CHAPTER I

The two texts of 'Othello' and early modern constructions of race

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There has in recent years been a seismic shift in the way Shakespearean textual scholars view the early printed versions of the plays. Through much of the twentieth century, earlier-published, shorter quarto versions were generally viewed as derivative – pirated versions or 'memorial reconstructions' of the play in performance – while longer, later-published quarto and Folio versions were regarded as more authoritative, closer to the plays as Shakespeare originally wrote them, or at least closer to the form in which he envisioned them for performance on stage. More recently, as in the case of the quarto and Folio versions of *King Lear*, some scholars have been willing to argue for Shakespeare as a reviser and augmenter of his own work, so that shorter and earlier published versions could be understood as earlier stages in his own evolving conception of his creations.

In the heady early days of the paradigm shift, *Othello* was mentioned alongside *King Lear* as a two-text play whose early quarto and Folio printings should be regarded as distinct versions, each with its own artistic integrity and theatrical logic. Countering Alice Walker's definitive statement of the older view of the first quarto of *Othello* (1622) as a corrupt and vulgarizing perversion of Shakespeare's intentions for the play, which she saw as more nearly reflected in the First Folio version of 1623, E. A. J. Honigmann announced optimistically in 1982, 'A strong case can be made for the "revision" of *Othello* and of *King Lear*; the fact that Shakespeare is thought to have re-touched not one but two of his greatest tragedies, and to have strengthened both in similar (and unusual) ways, makes the "revision-theory" more compelling – and more exciting.'[1] In the case of *King Lear* the aftermath is well known: the 1986 Oxford edition of the *Complete Works* offers both the quarto and Folio versions separately and as equals, and that editorial decision is repeated in the more recent *Norton Shakespeare* (1997), based on the Oxford text, and in Michael Warren's *The Complete King Lear* (1989). The two-text theory of *King Lear* may fairly be said to have 'arrived' – no

critic, director, or editor of the play can now afford to ignore it. What of the two-text *Othello*?

As I shall argue below, the differences between quarto and Folio versions of *Othello* are at least as important for interpretation as the differences between the two early versions of *King Lear*. And yet, Honigmann's optimistic assessment of the case for two separate texts of *Othello* was followed by little beyond silence. Even Honigmann's 1997 Arden edition of the play and his companion volume consolidating the case for Shakespeare as reviser of *Othello* do not further develop the interpretative questions that had interested him earlier.[2] In the last decade, there have been two new editions of the first quarto of *Othello*, but there is still, to my knowledge, no recent parallel-text edition to facilitate study of the differences between the two versions. Editors have generally skirted the tricky question of how Q1 *Othello* might mean differently than F1; with few exceptions they do not offer an apparatus that facilitates comparison between the two.[3] Even in the Oxford Shakespeare *Complete Works*, for reasons that had as much to do with lack of space as with the editors' preferences, Q1 was not printed separately or discussed as a separate entity.[4]

There are various possible explanations beyond publishing cost why the two-text *Othello* has died aborning while the two-text *King Lear* has flourished. Within the play, Othello sets himself resolutely, if futilely, against the doubling of meanings. In his destruction, engineered by a villain whose personal oath is 'by Janus' and whose virulent duplicity goes beyond anything to be found elsewhere in Shakespeare, the idea of a double text may carry a special stigma. But I will argue here that a more accessible, more intractable, explanation has to do with race. As recently as 1989, Michael Billington was able to write of the play in performance, '*Othello* is currently the least revived of all Shakespeare's tragedies and the reasons are not far to seek: casting problems and racial guilt.'[5] In the last ten years, however, *Othello* has been frequently performed and the subject of race in the play has engaged literally hundreds of critics in print. It is time we turned our editorial attention to a matter that has become central to the criticism.

