emir and a Byzantine lady. His origin is indicated by his name and is often alluded to.
>
> (2) He becomes enamored of the daughter of a general and governor of a neighboring province. Her name is Eudocia.
>
> (3) They elope and are pursued by the father and other relatives of the girl; a battle ensues, ending with a reconciliation of the two parties.
>
> (4) She accompanies him to the theatre of his wars, in a border land of the Empire.
>
> (5) When lying upon his death-bed, he takes leave of her and kisses her; then, seized with sudden jealousy, he presses her in his arms and chokes her to death.[23]

Krappe concludes that, if Digenis Akritas is not the main plot source of Othello, it has at least indirectly influenced Shakespeare's play indirectly because Cinthio was familiar, no doubt, with the epic.[24] Though Krappe's argument is attractive, scholars like Bullock have attacked this evidence as being inadequate and maintain that Shakespeare followed closely Cinthio's novella for the main plot structure of Othello.[25]

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[22] Loc. cit.

[23] Ibid., p. 159; John Mavrogordato (ed.), Digenes Akritas, is the definitive edition of the work.

[24] Krappe, op. cit., p. 159.

[25] Walter L. Bullock, "The Sources of Othello," MLN, XL (April, 1925), 226-228.

B

Shakespeare and Cinthio's Novella

Shakespeare encountered many obstacles with Cinthio's novella as he attempted to mold it into a serious tragedy. Among other problems, he was hampered by the untenable plot for tragedy, the weak heroine, the "melodramatic" villain, the incredible "crime passionel," the awkward resolution involving the villain and the hero, and the slow pace of the narrative in general.[26] However, as Muir points out, the most obvious drawback of Cinthio's novella was that the towering dimensions of the "tragic hero" were missing.[27] Consequently, Shakespeare's major task was to convert Cinthio's Moor into a character with more heroic stature; furthermore, he needed to reveal the way in which such a character can be driven to murder a virtuous wife. The major changes that Shakespeare fused into Othello involve an expansion of the novella in three ways: the addition and alteration of events that help clarify the action, the creation of new characters, and the supplementation and alteration of character motivation for Othello, Iago, Desdemona, and Emilia.[28] These changes quickened the action, tightened the plot, and

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[26]Muir, op. cit., p. 126.

[27]Loc. cit.

[28]Alice Griffen (ed.), The Sources of Ten Shakespearean Plays, p. 227.

increased the dramatic tension of Othello far beyond that in Cinthio's novella.[29] However, the purpose, here, is not to analyze the more aesthetic aspects of Othello, but rather to provide a brief discussion of Shakespeare's remodeling of the main plot source.

One of the most significant alterations of events that Shakespeare makes in Cinthio's tale involves the Moor and Disdemona. Cinthio indicates that Disdemona's parents disapproved of the match but that, eventually, they accepted the situation. On the other hand, Shakespeare not only has the couple elope, but he also increases dramatic tension by stressing the "unnaturalness" of the match.[30] Brabantio, in fact, accuses Othello of having used witchcraft on Desdemona (I.iii.60-64). Moreover, Shakespeare emphasizes the social law which stipulates that the marriage of a young girl without her father's consent is a denial of his sacred rights.[31] Finally, Shakespeare alters the length of time that the tragic couple has been married. In Cinthio, they live happily for what appears to be several months in Venice before the Moor is commanded to go to Cyprus. But Shakespeare causes the main action to occur just after the couple has eloped. His purpose clearly is to stress the fact that Othello had little

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[29]Muir, op. cit., p. 139.

[30]Ibid., p. 126.

[31]A good discussion of this point appears in Georges Bonnard's "Are Othello and Desdemona Innocent or Guilty?" ES, XXX (October, 1949), 175-184.

time actually to get to know Desdemona well; consequently, Iago's machinations and Othello's suspicions are much more believable.[32]

Still another aspect of Cinthio's narrative that Shakespeare has altered concerns the voyage to Cyprus. First of all, Cinthio does not mention a "troubled" sea or even that Venice is expecting a direct conflict with the Turkes. Also, Shakespeare separates Desdemona from Othello on the voyage (Othello entrusts her to Iago) and has him arrive after the other ships have landed. Shakespeare's changes function as foreshadowing incidents. Moreover, the Turkish fleet is lost at sea, making it possible for the rest of the action of the play to take place.

Both the alterations of the marriage situation and the voyage to Cyprus are closely tied to another area of change with which Shakespeare concerns himself. That area involves time, for in Othello, Shakespeare is using two clocks.[33] One clock has the true historic time, while the other indicates dramatic time. That is, while Cinthio's tale encompasses possibly a year, if not longer, Shakespeare has Desdemona murdered and the play resolved as quickly as thirty-six hours (dramatic time) after the main characters land in Cyprus. From the outset, he takes the leisurely pace of Cinthio's

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[32]Muir, op. cit., p. 130.

[33]Furness, op. cit., p. 358.

narrative and speeds it up to increase dramatic tension, almost to the point of making the actions become unbelievable. For it is from the moment of arrival in Cyprus that the most significant action occurs that must retain versimilitude--Iago's temptation of Othello.

Shakespeare also changed the circumstances involving the handkerchief that Othello had given to Desdemona. In Cinthio's novella, the Ensign personally steals it from Disdemona after the Moor had demanded that he present definite proof that she was untrue to him. On the other hand, Shakespeare had Emilia give the handkerchief to Iago before Othello had requested the "occular proof" of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Moreover, in Cinthio's narrative, the handkerchief has no magic powers in it such as Shakespeare indicates that it has in Othello. In addition, the Captain, in Cinthio's tale, does not give the handkerchief to a courtesan as Cassio does in Shakespeare's version. Thus, in effect, the culmination of Othello's humiliation comes as he learns that Cassio has given the love token to such a lowly person as Bianci. Once again, it is apparent that Shakespeare's reworking increased the dramatic tension in the play.

Another important change that Shakespeare brought about entails the murder plan and, consequently, the resolution of the plot. In both versions, Iago (Cinthio's Ensign) suggests the type of murder to be carried out, but one may discern that the plan that Shakespeare has Iago advance is much more tenable, dramatically. More importantly, it is

Othello who is to do the killing in Shakespeare's version, and there is no apparent plan to conceal the murder as the Moor and Ensign attempt to do in Cinthio's tale. Othello, thus, believes that he is justified in killing Desdemona. As a result of the alterations, a different and much more effective resolution was needed. Therefore, Othello does not survive the murder as does Cinthio's Moor; instead, he chooses to commit suicide in recognition of the tragic mistake that he has made. Shakespeare also allows him to hear the truth from Cassio and Emilia, but Cinthio's Moor never learns what actually has happened. Shakespeare further changes the resolution in that Iago kills Emilia and is taken prisoner. Both the Ensign and his wife survive the murder scene in Cinthio's narrative, as it is the Ensign's wife who relates the information that concludes the novella. In short, as in each major alteration that Shakespeare makes, he has once again quickened the action, tightened the plot, and, most importantly, increased the dramatic tension.

Another method of Shakespeare's expanding of Cinthio's narrative is the addition of characters. His main additions are Roderigo, Brabantio, Lodovico, Montano, and Gratiano. Roderigo, of course, acts as Iago's "dupe" and adds stronger motivation to Cassio's brawling scene.[34] Through Roderigo, the audience early detects the power that Iago actually has, thus making his treachery toward Othello more believable.

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[34]Muir, op. cit., p. 131.

On the other hand, the addition of Brabantio is to necessitate the public announcement of Othello and Desdemona's love for each other.[35] Brabantio is, in effect, the first significant opponent that Othello must face during the course of the drama.[36] Moreover, Shakespeare augments the dramatic tension by accusing Othello of having used witchcraft to gain the affectations of Desdemona. Thus, Brabantio, like Roderigo, is a character that compels other characters to reveal themselves.[37]

The additions of Lodovico, Montano, and Gratiano are more difficult to justify, but Shakespeare is keeping in mind the overall nature of his tragedy as he makes changes. For example, Lodovico clearly fits into the mold of Shakespearean characters that includes the Prince in Romeo and Juliet and Fortinbras in Hamlet. Lodovico restores order to the final tragic scene (as do the Prince and Fortinbras) and is the character that is expected to relay the "heavy" news to the state. Montano and Gratiano, on the other hand, mainly serve as additional witnesses to the aftermath of Desdemona's murder.

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[35]Aerol Arnold, "The Function of Brabantio in Othello," SQ, VIII (1957), 51.

[36]Arnold, op. cit., p. 54.

[37]A good short note on Roderigo is R. S. Dorsch, "This Poor Trash of Venice," SQ, VI (1955), 359-360. Good discussions on Brabantio are John W. Draper, "Signior Brabantio, Plaintiff," ES, XXII (1940), 193-198, and Warren D. Smith, "The Elizabethan Rejection of Judicial Astrology and Shakespeare's Practice," SQ, IX (1958), 159-176.

Their appearance, particularly in the final two scenes, insures that a definite resolution for the action will be reached quickly. Similarly, it is extremely important for them to hear Emilia's confession about the handkerchief so that a tenable resolution is, indeed, possible. Furthermore, it is Gratiano who informs the other characters that Brabantio has died in Venice and will not have to experience more grief with the death of Desdemona. The only other character additions worthy of mention are the Duke of Venice and the Clown, both of whom contribute very little of significance, with the exception of minor scenes in which they help reveal the nature of other characters.

Possibly the most important elements that Shakespeare alters are the character motivations for Othello, Desdemona, Iago, and Emilia. It is evident that he finds Cinthio's characters too poorly motivated to fit properly into his view of tragedy. Indeed, the Moor is the character that he finds as requiring the greatest amount of alteration. Stature is the main ingredient that Shakespeare adds to the character of the Moor to mold him into the dauntless Othello.[38] Both Othello and Cinthio's Moor are definitely valuable to the state, but Shakespeare, through such additions as the trial scene, constantly emphasizes the stature that Othello has attained. Furthermore, Cinthio does not afford the Moor an opportunity to talk of his many exploits as a soldier;

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[38]Muir, op. cit., p. 38.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, has Othello present a lengthy account of his travels and heroics. And it is Othello's stature that naturally leads him to his downfall (with Iago's help, of course), for his stature has evoked a tremendous amount of personal honor and pride within him. In fact, one might easily contend that Othello murders Desdemona, more as a consequence of the injury to his honor than from any other motivation. Therefore, the alteration of Othello's stature was all that Shakespeare needed to make in order to compel his tragic hero to murder his innocent wife.[39]

Shakespeare, no doubt, noted similar character weaknesses in Cinthio's Disdemona. That is, Disdemona is neither innocent enough nor constant enough to fit Shakespeare's requirements. Thus, he sketches Desdemona as being motherless and innocent to the point that she immediately evokes empathy despite the fact that she goes against her father's wishes. Moreover, in the face of Othello's unjust accusations, she remains constant, while Cinthio's Disdemona thinks mainly of the repercussions that her love for the Moor may have:

> I fear that I shall prove a warning to young girls not to marry against the wishes of their parents, and that the Italian ladies may learn from me not to wed a man whom nature and habitude of life estrange from us.[40]

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[39]Good discussions on the character Othello can be found in Marvin Rosenberg, The Masks of Othello; Robert B. Heilman, Magic in the Web: Action and Language in Othello; and E. E. Stoll, Shakespeare and Other Masters.

[40]Quoted in Furness, op. cit., p. 384.

Shakespeare's Desdemona clearly has too much concern for the success of her marriage with Othello to worry about such ulterior consequences. Shakespeare endows her with one unending drive--an undying love for her husband--that allows her to forgive Othello for his tragic action.[41]

Although Cinthio's Moor and Disdemona created several problems for Shakespeare, it is Cinthio's Ensign who actually undergoes more changes in motivation. Cinthio's Ensign is motivated only by the love that he feels for Disdemona which, in turn, sparks the jealousy and hatred that he develops toward the Captain and the Moor. Shakespeare apparently found this motivation to be insufficient, or at least not appropriate, in some respect. For Iago, the Ensign's counterpart, may, indeed, have some lustful intentions for Desdemona, but, more significantly, Shakespeare adds two other basic motivations for Iago's villainy: first, Iago believes that he was unjustifiably passed over to become Othello's lieutenant in favor of Cassio; also, he believes (or at least imagines) that both Cassio and Othello have had sexual relations with Emilia. Consequently, the main results of Shakespeare's alterations are that Iago is even more treacherous than Cinthio's Ensign and that he is more "in control" of the overall situation than is the Ensign.[42]

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[41]A good discussion on Desdemona is J. Kooistra's "On Desdemona's Character," ES, V (June, 1923), 81-90.

