

**The Adaptation of William Shakespeare's
"Othello" in Nicole Galland's I, Iago and in Toni
Morrison's Desdemona**

تكييف مسرحية أثلو لشكسبير في رواية "آي إياغو" لنيكول جالاند
وفي مسرحية "ديزيمونا" لتوني مورسون

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master's Degree in English Language and Literature**

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Authorization

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Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved father and mother, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support.

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Abstract

This study aims to identify how Nicole Galland’s novel *I, Iago* is considered an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *Othello* in terms of race, class, and the representation of women. In the same way, the study also aims to explore how Toni Morrison’s play *Desdemona* is considered an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *Othello* in terms of race, class, and the representation of women. Additionally, the study attempts to compare and contrast between the two adaptations in terms of the themes of race, class, and the representation of women. To achieve the objectives of the study, both works are analyzed through the theory of adaptation. The study concludes with an examination of how both authors, Nicole Galland and Toni Morrison, adhered faithfully to the events portrayed in Shakespeare’s play *Othello*, while also illuminating the ambiguities inherent in Shakespeare’s rendition. Both literary works are regarded as adaptations of Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

Keywords: Adaptation, Race, Class, Representation of Women, Othello, Shakespeare

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على كيفية اعتبار رواية *آي إياغو* للكاتبة نيكول جالاند مقتبسة من مسرحية *أثيلو* للكاتب وليام شكسبير من حيث العرق والطبقة وتمثيل المرأة. وبنفس الطريقة، تهدف الدراسة أيضاً إلى استكشاف كيف تعتبر مسرحية توني مورسون *ديزيمونا* مقتبسة من مسرحية *أثيلو* لوليام شكسبير من حيث العرق والطبقة وتمثيل المرأة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تحاول الدراسة المقارنة والتباين بين العملين الأدبيين من حيث موضوعات العرق والطبقة وتمثيل المرأة. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم تحليل كلا العملين من خلال نظرية التكيف. وتختتم الدراسة بفحص كيفية التزام كلا المؤلفين، نيكول جالاند وتوني موريسون، بأمانة بالأحداث التي تم تصويرها في مسرحية شكسبير *أثيلو*، مع إلقاء الضوء أيضاً على الغموض المتأصل في أداء شكسبير. يعتبر كلا العملين الأدبيين بمثابة اقتباسات لمسرحية شكسبير *أثيلو*.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تكييف، العرق، الطبقة، تمثيل المرأة، أثيلو، شكسبير.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

“Shakespeare is the dramatist for all seasons and arguably the most timeless and placeless dramatist, the world of literature has ever produced” (Gamage 2018, p.1). Daniel Fischlin (2000) states that Shakespeare’s writings have been adapted for the stage in a dizzying array of ways by playwrights for nearly four centuries. Patrick O’Neal (2016) also states that Shakespeare remains relevant and fascinating, as seen by the ongoing discussion and interest around his work. O’Neal continues with saying that the mystery that lies in his plays is what keeps him alive to this day and that his works are still debatable and under a lot of study, which makes him a famous or popular subject for adaptation.

Shakespeare’s tragedy *Othello* stands as a timeless masterpiece, delving into the complexities of human nature, jealousy, race, and manipulation. Set against the backdrop of the Venetian Republic, the play follows the novel moor Othello, whose marriage to Desdemona is sabotaged by the deceitful machinations of his ensign, Iago. As one of Shakespeare’s great tragedies, *Othello* is renowned for its compelling characters, intricate plot, and profound exploration of the themes that resonate across cultures and generations. Through its portrayal of love, betrayal, and the destructive power of jealousy, *Othello* continues to captivate audiences and scholars alike, inviting interpretations and adaptations that reveal new insights into the complexities of the human psyche.

Adaptation is just as important for preserving the play's relevance and guaranteeing its ongoing influence. By putting the ideas and characters of *Othello* in new settings, adaptations help current viewers better understand and relate to the narrative. By doing

this, adaptation ensures that the characters are relevant to today's issues, the story is captivating, and the themes are timeless. Linda Hutcheon (2006) states that adaptations are interpretive and creative acts that retain the aura of the adapted text and contain within them a palimpsestic doubleness.

Hutcheon also states that adaptation offers several advantages, one of which is its contemporary relevance. Some audiences might find it hard to relate to the Venetian Republic, the setting of *Othello* originally. Nonetheless, alterations have the ability to bring the tale into contemporary settings like high schools, military facilities, and corporate headquarters.

Linda Hutcheon (2006) also explains that diverse perspectives are another crucial aspect of adaptation. By reimagining characters and settings, adaptations can provide alternative viewpoints. Innovation and creativity are fostered by adaptation. Directors, writers, and artists have the opportunity to experiment with storytelling techniques, styles, and mediums. Modern adaptations often delve into issues like racism, gender dynamics, and the consequences of manipulation in today's society. They can provide a fresh take on the narrative, presenting it in innovative and thought-provoking ways.

An essential aspect of adaptation is reaching a wider audience. Although the classic productions of *Othello* still hold the attention of theatergoers, adaptations have a wider and more varied audience. They give people who might not have been familiar with the original work an introduction to the themes and characters of the play. This assures that *Othello* will continue to be relevant for a long time to come and expands its legacy.

Adaptations have intrinsic educational value. They introduce Shakespeare's themes and characters to new audiences and pupils, making them valuable teaching resources.

Adaptations of Shakespeare's works make them more approachable for those who might find the original text difficult, bridging the gap between classical literature and modern comprehension.

One aspect of adaptability that is new is multimedia interaction. Multimedia components like movies, virtual reality, or interactive web content can be used into modern adaptations. These components allow viewers a variety of interesting experiences that support changing artistic expression mediums and audience participation. There are multiple film adaptations of the play *Othello* such as, *Othello* (1952), which is directed by Orson Welles. Orson Welles' adaptation is a classic film version of the play, known for its atmospheric and stylized cinematography. *O* (2001) is a film directed by Tim Blake Nelson. *O* is a modern-day high school adaptation of *Othello*. It explores themes of jealousy and race within the context of a basketball team, with Odin (Othello) as a star player. Another adaptation is *Othello* (1995), which is directed by Oliver Parker. This adaptation sets the story in the 19th century and features a strong visual and emotional impact.

There are many rewritings of Shakespeare's *Othello* like the play that is discussed in this thesis, Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*, which is considered as a postcolonial rewriting. Claire Chambers (2016) declares that interpreting how writers from formerly colonized nations have "written back" to classic works from the English literary canon has been a major focus of postcolonial critics. John Peck (2002) states that writers with foreign backgrounds or those who live in other nations and are still impacted by the legacy of the British colonial control have made perhaps the most impact with their rewritings in recent years. Jyotsna G. Singh (2019) explains that Shakespeare's plays explore, reveal, marginalize, and engage with issues of race, encounters with people of color, and growing

nationalism in England. This causes writers to write back on the issues that Shakespeare explores.

According to Bianca Boccardo (2019), the play *Othello* by William Shakespeare is hailed as one of the most influential and enduring pieces of literature ever written. A deep and enduring educational experience, studying *Othello* offers insights into global themes, multifaceted characters, cultural dynamics, and language proficiency. Furthermore, *Othello's* adaptability guarantees its continued relevance by introducing the timeless story to modern audiences through creative reimagining. That is why it is important to study *Othello* and the essential role adaptation plays in keeping this timeless work lively and interesting.