Briefly summarized, my argument will run as follows: Q and F *Othello* offer markedly different constructions of race and its relation to other elements of the play, especially female purity. Most of the key passages critics have repeatedly cited to define the play's attitude towards blackness, miscegenation, and sexual pollution derive from the Folio version of the play, and do not exist in the quarto. To imagine 'gentle Shakespeare' as a

reviser who began with a text resembling Q, then amplified and refocused it into a text resembling F, is to imagine a Shakespeare who deliberately intensified what look from our modern perspective like racist elements of the play. Ania Loomba and others have recently emphasized the relative indefinition of racial identities and boundaries in the early modern era by comparison with our own. Loomba characterizes Shakespeare's time as 'either the last period in history where ethnic identities could be understood as fluid, or as the first moment of the emergence of modern notions of "race"'.[6] Where we place *Othello* in this shifting calculus of difference will depend to a significant degree on whether we choose Q or F.

The quarto and Folio versions of *Othello* were published only a year apart, yet they are markedly unlike: Q contains numerous oaths that have been softened or eliminated in F, which suggests that Q may predate the 1606 'Acte to Restraine Abuses of Players'. Q has fuller stage directions, which may suggest an origin closer to the play in performance. The two texts contain numerous small variants of the type that we have come to expect from Shakespearean two-text plays. But the most interesting difference is that F contains approximately 160 lines of text that are not present in Q. Conversely, Q includes a few lines that are not present in F. Were the Folio-only lines in the play from Shakespeare's first composition of it, then cut, perhaps for a specific performance, or were they Shakespeare's own additions as part of a broader revision? The added lines are by no means innocuous: they contain some of the play's most racially charged language. Within the confines of the present chapter I cannot hope to address all of the areas of difference between the two texts, but will confine myself to a discussion of the most extended F-only passages. What would the play look like without them?

Answering that question is, of course, impossible because we have all been conditioned to define *Othello* as a play that contains them: even editors who prefer Q as their copy-text routinely graft the F-only passages onto the play, and that practice of conflation has been followed ever since the 1630 publication of the second quarto.[7] But, following a methodology that has become commonplace in studies of *King Lear*, we can, as a heuristic device for recovering difference, at least try to think our way back into imagining what one version might have looked like on stage, might look like even now for readers, in the absence of its textual supplement. The method is not without flaws: to choose to compare two texts through a rather clumsy, formalist mode of close reading is to sacrifice some of our ability to see how a given text differs from itself. Then too, what look on paper like marked

contrasts between versions can usually be overcome through staging. But that does not mean that the differences should be ignored.

The first long F-only passage occurs during Iago and Roderigo's jeering encounter with Brabantio (1.1.81–157),[8] during which they attempt to convince the old man that his daughter has eloped with Othello. Both texts include Iago's scathingly clever, yet indirect, references to the coupling of Othello and Desdemona: they are a black ram and a white ewe making the 'beast with two backs', spawning coursers and jennets. But only in the Folio version does Roderigo chime in with his own much more explicit imagining of Desdemona's pollution (1.1.119–35). Here I cite the First Folio, using square parentheses to indicate the portions of the speech that are F-only:

Rod. Sir, I will answere any thing. But I beseech you
[If't 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,
But with a knaue of common hire, a Gundelier,
To the grosse claspes of a Lasciuious Moore:
If this 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 sence of all Ciuilitie,
I thus would play and trifle with your Reuerence.
Your Daughter (if you haue not giuen her 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 euery where: straight satisfie your selfe.]
If she be in her Chamber, or your house,
Let loose on me the Iustice of the State
For thus deluding you.

(TLN 133–53)

The characterization of Othello as an erratic outsider, an 'extrauagant, and wheeling Stranger, / Of here, and euery where' is F only, as is the graphic depiction of the 'Lasciuious Moore' grossly clasping a 'faire Daughter' who has hired a common knave to transport her, in 'grosse reuolt' against her father's authority. The lines that critics most often rely on to establish Othello's (stereotypical) Moorish lust and his marginality to Venetian culture even at the beginning of the play, the lines they cite most often to demonstrate

the normative culture's intolerance of miscegenation – these do not exist in the quarto, where Roderigo's speech reads in full,

> Sir, I will answer anything: But I beseech you,
> If she be in her chamber, or your house,
> Let loose on me the Iustice of the state,
> For this delusion.
>
> (B3r)[9]