[42]Muir, op. cit., p. 131.

These results are partly evident in that Iago not only manipulates Othello, but also Roderigo and Cassio: Cinthio's Ensign controls the Moor only.[43]

It is also evident that Shakespeare did not view the Ensign's wife as being sufficiently motivated, since he makes one very basic change in his characterization of Emilia. That is, Emilia--unlike her prototype--is blind to Iago's real character; she is aware that Iago wants Desdemona's handkerchief, but she does not know why. Also, unlike her counterpart, Emilia is murdered by her husband. The Ensign's wife, as was mentioned earlier, lived to report the resolution of Cinthio's narrative. Furthermore, it is evident that the Ensign's wife is motivated entirely by her love for the Ensign despite her awareness of his depraved nature. On the other hand, the more worldly Emilia feels a deep commitment to Desdemona and is not motivated by love for Iago to a significant extent. Emilia is clearly a better developed character as Shakespeare moves her from ignorance to awareness, while Cinthio's prototype is a rather flat, undeveloped character who changes very little.

Two other minor character changes that should be mentioned involve Cassio and Beanca. Shakespeare's Cassio and

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[43]There are many scholarly studies that contain good discussions on Iago; among them are the following: Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil; Marvin Rosenberg, "In Defense of Iago," SQ, VI (1955), 145-158; Clarence V. Boyer, The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy; and Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry.

Cinthio's Captain are very similar, except in the following respects: first, Cassio is manipulated by Iago, while the Captain is not manipulated at all by the Ensign; moreover, Cassio is unmarried, while the Captain is married. Shakespeare allows Cassio to be manipulated to indicate, once again, the power that Iago possesses. He sketches Cassio as being unmarried so that he might more convincingly include Bianca. She helps to reveal Cassio's character, but more importantly, she adds to Othello's humiliation by having Desdemona's handkerchief on her person. On the other hand, the Captain's wife in Cinthio's tale is a very insignificant character.[44]

Although the main plot source of Othello is reasonably well-established, the names of the characters pose a source problem. The name, Desdemona, of course is derived from Cinthio's Disdemona, but the sources for the names, Othello

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[44]The preceeding analysis did not include a view of the of the more aesthetic aspects that Shakespeare fused into Othello. The definitive discussions on the imagery in Othello are Caroline F. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and Wolfgang Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery. For discussions on the Christian premises of Othello, one should consult the following: Irving Ribner, Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy; Roy W. Battenhouse, Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Premises; Joseph A. Bryant Jr., Hippolyta's View: Some Christian Aspects of Shakespeare's Plays; and Geoffrey Bush, Shakespeare and the Natural Condition. Good general studies of Othello are included in Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes; Henry B. Charlton, Shakespearian Tragedy; Tucker Brooke, Shakespeare of Stratford; G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire; William Farnham, Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier; and Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison, A Companion to Shakespeare Studies.

and Iago, are questionable. For example, Malone contends that the names, Othello and Iago, were taken from John Reynold's God's Revenge Against Adultery (ca. 1605).[45] The table of contents of the work contains the following headnote:

> Hist. VIII. An Italian History
>
> Jocelina Countess of Chiety marries...Don Iago; He falls in love with Isabella, and commits Adultery with her; Is taken by the Countess and beheaded: She marries Othello an old German Soldier; She commits Adultery with Palfi: Othello leaves her in discontent.[46]

However, Farmer discovers Iago's name in the anonymous The History of the Famous Euordanus Prince of Denmark, With the Strange Adventures of Iago Prince of Saxonie (1605).[47] The problem, in both cases, is that the author may have been borrowing the names from Shakespeare's work. On the other hand, Holland maintains that Iago's name is symbolic, that it is derived from "Santiago or San Diego--St. James--who was the patron saint of Spain and whose cult was associated with driving the Moors out of Spain."[48]

For the name, Othello, Lee suggests still another source, believing that the "Oth" relates to Othoman, the founder of

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[45]Edmond Malone (ed.), The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, IX, 214.

[46]John Reynolds, The Triumphs of God's Revenge Against the Crying and Abominable Sin of Adultery, from the table of contents.

[47]Quoted in Furness, op. cit., p. 335.

[48]Norman N. Holland, The Shakespearian Imagination, p. 201.

the Ottoman empire.[49] Further suggestion of the name to Shakespeare may have been from Richard Knolles' Generall Historie which might, in fact, have several other resemblances to Othello, but Lee does not elaborate.[50] His contention may, indeed, be sound for if one closely reads the 1610 edition of the work, he finds the story of Othoman as a young man, and, more significantly perhaps, he should notice the name, Michaell Cossi, a "captaine" whom Othoman pardons.[51] Not only might Othoman be the name source for Othello, but Michaell Cossi could possibly be the name source for Michael Cassio. The latter possibility has apparently been overlooked by modern scholars.

Sisson offers still another possibility for the source of the name, Othello, as he asserts that, since Shakespeare was acquainted with North's Plutarch, he could have found the name of the emperor, Otho, and, also that of his successor Vitellias.[52] He maintains that the combination of the two names gave Shakespeare a name of "Roman dignity and exotic colour."[53] In addition, the name, Othello, was thus similar to the Italian name, Ottilio.[54] Sisson adds that Iago's name

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[49]F. N. Lees, "Othello's Name," N & Q, VIII (April, 1961), 139.

[50]Ibid., p. 141.

[51]Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes, p. 136.

[52]C. J. Sisson, New Readings in Shakespeare, II, 245.

[53]Loc. cit.

[54]Loc. cit.

derives from the Spanish form of James.[55]

While the name sources of the characters are relatively unimportant, it is interesting to note that their derivations are still questionable. Also questionable is the nature and significance of Othello's color. Was Othello black? Aaron of Titus Andronicus apparently was, but it is difficult to come to a conclusion about Othello because of one other black character created by Shakespeare. However, Jones furnishes a good explanation of Iago's use of Othello's color in weaving his web of destruction.[56] He also points out the dramatic treatment in general of African characters in Elizabethan drama,[57] and he believes that Iago's many references to Othello's "blackness" must suffice as evidence for his color.[58]

C

Shakespeare's General Reading

As one may discern, Shakespeare was quite faithful to the plot of Cinthio's novella, but Othello encompasses a wealth of outside material that greatly supplements Cinthio's work.

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[55] Loc. cit.

[56] Eldred Jones, Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama, pp. 100-101.

[57] Ibid., passim.

[58] Ibid., p. 101.

Unfortunately, a full explanation of the interweavings into Othello of Shakespeare's general reading is lacking. But it is apparent that the main ingredients that he needed to draw from his general reading were the local color of his setting and the geographical background for Othello's travels. In addition, many other aspects of Shakespeare's general reading and probable education are manifest in the drama.

A convenient local color source to which Shakespeare turned was John Florio's Second Frutes (1591). Muir contends that there is nothing unusual about the possibility that he may have turned to Florio's work.[59] In fact, it is fairly certain that he was well acquainted with Florio, since both probably served the Earl of Southampton at Tichfield in 1593-94.[60] Furthermore, Muir points out several passages from Florio's dialogues that may have influenced the "worldly wisdom" of Iago.[61] For example, Iago's description of women that follows has a counterpart in the Second Frutes:

> Come one, come on; you are pictures out of doors,
> Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
> Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
> Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds. (II.i.109-113)

Florio has constructed a very similar passage:

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[59]Kenneth Muir, "Shakespeare and Florio," N & Q, (November, 1952), p. 494.

[60]John Dover Wilson, The Essential Shakespeare, p. 64.

[61]Muir, "Shakespeare and Florio," pp. 493-495.

Women are in churches, Saints; abroad,
Angels: at home, deuils, at windowes,
Syrens: at doores, pyes: and in gardens,
Goates.[62]

Thus, Shakespeare was working with both a content and structure similar to those employed by Florio.

Some of the other witty verses that Iago renders a few passages later in the same scene are close to Florio. The tone of such passages is negative, particularly toward females, as one may determine from Iago's speech:

She that was ever fair and never proud,
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish and yet said 'Now I may,'
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail,
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following and not look behind,
She was a wight, if ever such wight were....
(II.i.149-159)

The same tone is evident in Florio's final chapter:

It is and euer was a woman's fashion,
To loue a crosse, to crosse a louing passion...
They weepe to winne, and wonne they cause to dye,
Follow men flying and men following flye...
If long, she is lazy, if little, she is lowde,
If fayre, she is sluttish, if foule, she is prowd.[63]

Once again, Shakespeare appears to have captured from Florio

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[62]Quotes from Second Frutes are from John Florio, Second Frutes (1591), a facsimile reproduction by R. C. Simonini, Jr., p. 175.

[63]Ibid., p. 189.

the tone and style that he needed for the speeches of the cynical Iago.

A concluding example, here, involves the famous passage in which Iago refers to Cassio as, "A fellow almost damn'd in a faire wife" (I.i.21). Muir maintains that a proverb in the final chapter of Second Frutes provides an interesting possible source for Iago's much discussed speech:[64]

> If fayre the worse for you,
> He that a white house and a fayre wife keepeth,
> For feare, for care, for ielousie scarce sleepeth.[65]

In short, from such passages as above, Shakespeare derived bits of tone and content that he wished to add to Othello. Moreover, since Florio wrote Second Frutes in both Italian and English, Shakespeare obtained a touch of local color that fused conveniently with the Venetian setting of his work.

Muir suggests as another source of local color for Othello Sir Lewes Lewkenor's English translation of Cardinal Contareno's The Commonwealth and Government of Venice (1599).[66] Also, Malone asserts that Shakespeare's use of the phrases, "officers of the night" (I.i.183) and "double as the Duke's" (I.ii.14), indicates that he was familiar with Lewkenor's translation or possibly Contareno's original version.[67]

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[64]Muir, "Shakespeare and Florio," p. 495.

[65]Florio, op. cit., p. 191.

[66]Kenneth Muir, "Shakespeare and Lewkenor," RES, VII, (April, 1956), 182.

[67]Quoted in Muir's "Shakespeare and Lewkenor," p. 182.

In addition, Hart points out that Shakespeare's rare use of the word, weaponed (V.ii.266), was borrowed from Lewkenor's translation.[68] Furthermore, Muir contends that the appearance of the words, signeory and intentively, in Othello is also evidence that Shakespeare utilized Lewkenor's work.[69]

More importantly, echoes of Lewkenor are evident in Othello's account of his wooing of Desdemona. Lewkenor speaks of the enjoyment one can derive from listening to

> ...the description of forreine regions, the manners and customes of farre distant countries, the diuersitie of their complections, humor, diet and attire, and such like other singularities, especially if they come from the mouth of a wise and well speaking traueller, to whose tongue I would willingly endure to have mine ears inclined.[70]

Othello's speech (I.iii.128-170) compares quite favorably with the tenets that Lewkenor has expressed.

Lewkenor also indicates that "My education hath been in the wars," as has Othello's, and he apologizes for "the vntuned harshness of my disioynted stile" (cf. Othello's "Rude am I in speech") and talks of "the violence of my own fortune" (cf. Desdemona's "downright violence and storm of fortunes").[71] As a final point of reference between the two works, Muir suggests that one should compare Iago's

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[68] Loc. cit.

[69] Ibid., p. 182.

[70] Quoted in Muir's "Shakespeare and Lewkenor," p. 182.

[71] Ibid., p. 183.

complaint that he should have been promoted by merit with the dedicatory sonnet to Lewkenor's work:

> [Venice]
> Where all corrupt means to aspire are curbd,
> And officers for vertues worth elected.
> The contrarie whereof hath much disturbd
> All states, where the like cause is vnrespected.[72]

Muir notes that Iago contrasts the past (Lewkenor's Venice) with the present (Shakespeare's Venice) in which promotions are by "favour."[73]

Scholars, however, disagree as to the source materials that Shakespeare consulted in order to specify the wide travels of Othello. For example, Baldwin maintains that, in the course of writing Othello, Shakespeare had to turn to Pliny's Natural History for geographical background.[74] He believes, however, that Shakespeare probably did not use Philemon Holland's 1601 translation of Pliny, but rather a 1598 Latin edition by Dalecampius.[75] On the other hand, Muir claims that Shakespeare did use Holland's translation, and in support of his view, he refers to Othello's defense against the charge of witchcraft early in the play.[76]

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[72] Ibid., p. 182.