We are welcomed into a universe of ageless ideas in *Othello* that endures for ages. The play's story revolves around a number of themes, including racism, love, envy, and manipulation. We come to understand these topics' lasting relevance in modern society as we examine them within the framework of the Elizabethan age. Jealousy is still a strong human feeling, love is still a universal force, and the dynamics of power and manipulation are still as strong now as they were in Shakespeare's day. One of the main themes of *Othello*, racism, is still a subject of debate and controversy in society today. By examining *Othello*, we investigate these themes and consider how universal they are to the human condition.

We are introduced to a group of nuanced people in *Othello* who have deep motivations, inner lives, and weaknesses. The terrible demise of Othello, the devious manipulation of Iago, and the innocence of Desdemona all hold a fascination for readers and viewers alike. Studying the complexity of these characteristics helps us better

comprehend human nature since they provide significant insights into human psychology and behavior.

The play offers an insight into Elizabethan cultural and societal conventions, as well as perspectives on race and class. It inspires us to have conversations about the problems and advancements in society, especially when it comes to racial prejudice. *Othello* challenges us to consider how far we've come in resolving these kinds of problems and what more needs to be done.

Shakespeare's writing is overflowing with language and poetry, and *Othello* is no exception. The play showcases Shakespeare's command of language and poetry, and analyzing it deepens our understanding of the beauty and impact of Shakespeare's verse. His words have had a lasting impact on the English language, and *Othello* offers a chance to appreciate his mastery of language.

Furthermore, *Othello* poses significant moral and ethical issues. Talks about justice, treachery, trust, and the effects of manipulation are sparked by the play. These talks, which encourage us to consider the consequences of our decisions and deeds, are still relevant in ethical and philosophical arguments.

Another important part of *Othello* is the psychological investigation. It explores feelings of insecurity, envy, and emotional manipulation. These intricate facets of the human experience can be thoroughly examined thanks to the characters' psychological states and the effects of their emotions.

This study explores the two adaptations Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*. In Nicole Galland's novel *I, Iago*, the classic Shakespeare villain is reimagined and given a voice of his own. Galland's narrative provides a unique

perspective on the events of Shakespeare's *Othello*, offering readers a deep dive into the inner workings of Iago's mind and motivations. Through skillful storytelling, Galland humanizes this infamous character, shedding light on the complexities of his nature and the forces that drive him to commit his heinous deeds. By delving into Iago's past and exploring his relationships with other characters, *I, Iago* challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions of villainy and raises thought-provoking questions about the nature of evil, manipulation, and the human condition.

In Toni Morrison's play *Desdemona*, the acclaimed author reimagines and reinterprets one of Shakespeare's most enigmatic characters from the play *Othello*. Morrison's narrative offers a compelling and intricate exploration of Desdemona's life, giving voice to a character often overshadowed by the tragic events of Shakespeare's original work. Through Morrison's lyrical prose and rich storytelling, *Desdemona* provides readers with a deep and nuanced understanding of Desdemona's inner thoughts, desires, and struggles. By centering the narrative on Desdemona's experiences and perspectives, Morrison invites readers to reconsider the traditional portrayal of this character, offering a fresh and insightful perspective on her life and relationships.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The current study attempts to explore the adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* in Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* in relation to the themes of race, class, and females' representations. The two literary works are analyzed by applying the theory of adaptation.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

Lots of studies have been continuously conducted on Shakespeare's play *Othello*. Up to the researcher's knowledge, there are no studies that can be found that tackle Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* or Nicole Galland's *I, Iago*. There have been almost no studies that are conducted on how these two literary works can be considered adaptations of Shakespeare's *Othello* in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females. The contribution of the study is to fill in the gap.

1.4. Questions of the Study

The current study answers the following questions:

1. To what extent can Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* be considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's play in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females?
2. To what extent can Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* be considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's play in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the two adaptations in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The study:

1. Explores Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females.
2. Explores Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females.

3. Compares and contrasts between the two adaptations in relation to the themes of race, class, and the representation of females?

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the time it has been written in. The study is also limited to the mentioned authors, Shakespeare, Nicole Galland, and Toni Morrison, and their mentioned literary works, *Othello*, *I*, *Iago*, and *Desdemona*. The study and what it concludes with cannot be generalized to the other authors' literary works.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This chapter is a survey of prior research and studies on William Shakespeare's *Othello*, Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*, and Nicole Galland's *I, Iago*. The studies that analyze how the plays and the novel deal with race, class, and representation of females are presented in this chapter. The chapter proceeds to give research that demonstrates how the writers represent these themes in the assigned plays and novels and how they are similar or different.

2.1. Studies on the Theme of "Race" in Shakespeare's *Othello*

This section presents the studies that analyze the theme of race in the Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

Neil (1989) offers an insightful examination of *Othello* by William Shakespeare. Through its portrayal of Othello and Desdemona's interracial relationship—which is viewed as "hideous" by other characters—Neill examines how the play subverts social conventions. He places the play's themes of race, adultery, and the grotesque in perspective and contends that these ideas are essential to comprehending the terrible events that take place in the play. Othello's ongoing importance in concerns of race and gender today is compellingly illustrated by Neill's study, which illuminates Shakespeare's indictment of racism and sexism.

Berry (1990) examines how the sad demise of the protagonist in William Shakespeare's *Othello* is portrayed as a result of his intense sense of alienation in a society that is predominately white. Berry contends that racism—both internalized within Othello and externalized from characters such as Iago—is the primary source of his alienation.

As a result of this loneliness, Othello becomes more and more hopeless and finally fails. Berry highlights the lasting significance of Othello's examination of race and alienation in modern society by illuminating the terrible impacts of racism and prejudice on individuals through a combination of thorough textual analysis and ideas from critical race and psychoanalytic theories.

Little (1993) examines Shakespeare's complex depiction of racism in the play and makes the case that it exposes more fundamental, deeper components of racial hatred than just clichés. Little highlights the subtle aspects of racism in early modern England by placing the play within the historical backdrop of that era. The "primal scene" of racism, according to him, occurs when Othello discovers he is perceived as a racial Other rather than a person. This realization is essential to comprehending the extent of racism Othello encounters. Little portrays racism as a harmful force that deforms both individuals and communities by demonstrating how characters use Othello's racial identity for their individual purposes. Little does this by drawing on psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories.

Hogan (1998) provides a thorough examination of how racism and hopelessness are explored in William Shakespeare's *Othello*. According to Hogan, the play portrays racism as a system of power that is utilized for control and manipulation in addition to being a kind of prejudice. He draws attention to the ways that characters like Iago take advantage of Othello's ethnicity, leaving him feeling deeply depressed and alone. Hogan's analysis sheds light on the play's critique of racial hierarchy and forces viewers to face their prejudices. It is based on critical race theory and psychoanalytic theory. "Othello, Racism, and Despair" offers a convincing analysis of Othello's investigation of race and racism in society and its ongoing significance.

Christine (2012) dedicates a whole chapter of the thesis to exploring the themes of race and feminism of Desdemona's interactions in the play. The focus on race is often attributed to the socially unacceptable dynamic of a white woman being with a black man, which is not present in other Shakespeare's plays. It is further argued that Desdemona is a privileged white woman who negotiates her status accordingly. The thesis only emphasizes the interchangeable relations between race, class and representation of females and how each position in society is negotiable and open to interpretations. It further negotiates the victimhood of Desdemona and suggests her own aggressions on others.