It is easy to see why editors long considered the Folio version of Roderigo's speech as simply excised in quarto: except for the usual minor differences in spelling, punctuation, and wording, Roderigo's surrounding lines are identical in both versions. Those editors who have more recently argued for Roderigo's more extended speech as a Shakespearean addition have suggested that the new lines proved necessary because early audiences found the scene too confusing without them.[10] But surely the Q version of the scene is no more confusing than many another Shakespearean first act exposition, and all is made clear a few minutes later when Desdemona and Othello face the Senators and offer their own version of events. What the F 'additions', if such they are, accomplish is to give an almost pornographic specificity and negativity to the image of interracial love. But they do more than that: in Q it is possible to regard Iago's taunts about animal sexuality as his own twisted, personal vision, since Roderigo does not contribute to them, unless we count his earlier reference to Othello as 'thicklips' (1.1.65). By having Roderigo join and even best Iago in articulating this 'primal scene' of miscegenation, F establishes it as a community view, even if the community consists at this point of two men plus Brabantio, who responds to Roderigo, 'This accident is not unlike my dream, / Belief of it oppresses me already' (1.1.140–1). His speech exists in both Q and F, but only in F do we know exactly what dreadful things he has been dreaming. As though by contagion, Roderigo's speech in F taints our vision of their love even before we see them together in Scene 3 as a valiant general and his forthright wife.

Remarkably, the greater sexual explicitness created by Roderigo's speech in the Folio version of the play extends to its language in later scenes, where Q is often more general. As would be expected, the greater explicitness is concentrated in the last two acts of the play, when the F-only passages painfully intensify the debate about Desdemona's virtue. Othello's fit upon hearing Cassio's 'confession' of adultery from Iago (4.1.35–43) is much more extended in the Folio version, and introduces, as Honigmann has observed, 'sexual overtones that are peculiarly revolting and effective – conjuring up

images of male and female sexual organs, thinly disguised'.[11] Especially in its longer Folio version, Othello's ranting is a tortured, fragmented elaboration of the 'gross' images from Act I:

> *Othe.* Lye with her? lye on her? We say lye on her, when they be-lye-her. Lye with her: {at this point, Q adds 'Zouns',} that's fullsome: Handkerchiefe: Confessions: Handkerchiefe. [To confesse, and be hang'd for his labour. First, to be hang'd, and then to confesse: I tremble at it. Nature would not inuest her selfe in such shadowing passion, without some Iustruction. It is not words that shakes me thus, (pish) Noses, Eares, and Lippes: is't possible. Confesse? Handkerchiefe? O diuell.]
>
> (TLN 2412–20)

In the next extended F-only speech (4.2.74–7) Othello finally confronts Desdemona directly with his rage against her supposed infidelity:

> [What commited,
> Committed? Oh, thou publicke Commoner,
> I should make very Forges of my cheekes,
> That would to Cynders burne vp Modestie,
> Did I but speake thy deedes.] What commited?
>
> (TLN 2768–72)

After this powerfully incendiary language, Othello finally comes out and calls her 'Strumpet' a few lines later. The Q version of lines 2768–72 is only two words, 'impudent strumpet' (sig. K3v, p. 824), which are usually added on for good measure to the F-only insults in the conflated texts of modern editions, so that in our modern texts Othello is more extensively abusive than in either early text considered separately. At 4.2.85–7, Q has Desdemona protest in response, 'If to preserue this vessell for my Lord, / From any hated foule vnlawfull touch, / Be not to be a strumpet, I am none' (sig. K4r, p. 824). The F version of the passage reads instead 'any other foule vnlawfull touch' (TLN 2781), implying that Othello's touch is also unlawful: in F, her marriage is itself construed as whoredom.

In response to these F-only passages, Desdemona's speech of self-justification before Iago at 4.2.150–66 is fourteen lines longer in F and more precise about what she is accused of. Only in F does she kneel before him and explicitly articulate the charge against her:

> I cannot say Whore,
> It do's abhorre me now I speake the word,
> To do the Act, that might the addition earne,
> Not the worlds Masse of vanitie could make me.
>
> (TLN 2875–8)

Her kneeling before Iago is a gesture that increases both her abjection and the hideous irony of her situation – protesting her virtue to the very man who best knows her truth.