[73] Loc. cit.

[74] T. W. Baldwin, "A Note Upon William Shakespeare's Use of Pliny," in The Parrott Presentation Volume edited by Hardin Craig, p. 181.

[75] Loc. cit.

[76] Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, I, 127.

Holland's translation includes the story of C. Furius Cresinus, who had similar charges filed against him:

> ...by indirect means, as if he had vsed sorcerie, and by charmes and witchcraft drawne into his owne ground that encrease of fruits.[77]

Similarly, Brabantio charges Othello:

> She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
> By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
> For nature so preposterously to err,
> Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
> Sans witchcraft could not.
> (I.iii.60-64)

Furthermore, Muir asserts that Cresinus begins his defense in much the same manner as Othello does, and that several phrases in his defense are somewhat parallel to Othello's speech before the informal court.[78]

Muir also contends that Shakespeare derived such details as the Anthropophagi, the image of the Pontic Sea, coloquintida, the Arabian trees, the mines of sulphur, a statue made of chrysolite, mandragora, and earthquakes from Holland's translation.[79] Baldwin, on the other hand, claims that the Arabian trees reference was borrowed from Ovid's Metamorphoses and that "antres vast" was probably derived from Virgil's

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[77]Paul Turner (ed.), The Natural History of C. Plinius Secundus, a translation by Philemon Holland, p. 166.

[78]Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, I, 127-128.

[79]Ibid., (fn. 2), p. 128.

Aeneid.[80]

On the other hand, Othello's references to the Anthropaphagi and to the Pontic Sea have also stirred much scholarly controversy. In his only reference to the Anthropaphagi, Othello describes them as "...men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders" (I.iii.144-145). As was mentioned above, Baldwin and Muir contend that the reference is derived from Pliny's Natural History, although they disagree as to the nature of the edition Shakespeare used. French, however, offers an interesting case for Ptolemy's Geography as the source, maintaining that Shakespeare borrowed the name from a page entitled "India Orientalis" which appeared in a 1535 edition.[81] Furthermore, he asserts that, since Ptolemy's works were quite popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Shakespeare would naturally have turned to such a source when he needed geographical background of a more exotic nature.[82] Fleay suggests yet another possible source for the Anthropaphagi reference, as he observes the description of similar men in Raleigh's narrative, The Discovery of Guyana (1596):

> Next vnto Arui there are two riuers Atoica and Caora, and on that braunch which is called Caora

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[80]Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 157ff.

[81]J. M. French, "Othello Among the Anthropophagi," PMLA, XLIX (September, 1934), 807.

[82]Loc. cit.

> are a nation of people, whose heades appeare not aboue their shoulders, ...they are called Ewaipanoma: They are reported to haue their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts, & that a long train of haire groweth backward betwen their shoulders.[83]

Moreover, according to Fleay, Shakespeare would not have doubted the credibility of Raleigh's narrative.[84]

In contrast, Othello's reference to the Pontic Sea, "Like to the Pontic Sea / Whose icy current and compulsive courses / Ne'er feel retiring ebb" (III.iii.453-455), is from Pliny according to Muir.[85] However, Spencer throws in a dissenting note as he points out that almost any "illiterate mariner" would possess a story of the Pontic Sea and could have passed it on to Shakespeare.[86] He claims that knowledge of the Pontic Sea was "commonplace" in the early part of the seventeenth century.[87] Therefore, he contends that attributing such an image completely to Shakespeare's acquaintance with Pliny's Natural History is unsound.[88] Furthermore, he justifies Shakespeare's use of the image as a "cunning piece

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[83]Sir Walter Raleigh, The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana, a facsimile by DaCapo Press, pp. 69-70.

[84]Frederick G. Fleay, A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare, p. 236.

[85]Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, I, (fn. 2), 128.

[86]Terence Spencer, "Three Shakespearian Notes," MLR, XLIX (1954), p. 50.

[87]Loc. cit.

[88]Ibid., p. 51.

of local colour."[89]

Perhaps, the most significant major reading source utilized by Shakespeare is Ovid's Metamorphoses. His debt to Ovid with respect to poetry is well-established, and it has been asserted that he has drawn from every book of Ovid's classic.[90] Indeed, there is hardly a play by Shakespeare in which the Metamorphoses cannot be traced.[91] Moreover, as early as 1598, comparisons between Ovid and Shakespeare were being made, for in that year Francis Meres issued the following comment in his Palladis Tamia:

> As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to Liue in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ouid liues in mellifluous & hony-tongued Shakespeare, witnes his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, & c.[92]

But while there is no doubt that Shakespeare borrowed heavily from Ovid and significantly for Othello, much of the controversy centers around which actual text of the Metamorphoses that he used. Many scholars maintain that he consulted Arthur Golding's 1567 English translation extensively, while others

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[89]Loc. cit.

[90]Shakespeare's debt to Ovid in poetry is thoroughly discussed in Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, pp. 137-155. L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, maintains that Shakespeare draws from every book of the Metamorphoses, p. 410.

[91]Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p. 410.

[92]Don Cameron Allen (ed.), Palladis Tamia (1598) by Francis Meres, p. 281.

contend that he read Ovid in Latin.[93] However, in Othello, there is one passage evident that clearly echoes Golding's translation; e.g., Othello's famous description of a storm:

> If after every tempest come such calms,
> May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
> And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
> Olympus-high and duck again as low
> As hell's from heaven!
> (II.i.187-191)

One discovers a quite similar description in Golding's translation:

> Disorderly, the storme increast, and from eche
> quarter fling
> The wyndes with deadly foode, and bownce the
> raging waves togither:
> ...Of flusshing waves and thundring ayre,
> confused was the noyse;
> The surges mounting up aloft did seeme to mate
> the skye,
> ...One whyle as from a mountaynes toppe it
> seemed downe too looke
> Too vallyes and the depth of hell.[94]

There are, of course, other significant echoes of Golding's translation of Ovid in Othello, but it will suffice to say that Shakespeare most certainly utilized it as a general

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[93]W. H. D. Rouse maintains in his edition of Golding's translation of the Metamorphoses that Shakespeare utilized the translation. Edgar I. Fripp in Shakespeare Studies: Biographical and Literary, claims that Shakespeare used a Latin version only. Gilbert Highet in The Classical Tradition argues that Shakespeare used both the original and a translation.

[94]W. H. D. Rouse (ed.), Ovid's Metamorphoses, a translation by Arthur Golding, xi. 565-581.

reading source, and particularly found it useful while composing Othello.

Among the minor reading sources that can be traced in Othello is Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. In fact, Smart asserts that Shakespeare knew Ariosto's work in the original Italian version.[95] He uses the passage in which Othello speaks of the handkerchief that his dying mother gave to him as proof that Shakespeare at least consulted the work:

> A Sibyl, that had number'd in the world
> The sun to course two hundred compases,
> In her prophetic fury sew'd the work....
> (III.iv.71-73)

Smart notes a passage in Orlando Furioso that he believes to be the source of Othello's speech. The following is William Stewart Rose's translation of that passage:

> Two thousand tedious years were nigh complete,
> Since this fair work was fashioned by the lore
> Of Trojan maid, warmed with prophetic heat....[96]

Whether or not Shakespeare consulted Orlando Furioso in Italian is questionable, but it is evident that he did utilize the work, and he may have known it in Sir John Harington's Elizabethan translation.

Other minor reading sources may be grouped together.

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[95]J. S. Smart, Shakespeare: Truth and Tradition, p. 183.

[96]Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti (eds.), Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, a translation by William Stewart Rose, canto 46, stanza 80.

Among them is John Soowthern's poem, Pandora (1584), which Chester views as being the source in Othello of such an obscure word as orgulus.[97] Overall, the evidence is not conclusive that Shakespeare used Pandora. On the other hand, Fleay claims that Othello's allusion to the "huge eclipse" (V.ii.99) indicates that Shakespeare had been reading John Harvey's Discoursive Problem Concerning Prophesies (1588).[98] However, the most significant reading source in this group is Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene. Potts mentions several parallels between Spenser's classic and Othello. First of all, she contends that there are character parallels between the Redcrosse Knight and Othello, Una and Desdemona, and Archimago and Iago.[99] In fact, she suggests that the name, Archimago, may be the source for Iago.[100] In addition to character parallels, she points out that Spenser's "mythical pattern" was what Shakespeare needed to breathe life into Cinthio's novella.[101]

No source study of Shakespeare's work would be complete without considering the type of education that he probably

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[97]Allan G. Chester, "John Soowthern's Pandora and Othello, II.i.184," MLN, LXVI (1951), 482.

[98]Fleay, op. cit., p. 236.

[99]Abbie Findlay Potts, Shakespeare and the Faerie Queen, pp. 177-178.

[100]Ibid., p. 177.

[101]Loc. cit.

had. The definitive work on this subject is, or course, Baldwin's two-volume William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke in which he traces the step-by-step educational process that the young Shakespeare would have encountered in an Elizabethan grammar school. Such schools had curriculums based largely upon Latin and classical Latin authors, as the children were required to read the prose of Cicero and Quintilian and the plays of Plautus and Terence among other works. But do any of these works manifest themselves in Othello? Baldwin claims that they do. Briefly, he detects the influence of Cicero's Ad Herennium in Iago's speeches, particularly (III.iii.375-383) and other passages that involve formal oration.[102] He asserts that the rhetoric employed by Othello (I.iii.76-81) is definitely under the influence of Quintilian's patterns of rhetoric.[103] Furthermore, he notes the influence of the more contemporary Erasmus, particularly his De Conscribendis Epistolis, the main compositional from taught in the grammar schools.[104] Baldwin, of course, offers many other areas of ingluence that may be discerned in Othello, but it is sufficient to say that the educational process that Shakespeare no doubt experienced served him well as a professional dramatist.[105]

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[102]T. W. Baldwin, William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, II, 97.

[103]Ibid., p. 197.

[104]Ibid., p. 275.

[105]Cf. J. A. K. Thomson, Shakespeare and the Classics, passim.

D

Contemporary Drama and Contemporary Events

Shakespeare's general reading provided him with valuable source material for Othello. In addition, there are two other source areas that one should consider. For example, one may discern that Shakespeare was influenced by contemporary drama, for much of his early work echoes passages from Marlowe, Lily, Greene, and Nashe. Similarly, one notes that he was influenced by contemporary political events, as most of his history plays have political overtones. However, the purpose of this present section is to determine the influence of both contemporary drama and events on Othello only.[106]

First of all, it can be demonstrated that Shakespearean dramas which precede Othello significantly influence it, particularly Twelfth Night and Measure for Measure. From Twelfth Night, Shakespeare derived Iago's manipulation of Roderigo, as Sir Toby Belch's manipulation of Sir Andrew is remarkably similar.[107] Iago maintains that he will aid Roderigo in winning Desdemona just as Sir Toby promises to help Sir Andrew fulfill his intentions toward Olivia. On the other hand, the influence of Measure for Measure is

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[106]The probable composition date of Othello is 1604; therefore, it will be the reference date for this chapter. A full discussion of the composition date of Othello is to be presented in chapter II.

[107]Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, I, 131.

evident in similar language and details as the use of rare words such as grange and seeming in both plays.[108] Indeed, Parrot suggests that Othello belongs to a "vogue" of domestic tragedies that appeared around 1603, and points to Thomas Heywood's A Woman Killed With Kindness as the main exemplar.[109] However, Parrot's comment draws thin if extended beyond Heywood's masterpiece, although several speeches in A Woman Killed With Kindness have close counterparts in Othello and should be identified. But first of all, one should recognize that A Woman Killed With Kindness contains four basic dramatic situations: (1) Master Frankford and Anne are the ideal couple, but Anne yields to the evil Master Wendoll; (2) the adulterous lovers are betrayed by a servant, but Wendoll escapes; (3) instead of exposing her, Frankford banishes her to another of his estates; (4) he forgives her on her deathbed. The similarities with Othello are not striking, but again, several speeches are significantly parallel in the two works.

