Did Shakespeare Know Leo Africanus?

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Source: *PMLA* , Sep., 1922, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Sep., 1922), pp. 470-483

Published by: Modern Language Association

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/457156

XXI. DID SHAKESPEARE KNOW *LEO AFRICANUS*?

Is Othello a puppet, an Englishman, or a Moor? No less estimable a Shakespeare scholar than Professor Stoll has pointed out what he has called the "great heap of contradictions"[1] in the character of Othello and has come to the conclusion that Shakespeare is merely following a dramatic jealousy tradition in the play of *Othello*—that he "but leans on the convention of slander and 'diabolical soliciting'. . . . Only, in order to expedite matters, Shakespeare leans hard, and Othello presents little or no resistance to temptation, is eager, excited, is, for all his protestations of faith, won over in a trice."[2] One cannot help feeling, according to Stoll, that Othello is "wrenched and altered" by the dramatist in the temptation scene.[3] A. C. Bradley, on the other hand, whose opinions I cite as typical of the opposite point of view, insists that "*any* man situated as Othello was, would have been disturbed by Iago's communications, and I add that many men would have been made wildly jealous."[4] Othello, in other words, is behaving like a normal human being of our own race. Bradley repudiates the "mistaken view" that Othello "retains beneath the surface the savage passions of his Moorish blood."[5] His nationality is incidental, and "in regard to the essentials of his character it is not important." He even goes so far as to say that "if anyone had told Shakespeare that no Englishman would have acted like the Moor, and had congratulated him on the accuracy of his racial psychology, I am sure he would have laughed."[6]

[1] *An Historical and Comparative Study, U. of Minn. Studies in Language and Literature,* (Minneapolis, 1915) p. 1-3.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 17.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 18.

[4] *Shakespearian Tragedy,* (London, 1916) p. 194.

[5] *Op. cit.* p. 186.

[6] *Op. cit.* p. 187.

Ever since the time of Schlegel[7] critics have argued for and against the proposition that Othello's temperament was typically Moorish or Ethiopian, but oddly enough not one of them has attempted to settle the argument by endeavoring to discover whether Shakespeare, in his portrayal of Othello, may have built upon any conventionalized ideas of the Moor or Ethiopian current among the Elizabethans. Did Shakespeare follow Cinthio in the matter of Othello's nationality without making that nationality a factor in his characterization? Or was he influenced by an Elizabethan dramatic convention in the representation of Moorish character? Or, finally, may he have been influenced in his portrait of Othello by some non-dramatic source? I propose to let the answer to the second and third questions determine the answer to the first.

While the Moor was a popular figure in pageants and plays before the time of Othello,[8] it must be admitted that there is no dramatic convention—at least in the plays that are left to us—adequate to explain the combination of essential nobility of character, valiant soldiership, and sudden violent jealousy that one sees in Othello. Of the eight extant plays before *Othello* in which the Moor appears, in five he is either almost entirely uncharacterized or is merely the soldier, and not a particularly noble soldier at that. In *Alphonsus, King of Arragon*, for instance, Arcastus, King of the Moors, is not individualized at all. In *Tamberlaine*, likewise, the King of Fez and the King of Morocco are colorless characters, subordinated to the pomp and pride of Bajazeth. There is slightly more characterization of the Moorish soldier with his "bombast circumstance" and his pride in the *Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain*

[7] *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.* The passage is quoted in the *Variorum Shakespeare*, p. 431 ff.

[8] See L. Wann, "*The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama*," *Mod. Phil.* XII, 163 ff.; R. Withington, *English Pageantry* (Cambridge, 1918-1920) I, 40 n. 5; 73-4; 215; 218 *n. 7; II, 23 f.*; *and C. R. Baskervill, An Elizabethan Eglamour Play, Mod. Phil.* XIV, 759 f.

Thomas Stukeley[9] but even here there is little that is even remotely related to Othello. In Peele's somewhat earlier play on the same subject, *The Battell of Alcazar fought in Barbarie*, the characters of Abdelmelec, Muly Mahamet, and their associates are allowed to storm through scenes of crude barbarity and speeches of rage, defiance, and righteous indignation. There is, it is true, some idealization of Abdelmelec—

> Lo, this was he that was the people's pride,
> And cheerful sunshine of the subjects all—[10]

but such is the general crudity of characterization that, even on the side of soldiership, the Moors of the *Battell of Alcazar* could scarcely have offered a prototype for Othello.