The best-known segment of F that does not exist in Q is most of the Willow Scene (4.3), which requires Desdemona to sing her song of abandoned love. The standard explanation for its absence from Q is that the play-text had to be adjusted quickly for a performance in which a boy singer was not available – perhaps because of a sudden adolescent change of voice. But some editors have made a case for the Willow Scene as a Shakespearean addition, noting that at other points towards the end of the play, Emilia's role is also expanded in F.[12] All of the most sexually explicit speeches of the scene are among its F-only lines: Emilia's affectionate banter about a 'Lady in Venice' who would walk barefoot to Palestine for a touch of Lodovico's 'nether lip' (TLN 3009–10), Desdemona's ventriloquizing of the lover's voice in the Willow Song: '*If I court mo women, you'le couch with mo men*' (TLN 3026), her questioning of Emilia about whether there can possibly be women who 'abuse their husbands / In such grosse kinde' (TLN 3032–3), and Emilia's extended declamation contending that 'it is their Husbands faults / If Wiues do fall', which claims for women the same passions and frailties as men have (TLN 3059–76). Lynda Boose and Michael Neill have emphasized the play's enlistment of the audience's capacity for a prurient, even pornographic, interest in the bedchamber of the two lovers – 'an interest that culminates in the eroticized sight of Desdemona's murder between her wedding sheets.[13] In F Iago even talks like the proprietor of a peep-show in his solicitation of Roderigo:

> Didst thou not see her paddle with the palme of his hand? [Didst not marke that?]
> *Rod.* Yes, [that I did:] but that was but curtesie.
>
> (TLN 1035–8)

Did you get that? Yeah, yeah! The extra F-only words shape the passage in a way that suggests adolescent voyeurism. By hammering away at the topic of sexual transgression within the context of marriage between a Venetian and a Moor, by scratching away at a wound and continually reopening it, the formidable series of F-only passages outlined above helps to keep alive in the play an itch of sexual prurience that turns its audience much more decisively than does Q into complicitous voyeurs upon a scene of vice that is the more powerful because it is a figment of our (and Iago's, Roderigo's, and finally Othello's) imaginations.

What would Q look like without the sexual overlay of F? For one thing, the F-only passages put additional burdens on the tragic protagonist. As we have seen, in the F version of Act 1, Othello is defined as a deviant and lascivious outsider even before he appears on stage. Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio constitute a miniature culture of xenophobia: while in Q it is possible to imagine Iago as the sole source of contagion, the effect in F is to intensify the social pressures against Othello's marriage. In the final two acts of the Folio version, the miniature culture of female domesticity and intimacy created by the Willow Scene, with its affectionate banter between the two women, and the concomitant expansion of Emilia's role at other points in the final scenes of F, similarly serve to create a society against which Othello is defined as aberrant. In Act 5 of the Folio version, Emilia protests much more vigorously against Othello's injustice and Iago's 'Villany' and threatens to kill herself 'for greefe' (TLN 3475–8); in F she dies addressing her dead mistress and echoing Desdemona's Willow Song, a telling reminder of the intimacy of the earlier scene:

Æmil. What did thy Song boad Lady?
Hearke, canst thou heare me? I will play the Swan,
And dye in Musicke: *Willough, Willough, Willough.*
(TLN 3545–7)

There is an important difference in functioning between the culture of xenophobia aimed against Othello at the beginning of the play and the fragile culture of female domesticity at the end of it. During the intervening acts, audience sympathies have been forced into realignment. The more Othello rants against Desdemona, the more he sacrifices the sympathy of bystanders within the play and also of the audience outside it. We have already noted how Roderigo's F-only speech defines the Moor as 'extravagant' and unsettled even before he comes on stage. It will come as no surprise that several other F-only passages serve to intensify our sense of Othello not as the urbane Venetian we briefly glimpse in 1.3 and at his arrival on Cyprus, but as a threatening outsider.