It is possible that Shakespeare turned to Heywood's play for aid in creating the character and speech of Othello, as he and Frankford are faced with analagous situations. For example, Frankford's speech as he ponders the honesty of Wendoll and Anne is echoed by Othello as he reflects on the honesty of Desdemona. Frankford exclaims:

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[108]Fleay, op. cit., p. 236.

[109]Quoted in Craig's edition of The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 944.

'Tis probable. Though blunt, yet he is honest.
Though I durst pawn my life, and on their faith
Hazard the dear salvation of my soul,
Yet in my trust I may be too secure.
May this be true? O, May it? Can it be?
Is it by any wonder possible?
Man, woman, what thing mortal can we trust,
When friends and bosom wives prove so unjust?
What instance hast thou of this strange report?[110]
(viii.79-87)

Othello's is equally forceful:

By the world,
I think my wife be honest and think she is not;
I think that thou art just and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!
(III.iii.383-393)

Moreover, the threat that Frankford issues to Nick is re-echoed by Othello to Iago. Frankford warns:

Y'are a knave, and I have much ado
With wonted patience to contain my rage,
And not to break my pate. Th'art a knave.
I'll turn you, with your base comparisons,
Out of my doors.
(viii.51-55)

Similarly, Othello entreats Iago:

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!
(III.iii.359-363)

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[110]Quotes from A Woman Killed With Kindness are from Charles Read Baskervill, et. al. (eds.), Elizabethan and Stuart Plays.

However, the most striking parallels involve Frankford's defense of Anne and Othello's defense of Desdemona. Frankford renders the following speech in behalf of Anne:

> Away! Begone!
> She is well born, descended nobly;
> Virtuous her education; her repute
> Is in the general voice of all the country
> Honest fair; her carriage, her demeanor,
> In all her actions that concern the love
> To me her husband, modest, chaste, and godly.
> Is all this seeming gold plain copper?
> ...No, I will lose these thoughts;...
> Till I know all, I'll nothing seem to know.
> (viii.100-117)

Although perhaps not as firmly convinced of Desdemona's honesty, Othello makes a similar speech in her behalf:

> 'Tis not to make me jealous
> To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
> Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;
> Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
> Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
> The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
> For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
> I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
> And on the proof, there is no more but this,--
> Away at once with love or jealousy!
> (III.iii.183-192)

In addition to the evidence above, one may discern that Anne is of the same character mold as Desdemona and that several of Wendoll's speeches are couched in scheming rhetoric echoed by Iago.

Even more difficult than assessing the influence of contemporary drama on Othello is the problem of determining the influence of contemporary events. With Othello, this problem is colored by the fact that James VI of Scotland

became James I of England just before the probable composition date of the play. Moreover, one can trace historical influence to such an extent that it wears thin and untenable.[111] On the other hand, the coming of James VI to England to succeed Elizabeth must certainly have touched Shakespeare, for one should always remember that he was a servant to the throne.

An actual historical counterpart for the character, Othello, has also been suggested in one Christopher Moro, a soldier who flourished in Venice around 1508.[112] The evidence for such a conjecture is lacking, however. Jones and Ross offer a much more tenable view of the historical and contemporary influences on Othello involving James VI and his ascension to the throne of England in 1603. Since it is known that James possessed a deep interest in poetry and, in fact, wrote poetry when he was a young man, Jones contends that Shakespeare drew from James' early poetry to gain favor or merely to show respect to the new king.[113]

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[111]For example, Lilian Winstanley, Othello as the Tragedy of Italy, views Othello as the allegorical representation of Spain and the innocent Desdemona as Italy. Winstanley discusses Othello in terms of a European mythology that she claims Shakespeare's audience would quickly understand. Her view depends upon the contention that Othello was revised after 1606. The present study will discount such a position in chapter III.

[112]Satin, op. cit., p. 427.

[113]Emrys Jones, "Othello, Lepanto and the Cyprus Wars," Shakespeare Survey, XXI, passim.

James' most famous poetical work is the heroic poem, Lepanto, written in 1585 when he was only nineteen. When James took the throne in 1603, Lepanto was reprinted.[114] The poem itself praises the victory of the confederate Catholic states over the Turks. The battle of Lepanto was the final battle of the conflict which started in 1570.[115] Jones asserts that, while Shakespeare may not be directly indebted to Lepanto, the fact that no other Shakespearean play involves a conflict between the Christians and Turks strongly suggests that he consulted the work for background purposes.[116] On the other hand, Ross maintains that Shakespeare did borrow a particular phrase from the following lines at the beginning of the work:

> A bloodie battell bolde,...
> Which fought was in LEPANTOES gulfe
> Betwixt the baptiz'd race,
> And circumsised Turban'd turkes....[117]

From these lines, Ross claims that Shakespeare borrowed his expression, "Turban'd Turke," which appears in Othello (V.ii.353).[118] Indeed, that James should have influenced Shakespeare, and, consequently, Othello is possible, for what

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[114] Ibid., p. 52.

[115] Ibid., p. 47.

[116] Ibid., p. 52.

[117] James Craigie (ed.), The Poems of James VI of Scotland, I, 202.

[118] Lawrence J. Ross, "Marble, Crocodile, and Turban'd Turk in Othello," PQ, XL (October, 1961), 483.

better way could he have welcomed the new king than by presenting a work that included at least indirect allusions to his finest poetical work?

Briefly, to summarize, one concludes that Cinthio's Hecatommithi is the main plot source of Othello, although several other works have similar plots. Shakespeare was faced with many obstacles to good drama in Cinthio's novella, but by expanding and altering the work, he molded it into a great tragedy. However, he needed more than the framework of Cinthio's novella; consequently, he turned to his general reading sources for local color for his setting and geographical background for Othello's travels. In addition, Othello may have been influenced by contemporary drama, as Shakespeare may have borrowed from Heywood's A Woman Killed With Kindness. And finally, the advent of James I and Shakespeare's desire to please him also found its way into the source material for Othello.

CHAPTER II

THE DATING AND PRINTING OF *OTHELLO*

A

The Composition Date of *Othello*

To determine the composition date for a Shakespearean play, or any other dramatic work, one must weigh both external and internal evidence. In the process, he should substantiate a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem* in which the dramatist composed the work. For *Othello*, the most significant external evidence is the first mention of its performance on November 1, 1604, at Whitehall, a banqueting hall in which the King's Company played no less than four of Shakespeare's plays from October 16 to December 30 of 1604.[119] Harrison furnishes an account of the event in his entertaining *Jacobean Journal*--the essential facts, of course, are intact:

> 1st November. 'THE MOOR OF VENICE.'
> This night the King's players played in the Banqueting House at Whitehall before his Majesty

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[119] E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 119. *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Comedy of Errors* were the others.

a play called The Moor of Venice, by Shakespeare,....[120]

Othello was performed at Whitehall, once again, in 1612.[121] The play had been brought out of repertory for a production at the Globe on April 30, 1610.[122] It was also played at Oxford in September of 1610.[123]

Another very significant piece of external evidence is contained in an allusion to Othello that appears in Thomas Dekker's The Honest Whore, Part I. The following passage from that play entails a conversation between the Duke of Milan and Hippolito. The Duke suspects that Hippolito has killed Infelice, the Duke's daughter, with whom Hippolito is in love:

> Duke. What wouldst thou haue? is she not dead?
> Hip. Oh, you ha killd her by your crueltie.
> Duke. Admit I had, thou killst her now againe;
> And art more sauage then a barbarous Moore.[124]
> (I.i.34-37)

If the "barbarous Moore" is clearly an allusion to the character, Othello, one can narrow the composition date of Othello. Since the composition date of The Honest Whore, Part I is between January and March of 1604, Othello must

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[120]G. B. Harrison, A Jacobean Journal 1603-1606, p. 165.

[121]Chambers, op. cit., p. 127.

[122]Ibid., II, 215.

[123]Geoffrey Tillotson, Essays in Criticism and Research, p. 41.

[124]Quotes from The Honest Whore are from The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, II, edited by Fredson Bowers.

have been written before March, 1604.[125]

Hart, however, offers further external evidence to indicate that the composition date may be 1603 rather than 1604, basing his support on the "bad quarto" (Q_1) of Hamlet, printed November 10, 1603.[126] He claims that the work incorporates material from Othello.[127] Moreover, he points out that the London theatres were closed between March and November of 1603, because of the plague.[128] Therefore, he asserts that Othello was written early in 1603, if not before.[129] The first example from Hamlet involves the Ghost's reaction to Hamlet's pity, "Nay pitty me not, but to my vnfolding / Lend thy listning eare, but that I am forbid...."(iv.74-75).[130] Hart perceives a similarity between that speech and Desdemona's comments to the Duke, "Most gracious duke, / To my unfolding, lend your prosperous ear..."(I.iii.242-243). Secondly, he points to the use of the unusual phrase, "Olympus high," in both plays.[131] In Hamlet, Laertes utters the following lines in the graveyard scene:

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[125] Ibid., p. 3.

[126] Alfred Hart, "The Date of Othello," TLS, (October 10, 1935), p. 631.

[127] Loc. cit.

[128] Loc. cit.

[129] Loc. cit.

[130] Quotes from Hamlet are from William Shakspere's Hamlet The First Quarto 1603, a facsimile prepared by William Griggs.

[131] Hart, op. cit., p. 631.

> Forbeare the earth a while: sister farewell:
> Now powre your earth on Olympus hie,
> And make a hill to o're top olde Pellon....
> (xvi.141-143)

Othello renders the same phrase when he meets Desdemona in Cyprus, "And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas / Olympus-high and duck again as low..."(II.i.189-190). According to Hart, Hamlet's speech to Claudius at the climax of the play contains another possible echo from Othello.[132] Hamlet exclaims, "What is the reason sir that you wrong me thus? / I neuer gaue you cause..."(xvi.163-164). In turn, Cassio's remark to Othello in the final act is strikingly similar, "Dear general, I never gave you cause"(V.ii.276). In addition, Hart draws minor parallels from the phrasing in the two works.[133] He suggests that one may compare favorably Claudius', "A pretty wretch! this is change indeede... (xiii.42) with Emilia's, "Here's a change indeed"(IV.ii.106). He also points to the similarity between Leartes', "I in all loue and dutie take my leaue..."(ii.25) and Iago's "Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty..."(I.i.58)--similar in phrasing, but not in meaning.[134] The obvious problem with Hart's argument is that the parallel phrases that he notes could have been derived from Hamlet rather than from Othello. Nevertheless, his view deserves serious consideration.

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[132] Loc. cit.

[133] Loc. cit.

[134] Loc. cit.

Moreover, the only other external evidence for dating Othello is its similarity to Heywood's A Woman Killed With Kindness (ca. 1603). Thus, the external evidence points to either 1603 or early 1604 as the composition date.

Internal evidence also leads one to accept a composition date of 1603 or 1604. The following excerpt from Craig's table of metrical tests indicates that Othello belongs to the same composition period as Measure for Measure and King Lear.[135]

	5-ft. rhymes	% run-on lines	double endings	% speech endings	lt.-wk. endings	prob. date
Mea. Mea.	73	23.0	338	51.4	7	1604 (winter)
Othello	86	19.5	646	41.4	2	1604 (spring)
K. Lear	74	29.3	567	60.9	6	1605 (winter)

Most of the similarities are obvious and require no explanation. The two most important tests mentioned above are those involving double endings and light-weak endings.[136] Double endings or "feminine endings" refer to lines that include an extra syllable. It is evident that Shakespeare employed double endings more frequently toward the close of his career. More importantly, Othello clearly fits in the period 1603-1605 in

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[135]Craig, op. cit., p. 38.

[136]Loc. cit.

this respect. Similarly, Shakespeare used light-weak endings (lines ending with lightly stressed syllables) more abundantly in his later plays. However, it is apparent that Othello is somewhat "out of place" with respect to light-weak endings. In fact, the application of metrical tests to Othello leads one to consider more strongly 1603 as the composition date rather than 1604.