Abuzahra and Salahat (2018) analyze Iago's speech in *Othello* using critical discourse analysis. The results of this study demonstrate how Iago dehumanizes and degrades other characters in the play by using animal metaphors. Iago is also able to alienate Othello due to his distinctive identity and skin tone from Venetian society. Furthermore, Iago demonstrates misogynistic views toward women during the play. Furthermore, Iago has remarkable proficiency in eloquence. He was able to fool every character in the play by manipulating the majority of them. Therefore, it can be said that Iago conceptualizes and links his usage of animal analogies to his cognitive thinking. Furthermore, the racist remarks made by Iago in the play mirror the prejudice that Shakespeare's day had for "non-white" individuals.

In addition, Moghari (2021) raises questions about the nature of whiteness and its role in the erasure of Othello's racial identity. The marriage between Othello, a black man, and Desdemona, a European woman, is depicted as a failure, reinforcing negative stereotypes about Africans being jealous, illogical, and crazy. Othello is referred to using derogatory terms such as "fool" and "thick lip," highlighting racial prejudice. The play

also explores the binary opposition of white and black, using marriage as a tool to reinforce the separation between the two races. Nevertheless, these portrayals are subject to interpretation and analysis, and different adaptations, such as postcolonial and feminist ones, offer alternative perspectives on Othello and challenge the stereotypes associated with race and marriage.

Croft's paper (2023) has examined the racial identity of Othello, the depiction of Moors in early modern drama, and the stereotypes associated with blackness in the play. It explores the diversity that went into the labeling of a Moor, considering factors such as religion, race, and nationality. It also proves the dominance of white bodies and how white people often perceive themselves as "unraced" or without color. It also analyzes the power dynamics between whiteness and the black body of Othello. Overall, the exploration of race in *Othello* is intertwined with themes of class and feminism.

2.2. Studies on the Theme of “Class” in Shakespeare’s *Othello*

This section presents the studies that analyze the theme of class in the Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

Berry (1972) provides a thorough examination of William Shakespeare's tragedy, highlighting the recurrent themes and patterns that influence the play's structure. Berry demonstrates how language and perception may be used to deceive by highlighting patterns of manipulation and deception, especially in the relationship between Othello and Iago. In addition, he looks at social and identification patterns, showing how Othello's race is used against him. Berry also takes into account gender and power dynamics, illuminating how figures such as Emilia and Desdemona deal with patriarchal relationships. All things considered, Berry's perspective clarifies the complexities of Othello and deepens our comprehension of Shakespeare's narrative devices.

Howard and Shershow (2000) reinterpret Shakespeare's plays using Marxist ideology. The writers give new insights on well-known texts by demonstrating how Shakespeare's works address social and economic themes through perceptive articles. They examine topics in Shakespeare's drama such as class conflict and historical materialism, drawing on a variety of Marxist thinkers. Howard and Shershow write in an approachable manner that makes their views persuasive to a broad audience even when they deal with difficult subjects.

Smith (2013) offers a convincing interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the handkerchief in *Othello* by Shakespeare. According to Smith, the handkerchief—which was once a sign of love—becomes a potent representation of Othello's class, racial otherness, and the deadly essence of jealousy. Smith painstakingly breaks down how Othello's inner struggle and the breakdown of trust in his relationship with Desdemona are reflected in the handkerchief's change. The study clarifies how jealousy, race, and class intertwine in the play and provides a sophisticated interpretation of both Othello's persona and the play's overarching themes.

Frazer (2016) looks at how William Shakespeare's plays relate to current political discussions and reflect and comment on the political situations of his day. Shakespeare's plays, which address issues like class, leadership, authority, and justice, provide enduring insights on human nature and political power, according to Frazer. She shows the breadth and depth of Shakespeare's political thinking through the way his plays—which range from tragedies to comedies to histories—explore subjects like kingship, oppression, and revolt. Shakespeare's works continue to influence political thought and practice, as demonstrated by Frazer's study, which also demonstrates how different philosophers and movements have understood them. "Shakespeare's Politics" is an invaluable resource for

comprehending the relationship between politics and literature because of the author's ability to bring Shakespeare's timeless relevance to contemporary political conversation.

Alkoli (2018) shows that Iago in *Othello* is very much aware of his position in society and due to his pride and confidence he seeks power. She furthers the discussion so that Iago's desires are driving him towards evil doings. His jealousy is what propels him in his actions and justify his taking what is not rightfully his (Cassio's position in the army). His main tool is manipulation to reach his intended goal, as the study suggests, without even verbally mentioning his motives in the play.

Tayyaba and Akhtar (2022) explore Othello's language and speech through a critical lens. The writers use critical discourse analysis to look at how language in the play creates and maintains power relations about class, gender, and race. They show how characters, especially Othello because of his color, use language to uphold societal structures and perpetuate stereotypes. To provide more depth to its research, the paper also examines instances of resistance in which characters contest prevailing discourses. Overall, this work adds to the larger body of research on Shakespeare's literature and critical discourse analysis while providing an insightful look at how language influences social reality in Othello.

2.3. Studies on the “Representation of Women” in Shakespeare’s *Othello*

This section presents the studies that analyze the representation of females in the Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

Gernnan (1987) provides a thorough examination of the various ways that Shakespeare's *Othello's* female characters express their agency through conversation. Grennan looks at Emilia, Bianca, and Desdemona, showing how they use song, speech,

and silence to negotiate the patriarchal society. He demonstrates how Desdemona's inner strength is revealed by her "Willow Song," eloquence, and emotional depth. Grennan also looks at the ways in which Emilia's "song of the maid" and quiet periods can be seen as acts of defiance. His research highlights the characters' complexity and agency in the play, giving us a deeper comprehension of them.

Dollimore (1990) provides an insightful analysis of Shakespeare's portrayal of women. Dollimore contends that feminist viewpoints demonstrate the female characters in Shakespeare's plays to be more than just passive caricatures, highlighting their depth and agency. Additionally, he looks at how Marxist humanism and cultural materialist perspectives help us comprehend the social and economic environments that mold these individuals. Shakespeare's plays deal with issues of gender, power, and society; Dollimore's analysis sheds new insight on how women are portrayed in these plays.

Vanita (1994) investigates how Shakespeare's play portrays women's vulnerability. Vanita contends that Emilia and Desdemona's terrible outcomes are a result of being portrayed as "unprotected" by the patriarchal culture. She emphasizes how cultural expectations and conventions restrict women's agency and autonomy, demonstrating how Emilia and Desdemona's deeds cause them to become victims. Vanita's work makes a significant contribution to feminist literary criticism and the study of *Othello* because of her feminist analysis, which is based in the junction of gender and race and delivers a potent critique of the marginalization of women in patriarchal society.

Das (2012) delves into how women are portrayed in *Othello*. Shakespeare's portrayal of women in the play, especially Desdemona and Emilia, is complex and goes beyond simple clichés, according to Das. She investigates Emilia's rejection of conventional gender norms and draws attention to Desdemona's nuanced acts of autonomy, such as her

decision to wed Othello despite her father's desires. Das also examines the intricate relationship between gender and race in *Othello*, highlighting Desdemona's dual status as a racially privileged person and a victim of patriarchal oppression. Her analysis highlights the complexity and agency of Shakespeare's female characters in *Othello*, adding dimension to our understanding of gender dynamics in the play.