The two plays in which the theme of passion is dominant are *Lust's Dominion* and *Titus Andronicus*. One does not care to see much connection between the "noble Othello" and the malignant and cruel Eleazar and Aaron, and, indeed, there is scarcely a similarity to be found. In both, the Moor is pictured as a man of passion but one in whom the illicit passion has practically run its course—more so in *Lust's Dominion* than in *Titus Andronicus*—and in whom the main motive is now vengeance and thirst for power. Eleazar cries:

> Now, purple villany,
> Sit like a robe imperial on my back,
> That under thee I closelier may contrive
> My vengeance. . .
> . . . I care not, I,
> How low I tumble down, so I mount high.[11]

And Aaron:

> Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,
> Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.[12]

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[9] Edited by Richard Simpson in *The School of Shakspere* (London, 1878) Vol. I. Cf. 1. 2305 ff. and 2393 ff.

[10] *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Robert Greene and George Peele* (London, 1861) p. 440, V, i.

[11] *Dodsley's Old English Plays* (London, 1875) XIV, 103-4.

[12] Cambridge Shakespeare (London, 1892) Vol. VI, II, iii, 37.

The jealousy theme does not enter into the story of Aaron at all, and so far is jealousy from being a motive force in Eleazar that he sees in the forced unfaithfulness of his wife only an advantage to himself:

> I thank my sovereign that you love my wife;
> I thank thee, wife, that thou wilt lock my head
> In such strong armour to bear off all blows;
> Who dare say such wives are their husbands' foes?[13]

From the stage convention of the Moor, then, Shakespeare could have got but little. So far as we can tell from the plays that have been preserved, it offered merely a general tradition of the Moor as a soldier on the one hand, and on the other, of the Moor as a man of passion with an endless capacity for villainy. Shall we be forced to agree therefore that racial considerations did not play a part in determining the character of Othello; that the change in the type of Moor seen in *Othello* was merely an adaptation to fit the exigencies of the plot with no concern for the fidelity of the picture? It is true that Shakespeare had a hint to work on in Cinthio's *novelle*, but it was only the barest hint, for almost the only formal characterization of the Moor comes in the first sentence in which he is described as "very valiant and of a handsome person," and in the words of Desdemona—not made use of by Shakespeare—that "you Moors are of so hot a nature that every little trifle moves you to anger and revenge."[14] We have still to explain not only the simplicity, frankness, and nobility of the character of Othello in spite of his sudden fit of passionate jealousy, but the whole colorful background of Othello's past: his connection with "men of royal siege," his wanderings from country to country that made it possible for Roderigo to describe him as "an extravagant and wheeling stranger Of here and everywhere;" his conversion to Christianity; and his captivity and "most disastrous chances." Is there any source for all this? I think there is.

[13] *Op. cit.* I, iv, p. 113.
[14] Variorum ed. p. 377, 380.

There were a number of descriptions of Africa written by travelers before the time of Othello. Azurara's *Chronica do Descobrimento e Conquista de Guinê* was not accessible in translation in the sixteenth century,[15] but Francisco Alvarez's *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia* was put forth frequently in both Italian and French translations from the time of Ramusio on.[16] There was a Latin work by John Thomas Frigius called *Historia de Bello Africano*, 1580. In English there were, moreover, a number of extracts on Africa in Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*, where, as editors have pointed out, Shakespeare may have picked up his famous allusion to the "Anthropophagi and men whose heads Do grow beneath their shoulders."[17] The readiest, best known, and most compendious source that Shakespeare could have turned to, however, was John Pory's English translation of Leo Africanus under the title of *A Geographical Historie of Africa Written in Arabicke and Italian by Iohn Leo a More . . . translated and collected by Iohn Pory . . .* Londini, 1600. The book had attracted considerable attention even before Pory's translation. Leo had originally written his book in Arabic but at the suggestion of Pope Leo rewrote it in Italian, completing it in 1526.[18] This Italian version was included by Ramusio in the numerous editions of his *Primo Volume delle Navigationi* (1550, 1554, 1563, 1588, etc.), and was in turn translated into Latin by Florian in 1556 and into French by Jean Temporal in the same year. It is not improbable that Pory's translation, which contained considerable

[15] *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* (Hakluyt Soc. edition) I, lv ff.

[16] For a list of 16c. editions see the Hakluyt Soc. edition p. v-vi.