The internal evidence for dating Othello also more closely involves a terminus quo. For example, Malone cites the following speech by Othello as having derived from the 1601 essays of Sir William Cornwallis: "...the hearts of old gave hands;/ But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts"(III.iv.46-47).[137] He is quite certain that Othello echoes the following excerpt from Cornwallis' essay "Of Complements":

> ...our fore-fathers...They had wont to give their handes and their hearts together, but we thinke it a finer grace to looke a squint, our hand looking one way and our heart another.[138]

On the other hand, Warburton asserts that Othello's lines refer to James' institution of the order of Baronets in 1611 and their by-laws.[139] Malone's argument becomes much more

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[137]Edmund Malone, The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, II, 403.

[138]Don Cameron Allen (ed.), Essayes By Sir William Cornwallis The Younger, p. 90.

[139]Quoted in Malone, op. cit., p. 401.

tenable in company with the other existing evidence. Thus, a terminus quo of 1601 is certainly possible and is reinforced, if one considers that Shakespeare used Holland's 1601 translation of Pliny's Natural History. However, if Shakespeare did, in fact, utilize Knolles' Generall Historie of the Turks (1602), the terminus quo and terminus ad quem must be from 1602 to March of 1604. Most scholars contend that 1604 is the most likely composition date, but one should also view 1603 as a strong possibility.[140] Based on the evidence thus cited, the conclusion of this present study is that Othello was written during the early months of 1604.

B

The Printing of Othello

A knowledge of the printing history of Othello is necessary before one can accurately evaluate the Q_1 and F_1 texts. One should recognize that such knowledge will help to determine the manuscripts behind these texts. Therefore, the following brief discussion of the printing history of Othello should serve as an integral part of this present textual study.

The first publishing notice for a text of Othello is the following entry in the Stationers' Register:

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[140]Among those who favor 1604 are Oscar J. Campbell (ed.), The Living Shakespeare, p. 819; Hardin Craig (ed.), The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 943; E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 462; and H. C. Hart (ed.), Othello, p. xvii. Peter Alexander, Shakespeare's Life and Art suggests 1602, p. 142.

6 Octobris 1621

Thomas Walkley — Entred for his copie vnder the handes of Sir George Buck, and Master Swinhowe Warden, The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice....[141]

This entry refers to what was to become Q_1 of Othello, although the publishing date is usually listed as 1622. Consequently, Walkley's quarto was the last Shakespearean quarto to be printed before the Folio of 1623. It will become evident that Walkley's publication presents a problem--e.g., did the King's Company sanction the printing of Q_1 of Othello?[142]

To solve the problem mentioned above, one must know something about Walkley's publishing activities before 1621. From 1619 to 1622 he and another bookseller, Francis Constable, apparently monopolized the publication of the plays owned by the King's Company.[143] They published five of their plays during that period--The Maid's Tragedy and A King and No King (1619), Philaster (1620), Thierry and Theodoret (1621), and Othello (1622).[144] These plays have been called the "Burse

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[141]Edward Arber (ed.), A Transcript of the Registers of the Stationers' Company of London; 1554-1640, IV, 21.

[142]Entry in the Stationers' Register did not guarantee that the text of a play was good or that it had received the sanction of an acting company, cf. Leo Kirschbaum, Shakespeare and the Stationers, p. 156. Also Q_1 of Othello may have been published later than October of 1621, cf. Charlton Hinman, The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare I, 29.

[143]Kenneth W. Cameron, "Othello, Quarto 1, Reconsidered," PMLA, XLVII (1932), 672.

[144]Loc. cit.

quartos;" the first four have been attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher.[145] More importantly, since these plays belonged to the King's Company and were printed after May of 1619, Walkley must have secured their sanction, as he had to comply with the Lord Chamberlain's Blocking Entry:

3 Maij 1619

Hen. Hemings.	vppon a lẽr from the right hoble the Lo. Chamberleyne It is thought fitt & so ordered That no playes that his Matyes players do play shalbe printed wthout consent of some of them[146]

In addition, Walkley's rights to Othello were apparently sound, for in 1628 he assigned them to Richard Hawkins. The Stationers' Register records the transaction:

1 mo Martij 1627 [i.e. 1628]

Master Richard Hawkins	Assigned ouer vnto him by Thomas Walkley, and Consent of a Court holden this Day all the estate right title and Interest which he hath in these copies following.... A Kinge and no Kinge./ PHILASTER or love lies ableeding./ ORTHELLO the more of Venice./[147]

Therefore, the evidence indicates that the King's Company did, in fact, sanction Walkley's 1622 publication of Othello. However, in this instance the evidence is misleading.

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[145] Loc. cit.

[146] William A. Jackson (ed.), Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1602 to 1640, p. 110.

[147] Arber op. cit., p. 160.

Most scholars contend that Walkley's publication received permission from the King's Company. Pollard maintains that, in granting such permission, the King's Company must have retained the right to print Othello in the Folio.[148] He discounts any possibility that Q_1 of Othello was a "stolen" or "surreptitious" copy such as Heminge and Condell warned of in their preface to the Folio.[149] On the other hand, Rhodes suggests that Q_1 was based on a prompt-book that was "purloined" from the King's Company.[150] Willoughby is in agreement with Pollard, except that he believes, that the King's Company sanctioned Walkley's publication when irritated at William Jaggard for interrupting the printing of the Folio in the fall of 1621.[151] Greg initially agrees with Pollard,[152] but later concludes that the Lord Chamberlain's Block Entry was not effective; consequently, he believes Walkley may not have received permission to print Othello.[153]

Kirschbaum strongly defends the position that Walkley published Othello without the sanction of the King's Company.

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[148]Alfred W. Pollard, Shakespeare's Folios and Quartos, p. 113.

[149]Ibid., p. 56.

[150]R. Crompton Rhodes, Shakespeare's First Folio, p. 32.

[151]E. E. Willoughby, A Printer of Shakespeare: The Books and Times of William Jaggard, p. 167; "The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare," The Library, No. 8 (1932), 39.

[152]W. W. Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, p. 67.

[153]W. W. Greg, Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing Between 1550 and 1650, (fn. 1) p. 122.

He points out that no Shakespearean text had been published with permission from the King's Company since Q_2 (1604) of Hamlet.[154] He asserts that the company would not have broken a precedent of nearly twenty years.[155]

In addition, he contends that Walkley had been a source of irritation to them with the Burse quartos.[156] Furthermore, he doubts that they would have sold an individual play to Walkley after they had assigned the printing rights for all of Shakespeare's plays to Jaggard.[157] He suggests that Othello was not on Jaggard's list of printing rights to be purchased.[158] He agrees with Greg's position that the Blocking Entry of 1619 was ineffective.[159] His conclusion is that Walkley printed Othello from a private transcript without the sanction of the King's Company.[160]

One may more clearly view the problem that Walkley's Othello entails along with a brief history of the 1623 Folio. It is not known what prompted Heminge and Condell to publish the works of Shakespeare, nor is it known what influenced them to choose Jaggard as their publisher. Jaggard had been involved with two spurious publishing attempts involving

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[154]Kirschbaum, op. cit., p. 247.

[155]Loc. cit.

[156]Loc. cit.

[157]Loc. cit.

[158]Loc. cit.

[159]Ibid., p. 253.

[160]Ibid., p. 247.

Shakespeare's work: The Passionate Pilgrim, a pirated anthology which included several poems that Jaggard knew were not Shakespeare's; the "Pavier Shakespeare," a 1619 printing of ten plays all purporting to be Shakespeare's--all were either false or genuine with false dates and fraudulent imprints.[161] The latter publication was for Thomas Pavier.[162] Nevertheless, Jaggard was the man selected for the job. Scholars disagree somewhat as to the approximate date on which the Folio printing began. However, the importance of this date should be evident; if the Folio printing began after the publication of Q_1 of Othello, then the King's Company would have had no reason to sanction Walkley's work; that is, Willoughby's argument that the company sanctioned Walkley's Othello in reaction to a delay in the Folio printing would be discounted. Willoughby asserts that production on the Folio began late in the summer of 1621.[163] On the other hand, Shroeder and Hinman argue that production started in the early months of 1622. Shroeder claims that Jaggard planned to finish the Folio in the fall of 1622.[164] Hinman arrives at February or March of 1622 as a starting date and demonstrates that Augustine Vincent's A Discovery of Errors and

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[161]Crompton, op. cit., p. 33.

[162]Loc. cit.

[163]Willoughby, "The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare," p. 33.

[164]John W. Shroeder, The Great Folio of 1623, p. 3.

Thomas Wilson's A Christian Dictionary were Jaggard's primary concerns from November of 1621 to January of 1622.[165] He denies that Jaggard would have halted production of something as potentially lucrative as the Folio.[166] On the other hand, Willoughby notes that the London edition of the Mess Katalog of the Frankfurt book fair contained advertisements for two books that were to be sold by Jaggard in October of 1622.[167] One of the books was Shakespeare's Folio. He contends that Jaggard planned to have the Folio completed by that date, but he interrupted its printing in October or November of 1621 to work on Vincent's Discovery of Errors.[168] He claims that Vincent's book had been pressing Jaggard and that he wanted to finish it before working on anything else.[169] One concludes, therefore, that Walkley printed the quarto version of Othello without the sanction of the King's Company. The 1619 Blocking Entry was clearly ineffective. In addition, the printing of the Folio probably began early in 1622 rather than in the summer of 1621. Willoughby's argument is attractive, but one needs more information on the relationship between Jaggard and Vincent to judge its merits adequately.

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[165]Hinman, op. cit., p. 363.

[166]Loc. cit.

[167]E. E. Willoughby, "An Interruption in the Printing of the First Folio," The Library 4th. Series, IX (June, 1928), 262.

[168]Ibid., p. 266.

[169]Ibid., pp. 265-266.

C

Major Textual Views on Othello

The concluding section of this chapter entails summaries of the major textual views on Othello from 1885 to the present. To maintain a chronological representation of these textual views, one has included the opinions of a few scholars, not usually regarded as major Shakespearean scholars. Also, often two scholars are covered within one summary, particularly when their views coincide. The approximate date of the textual view is marked in parentheses.

Herbert A. Evans (1885) - Evans contends that the text behind the F edition of Othello is unquestionably different and of more authority from the one used for printing Q.[170] He substantiates this contention by pointing out several passages in which the F reading is superior to that in Q.[171] He suggests that the text behind Q is probably a "disused actor's" or a "promptor's" copy.[172] In his view, Q has been shortened for stage purposes, although the presence of oaths and expletives indicates to him that the copy was not used on the stage at the time.[173] He discounts the theory

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[170]Herbert A. Evans, "Introduction," Othello, Quarto One 1622, A Facsimile, p. vii. In these textual summaries Q_1 will be designated as Q and F_1 as F.

[171]Ibid., pp. viii-x.

[172]Ibid., p. xi.

[173]Ibid., p. xii.

that the F edition is based on a revised text.[174]

A. C. Bradley (1904) - Bradley claims that Q and F of Othello are two "distinct versions" of the play.[175] He believes that the F readings are generally superior to Q readings, but "frequently" the readings of Q are better.[176] He asserts that "in the great majority of cases" the "missing" lines of Q are omissions, most of which are "accidents of printing."[177] He does not clarify the textual basis for Q and F editions, but presents a lengthy examination of the "Folio-only" lines to show that the F version does not embody a Shakespearean revision.[178]

A. W. Pollard and Sir Sydney Lee (1909) - Neither Pollard nor Lee has much textual comment on Othello specifically, but one must recognize the importance of their views. Pollard's main statements on Othello are that Q was not used in printing F, and that the manuscript behind F was probably the prompt-book.[179] On the other hand, Lee is convinced that the entire Shakespeare Folio was printed from "acting versions."[180]

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[174]Ibid., p. xiv.

[175]A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, p. 429.

[176]Loc. cit.

[177]Ibid., p. 431.

[178]Ibid., pp. 430-432.

[179]Pollard, op. cit., p. 63.

[180]Lee, op. cit., p. 319.