Alkurdi & Al-Jezawi (2016) work on the same idea of the dynamics of power relations exercised by women in the play. They suggest that the female characters in *Othello* challenge traditional power relations and offer a critique of the patriarchal system, highlighting the complexities of gender dynamics and power relations within the play. They mainly treated the race problem through the postcolonial theory and incorporated the feminist theory to represent the dynamics time and time again.

Hussain, Khan, and Bin Zubair (2023) offer a thorough examination of Shakespeare's portrayals of women within the framework of Elizabethan culture. They contend that patriarchal norms are portrayed in the works of characters such as Emilia and Desdemona, emphasizing their lack of agency and the tragic consequences they encounter. The writers also go through situations in which Shakespeare challenges gender norms, demonstrating how his characters exercise their agency in the face of social pressures. All things considered, their approach clarifies the intricacies of gender dynamics in *Othello* and how it reflects Elizabethan perspectives on women.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Procedures

3.1. Method

The study approaches Shakespeare's *Othello* through the theory of adaptation to explore themes of race, class, and representation of females. Both the works of Nicole Galland, and Toni Morrison are a new reading of Shakespeare's play. Julie Sanders (2006, p.3) states that many writers and scholars refer to adaptation as "rewriting" or "intertextuality". Sanders (2006) makes a distinction between appropriations and adaptations in her capacity as an adaptation theorist. She claims that depending on the intertextuality's goal, they are both different. While they both involve interaction with the text, she continues, appropriation "adopts a posture of critique, even assault" (p. 4). Sanders goes on to define every word. She states, for example, that adaptations of classic literary works identify "themselves as an interpretation or rereading of a canonical precursor" and that "the movement into a new generic mode or context" is occasionally involved (p. 2). Meanwhile, she describes appropriations as "a decision to reinterpret a source text that is shaped by a writer, director, or performer's political or ethical commitment." Moreover, according to her, these theories would introduce "multiple and sometimes conflicting production of meaning." (p.2)

On the other hand, another adaptation theorist, Linda Hutcheon (2006), offers a fresh method for assessing adaptations that takes into account the narrative techniques and the media in which they are presented. According to Hutcheon, the notion of adaptation ought to be the foundation of any adaptation. According to her, "Adaptation theory should take [the reasons behind adaptation] seriously, even if this means thinking about the role of intentionality in our critical thinking about art in general" (p. 95). She talks about

adaptations as a product and as a "process of creation and reception," regarding them as "deliberate, announced, and extended re-visitations of prior works" (p. 115). According to Hutcheon (2006), when adaptation is used to create a product, the primary ideas from the original sources will still be present, even though the original text will change. According to her, the first step in the process is to identify the "adaptor" and the rationale for the adaptation, keeping in mind that the new work—the adaptation—may be accepted and perceived as a secondary or inferior source to the adapted work source (p. 15). She also claims that when adaptation is considered a process, it essentially turns into an appropriation process (p. 95). One views adaptation as a "formal entity or product." This implies that the adaptation may be taken from a different work or works. This could involve a "shift" to a different genre, medium, or even frame, style, and context—perhaps even just narrating the story from a different point of view—without altering the plot. A change from historical to fictitious, biographical to fictional, or real to fictional could also fall under this category. "Interpretation and their recreation" are where adaptation also begins. It can be viewed as a "form of intertextuality" and the "process of reception" (p.8).

Hutcheon (2006) goes on to say that everyone uses adaptation. She also talks about the significance of the new text (p. 11), which is an adaptation, as well as the old text, which is an adapted text. She also declares that although no adaptation can match the quality of the "original," the adapted text is nevertheless regarded as superior to any adaptation. It is not the case that an adaptation of a literary work makes it the "original" or "authoritative" version. When a text is altered and referred to as the "source" or "original," it might be just as essential as the original. Adaptation creates a "dialogue relation among texts," a phenomenon known as "intertextuality," which "was only a formal issue" (p. 11–12).

Thus, adaptation is a form of literary interpretation that writers use to represent new or old point of view in reading a work of literature. A way of interpreting William Shakespeare's *Othello* is through looking into the works of Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*, and Nicole Galland's *I, Iago*. These works would lend an interpretation of the canonical work with comparing and contrasting themes of: race, class and representation of females.

3.2. Samples

3.2.1. Summary of Nicole Galland's *I, Iago*

Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* is a retelling of the events of the Shakespeare's play *Othello* from the perspective of Iago, Othello's ensign. The novel is divided into two parts; the "before", which is a prequel to the Shakespeare's play, and the "after", which move simultaneously with Shakespeare's play.

The novel starts with Iago's childhood stories with his friend Roderigo. It also explains how Iago got into military training from artillery to infantry. As well as, the death of Iago's father. Iago becomes an officer, or an ensign, and then meets and falls in love with Emilia. He marries her and they live happily together for two years.

Iago then meets Othello at a party in Venice. They connect instantly and Iago grows to admire and appreciate him. Even more so after they go to battle together. Othello meets Desdemona when he is invited to dine with her father, Brabantio. They secretly admire and fall in love with each other.

Cassio is introduced as a strategist for the army. He would later help Othello and Desdemona exchange love letters between them as well as help Desdemona escape from her home in order to elope with Othello. In return, Othello assigns Cassio as his lieutenant and this shows how he betrayed his loyal ensign, Iago.

Iago starts to plan his revenge; he uses Roderigo to tell Brabantio of what happened with his daughter causing chaos. Desdemona declares that she loves Othello and willingly married him. Othello is sent to Cyprus to fight against the Turks invasion taking his wife with him.

Iago causes Cassio to lose his lieutenantcy and plans to convince Othello that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio. With some manipulation and stealing Othello's handkerchief, he succeeds. Othello vows to kill both Desdemona and Cassio. He asks Iago to kill Cassio. Iago convinces Roderigo to do it and when Roderigo fails, he wounds Cassio and kills Roderigo himself.

At this time, Othello strangles Desdemona to death and when Emilia walks in on this, Othello admits he is the killer and states that he did this because of what Iago informed him of. When Iago arrives, Emilia confronts him and exposes all his lies which results in Iago killing her so that she can say no more. After learning the truth, Othello kills himself. Iago is imprisoned and is to be tortured while Cassio is assigned to rule Cyprus. The novel ends in the same tragic way as the play *Othello*, but while seeing it through the eyes of the villain, Iago, knowing and understanding his reasons and motives behind his actions.

3.2.2. Summary of Toni Morrison's Desdemona

Desdemona by Toni Morrison is a reimagining of William Shakespeare's *Othello* from the perspective of its female characters: Desdemona, Emilia, and Barbary. This play is considered a sequel to Shakespeare's play as all the characters present are in the afterlife confronting each other. The play explores themes of race, gender, power, and agency.

The story revolves around Desdemona's relationship with other characters from Shakespeare's play. Desdemona starts by explaining the patriarchal society that she lived in where no woman could say her thoughts, desires, or whom she wishes to marry.

She meets Othello in the afterlife and confronts him about killing her and how he could he have doubted her loyalty and love.

She then meets Emilia. Emilia confronts Desdemona about how they were friends but Desdemona would treat Emilia as her maid with constant requests. Emilia struggles with her own sense of identity and loyalty.