[17] Hakluyt Soc. edition, VI, 169-70. There is an early English book on Africa entitled *The description of the contrey of Aphrique, the fyrst part of the worlde with the cituation of al the countreys together with the particular maners, lawes, and ceremonies of dyvers people inhabityng in the same part. Trans. out of Frenche into Englyshe by W. Prat.* London, 1554. This is rather puzzling for I find no French book of which this could be the translation. Both Alvarez and Leo Africanus were first translated into French in 1556.

[18] Hakluyt Soc. edition, I, lii.

additions of his own which he compiled largely from Alvarez, should have come to Shakespeare's attention, for the book is said to have brought its author "considerable notoriety" (DNB). Pory, moreover, was a kind of disciple of Hakluyt, who protests somewhat proudly in his commendatory letter prefaced to the translation that "my selfe was the first and onely man that perswaded him to take it in hand."[19] Now Gayley, in his discussion of Shakespeare's use of Strachey's letter from Virginia in the *Tempest*, has shown how closely Shakespeare must have been associated with Hakluyt and the other three "adventurers nominated as principals in the earliest charter of the London Company, 1606."[20] If Gayley is right—and his arguments do not seem to leave much room for doubt—Shakespeare may possibly have been introduced to Pory's work through Hakluyt. But, however this may be, the book contains so much which throws light on the character of Othello that it is hard to believe that Shakespeare was not acquainted with it.[21] There is, it is

[19] Op. cit., I, 103.

[20] *Shakespeare and the Founders of Liberty in America* (N. Y., 1917) Ch. III, cf. especially p. 75-6.

[21] There are several passages in the *Geographical Historie* of interest in connection with the *Tempest* also. The most specific is the reference to Carthage and Tunis. Gonzalo, when reminded that "Widdow Dido" belonged to Carthage, not Tunis, defends himself with, "This *Tunis* Sir was *Carthage*" (Variorum Edition, II, i, 86). The surprise and derision with which his remark is greeted seem to indicate that this was no mere current idea at the time. It is possible that the thing that put the idea into Shakespeare's mind was the description by Leo of the decay of Carthage and the founding of Tunis which shows in what sense Tunis was Carthage: "For the inhabitants of Carthage were loth to remaine any longer in their owne towne . . . wherefore they repaired unto Tunis, and greatly enlarged the buildings thereof" (III, 715-6). There follows an elaborate description of the King of Tunis and his court (III, 722-725). For the rest, there are descriptions of witches and enchanters who practice raising storms (III, 1002-1003), descriptions which are of some interest but little significance for the idea is common in folklore. Even the description of the conspiracy against the good Gonsaluo who was represented to King Sebastian as being "a Magician, who by witchcraftes and inchantments could turne kingdomes topsie turvie" (III, 1062) does not connect closely enough with the story of Prospero to

true, no indubitable proof that Shakespeare knew the book. External evidence is lacking and the internal evidence is of a more or less general nature. His use of the book can be regarded only as a possibility, but it seems to be altogether too much of a possibility to be ignored.

Pory's version of Leo Africanus supplies not only a general correspondence with the character of Othello but a parallel also between the early career of Othello and the career of Leo Africanus, as told by Pory and Leo himself. But before we enter the discussion of these points of similarity I should like to add a note to the problem of whether Shakespeare intended Othello for a Moor or an Ethiopian. Critics have long pointed out the contradictory evidence within the play: the fact that he is called a Moor, a "Barbary horse" (I, i, 124, Variorum Edition),[22] and is said to be going to Mauritania (IV, ii, 220); while at the same time he is termed "the thick-lips" (II, i, 66), and is described as black. The epithet thick-lips is a term of abuse and need not be taken much more seriously than Brabantio's derisive implication that Othello was pagan (I, ii, 99) which we can prove to be untrue (II, iii, 319-320), but the blackness of Othello seems to be too firmly established by Othello's own words, "begrim'd and black As mine own face" (III, iii, 387-8), to be denied. Some critics have made of this contradiction a proof that Othello was a negro while others have argued that he was a Moor. Bradley, however, points out other sixteenth century examples of a similar confusion between the negro

be of much significance. Of slightly more interest is the long section at the beginning of the work which deals with the islands off the coast of Africa (I, 85-102). The inhabitants of some are described as very primitive (I, 87, 99-100); near to some "as unto that of Bermuda, there are continual stormes and tempestes" (I, 92); and the inhabitants of others are "addicted to Magick and inchantments, and doe bring to passe matters incredible" (I, 87). Current interest in strange and remarkable islands, fostered by the tales of the travelers, may well have played a considerable part in determining the choice of an island setting for the story of the *Tempest*.