He also asserts that the F texts are often "markedly inferior" to the quartos.[181]

R. Crompton Rhodes and J. Dover Wilson (1923) - Rhodes asserts that the manuscripts behind the F editions of Hamlet, King Lear, and Othello are "almost certainly" prompt-books.[182] He believes that the prompt-book of Othello was stolen from the King's Company and also used in printing Q.[183] Wilson agrees with respect to the text behind F of Othello.[184] Moreover, Wilson maintains that most of the texts on which the F editions are based are prompt-books.[185]

Sir E. K. Chambers (1930) - Chambers suggests that Q and F of Othello derive "substantially" from the same source.[186] He also views Q as a text with numerous "omissions"--mainly longer speeches.[187] He contends that, for the most part, the F readings are better than Q readings.[188] He discounts the revision theory for F.[189] Although he claims that Q and F

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[181] Loc. cit.

[182] Rhodes, op. cit., p. 107.

[183] Ibid., p. 32.

[184] J. D. Wilson et. al., (eds.), Studies in the First Folio, p. 67.

[185] Ibid., p. 62.

[186] Chambers, op. cit., pp. 459-460.

[187] Loc. cit.

[188] Ibid., p. 460.

[189] Ibid., p. 459.

texts are from the same source, he admits the possibility that F may have been printed from the "original" source text and Q from an "unfaithful transcript."[190]

E. E. Willoughby and R. B. McKerrow (1931) - Willoughby does not offer a specific statement on the finely textual aspects of Othello, but it is evident that his views coincide with Pollard's. His most important statement on Othello involves the printing of Q. As was mentioned earlier in this study, he contends that the King's Company did sanction Walkley's Othello.[191] Similarly, McKerrow makes no definite statement about the manuscripts behind Q and F of Othello, but his suggestion that many poor texts were set up from an author's original draft relates directly to Q.[192] Thus, he would be strongly inclined to defend Shakespeare's "foul papers" as the text behind Q of Othello.

Kenneth W. Cameron (1932) - Cameron's main assertion is that some of the "peculiarities" of Q can be clarified by comparing it with the Burse quartos.[193] His examination of these quartos leads him to conjecture that Q of Othello is the "late official acting version" of the play and that the text

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[190]Ibid., p. 460.

[191]Willoughby, "The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare," p. 39.

[192]R. B. McKerrow, "The Elizabethan Printer and Dramatic Manuscripts," The Library 4th. series, XII (193 -32), 265.

[193]Cameron, op. cit., p. 672.

behind F is either a "discarded manuscript" or a "presentation copy."[194]

Leo Kirschbaum and Tucker Brooke (1948) - Kirschbaum contends that Q of Othello was printed from a private transcript, but he is reluctant to point out the nature of the manuscript from which the transcript was made.[195] He cautions that a good private transcript can duplicate the distinctive features of both an author's foul papers or a prompt-book.[196] He also cautions against attributing mislined verse in a quarto as evidence of the author's foul papers--such a case occurs with Q of Othello.[197] On the other hand, Brooke is more definite as he asserts that F of Othello is based on a manuscript of some type, not on Q.[198] Also, he maintains that many of the variants in F are "sophistications" probably added by the editors.[199]

Alice Walker (1952) - Miss Walker's views on the textual history of Othello have been attacked frequently, for she is bold enough to assert that the texts behind Q and F are

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[194]Ibid., p. 678.

[195]Kirschbaum, op. cit., p. 247.

[196]Ibid., p. 161.

[197]Leo Kirschbaum, "Shakespeare's Hypothetical Marginal Additions," MLN, LXI (1946), 48.

[198]Tucker Brooke, Essays on Shakespeare and Other Elizabethans, p. 86.

[199]Ibid., p. 106.

not independent.[200] That is, she claims that F was printed from a "corrected" (but not necessarily revised) copy of Q.[201] She also suggests that the "inferiority" of Q is "due not to scribal errors but to memorial contamination."[202] In addition, she surmises that, if her theories are correct, the textual history of Othello needs a "very thorough reconsideration."[203] However, her defense of F readings as more "Shakespearean" than those in Q is perhaps her main contribution on the text of Othello.[204]

W. W. Greg (1955) - Contrary to Miss Walker's view, Greg insists that he can find no evidence to indicate that F of Othello was printed from Q.[205] He suggests that Q is based on a "private transcript" derived from Shakespeare's foul papers with a significant amount of editing.[206] He also refutes any notion that Shakespeare revised Q in order for it to be utilized as a copy text for F.[207] He believes, instead that the text from which F was printed is the prompt-book.[208]

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[200]Alice Walker, "The 1622 Quarto and the First Folio Texts of Othello," p. 16.

[201]Loc. cit.

[202]Loc. cit.

[203]Ibid., p. 17.

[204]Alice Walker, Textual Problems of the First Folio, p. 139

[205]W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare, p. 108.

[206]Ibid., p. 110.

[207]W. W. Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, p. 365.

[208]Ibid., p. 370.

Hardin Craig (1961) - Craig's basic view of the text of Othello is that F is not based on a prompt-book nor printed from Q.[209] He maintains that F is actually based on a transcript not utilized in the staging of the play.[210] He believes that Q was probably printed from Shakespeare's "fair copy" of the play.[211] He also asserts that Q "changed considerably" through its use on stage.[212]

Charlton Hinman (1963) - Much of Hinman's work with the textual aspects of Othello involves the F text, particularly with regard to the compositors of F.[213] He basically agrees with Greg's view that F was probably printed from Q collated with the prompt-book and Q is a private transcript of foul papers.[214] Hinman adds that, where readings in the two texts coincide, one must not regard them as having as much authority as F readings which differ from Q.[215]

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[209]Hardin Craig, A New Look at Shakespeare's Quartos, p. 37.

[210]Ibid., p. 40.

[211]Ibid., p. 43.

[212]Loc. cit.

[213]Hinman's main articles in this area are "A Proof Sheet in the First Folio of Shakespeare," The Library, XXII (1943), 101-107 and "Principles Governing the Use of Variant Spellings as Evidence of Alternate Setting by Two Compositors," The Library, XXI (1940), 78-94.

[214]Hinman, The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare, I, 4.

[215]Loc. cit.

Kenneth Muir (1965) - Muir contends that F of Othello is derived from a copy of Q that was "imperfectly collated" with an "authoritative manuscript."[216] He also agrees with the theory that Q is based on Shakespeare's foul papers.[217] In fact, he suggests that many of the "cuts" in Q result from the copyist's inability to read Shakespeare's difficult handwriting.[218]

E. A. J. Honigmann (1965) - Honigmann centers his textual criticism of Q and F of Othello around a refutation of Walker's "vulgarisation" theory of Q as he terms it.[219] He claims that Q has more "Shakespearean flavour" than Walker has granted.[220] He mainly supports Greg's view of the textual aspects of the play.[221] However, the essence of his examination of the two editions of the play is that Q was set up by more than one compositor and that more than one scribe copied the manuscript behind Q.[222]

These textual summaries are valuable because they provide

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[216]Kenneth Muir, "The Text of Othello," p. 227.

[217]Ibid., p. 229.

[218]Ibid., p. 228.

[219]E. A. J. Honigmann, The Stability of Shakespeare's Text, p. 107.

[220]Loc. cit.

[221]Ibid., p. 109.

[222]Ibid., p. 112.

the range of background scholarship that one needs in order to branch out into a close textual study of Othello on his own.[223]

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[223]Another textual view that merits attention is Nevill Coghill's revision theory. He argues that F_1 is a revision of Q_1. He claims that the "Folio-only" passages are actually revisions made by Shakespeare that are "functional" in terms of stagecraft. Nevill Coghill, Shakespeare's Professional Skills, pp. 167-197.

CHAPTER III

A New Textual Study of Q_1 and F_1 Texts of *Othello*

Through a close comparison of the Q_1 (1622) and F_1 (1623) texts of *Othello*, one concludes that Q_1 has been printed (rather carelessly) from a prompt-book, and that F_1 has been printed from a good transcript of a clean copy of the play.[224] Q is clearly a stage version, since it provides all of the necessary directions for the staging of the play.[225] On the other hand, F has inadequate stage directions; therefore, one proposes that it must be a version

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[224]The prompt-book is the playhouse or stage version of a play. The clean copy is a transcript of foul papers (rough draft) to be submitted to the censor. The clean copy is not intended for playhouse use. Other textual works relating directly or indirectly to *Othello* that one should consult are Alfred W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight With the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of His Text*; A. C. Patridge, *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*; R. B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena For the Oxford Shakespeare*; Percy Simpson, *Shakespearian Punctuation*; Fredson Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism*; W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents From the Elizabethan Playhouses*; and the following works by T. W. Baldwin: *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*, and *On Act and Scene Division in the Shakspere First Folio*.

[225]Cf. Hardin Craig, *A New Look at Shakespeare's Quartos*, p. 40. In this chapter Q_1 will be designated as Q and F_1 as F.

not intended for playhouse use. Furthermore, Q contains more colloquial language than F, also suggesting that Q is a stage version.[226] Moreover, as a stage version, Q does not include much of the repetitious and non-essential material to be found in many parallel F passages. Parallel passages may help to prove that Q is, indeed, a stage version of Othello (i.e., based upon a prompt-book) and that F is a fuller version of the play derived from a good transcript of the clean copy.

The first significant parallel occurs in I.i, in Roderigo's speech to Brabantio. Here, the Q version is significantly better for performance, since it does not contain the obvious repetitions of the F version. Secondly, one considers the F passage to be much too pompous in effect for Roderigo. Finally, the Q passage maintains the simple nature of Roderigo's character intact:[227]

Q	F
Sir, I will answer anything: But I beseech you,	Sir, I will answere anything. But I beseech you Ift be your pleasure, and most wise consent, (As partly I find it is) that your faire Daughter, At this odde Euen and dull watch o' th' night Transported with no worse nor better guard,

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[226]Cf. Ibid., p. 37.

[227]Quotes from Q are to Othello, Quarto One 1622, a facsimile prepared by Charles Praetorius.

But with a knaue of common
hire, a Gundelier,
To the grosse claspes of a
Lasciuious Moore:
If thus be knowne to you,
and your Allowance,
We then haue done you bold,
and saucie wrongs.
But if you know not this, my
Manners tell me,
We haue your wrong rebuke.
Do not beleeue that from the
scene of Ciuilitie,
I thus would play and trifle
with your Reuerence.
Your Daughter (if you haue
not giuen she leaue)
I say againe, hath made a
grosse reuolt,
Tying her Dutie, Beautie, Wit
and Fortunes
In an extrauagant, and
wheeling Stranger,
Of here, and euerywhere:
straight satisfie yourself.
If she be in her Chamber, or
your house,
Let loose on me the Iustice
of the State
For thus deluding you.
(I.i.121-141)

If she be in her chamber, or
your house,
Let loose on me the Iustice
of the State,
For this delusion.
(I.i.121-124)

Although one admits that the Q compositor could have skipped in the copy from "Ift be" to "If she," the evidence seems to demonstrate that the Q passage is the stage version derived from a prompt-book, while F is based on a more complete fair copy of the play.