Following Emilia, Desdemona meets her former maid, Barbary. She reminisces about the good times they had together and how they were friends. Barbary replies that her real name is Sa'ran and that she was never Desdemona's friend as she was forced to feed and wash her as that was her job. Othello apologizes to Desdemona and shows how much he regrets his actions but it is too late. They are in the afterlife. Through their interactions and experiences, the play delves into the complexities of race, gender, and power dynamics in a patriarchal society. It offers a new perspective on the events of *Othello* and challenges readers to reconsider their assumptions about these iconic characters.

3.2.3. Summary of William Shakespeare's Othello

Othello is a tragedy by William Shakespeare that tells the story of Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army, and his tragic downfall due to jealousy. The play explores themes of love, jealousy betrayal and racism.

The story begins with Othello secretly marrying Desdemona, a Venetian noblewoman, much to the dismay of her patrician father, Brabantio. Othello promotes Cassio to be his lieutenant instead of his ensign, Iago. By doing this, Iago sets out to have his revenge from Othello. After Othello's marriage to Desdemona, he is set out to Cyprus to defend against the Turks invasion taking his wife with him. In Cyprus, Iago starts with his

revenge, he convinces Othello that Desdemona is having an affair with his lieutenant, Cassio. Iago manipulates events and steals Othello's handkerchief, a gift from him to Desdemona, so that it may appear as though Desdemona and Cassio are truly having an affair, which leads Othello to become consumed by jealousy and murderous thoughts.

He plots with Iago to kill Cassio and then he himself kills Desdemona. Emilia, Iago's wife, walks in on the sight of Desdemona dead and starts to accuse Othello of being the devil and as they talk, Iago's deceit is revealed. Othello realized his tragic mistake and kills himself. Iago kills his wife, Emilia, so that she could stop talking about his evilness. Iago is arrested and imprisoned for his actions. Cassio is assigned to rule Cyprus. The play ends with the tragic consequences of jealousy and deception, highlighting the destructive nature of these emotions.

3.3. Procedures

1. The researcher tackled the previous literature to decide on the title and to make sure of the shortage that the study will fill.
2. The researcher read the three literary works through the lens of adaptation, specifically looking at the themes of race, class, and the representation of women.
3. The researcher went through the previous studies that tackled the themes of class, race, and representation of women as well as adaptations.
4. The researcher wrote the proposal.
5. The researcher provided specific evidence from all three works on how both authors used the theory of adaptation in their works.
6. The researcher integrated these evidences with scholars' arguments.
7. The researcher reached to certain statements to conclude with.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis

This chapter discusses and explores the representation of the themes of race, class, and females in the novel *I, Iago* and the play *Desdemona* while discussing to what extent can the novel and play be considered an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Othello*.

4.1. William Shakespeare's *Othello* in Terms of the Themes of Race, Class, and the Representation of Women.

William Shakespeare's works have stood the test of time and provided inspiration time and time again. The two works discussed in this thesis are only examples of the richness of his works. Although Shakespeare's themes are universal, so are the counterpart themes to them. Regardless of how we read Shakespeare, we can always end up having a counterpart opinion to the sentiments presented in his works. In hindsight, it depends on how we read Shakespeare that we can provide a counterpart opinion of what is in front of us. *Othello* is one of the most universally acclaimed of his works due to the theme of jealousy. Yet, other themes have started to surface after a while with the change of times that forced critics to see this work in new light. Hence, we have the three updated readings into this play of race, class, and the representation of women.

4.1.1. Theme of Race

Theme of race plays a central role in shaping the experiences and destinies of the characters, particularly Othello, the Moorish general of the Venetian army. Through Othello's character and the interactions between the other characters, Shakespeare explores the themes of racial prejudice and the impact of societal perceptions of race. Arthur Little (1993) states that Shakespeare's play has three main plot points: Othello's

blackness, his marriage to Desdemona, a white woman, and his murder of her. Of course, these components are connected. Their marriage is important to the meaning of Othello's murder of Desdemona, and Othello's blackness plays a major role in the meaning of their union. It is believed that Othello's blackness is what first gave rise to the play's fears (Little, 1993, p.306).

Patrick Hogan (1998) also states that even in non-derogatory situations, the Venetian's attitude toward Othello is racist in practically every sense. Many Venetians regard Othello as a friend and colleague, and he is a superb leader in the Venetian army. Even still, they refer to him as "the moor" significantly more than they do as Othello, this specific man. The ratio is nearly two to one in favor of the general category over the name. put another way, they talk about him and even address him regularly, but not as a distinctive individual, but rather as an example of his race (Hogan, 1998, p.439). Some examples to support this is when Roderigo refers to Othello as "the thick lips" (Shakespeare, I.i.63) and when Iago goes on to characterize Othello as a brute beast shouting that he is "an old black ram" (Shakespeare, I.i.85). Iago also raises fear in Brabantio with the possibility that Brabantio's grandchildren will be of mixed race, saying, "your daughter is covered with a Barbary horse, hence you'll have nephews neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for Germans" (Shakespeare, I.i.88). Iago goes on to degrade Desdemona for loving and marrying Othello for she is so fair, beautiful, and white to choose "the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor" (Shakespeare, I.i.119,123). "What delight shall she have to look on the devil?" he asks Roderigo (Shakespeare, II.i.224-225). Brabantio accuses Othello of using witchcraft, a stereotype of Othello's background, to seduce Desdemona. As only magic, foul charms, and drugs could take Desdemona "from her guardage to the sooty bosom of such a thing as thou, to

fear, not to delight” (Shakespeare, I.ii.72-73). Brabantio also questions how she could “fall in love with what she feared to look on” (Shakespeare, I.iii.99). Here Brabantio is commenting on the appearance of Othello as it is supposed to promote the feelings of fear rather than love. Desdemona herself acknowledges the fact that Othello is black. While discussing her marriage she refers to him not as Othello but as “the moor” (I.iii.187). Even when she expresses deep affection towards him, she still does not call him by his name instead she says “I love the moor” (Shakespeare, I.iii.243). Later on, when Iago convinces Othello of Desdemona’s infidelity, Othello replies “She’s gone” (Shakespeare, II.iii.266). He offers two potential explanations for her treachery. One is age, that he is “declined into the vale of years” but then dismisses this saying “yet that’s not much” (Shakespeare, III.iii.264-265). The other reason, the reason he accepts, is simply “I am black” (Shakespeare, III.iii.263). Racism confronts Othello everywhere he looks. Its many masks or faces—friendship, admiration, love, and even hatred, contempt, and abuse—make it more persistent, alluring, and unstoppable. He ultimately gives in to the racist perception of people around him. The ensuing hopelessness results in suicide and murder (Hogan, 1998).

Othello decides to suffocate Desdemona for a racial cause, suggesting that he has at least partially adopted Venetian society’s racism saying, “I’ll not shed her blood, nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow (Shakespeare, V.ii.3-4).” Emilia suggests that her whiteness has become sacred, just as his blackness has become demonic saying “the more angel she, and you the blacker devil (Shakespeare, V.ii.129-130).” Thus, Berry associates Othello’s blackness to “ugliness, treachery, lust, bestiality, and the demonic. This poisonous image of the black man later informs Othello’s judgement of himself (Berry, 1990).”