[22] My references are to the Rolfe, 1907 edition, unless otherwise specified as here.

and the Moor;[23] and to his list may be added an example from Hakluyt—"the Blacke Moores, called Ethiopians or Negros"[24]—as well as examples from Leo Africanus himself. In the *Geographical Historie of Africa* the Moors are divided into two classes, the "white or tawnie Moores, and Negros or blacke Moores" (I, 20), but there seems to be not merely a confusion in name but even, to the casual reader at least, in characteristics. Leo writes, "But whatsoeuer difference there be betweene the Negros and the tawnie Moores, certaine it is that they all had one beginning" (I, 130). And in his characterization of the Moor he summarizes in one passage the traits of the inhabitants of all parts of Africa and heads his sections: *The commendable actions and vertues of the Africans*, and *What vices the foresaid Africans are subject unto* (I, 182, 185). Within these sections, it is true, there is some slight attempt to distinugish between the inhabitants of the various regions of Africa but the differentiation is so hazy that a person reading the passage as a whole would carry away with him only a general conception of "the African." The evidence would seem to point to the conclusion that Shakespeare was describing neither a Moor nor a negro in our modern conception of the terms but a confusion of the two types.

The early career of Othello, of which Shakespeare gives us hints here and there, is, as I have said, parallel in general to the career of Leo Africanus before he came to Italy. Othello was of noble descent—"I fetch my life and being From men of royal siege" (I, ii, 21-2)—and so was Leo. Pory writes of him in the section *To the Reader:* "First therefore his Parentage seemeth not to haue bin ignoble. . . . Now as concerning his Emploiments, were they not such as might well beseeme a man of good worth? For (to omit how many courts and campes of princes he had frequented) did not he, as himselfe in his third booke witnesseth, personally serue king Mahumet of Fez in his wars against Arzilla? And was

[23] *Op. cit.* p. 198-200.

[24] Princ. Nav. VI, 143.

he not at another time, as appeareth out of his second Booke, in seruice and honorable place under the same king of Fez, and sent ambassadour by him to the king of Maroco?" (I, 4, 5-6). Othello had been a great traveler, an 'extravagant and wheeling stranger Of here and everywhere' who even yet was jealous of his "unhoused free conditions," and Leo likewise had been an insatiable traveler. At some time in his career Othello had been converted to Christianity and so had Leo. Othello had been captured, sold into slavery, and redeemed thence, and so had Leo.

Othello's story runs thus:

> Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
> Of moving accidents by flood and field,
> Of hair-breadth scapes i' the *imminent* deadly breach (I, iii, 134-6).

Pory writes, "Moreouer as touching his exceeding great Trauels. . . . I maruell much how euer he should haue escaped so manie thousands of *imminent* dangers. And (all the former notwithstanding) I maruel much more, how euer he escaped them" (I, 6. The Italics are mine). Othello continues:

> Of being taken by the insolent foe
> And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
> And portance in my travel's history (I, iii, 137-9).

And Pory tells how Leo was delivered "into the hands of certaine Italian Pirates, about the isle of Gerbi, situate in the gulfe of Capes, betweene the cities of Tunis and Tripolis in Barbarie. Being thus taken, the Pirates presented him and his Booke unto Pope Leo the tenth" (I, 7). In another part of the book Leo tells of narrowly escaping the clutches of the Arabians between Barbarie and Aegypt, of whom he writes, "If any stranger fall into their hands, depriuing him of all that he hath, they presently carry him to Sicilie, and there either sell or exchange him for corn" (I, 160-1).

The succeeding lines in Othello's speech are:

> Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven
> It was my hint to speak,—such was the process (I, iii, 140-2).