Brabantio's charge of witchcraft is involved in the next significant parallel passage. The emphasis of the two passages, here, is clearly different, inasmuch as F stresses Othello's alleged use of magic and witchcraft, while the Q does not. However, as one may discern, the Q passage contains

the basis for Brabantio's accusation, e.g., the unnaturalness of Desdemona's choice; that is, Q includes the essential information for a smooth, uninterrupted scene:

Q	F
Oh thou foule theefe, where hast thou stowed my daughter?	Oh thou foule theefe, where hast thou stow'd my Daughter?
Dambd as thou art, thou hast inchanted her,	Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchaunted her
For ile referre me to all things of sense,	For Ile referre me to all things of sense,
	(If she in Chaines of Magick were not bound)
Whether a maide so tender, faire and happy,	Whether a Maid, so tender, Faire, and Happie,
So opposite to marriage, that she shund	So opposite to Marriage, that she shun'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our Nation,	The wealthy curled Deareling of our Nation,
Would euer haue (to incurre a general mocke)	Would euer haue (t' encurre a general mocke)
Runne from her gardage to the sooty bosome	Run from her Guardage to the sootie bosome,
Of such a thing as thou? to feare, not to delight,	Of such a thing as thou: to feare, not to delight?
	Iudge me the world, if 'tis not grosse in sense,
	That thou hast practis's on her with Foule Charmes,
	Abus'd her delicate Youth, with Drugs or Minerals,
	That weakens Motion. Ile haue 't disputed on,
	'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking;
	I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,
Such an abuser of the world, a practiser	For an abuser of the World, a practiser
Of arts inhibited, and out of warrant?	Of Arts inhibited, and out of warrant:
Lay hold vpon him, if he doe resist,	Lay hold vpon him, if he doe resist
Subdue him at his perill. (I.ii.62-74)	Subdue him, at his perill. (I.ii.62-80)

Again, one asserts that while problems incurred on the part

of the Q compositor account for the lines "missing" in the Q, the Q still appears to be a stage version of the passage and does not contain any of the non-essential expository material that occurs in the F. In at least three other parallel passages, one observes that the most tenable explanation is that Q is the stage version and that F, with much non-essential expository material, is a version not designed for playhouse use. Among these passages is the one that occurs in I.iii, in which the First Senator is discussing a battle manuever executed by the Turkes. Here, Q contains the essential elements of the Senator's comments, while F contains seven additional lines that contribute very little to the passage:

Q

This cannot be by no assay
of reason--
Tis a Pageant,
To keepe vs in false gaze:
when we consider
The importancy of Cypresse
to the Turke:
And let our selues againe,
but vnderstand,
That as it more concernes the
Turke then Rhodes,
To may he with more facile
question beare it.
(I.iii.18-23)

F

This cannot be by no assay
of reason.
'Tis a Pageant
To keep vs in false gaze,
when we consider
Th' importancie of Cyprus
to the Turke:
And let our selues againe
but vnderstand,
That as it more concerns the
Turke then Rhodes,
So may he with more facile
question beare it.
For that it stands not in
such Warrelike brace,
But altogether lackes th'
abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in.
If we make thought of this,
We must not thinke the Turke
is so vnskillful,
To leaue that latest, which
concernes him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease,
and gaine

To wake, and wage a danger
profitlesse.
(I.iii.18-31)

Here, Q clearly remains as a stage version based upon a prompt-book, and f, with the fuller text, is a non-stage version derived from the author's fair copy of the play.

Lines from the "temptation scene" (III.iii) comprise another parallel passage in which the F version contains obvious non-essential material for performance. In the following exchange, one concludes that Othello's speech in the F version is actually unnecessary, for his actions alone would demonstrate convincingly that he is "eaten up with passion:"

Q	F
Iag. I should be wise, for honestie's a foole, And looses that it workes for;	Iago. I should be wise: for Honestie's a Foole And loses what it workes for.
	Oth. By the World, I think my wife be honest, and thinke she is not: I think that thou art just, and thinke thou are not: Ile haue some proofe. My name that was as fresh As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and blacke As mine owne face. If there be Cords, or Kniues, Poyson, or Fire, or suffocating streames Ile not indure it. Would I were satisfied.
I see sir, you are eaten vp with passion, I doe repent me that I put it to you, You would be satisfied. Oth. Would, nay, I will. (III.iii.382-387)	Iago. I see you are eaten vp with Passion: I do repent me, that I put it to you. You would be satisfied? Oth. Would? Nay, and I will. (III.iii.386-397)

Furthermore, Emilia's long speech in F at IV.iii.80-100 is also not essential for the staging of Othello. Moreover, like Roderigo's F speech at I.i.122-138, Emilia's lines do not match her character, since it is difficult to imagine the worldly Emilia's delivering such a profoundly philosophical speech on husbands and wives. Once again, the Q represents a more stageable version, as Emilia retains her fundamental character in the Q version of the parallel passage.

In several other noteworthy parallel passages, the F version reveals some beautiful poetry and striking imagery, but these specific lines add nothing to the basic action of the scene involved. For example, Desdemona's speech in F at IV.ii.149-166 embodies a very moving plea to Iago for help; however, her line in the Q version, "What shall I do to win my Lord againe?" (1. 149), is actually all that is necessary in her exchange with Iago. Similarly, Othello's F speech at V.ii.266-272 contains good poetry, but, once again, the Q version includes only the essential information needed for the staging of the scene. Moreover, Othello's famous "Pontic Sea" speech is contained in the F version, but not in the Q version. Again, although Othello's lines, here, display a most vivid imagery, they are not absolutely essential to the action in the scene:

Q	F
Iag. Patience I say, your mind perhaps may change. Oth. Neuer:	Iago. Patience I say: your minde may change. Oth. Neuer Iago. Like

	to the Ponticke Sea, Whose icie Current, and compulsiue course, Neu'r keepes retyring ebbe, but keepes due on To the Proponticke, and the Hellespont: Euen so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace Shall neu'r looke backe, neu'r ebbe to humble Loue, Till that a capeable, and wide Reuenge Swallow them vp. Now by yond Marble Heauen,
In the due reuerence of a sacred vow, I here ingage my words. Iag. Doe not rise yet:.... (III.iii.452-455)	In the due reuerence of a Sacred Vow, I heere engage my words. Iago. Do not rise yet:.... (III.iii.452-463)

Such a passage as the one above leads one to conclude that the Q version is a stage version based on a prompt-book, and that the F version is derived from the fuller text of the clean copy of the play.

No doubt, the most discussed passage that appears in the F version of Othello and not in the Q is Desdemona's "Willow Song." The present author has no new theory to offer regarding it, but rather echoes Craig's position, that the song is not included in the Q version because there was no boy available at the time to sing it.[228] Craig's view, therefore, lends support to the theory that the Q version of Othello is, indeed, a stage version; that is, being the stage version, the Q would more likely reflect the conditions of the acting company that played it.[229] Although Craig's

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[228]Craig, A New Look at Shakespeare's Quartos, p. 38.

[229]Loc. cit.

theory is consistent with the evidence provided in this present study, a convincing explanation for the "Willow Song" passage is still lacking. Similarly, an adequate interpretation for parallel passages at IV.i.36-44, IV.ii.71-77, and V.ii.265-273 has not yet been proposed. For example, Craig claims that these passages are not present in the Q version because of compositor errors made when the Q was printed from a prompt-book.[230] On the other hand, there is a more tenable view for at least one parallel passage in which the Q version contains lines that do not occur in the F version. Craig suggests that compositor errors in the F account for most of these passages.[231] However, one notes that, at V.ii.85, the Q version of the parallel passage is the stage version, and that a compositor error is not likely involved:

Q	F
Oth. Tis too late. he stifles her.	Oth. It is too late. Smothers her.
Des. O Lord, Lord, Lord. Emillia calls within.	Emilia at the doore.
Em. My Lord, my Lord, what ho, my Lord, my Lord.	Emil. My Lord, my Lord? What hoa? My Lord, my Lord.
Oth. What voyce is this? not dead? not yet quite dead?	Oth. What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruell, am yet mercifull,	I that am cruell, am yet mercifull,
I would not haue thee linger in thy paine,--so, so. (V.ii.82-87)	I would not haue thee linger in thy paine? So, so. (V.ii.82-87)

Once again, one sees that the Q version is clearly the stage

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[230] Ibid., p. 39.

[231] Loc. cit.

version because it provides a sensible connection for Othello's "What voice is this?" In the F version, on the other hand, Othello's comments must seem to refer to Emilia.

For these reasons, one concludes that a majority of parallel passages indicate that the Q text of Othello is a stage version based on a prompt-book, and that the F text is a version not intended for playhouse use, but derived from the clean copy of the play. (Appendix A of the present study contains a scene-by-scene count of the lines appearing in the Q only or the F only.)

Another major point of difference between Q and F occurs in the stage directions. In Q, the stage directions are complete, providing for all of the necessary stage action. On the other hand, F lacks a significant number of quite necessary stage directions. For example, the more important "missing" directions are those giving an adequate picture of both the stage action and stage properties. The most significant of these missing directions are included in the following list taken from Q: "in his night-gown" (I.i.159); "set at a table with lights" (I.iii.1); "Exit two or three" (I.i.120); "a shot" (II.i.55); "Trumpets within" (II.i.177); "they kiss" (II.i.198); "Help, help, within" (II.iii.136); "they fight" (II.iii.147); "A bell rung" (II.iii.151); "he kneels" (III.iii.457); "Iago kneels" (III.iii.469); "A Trumpet" (IV.i.208); "with a light" (V.i.45); "with a light" (V.ii.1); "He kisses her" (V.ii.15); "She dies" (V.ii.126); "Othello falls on the bed" (V.ii.199); "The Moor runs at Iago. Iago

kills his wife" (V.ii.236); "She dies" (V.ii.252); "in a chair" (V.ii.283); "He stabs himself" (V.ii.357).[232] More complete stage directions clearly indicate that a prompt-book is involved--such is the case with the Q version of Othello. Moreover, the stage directions in the F version are much too incomplete to have been used in a performance; therefore, one concludes, once again, that the F version of Othello is based on the clean copy of the play. (Appendix B of the present study contains a complete listing of stage directions in both texts.)

Punctuation variants between the two texts also suggest that Q derives from a prompt-book and F from the clean copy of the play. Briefly, Q is more lightly punctuated throughout than is F. That is, Q contains fewer "full stops" and a significantly lesser amount of "half-stops" (colons and semicolons). Thus, the punctuation of Q allows more movement within speeches, without damaging the actor's ability to render the lines freely. The F punctuation appears to be "contrived;" possibly Ralph Crane (who is supposed to have prepared copy for several plays in the Folio) made a transcript of the clean copy of the play, for the "heavy style" and generous use of hyphens and parentheses in the F version of Othello are characteristic of Crane's punctuation.[233]

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[232]Author's list has been collated with Ridley's in his edition of Othello, p. xxviii.

[233]Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, p. 271.

The following example (used by Ridley in his edition of Othello) should suffice as an illustration of the general nature of the punctuation in the Q and F texts (I.i.144-159):[234]

Q	F
Farewell, for I must leaue you,	Farewell: for I must leaue you.
It seemes not meete, nor wholesome to my pate,	It seemes not meete, nor wholesome to my place
To be produc'd, as if I stay I shall	To be producted, (as if I stay I shall)
Against the Moore, for I doe know the state,	Against the Moore. For I do know the State,
Howeuer this may gaule him with some checke,	(Howeuer this may gall him with some checke)
Cannot with safety cast him, for hee's imbark'd,	Cannot with safetie cast-him. For he's embark'd
With such loud reason, to the Cipres warres,	With such loud reason to the Cyprus Warres,
Which euen now stands in act, that for their soules,	(Which euen now stands in Act) that for their soules
Another of his fathome, they haue not	Another of his Fadome, they haue none,
To leade their business, in which regard,....	To lead their Businesse. In which regard,....

Immediately, one detects the freedom of movement in the Q passage, and if one were to choose which version were to be used on stage, he would, no doubt, choose the Q version. On the other hand, the F passage is characteristic of Crane's transcripts of clean copies.[235] Indeed, the punctuation of the F version does not suggest that it is derived from a prompt-book.

Word and phrase variants also reveal evidence that Q

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[234]Ridley, op. cit., p. 214.

[235]Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, p. 271.

is based on a prompt-book, and that F is not. In many parallel passages, Q contains a colloquialism where F includes a more formal and grammatical word. As Craig asserts, the more informal language of Q implies strongly that it is a stage version, while the language of F suggests that the clean copy of the play is involved.[236] The following list of word variants between the two texts reveals their differences in language: Q "rust 'em," F "rust them" (I.ii.59); Q "ha," F "hath" (II.i.6); Q "ashore," F "on shore" (II.i.28); Q "known," F "acknowne" (III.iii.319); Q "For be sure of," F "Be assured of" (I.ii.11); Q "chiding," F "chidden" (II.i.6).[237] Similarly, many phrase variants clearly indicate that Q is a stage version, and that F is not. For example, one recalls the famous passage at II.i.63-65:

(Q) One that excells the blasoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation,
Does beare all excellency.

(F) One that excels the quirkes of Blazoning pens,
And in th' essentiall Vesture of creation,
Do's tyre the Ingeniuer.

One notes at once that the last line of the F version is difficult to read and would probably be difficult for an actor to render. Regarding such examples, one concludes, again, that the Q version is a stage version, since it is

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[237] A few F word variants have resulted from "sophistication" by the Folio editors. For a discussion of these sophistications, one should consult Kenneth Muir, "Folio Sophistications in Othello," N & Q, (August ", 1952), pp. 335-336.

clearly less difficult to read and, no doubt, to deliver on the stage. Thus, the F version, once again, appears to be derived from the fair copy of the play.