According to the study of Tayyaba and Shamim (2022), the use of negative lexical items to describe character is evident. For example, Brabantio repeatedly uses the words “thief, devils, barbary horse” to describe and disrespect Othello. Othello is also called “moor” and “old black ram” which shows the racist attitude of others (Tayyaba and Shamim, 2022, p.391). In contrast, Desdemona is referred to as tender, fair, sweet, and delicate by other characters to emphasize how different she is than Othello (Tayyaba and Shamim, 2022, p.392).

Finally, Michael Neil (1989) states that in Othello, discussions over race are nearly always inextricably linked, whether directly or indirectly, to those of culture, because differences in hue are understood to represent differences in “barbarity”, “animality”, and “primitive emotion (Neil, 1989, p.393).”

4.1.2. Theme of Class

Elizabeth Frazer (2016), states that a jealous subordinate officer brings down Othello, a dependable state officer, for reasons related to race, class, and proper authority while conducting state business (Frazer, 2016, p.505). This summarizes what Iago did to Othello as people at that time in the Venetian society believed that people with darker complexions are seen as of lower class and status.

According to Ian Smith (2013), the strongly racist vocabulary of Iago from the play's opening scenes makes Cassio see himself, “drunken and disorderly,” as a monstrous black demon, for whom Othello represents as the typical “socially disruptive and animalistic foreign character (Smith, 2013, p. 13).” In the opening scene, Iago calls Othello “old black ram (Shakespeare, I.i.85).”

When Desdemona runs off and marries Othello behind her father, Brabantio, it is Iago who informs him considering that the daughter of patrician should not marry a general in the army. Brabantio refers to this marriage as “treason of the blood (Shakespeare, I.i.169).” Ralph Berry (1972) declares that the Venetian society did not approve of racial-intermarriage and of course as Desdemona comes from a patrician family, how can she marry a general in the army (Berry, 1972). This is proven when Brabantio also says “have to incur a general mock / run from her guardage to the sooty bosom/ of such a thing a thou? (Shakespeare, I.ii.69-71)”

Other than Othello’s social status among the Venetian Society, Iago’s social status is looked upon and seen as part of the reason why he was not promoted to lieutenant. The relationship between Cassio and Iago has distrust as there are hints that Iago comes from a lower social stratum than Cassio. Iago proves this in Act I, scene I where he expresses his discontent about Cassio’s promotion over him, suggesting that Cassio’s higher social status played a role in the decision. (Berry, 1972) Iago says “And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof / At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds / Christian and heathen” (Shakespeare, I.i.4-5). Iago is fuming because Othello passed him over for the position of lieutenant and instead chose Cassio, a seemingly inexperienced soldier. Here, Iago boasts about his own military experience, witnessed by Othello himself. He fought alongside Othello in various locations (“Rhodes,” “Cyprus,” and “other grounds”) against both Christian and pagan (“heathen”) enemies.

These examples in Shakespeare’s play paint a picture of how the Venetian society, at the time, viewed social class as well as customs and what they considered normal or not. The social class of the characters determines the kind of relationship they have with each other as well as how they advance in promotions and who to marry.

4.1.3. Representation of Women

In William Shakespeare's *Othello*, the play shows the oppression women must endure daily. Although Desdemona and Emilia's characters are proven to be of high conduct, patriarchy controls their ends and dooms their favor and fortunes.

According to the study by Hussain et al (2023), Desdemona is a highly sought-after woman since she is educated and the daughter of a senator from Venice. Nevertheless, she decides to wed Othello, a Moor serving as a Venetian army general. She bravely opposes her father and anyone else who disagrees with her decision. (I. iii. p.180-192). Here, Desdemona shows that she obeys her husband and follows the society's patriarchal rules even though she defies her father by marrying Othello. "She believes that her faithfulness to her partner is a testament to her position as a spouse and her contribution to their household's happiness (Hussain et al, 2023, p.3)." She uses manipulation to show where her duty lies according to the patriarchal society and by defying them at the same time.

Her presence is seen by many Venetians as being essential to Othello's existence (Hussain et al, 2023). This is made clear when Othello's subordinate Cassio addresses her as "She that I spake of, our great captain's captain." (Shakespeare, III. iii. p.76) It is implied that she is one of Othello's main sources of inspiration, giving him the will and drive to ensure Cyprus's triumph. This emphasizes Desdemona's special and significant part in Othello's battle against the Turks (Hussain et al, 2023, p.4). It is obvious that she is the source of his strength given that Othello recognizes her as his "O my fair warrior!" (Shakespeare, II.i.175)

Frazer (2016) explains that Emilia struggles with patriarchal authority as well. Like Desdemona, she is destroyed by patriarchal ideals that deny her a free will and an

independent voice (Frazer, 2016, p.517). Between giving in to Iago's demands over the handkerchief and meeting her demise at his hands, Emilia starts to realize that someone is discrediting Desdemona. Iago's misogynistic "jest" regarding Emilia's tongue causes Emilia to act reluctant and silent when she first lands in Cyprus with Desdemona. At the moment, Desdemona finds the joke amusing saying "alas, she has no speech." (Shakespeare, II.i.103) Later, Emilia regrets that she is in so much trouble that she is unable to comprehend because of her free speech on Cassio's behalf. Emilia responds to Othello's charge that Desdemona is a whore by calling him a devil during their confrontation after he has mortally wounded Desdemona. Previously, Emilia had addressed him as "my lord." (Shakespeare, V.ii.130-134) This shows how Emilia's character changes from silent to someone who will speak their mind.

Das (2012) argues in her study that the tragedy is the result of following patriarchal norms and prejudices. The play is based on men's misconceptions about women and women's helplessness to defend themselves against the way society views them (Das, 2012, p.39-40). This is shown by Othello's domination, violence, and authority which are far more manly than Desdemona's highly feminine traits of submission, gentleness, and compliance. After being severely beaten and verbally abused by Othello out of jealousy, Desdemona informs Iago "I am a child to chiding". (Shakespeare, V.ii.96) Because of a system that views women as the weaker, more dependent sex, Desdemona is powerless to stop Othello and is ill-prepared to handle such aggression. As a result, Desdemona retreats into infantile behavior as a way to avoid facing reality.

Das continues that Shakespeare acknowledges that women have historically faced social, economic, and political disadvantages throughout human history. Shakespeare has outlined gender concerns through strong female characters. He has presented a thorough

analysis of life, giving equal weight to the perspectives of men and women. His female characters depict the societal stigmas women experienced at the period. By endowing his female characters with qualities and strength, he has conveyed his own appreciation for strong, educated women. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that Shakespeare was a pioneer of the feminist movement. In actuality, he promotes the full liberation of women in society and aims to eradicate gender inequality through the portrayal of female characters in the tragedies (Das, 2012, p.55).

4.2. Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* as an Adaptation in Terms of the Themes of Race, Class, and the Representation of Women.

The novel *I, Iago* is the retelling of the play *Othello* by Shakespeare from the point of view of the villain Iago. It depicts his life before the beginning of the play as well as his point of view during the play. The novel is made up of two parts the "Before" which is considered the prequel to the actions of Shakespeare's play and the "After" which takes place simultaneously with the play. The actions that take place in the "Before" part show how the society of Venice is made as well as how Iago views the society and how he is made an ensign for the military. He forms a great connection with the general Othello that is full of admiration and love until Othello decides to promote Cassio to lieutenant instead of Iago which results in Iago feeling betrayed and wanting revenge. The actions that take place in the "After" part show the flow of thoughts in Iago and all his master plans for revenge and his reasons behind them. The themes of race, class, and the representation of women are present in both the novel and the play as the course of action takes place simultaneously.