Much critical attention, especially in the last decade, has been devoted to the question of Othello's colour. Is he coal-black, as several lines from the play seem to suggest, or is he instead tawny or swarthy, like Shakespeare's 'Dark Lady' or like the Moorish ambassador to England whose portrait survives from his visit in 1600–1?[14] It has by now been established that there were numerous 'blackamoors' in England. For London audiences, the sight of black skin would not have been the monstrous anomaly earlier critics of the play assumed it would be. Queen Elizabeth's notorious edicts

attempting to deport 'negars and blackamoors' – on grounds that they consumed scarce food needed by her own subjects in time of famine, that they were associated with the Spaniards at a time that England was at war against Spain, and that they were, in any case, Muslim or pagan infidels and therefore no part of the English Christian community – did not meet with success: many courtiers had black servants, and there are records of black property-holders and taxpayers in the period.[15] It is overwhelmingly likely that in seventeenth-century productions, Othello was portrayed as black, like Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, for which we have Henry Peacham's sketched record of a scene as it appeared on stage, or like Queen Anne and her ladies when they appeared as blackamoors in *The Masque of Blackness*, which was performed at court on 6 January 1605, and which may well have been in rehearsal the previous November when *Othello* was performed at court.

Early audiences, it seems, liked their 'black' Moors to look black, but that leaves open the question of what stereotyped reactions they may have brought to the sight of that skin colour on stage. As part of the recent interest in race in *Othello*, critics have debated almost endlessly the potential associations of blackness in Elizabethan and early Jacobean culture.[16] It is easy to impose our own postcolonial, post-slavery associations of blackness with degradation upon a culture in which the constellation of structures that we view as constituting racism were only in process of coming together. What is less easy is to attempt to determine how a given cultural artefact might have functioned as part of an incipient discourse of racism.

The term 'racism' itself dates only from the 1930s, but the concept goes back much further. If we base ourselves upon George M. Fredrickson's recent definition, then Shakespeare's England was not quite racist. According to Fredrickson, racism exists when differences that 'might otherwise be considered ethnocultural are regarded as innate, indelible, and unchangeable' and are combined with efforts at exerting control over the stigmatized group. 'Racism, therefore, is more than theorizing about human differences or thinking badly of a group over which one has no control. It either directly sustains or proposes to establish *a racial order*, a permanent group hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature or the decrees of God.'[17] According to most readings of the play, *Othello* is not quite racist, in that it is capable of presenting, even if only briefly, a powerful portrait of a man who is marked by ethnocultural differences from the Venetians, but appears to be accepted by them because he has adopted the religion and ethos of the dominant group. In the words of the Duke to Brabantio,

'If virtue no delighted beauty lack / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black' (1.3.290–1).

In this view, Othello's black skin is a liability, but not a marker of 'innate difference' that demands subordination in a 'permanent group hierarchy'. What *Othello* does, and much more explicitly and powerfully in F than in Q, is enact a process by which skin colour comes to be associated even by Othello himself with innate differences that demand his subordination or exclusion. On this view, the play is a powerful laboratory in which many of the stereotyped racial attitudes that were to dominate later culture are allowed to coalesce. The play was enormously popular on stage during the seventeenth century, when imperial expansion and plantation slavery were becoming key elements of England's economic prosperity, and English racial attitudes were coming to be defined along colour lines. Small wonder that the controversy over quarto and Folio *Othello* has been placed on a back burner rather than receiving the attention it deserves as a parallel case to *King Lear*. If Shakespeare was the reviser who turned Q into F, then he revised in the direction of racial virulence.

The lines most frequently cited by modern critics to establish both the skin colour of Othello and its association with filth and moral turpitude exist only in the Folio version of the play. Here is the F passage from 3.3 in its broader context:

Oth. Nay stay: thou should'st be honest.
Iago. I should be wise; for Honestie's a Foole,
And looses that it workes for.
[*Oth.* By the World,
I thinke my Wife be honest, and thinke she is not:
I thinke that thou art iust, and thinke thou art not:
Ile haue some proofe. My name that was as fresh
As *Dians* 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.
Iago.] I see you are eaten vp with Passion:
(TLN 2026–37)