A concluding point of comparison that one must consider is the occurrence of oaths in the two texts. Much of the textual discussion surrounding the use of oaths in Elizabethan-Jacobean play texts stems from a document of control issued in 1606, entitled An Acte to Restraine Abuses of Players. This act appears in the Statutes as follows:

> For the preventing and avoyding of the great Abuse of the Holy Name of God in Stageplayes, Interludes, Maygames, Shewes, and such like; Be it enacted by our Soveraigne Lorde the Kinges Majesty, and by the Lordes Spirituall and Temporall, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authoritie of the same, That if at any tyme or tymes, after the end of this present Session of Parliament, any person or persons doe or shall in any Stage play, Interlude, Shewe, Maygame, or Pageant jestingly or prophanely speake or use the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghoste or of the Trinitie, which are not to be spoken but with reverence, shall forfeite for everie such Offence by hum or them committed Tenne Pounds, the one moytie thereof to the Kinges Majestie, his Heires and Successors, the other moytie thereof to hym or them that will sue for the same in any Courte of Recorde at Westminster, wherein no essoigne, Protection or Wager of Law shalbe allowed.[238]

Thus, the presence of oaths in the Q suggests that the prompt-book on which it is based was prepared before 1606. Indeed,

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[238]The Statutes at large, Conteyning all svch acts which at any time here tofore haue beene extant in Print from the Magna Charta, untill the sixteenth yeere of the Raigne of... Lord James..., II, 613.

this prompt-book may be the one used for the 1604 performance of Othello. On the other hand, the lack of oaths in the F indicates that the transcript of the clean copy was made after 1606. (Appendix C of this present study contains the oaths found only in Q and the oaths in Q for which F retains a weak substitute.)

To conclude, one proposes that Shakespeare conceived the idea for writing Othello late in 1603 or, more likely, early in 1604. Thereafter, he worked quickly, as was his custom, from the plot structure that he found in Cinthio's The Hecatommithi, but also discovered that he needed to supplement his material with local color and geographical background. For these elements, he turned to such works as Florio's Second Frutes and Holland's translation of Pliny's Natural History. Strands of his other outside reading also found their way into Othello, as did echoes of Heywood's contemporary drama, A Woman Killed With Kindness. It is also evident that he was probably mindful of the change in power in his home country, since he borrowed at least indirectly from the poetry of James I.

Perhaps of more importance to this present study, however, is the printing history of Othello. For this textual area, one concludes that, shortly before October of 1621, Thomas Walkley obtained a prompt-book of Othello. He apparently published the work in quarto form late in 1621 without the sanction of the King's Company. Furthermore, from a close textual study of the Q and F texts, one concludes

that the Q was printed from a prompt-book and that the F was printed from a transcript of the clean copy of the play. One is reminded of Greg's comment on the textual history of Othello, "When all is said it has to be admitted that the evidence for the textual history of Othello remains contradictory and ambiguous."[239] It is hoped that this new textual study of Othello has, at least, brought together the latest evidence, weighing it with the older scholarship in such a way as to provide a different and more succinct perspective for this scholarly problem.

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[239]Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, p. 370.

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APPENDIX A

Lines in one only text:

	No. of Lines	F_1-only	Q_1-only
Act I			
scene i	184	17	1
scene ii	100	7½	0
scene iii	409	14	5
total	693	38½	6
Act II			
scene i	320	4	1
scene ii	12	0	0
scene iii	394	3	0
total	726	7	1
Act III			
scene i	60	1	0
scene ii	6	0	0
scene iii	478	15	0
scene iv	201	4½	0
total	745	20½	0
Act IV			
scene i	293	13½	0
scene ii	252	19½	2
scene iii	106	47	0
total	651	80	2
Act V			
scene i	129	2	0
scene ii	327	23	½
total	500	25	½
TOTAL	3315	171	9½

APPENDIX B

Stage Directions:[240]

	Q_1	F_1
I.i.1	Enter Iago and Roderigo.	Enter Rodorigo, and Iago.
81	Brabantio at a window.	Aboue (immediately after speech-heading Bra.)
144	(no S.D.)	Exit.
159	Enter Brabantio in his night gowne, and seruants with Torches.	Enter Brabantio, with Seruants and Torches.
ii.1	Enter Othello, Iago, and attendants with Torches.	Enter Othello, Iago, Attendants, with Torches.
28	Enter Cassio with lights, Officers, and torches.	Enter Cassio, with Torches.
52	Enters Brabantio, Roderigo, and others with lights and weapons.	54 Enter Brabantio, Rodorigo, with Officers, and Torches.
iii.1	Enter Duke and Senators, set at a Table with lights and Attendants.	Enter Duke, Senators, and Officers.
12	Enter a Messenger	Enter Saylor.
32	Enter a 2. Messenger	Enter a Messenger.
46	Enter Brabantio, Othello, Roderigo, Iago, Cassio, Desdemona, and Officers.	Enter Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Rodorigo, and Officers.
120	Exit two or three.	(no S.D.)
170	Enter Desdemona, Iago, and the rest.	Enter Desdemona, Iago, and Attendants.
293	Exeunt.	Exit.
300	Exit Moore and Desdemona.	Exit.
379	Exit Roderigo.	Exit.
402	Exit.	(no exit for Iago)
II.i.1	Enter Montanio, Governor of Cypres, with two other Gentlemen.	Enter Montano, and two Gentlemen.
19	Enter a third Gentleman.	Enter a Gentleman.
51	Enter a Messenger (and "A sail..." given to him as he enters).	Within. A Saile, a Saile, a Saile (but no messenger's entry).
57	A shot.	(no S.D.)
65	Enter 2. Gentleman.	Enter Gentleman.
80	Enter Desdemona, Iago, Emillia, and Roderigo.	Enter Desdemona, Iago, Rodorigo, and Aemilia.
91	within. A saile, a saile.	(in text, not as S.D.)

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[240]Author's findings have been collated with those of M. R. Ridley in his edition of Othello, pp. 204-207.

178	Trumpets within.	(no trumpets)
198	they kisse.	(no S.D.)
212	Exit.	Exit Othello and Desdemona.
ii.1	Enter a Gentleman reading a Proclamation.	Enter Othello's, Herald with a Proclamation.
11	(no exit)	Exit.
iii.1	Enter Othello, Cassio, and Desdemona.	Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Attendants.
11	Exit Othello and Desdemona.	Exit.
57	Enter Montanio, Cassio, and others.	Enter Cassio, Montano, and Gentlemen.
130	Exit Rod.	(no exit for Rodorigo)
136	Helpe, helpe, within	(no S.D.)
137	Enter Cassio, driving in Roderigo.	Enter Cassio Pursuing Rodorigo.
147	they fight.	(no S.D.)
148	A bell rung.	(no S.D.)
154	Enter Othello, and Gentlemen with weapons.	Enter Othello, and Attendants.
240	Enter Desdemona, with others.	Enter Desdemona attended.
251	Exit Moore, Desdemona, and attendants.	Exit.
326	Exit.	Exit Cassio.
372	(no exit for Roderigo)	Exit Rodorigo.
378	Exeunt.	Exit.
III.i.1	Enter Cassio, with Musitians and the Clowne.	Enter Cassio, Musitians, and Clowne.
20	(no exit for Musicians)	Exit Mu.
29	Enter Iago. (but no exit for Clown)	Exit Clo. Enter Iago.
56	Exeunt	(no S.D.)
ii.1	Enter Othello, Iago, and other Gentlemen.	Enter Othello, Iago, and Gentlemen.
iii.28	Enter Othello, Iago, and Gentlemen.	Enter Othello, and Iago.
90	Exit Desd. and Em.	Exit.
293	Ex. Oth. and Desd.	292 Exit.
458	he kneeles.	(no S.D.)
471	Iago kneeles.	(no S.D.)
iv.1	Enter Desdemonia Emilla and the Clowne.	Enter Desdemona, Aemilia, and Clown.
17	Exit.	Exit Clo.
94	Exit.	Exit Othello.
135	(no exit for Iago)	Exit.
164	Exeunt Desd. and Emillia.	Exit.
198	Exeunt.	Exeunt omnes.
IV.i.1	Enter Iago and Othello.	Enter Othello, and Iago.
37	He fals downe.	43 Falls in a Traunce.
165	Exit Cassio.	(no exit for Cassio)
207	A Trumpet.	(no trumpet)
ii.173	Exit women. Enter Roderigo.	Exeunt Desdemona and Aemilia. Enter Rodorigo.

243	Exit Iag. and Rod.	Exeunt.
iii.1	Enter Othello, Desdemona, Lodouico, Emillia, and Attendants. (put earlier, after "about it" in l. 241 of preceding scene).	Enter Othello, Lodouico, Desdemona, Aemilia, and Attendants.
9	Exeunt.	Exit.
V.i.36	Ex. Enter Lodouico and Gratiano.	Exit Othello. Enter Lodouico and Gratiano.
45	Enter Iago with a light.	Enter Iago.
109	Enter Em.	(no entry for Emilia)
ii.1	Enter Othello with a light.	Enter Othello, and Desdemona in her bed.
19	He kisses her.	(no S.D.)
84	he stifles her.	Smothers her.
85	Emillia calls within.	Aemilia at the doore.
126	She dies.	(no S.D.)
168	Enter Montano, Gratiano, Iago, and others.	Enter Montano, Gratiano, and Iago.
199	Oth. fals on the bed.	(no S.D.)
235	The Moore runnes at Iago. Iago kils his wife.	(no S.D.)
238	Exit Iago.	(no exit for Iago)
244	Exit Mont. and Gratiano.	Exit.
252	she dies.	(no S.D.)
256	Gra. within.	(no S.D.)
283	Enter Lodouico, Montano, Iago, and Officers Cassio in a Chaire.	Enter Lodouico, Cassio, Montano, and Iago, with Officers.
357	He stabs himselfe.	(no S.D.)
360	He dies.	Dyes
372	Exeunt omnes.	Exeunt.

APPENDIX C

Oaths in Q_1-only[241]

(I.i.7)	S'blood	(II.ii.188)	Zouns
(I.i.35)	God	(II.ii.318)	God
(I.i.94)	Zounds	(III.iii.180)	Zouns
(I.i.121)	Zouns	(III.iii.189)	By Heauen
(II.ii.13)	Heauen	(III.iv.96)	Heauen
(II.ii.128)	God	(IV.i.45)	Zouns
(II.ii.167)	Zouns	(IV.i.236)	God

Oaths for which the F supplied weak substitutes:

	F_1	Q_1
(II.ii.83)	'Fore heauen	Fore God
(II.ii.92)	'Fore Heauen	Fore God
(II.ii.115)	Why...	Fore God
(II.ii.119)	heau'ns aboue	God's aboue
(II.ii.180)	Alas	godswill
(II.ii.184)	Fie, fie,	godswill
(II.ii.232)	If I once	Zouns, if I
(II.ii.290)	Marry Heauen	Mary God
(II.ii.411)	Introth	by'the masse
(III.iii.86)	Trust me	Birlady
(III.iii.126)	Alas	By heauen
(III.iii.203)	Good Heauen	Good God
(III.iii.231)	Heauen	God
(III.iv.92)	Heauen	God
(III.iv.115)	Away	Zouns
(III.iv.214)	in good troth	by my faith
(IV.i.261)	Trust me	By my troth
(IV.ii.168)	Oh Heauens	O heauen
(IV.ii.177)	Alas Iago	O Good Iago
(IV.ii.225)	Nay	by this hand
(IV.iii.79)	In troth	Good troth
(IV.iii.80)	In troth	By my troth
(IV.iii.84)	why	vds pitty
(IV.iii.113)	Heauen	God
(V.i.113)	Yes, 'tis	O Heauen
(V.ii.71)	O Heauen	Then Lord
(V.ii.148)	Alas!	O Lord
(V.ii.270)	Oh Heauen!	O God!
(V.ii.271)	Come...	Zouns...

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[241]Author's findings have been collated with those of Kenneth W. Cameron in "The Text of Othello: An Analysis," PMLA, XLVII (December, 1932), 780.