4.2.1. Theme of Race

Nicole Galland stays true to the representation of racism in *Othello* in her adaptation *I, Iago* as she uses some of the same expressions used in the original Shakespeare's play to describe Othello as well as adding her own. In the novel, starting with the "before" section, Iago first meets Othello at a party. Before seeing him in person, the people around Iago started to describe the newly appointed general. They describe his black face as a mask quoting "they say it's not a mask at all! They say that is his real face! Can you imagine? So ugly and so dark?" (Galland, 2012, p.104)

The people in the venetian society stress the fact that he is of a different color and some even tried to wipe the paint off his face to no avail. A woman from the venetian society states to Iago and his wife, Emilia, that even if he is not quite human, he should not be treated as an animal. (Galland, 2012). She states "Well, it isn't human skin, Human skin is not that color" (Galland, 2012, p.105) These examples show how the society has racial prejudice against Othello and how they already formed an idea of him without knowing him.

Iago's first meeting of Othello is not spoken of in Shakespeare's play yet Nicole Galland managed to create a first meeting that makes sense in the way people are reacting to the sight of a black man and the prejudice that is shown against him. Upon seeing Othello, Iago describes him by saying that even his lips and gums are dark which make his teeth even more white. He also describes that his complexion and dress make him stand out as well as the embroidered strawberry kerchief tied around his neck seemed out of place. (Galland, 2012).

The way Othello is being described shows how fascinated the venetian society is of someone who is different than them by race and background. More stereotypes are

mentioned when Roderigo, Iago's childhood friend, sees Othello. He calls Othello a "barbarian" and quotes "Not likely he'd be buying spices from me anyhow, he probably eats raw meat (Galland, 2012, p.119)." These stereotypes are linked with people of darker complexion and are looked down on by the venetian society that is set in this novel. The senators of Venice are fascinated with Othello's dark skin and invite him to all sorts of parties and dinners, this makes Othello feel like something to be shown off. Othello states "I am not Othello to them, I am not even the general of their forces, I am rather something to show off to their neighbors and their servants and themselves. I help them feel pleased with themselves, they are so cosmopolitan and perhaps even brave that they chat with somebody who hardly looks human to them. I am so sick of it, Iago, I am so damned tired of it all. I cannot wait until we quit this damned city again (p.144, Galland)."

Othello is invited to Barbantio's home to dine where he fancies Desdemona, Barbantio's daughter, but Iago knows of the patrician's way of thinking and other than the fact that Othello is neither a patrician himself nor a venetian, he also states that Othello will change the race of the family. (Galland, 2012) This is not acceptable in the venetian society. Upon explaining the way of the venetian society to Othello, Othello argues with Iago that "here, in this great republic, where my race has not prevented me from ascending to the heights of..." (p.163, Galland) Iago explains that he may ascend in his military status but never to the position where he could marry the daughter of a patrician in the venetian society.

In the "after" section, when Othello eloped with Desdemona and Roderigo, with the encouragement of Iago, told Desdemona's father, Barbantio, of this; Roderigo calls Othello "The moor" (Galland, 2012, p.223). The word "moor" is used continuously in the novel *I, Iago* and in the play *Othello* as a way to describe Othello's dark skin in an

insulting manner. Continuing with the stereotypes associated with black people, Barbantio accuses Othello of using black magic to make Desdemona marry him saying: “Have you used your heathen magic to enslave her with lust? (Galland, 2012, p.224)” This stereotype is typically associated with third world countries and thus Othello is accused of using them as it is unbelievable that a fair white woman from the venetian society would willingly fall in love and marry a black man. Barbantio also states that he will accuse Othello in front of the members of Council with kidnapping Desdemona and that no member of Council will side with a “foreign black heathen (Galland, 2012, p. 255).”

4.2.2. Theme of Class

The theme of class in Shakespeare’s *Othello* serves to highlight the complexities of social hierarchy and the ways in which it can impact relationships and interactions between characters. It is subtly woven into the fabric of the play, particularly through the characters’ interactions and social statuses. In Nicole Galland’s *I, Iago*, she shows how social status plays an important part in how the characters act and how they perceive each other.

In the novel, starting with the “before”, Nicole Galland paints a picture of how the society is. We can see this with how Iago describes Roderigo’s family’s financial state. He explains how Roderigo’s family could not afford a nursemaid for their child as his father was a failing spice merchant while Iago’s family could afford one as his father was a thriving silk trader (Galland, 2012, p.5). Iago even helps out his friend, Roderigo, when they were children by giving him his share of money that they earned together so that Roderigo would be able to buy new clothes for himself. (Galland, 2012, p.14). The author

also shows us how Iago's family had many servants and adored the frivolous social culture where they attended multiple balls wearing fancy masks (Galland, 2012).

When describing Emilia's house, Iago sees that they are not a wealthy family as he looks around the furniture of the house stating, "I smiled politely, aware that Emilia was waiting to see if I would judge her for her family's modest means (Galland, 2012, p. 95)." This shows how the characters view each other in the social hierarchy of the Venetian society. This plays an important role with how one chooses the person they will marry.

Othello's otherness, as a Moor, occupies a unique position in Venetian society. While he holds a high rank as a general, his race and outsider status make him a target for discrimination and prejudice. This highlights the rigid class boundaries of the time and the challenges faced by those who do not fit into the established social hierarchy. This is seen when Othello starts to fall in love with Desdemona and asks Iago to explain the "Venetian courting customs". (p.162, Galland) Iago explains that since Desdemona is the daughter of a patrician, she can only marry someone from the same rank. He also explains that no one can ascend to become a patrician, one must be born into a family of patricians (Galland, 2012, p.162). Othello is upset by this and starts to think how his race prevents him from ascending in ranks in the Venetian society which proves that he will be forever considered an outsider at that time (Galland, 2012, p.163). Here Othello somehow accepts that he will not marry Desdemona and asks Iago to come with him when he is to dine at Brabantio's house to "help [me] remember my place (Galland, 2012, p. 164)."

Roderigo also fancies Desdemona and when he tries to ask her father for permission to marry her, her father says "Of course we won't accept this. The man is not even a patrician, for the love of angels, why does he think I would let him near my daughter

(Galland, 2012, p.173).” This also shows that even Roderigo, who became a wealthy spice trader, is rejected by Brabantio for not being a patrician.

Desdemona’s decision to marry Othello, a man of lower social standing, is seen as a rebellion against the norms of her class. Her father, Brabantio, expresses shock and dismay at her choice, highlighting the importance of social status and reputation in their society. We can see this in the novel, in the “after” part, where Brabantio accuses Othello of using witchcraft to kidnap Desdemona in front of the court (Galland, 2012, p.226). When Desdemona states that her duty lies with her husband, Brabantio expresses disapproval and states to Othello “She deceived me. She may deceive you just easily (Galland, 2012, p.235).”

Iago’s resentment towards Othello is fueled in part by his own ambition and desire for upward social mobility. He wants the lieutenantcy that was given to Cassio, which will give him better rank in the army. He sees Othello’s marriage to Desdemona as an affront to his own ambitions and uses it as a pretext for his schemes. He plots to make it seem like Desdemona betrayed Othello with Cassio which will “indulge [my] righteously vengeful imagination (Galland, 2012, p.243).” By acting upon his plan, he will be given the lieutenantcy that he longed for which will make him rise in social status. Iago manipulates the character’s perceptions of each other based on their class, using stereotypes and prejudices to turn them against each other. This manipulation highlights the ways in which class differences can be used to show discord and division (Galland, 2012, p.246).