In Q, the issue is Iago's honesty – something that should indeed be subject to doubt – but in F, Othello expands the whole question of honesty into an interrogation of the relation between skin colour, reputation, and moral rectitude. In modern editions, 'My name' at TLN 2032 is almost always altered to 'Her name', following the second quarto of 1630, which has no

particular textual authority but irons out the gender trouble of imagining a seasoned black warrior who can think of his name as resembling fair 'fresh' Diana's face. In this passage, an ugly demand for congruence between a 'fair' inside and a 'fair' outside begins to push Othello towards a mistaken self-imaging that blackens his name and nature to match his skin. Desdemona's purity is required for his own: if she is sullied, then what now look to us like racial stereotypes begin to click into place. In Q, by contrast, the language that associates 'black' with immorality is not reserved exclusively for Othello himself. One of the only passages in which Othello's language towards Desdemona in Q is harsher than it is in F – contrary to the pattern we have established above – is at 4.2.67, just before his accusations of 'whore' that we have already discussed. In Q Othello addresses Desdemona, 'O thou blacke weede, why art so louely faire?' (Sig. K4r, p. 824); the equivalent passage in F is 'Oh thou weed: / Who art so louely faire' (TLN 2762–3). Most modern editions follow the Folio and read simply 'weed'.[18] It is a minute difference, perhaps, but a key one in that it establishes a separability of blackness and skin colour in Q that does not exist in F.

Elsewhere in the Folio, what Fredrickson would call Othello's 'ethnocultural differences' are further negativized in ways that they are not in the quarto. Only in F does Brabantio reiterate to the Venetian Senate his conviction that Othello must have bound Desdemona in 'Chaines of Magick' in order to gain her love:

> Iudge me the world, if 'tis not grosse in sense,
> That thou hast practis'd on her with foule Charmes,
> Abus'd her delicate Youth, with Drugs or Minerals,
> That weakens Motion.
>
> (TLN 290–3)[19]

The 'foule Charmes' suggest heathen magic, but elsewhere in F Othello is strongly associated with the Muslim infidel. The famous lines in which he likens the icy current of his passion for revenge to the icy current of the 'Ponticke Sea' – running straight, swift, and 'compulsiue' through the Bosphorus past Istanbul into the Mediterranean – exist only in the Folio. They establish a connection to the Ottoman Turks whom his allegiance to Venice would require him to identify as the enemy (TLN 2103–12).

As Nevill Coghill was the first to notice, the F-only lines in the 'Ponticke Sea' speech, in which Othello kneels before Iago and protests the implacability of his lust for revenge, balance the F-only lines, cited earlier, in which Desdemona kneels before Iago to protest her innocence of the unspeakable

crime of whoredom.[20] The parallel structure adroitly heightens our sense of utter contrast, to the point of disconnection, between the 'black' revenger and his 'fair' victim. Finally, at the very end of the play, as Othello attempts to justify his murder of Desdemona before the horrified Venetian onlookers, the Folio version alone includes lines that require the on-stage audience to recoil in horror from Othello's person, which by this point in the play has become dangerous, almost contagious. Only in F does he protest to his auditors, 'Be not affraid, though you do see me weapon'd' and again, three lines later, 'Do you go backe dismaid? 'Tis a lost feare' (TLN 3566, 3569). In Q, the primary focus of the speech is on his reaction to Desdemona's death – the pity of it! In F, the speech is divided between the lines on Desdemona and his perception of his own isolation from his erstwhile culture. As Arthur Little, Jr, has perceptively noted, *Othello enacts* Elizabeth's order for the deportation of 'negars and blackamoors' in that the tragic protagonist, who is at least tenuously accepted by powerful Venetians at the beginning of the action, dies in exile at the end, defined as irredeemably alien from it by a sequence of events that consolidate the audience's negative 'cognitive assonance to physical blackness'. Whatever it may have been at the beginning of the play, Othello's black skin at the end of it is indelibly associated with hypersexuality, predation upon white womanhood, demonism, and alien status.[21] And these connections are drawn with particular explicitness in the Folio. Through his suicide, Othello tries to undo the set of stereotypes that have so fatally clicked into place. But that action against the infidel 'Turk' he has become completes his 'exile' by relieving the dominant culture of the disturbing difference that his presence has represented.