Pory has, "For how many desolate cold mountaines, and huge, drie, and barren deserts passed he? How was he in hazard to haue beene captiued, or to haue had his throte cut by the prouling Arabians, and wilde Mores?" (I, 6). There are other passages in Leo Africanus that may have lent color to these lines in Shakespeare. The "hills whose heads touch heaven" may be a reflection of the description of Mount Atlas "whose tops of incredible height rising out of the midst of sandy desertes, exalt themselues aboue the cloudes" (I, 15), or Shakespeare may have recalled the picturesque allusions to the "mountaines of the moon" (I, 66). It goes without saying, perhaps that there are countless references to "deserts idle" (I, 12, 12-14, 124, 127; III, 797-800, 820, 828, 832, 834, 855, 973, etc.). There are also many descriptions of "antres vast," such as "That sandie, barren, and desert part of Africa" is inhabited by Troglodytae, "a people so called, bicause of their dwelling in caues under the ground" (I, 26), or "Neere vnto this towne standeth a certaine hill full of mighty caues, wherein the common people say, that giants inhabited of olde" (III, 710-1). There is also a very elaborate description of a great cavern or pit "of so great a depth that the bottom thereof can in no wise be seen." (II, 555-557). There are several descriptions of cannibals (cf. I, 60, 61, 76-7) but Shakespeare's allusion to them in the next few lines of this speech is probably to be traced—if indeed it owes its origin to anything more than hearsay—to the passage in Hakluyt already indicated.

In the latter part of Othello's speech he refers again to his early life of wandering:

> . . . a prayer of earnest heart
> That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
> Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
> But not intentively. I did consent,
> And often did beguile her of her tears,
> When I did speak of some distressful stroke
> That my youth suffer'd (I, iii, 152-8).

Leo also alludes to the fact that his journeys were made in his youth. He promises to describe "Arabia Deserta,

Arabia Petrea, Arabia Felix, and the Asian part of Egypt, Armenia, and some part of Tartaria; all which countries I sawe and passed through in the time of my youth. Likewise I will describe my last voiages from Constantinople to Egypt, and from thence vnto Italy" (I, 6, and III, 904-5).[25]

More vital than these resemblances in the career of Leo Africanus and Othello is the similarity in traits of character between the Moor, as described by Leo, and Othello. Othello is continually commended for his soldiership. "The man commands Like a full soldier," says Montano (II, i, 35-6) and even Iago is forced to admit that "Another of his fathom they have none To lead their business' (I, i, 142). Over and over again he is given the epithet of brave and valiant. Montano calls him "brave Othello" (II, i, 38), a Senator, "brave Moor" (I, iii, 48). He is announced at the council chamber as "the valiant Moor" and the Duke greets him as "valiant Othello" (I, iii, 47, 48). The Herald in Cyprus speaks of him as "our noble and valiant general" (II, ii, l). Desdemona says "And to his honours and his valiant parts Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate" (I, iii, 252-3), and finally at the end Othello himself echoes pathetically his former title:

> I am not valiant neither,
> But every puny whipster gets my sword (V, ii, 242-3).

Now the Moors, in innumerable passages in the *Geographicall Historie*, are praised as brave and noble soldiers. Is it only a coincidence that the word valiant is used so frequently in connection with them also? "The people called Ruche," writes Leo, "haue very small dominions . . . howbeit they are most valiant soldiers, and exceeding swift of foote" (I, 145-6). The people of eastern Mauritania are "noble and honest persons, and endued with all kinde of humanities and Ciuilitie. . . . These also are a most

[25] The idea that the Moors were great travelers is reinforced by two other passages in Leo Africanus, I, 184, and III, 727. In I, 21, Leo speaks of the "vagrant and roguish life" of the Arabians.

valiant nation" (I, 148). Again, in the general description of the Africans, Leo writes: "Likewise they are most strong and valiant people, especially those which dwell vpon the mountaines" (I, 183). And of the Arabians who live in tents he writes further, "They are in their kinde as deuout, valiant, patient, courteous, hospitall, and as honest in life and conuersation as any other people. . . . They are reported likewise to be most skilfull wariours, to be valiant, and exceeding louers and practisers of all humanitie" (I, 184). These passages might be matched with many others of the same kind.

Further, Othello is characterized not only by valiantness but by a certain nobility and assured integrity of soul illustrated by such comments as "Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate Call all in all sufficient," (IV, i, 250 ff.), and Othello's own quiet self-assurance—"My parts, my title, and my perfect soul" (I, ii, 30). There is a marked simplicity and frankness in his nature. "This Moor is of a free and open nature That thinks men honest that but seem so," muses Iago, and later he repeats that "The Moor . . . is of a constant, loving, noble nature" (I, iii, 393-4, II, i, 275-6). This fact is born out also not only by Othello's own statements—"Rude am I in my speech" et cetera, and, "Haply, for I am black, And have not the soft parts of conversation" (I, iii, 81, and III, iii, 263-4)—but by the essential simplicity and naivité of his mental processes (Cf. the rest of the soliloquy, III, iii, 258). Precisely the same characteristics are ascribed to the Moors by Leo: "Also, the Moores and Arabians inhabiting Libya are somewhat ciuill of behaviour, being plaine dealers, voide of dissimulation, fauourable to strangers, and louers of simplicite" (I, 184). "Most honest people they are, and destitute of all fraud and guile; not onely imbracing all simplicitie and truth, but also practising the same throughout the whole course of their liues: albeit certaine Latine authors, which have written of the same regions, are farre otherwise of opinion" (I, 183). And again,