Before the quarto version of *Othello* came to be viewed as Shakespeare's first version of the play, it was reviled in a language of miscegenation that demonstrates the unease textual scholars felt but could not directly express toward the more benign construction of racial difference offered in Q. Alice Walker, for example, records her dismay with the 'contamination' of the Folio, which has 'taken colour in linguistic forms' from the quarto: 'the pollution holds in the exchange'.[22] What she is subliminally reacting against, I would suggest, is the recognition that Q does not rein in the cultural danger represented by Othello's blackness and sexuality with anything like the virulence of F. Now, however, F is taken to be Shakespeare's revision of Q, and it is more common to encounter praise for the many felicities of F that are only embryonic in Q. We need to recognize the extent to which the more powerful language of F gains its special force through its strikingly concrete representations of the dangers of racial difference and its racheting

up of racial conflict to – and some would say past – the limits of human endurance. It would, of course, be possible to rescue Shakespeare from the implications of this recognition, as Honigmann tried to do when he suggested that Shakespeare 'knew more about racism than modern critics have cared to admit',[23] the implication being that Shakespeare aired contemporary racial attitudes in order to critique them out of some greater and more refined sense of humanity. I have suggested, rather, that Shakespeare as a reviser of *Othello* was, in effect, himself written by shifting contemporary attitudes toward race. A similar shift takes place over time in the texts of *Titus Andronicus*: its Folio text includes a final four lines that do not exist in the first quarto of 1594. These four lines specify Aaron, the 'damn'd Moore / From whom, our heauy happes had their beginning' (TLN 2705–6) as the source of all the deaths, mutilations, and mutinies that Rome has suffered during the course of the play.

It is possible, of course, that the revision theory of *Othello* is in error, as Scott McMillin has recently contended, and that what have looked for the past several decades like additions to Q are instead cuts from an original Shakespearean version resembling F.[24] In that case, we are back in Alice Walker's territory, but able, we can hope, to view the issue of Q–F racial difference with a bit less obliquity and suppressed shame. If the F-only passages are cuts – and a strong argument can be made for that position – then someone – Shakespeare? his company? the Master of the Revels? – deliberately took out the most racially explicit passages of the play, presumably to meet the demands of a specific performance. One likely occasion might have been the inaugural performance of *Othello* at court in November 1604. There are numerous reasons why the King's Men might have wanted to tone down the racial virulence of the play at that particular time: *The Masque of Blackness* was about to be performed by the Queen and her ladies; James I had just formally concluded peace with Spain in August 1604, and an increased Spanish presence at court might make it wise to soften some of the play's most flamboyant language about Moors, blackness, and miscegenation.[25] What is most interesting about this alternative scenario is that it requires us to imagine Shakespeare or some other agent during the period as able to perceive and dampen the play's most virulent language of racial difference for the sake of a given performance while simultaneously preserving it for later performances, in which it might be expected to prove more palatable. Neither the reviser nor the cutter much resembles the 'gentle Shakespeare' we have been taught to know and love. But one thing is certain: we need to be able to study the Q–F differences

in all their painful clarity in our modern editions, which presently obscure them.

NOTES

1. E. A. J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Revised Plays, *King Lear* and *Othello*', *The Library* 6th series, 4 (1982), 142–73, 171.
2. Contrary to his usual pattern of thinking about the early quartos, W. W. Greg posited the Folio version of *Othello* as based on Shakespeare's own revisions of Q in *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 357–74. Nevill Coghill is credited by Honigmann with being the first reader to explain the Shakespearean revisions from Q to F in terms of their thematic implications in *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* (Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 164–202. Honigmann's *The Stability of Shakespeare's Text* (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 100–20 appeared too soon fully to acknowledge Coghill's arguments, which Honigmann treated in 'Shakespeare's Revised Plays', n. 1 above. See also Balz Engler, 'How Shakespeare Revised *Othello*', *English Studies* 57 (1976), 515–21, which extends Coghill's argument. For Honigmann's more recent work, which does not press the thematic arguments further, see his Arden3 edition of *Othello* (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1997); and his *The Texts of 'Othello' and Shakespearean Revision* (London: Routledge, 1996).
3. The two recent editions of Q1 *Othello* are by Andrew Murphy (ed.), *The Tragoedy of Othello, The Moore of Venice* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995); and Scott McMillin (ed.), *The First Quarto of Othello* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). McMillin, however, sees Q1 as an abridged performance version and Shakespeare's 'original' as more closely resembling F. Recent editors of the play who have made the differences between Q and F particularly accessible include Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (eds.), *Othello* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993), which clearly marks Q-only and F-only passages in the text; and Norman Sanders (ed.), *Othello* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), which briefly summarizes Coghill and Honigmann's arguments in his 'Textual Analysis', pp. 193–207.
4. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, with John Jowett and William Montgomery, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 478.
5. Michael Billington in *The Guardian* (16 March 1989); as cited in Lois Potter, *Shakespeare in Performance: Othello* (Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 185.
6. Ania Loomba, '"Delicious Traffick": Racial and Religious Differences on Early Modern Stages', in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 203–24, p. 203. See also Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Margo Hendricks, 'Surveying "Race" in Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Alexander and Wells, pp. 1–22; and Emily C. Bartels, '*Othello* and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series, 54 (1997), 45–64.

7. See Thomas L. Berger, 'The Second Quarto of *Othello* and the Question of Textual "Authority"', in *Othello: New Perspectives*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Kent Cartwright (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991), pp. 26–47.
8. Here and throughout, line numbers to the standard, conflated text of *Othello* are cited from Honigmann's Arden3 edition.
9. For parity with Folio citations, quarto citations are also given in facsimile, from Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir (eds.), *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). Since this edition does not supply Through Line Numbers, citations are given by quarto signature number plus page number in the edition. The present citation is to p. 791.
10. See Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*, pp. 180–2, Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Revised Plays', 161, and Sanders (ed.), *Othello*, p. 203.
11. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Revised Plays', 164.
12. See especially Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*, pp. 192–9.
13. See Michael Neill, 'Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989), 383–412; and Lynda E. Boose, '"Let It Be Hid": Renaissance Pornography, Iago, and Audience Response', in *Autour d'"Othello"*, ed. Richard Marienstras and Dominique Goy-Blanquet (Paris: Institut Charles V, 1987), pp. 135–43.
14. See Bernard Harris, 'A Portrait of a Moor' (1958), as reprinted in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Alexander and Wells, pp. 23–36; and Mythili Kaul's introduction to *Othello: New Essays by Black Writers* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1997), pp. 1–19.
15. See, among many other studies, Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: Black People in Britain since 1504* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984), pp. 1–32; Paul Edwards, 'The Early African Presence in the British Isles', in *Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain*, ed. Jagdish S. Gundara and Ian Duffield (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1992), pp. 9–29; and James Walvin, *The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555–1860* (London: Orback and Chambers, 1971).
16. See, among many other studies, Loomba, '"Delicious Traffick"'; Hall, *Things of Darkness*; Fryer, *Staying Power*, pp. 135–46; Eldred D. Jones, *Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); and Emily C. Bartels, 'Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), 433–54.
17. George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 5–6. I am also indebted to Kwame Anthony Appiah's review, *New York Times Book Review* (4 August 2002), 11–12, which agrees with Fredrickson's definition in general but urges more attention to the damage that racist ideology can do even in the hands of the powerless.
18. An exception is M. R. Ridley's Arden2 edition of *Othello* (London: Methuen, 1958), which, atypically for its time, uses the quarto as its copy-text and retains the reading 'black weed', p. 154.

19. See Coghill's discussion of thematically connected lines, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*, pp. 183–5.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 188–91.
21. See Arthur L. Little, Jr, *Shakespearean Jungle Fever: National–Imperial Re-Visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 85–6; and Michael Neill, '"Mulattos", "Blacks", and "Indian Moors": *Othello* and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49 (1998), 361–74.
22. Alice Walker, *Textual Problems of the First Folio* (Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 4.
23. Honigmann, *Othello*, p. 31.
24. See McMillin (ed.), *Othello*, pp. 13–44.
25. Jones, *Othello's Countrymen*, p. 30, notes that blackamoors, who commonly appeared as characters in other masques of the period, disappeared from the Tudor masque during the time of Spanish Philip and Mary Tudor, which suggests Spanish antipathy to the motif.