"They keepe their couenant most faithfully, insomuch that they had rather die than breake promise" (I, 183).

Othello is pictured as trusting his two friends so implicitly that the supposed duplicity of the one only makes him more dependent on the other. So Leo describes the "tawney Moores" as being "stedfast in friendship" (I, 184). If Othello seems unusually credulous to us, so were the Moors described by Leo: "Their wits are but meane, and they are so credulous, that they will beleeue matters impossible, which are told them" (I, 185).

In the matter of love, jealousy, and wrath Leo's characterization has a bearing also. The restraint and sanctity of Othello's love for Desdemona we have already shown to be a grateful contrast to the hideous lasciviousness of Eleazar and Aaron of *Lust's Dominion* and *Titus Andronicus*. In this regard Leo's testimony is of interest. "They haue alwaies beene much delighted with all kinde of ciuilities and modest behauiour: and it is accounted heinous among them for any man to vtter in companie, any bawdie or vnseemely worde. . . . Whatsoeuer lad or youth there lighteth by chaunce into any company which discourseth of loue, no sooner heareth nor vnderstandeth what their talke tendeth vnto, but immediately he withdraweth himselfe from among them" (I, 184). At the same time the Moors are described as extremely jealous of the chastity of their wives, so much so that "whomsoeuer they finde but talking with their wiues, they presently goe about to murther them;" and "by reason of iealousie you may see them daily one to be the death and destruction of another; . . . they will by no means match themselues unto an harlot" (II, 233, and I, 154). "No nation in the world," Leo writes further, "is so subiect vnto iealousie; for they will rather leese their lives, then put vp any disgrace in the behalfe of their women" (I, 183; see also II, 238, 259, etc.). While it is clear that Shakespeare did not intend to go quite to this length, for Othello's dying words about himself, that he was one "not easily jealous," must surely be taken seriously, yet the passages go a long way to

explain Othello's violence in his jealousy. Any other trial but the unfaithfulness of Desdemona he could have borne: "Had it pleas'd heaven To try me with affliction . . ." (IV, ii, 46 ff.). "I had rather be a toad And live upon the vapour of a dungeon," he exclaims, "than keep a corner in the thing I love For others uses;" and later:

> If there be cords, or knives,
> Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
> I'll not endure it (III, iii, 270-3, and III, iii, 388-390).

It never occurs to him that there is any solution but murder, and such is the impetuousness of his wrath that there is no diverting it. On this latter score Leo again has an interesting comment: "being also very proud and high-minded, and woonderfully addicted vnto wrath. Insomuch that (according to the prouerbe) they will deeply engraue in marble any iniurie be it neuer so small, and will in no wise blot it out of their remembrance" (I, 185). Compare this with Othello's vow that his vengeance shall know no ebb:

> Now by yond marble heaven,
> In the due reverence of a sacred vow
> I here engage my words (III, iii, 187-9).

Thus not only do practically all the suggestions for the early life of Othello find their counterpart in Pory's version of Leo's *Geographical Historie of Africa,* but, what is more important, almost every trait of his character as well.[26]

If it had only been one of Shakespeare's contemporaries who said that his Othello was nothing but a "great heap of contradictions," Shakespeare could have silenced him by pointing to the best authority then available on the characteristics of the Moor. Possibly Shakespeare would have laughed, as Bradley thinks, if someone had complimented him on the accuracy of his racial psychology but I am inclined to doubt it.

LOIS WHITNEY

[26] The argument from names is too unimportant to be insisted on but for the sake of completeness I might mention that the name Iago appears in three different places in Leo Africanus (I, 97-8; III, 1050; III, 1065), the name Roderigo in two places (II, 509; III, 1050), and in one of these passages the name Iago Diaz and Roderigo are associated together (III, 1050).