4.2.3. Representation of Women

In Shakespeare's *Othello*, representation of women is nuanced, mainly in the roles of Emilia and Desdemona. Even though these women have important parts in the play, the patriarchal culture which they live also has an impact on the characters.

Through a retelling of the events from the perspective of Iago, the antagonist of William Shakespeare's *Othello*, Nicole Galland's novel *I, Iago* presents an original retelling of the drama. Galland's book has a complex and multidimensional portrayal of women, especially Emilia and Desdemona. It is shown that Emilia is a multifaceted person with her own goals, reasons, and challenges. She is shown as Iago's devoted wife, yet she dares to disagree with her husband's decisions and deeds. In Galland's novel, Emilia's character is given more nuance and agency, and her connection with Iago is examined in greater detail. Desdemona is similarly given more depth in *I, Iago*. She has a more detailed portrayal of her relationship with Othello, and her choices and actions are given more meaning. Desdemona's character is revealed to be independent and strong-willed, defying the stereotype of her as a helpless victim. Evidence from the novel will explain this further.

Nicole Galland, in the "before" section, paints a picture of how women are treated at the time in the Venetian society. When Iago goes to a brothel with his cadets, he talks suggestively of the women explaining how they are dressed in exposing clothing. He also talks to them disrespectfully (Galland 2012, p.39-41). Iago states "the city of Venice boasts approximately one whore for every seven male citizens. Many of the prostitutes are mistresses who live better than proper wives (Galland, 2012, p.39)." This suggests the normality of having wives as well as mistresses for one man.

Women at the time wore makeup and this was looked upon by Iago as unnecessary and something that ruined their natural beauty. He describes his mother as “creating a new face for herself” and that by doing this all the women at the time looked identical. He also describes this by saying “looking ridiculous (Galland 2012, p.49).”

After Iago marries Emilia and they meet Othello, Iago is asked to leave Venice without Emilia. She does not approve of this and says something to Othello to convince him that she should come along. At first, Iago believes she offered herself to him and accuses Emilia of this saying that this was expected (Galland, 2012). He states “Did you say you’d make yourself available to him as well? Do you plan to whore yourself to the higher ranks? Don’t think I haven’t heard about what officers expect of lower-ranking wives (Galland, 2012, p.121).” When she says that she merely said that her being with Iago improves his performance with the military, he says that this kind of talk is unacceptable from a woman stating “He thinks you’re loose. When a woman talks to a man like that, a man *knows* what it means (Galland, 2012, p.122).” This suggests that men thought of women only as sexual objects.

When Othello showed interest in Desdemona, Iago declares that her father would not “dispose” of her to someone who is not a patrician or Venetian and will change the race of the family (Galland 2012, p.156). The use of the word “dispose” shows that women did not have a choice in their marriage and that their male guardians had control of this choice, in this case, Desdemona’s father is the only person who chooses whom she will marry. Iago continuously calls Desdemona “that girl” in which Emilia replies to him saying “You’ve never once to my ear called her that [Desdemona]. You call her ‘that girl’, as if she were an object, not a person.” (p.157) Iago states that she “essentially is an object. She will be married off according to her father’s will.” (p.157) Which further

proves that women had no choice whatsoever. Brabantio, Desdemona's father, does give her the choice to reject different suitors which makes Iago describe him as an "indulgent father". (Galland 2012, p.164) This shows that Desdemona had the right to reject but will marry someone her father, nonetheless, approves of. She is given part of the choice.

In the "after" section of the novel, Desdemona later chooses to marry Othello against her father's wishes and states in front of the court "My duty lies with my husband." (Galland 2012, p.232) This shows Desdemona's character as a strong-willed and independent woman.

When Iago, Emilia, and Desdemona reach Cyprus, Iago talks to the ladies in a demeaning manner. He says "Speaking as a man renowned for his honesty, I am pained to inform you that you-and all ladies, if her ladyship will excuse me-you are three kinds of dishonest. In public you're the very pictures of innocence, but at home you nag and complain, and then in bed, of course, as every man knows-" Emilia stops him from continuing as this talk is disrespectful, specially when he is addressing Desdemona. This shows the patriarchal society that they lived in and how men view women (Galland 2012, p.251).

Violence was apparent in the way men treated women. When Othello receives a letter about the state and it upsets him. He slaps Desdemona across her face. (Galland 2012, p.331) This is the start of Othello's violence towards his wife. This violence surprises Iago and Lodovico who witnessed it.

After Othello killed Desdemona and Emilia found out, Iago tried to keep her quiet so that she would not expose him. He asks her to "stop your tongue" but she refused claiming "I am honor bound to speak now." (Galland, 2012, p.360) She accused Othello of

murdering an innocent woman and denied everything Iago claimed about Desdemona. Iago feeling betrayed by her, tried to get her to leave and go home to which Emilia turns to the gentlemen in the room and asks “Give me leave to speak.” (Galland, 2012, p.362) Here, Emilia’s character shows strength as she will not be silenced and will speak the truth. Iago sees this as betrayal as he expects his wife to obey him. Emilia continues to clarify that she is the one who found the handkerchief and accuses Iago of being a lying devil. She further states “The truth will out, Iago! It will out! I will speak if the heavens and the devils together conspired to shut me up, I’ll speak, you evil creature!” (Galland 2012, p.363) Iago then starts to slur at her and call her a liar as he states “She was betraying me.” He tries to justify killing her by stating that she is betraying him. He stabs and murders her to keep her quiet. (Galland 2012, p.364-365) This shows how Iago felt threatened by Emilia’s words and the power that her words hold.

4.3. Toni Morrison’s *Desdemona* as an Adaptation in Terms of the Themes of Race, Class, and the Representation of Women.

Desdemona is a musical performative play written by Toni Morrison. An obvious conclusion is inferred that the leading cast is a female, Desdemona, hence we have a feminine point of view. Unlike Shakespeare's idealized character, Morrison's is flawed and human. Through her encounters, she grapples with her own mistakes and gains a deeper understanding of the limitations placed upon her and other women. The power dynamics in the play are reimagined through conversations held in the afterlife mainly represented by the female characters. She grapples with her own choices and encounters the silenced women from the original play, like her maid Sa'ran, Mona, and Emilia. Morrison's *Desdemona* offers a powerful commentary on race, class, and gender. By giving voice to the silenced women and exploring their perspectives, she critiques societal

structures and celebrates the complexities and strengths of women who dare to speak their minds. Morrison's curation of the three themes interlap so often that it is hard to give precise different examples on each theme. Nevertheless, there are more obvious examples than others. The following example is what could be hinting on a more obvious racial theme than the others. Here we have an exchange between Desdemona and her nanny Barbary who we discover her true name as Sa'ran.

4.3.1. Theme of Race

Morrison utilizes the character of Barbary, a woman of African descent who served as Desdemona's childhood caregiver, to highlight the play's exploration of race. When Desdemona describes her initial attraction to Othello, she compares the "glint of brass in his eyes" to that of Barbary (Morrison, 2012, p. 23). This association suggests a subconscious link between Desdemona's fondness for Barbary and her attraction to Othello, hinting at a racial undercurrent to her feelings. The act of looking away then being drawn back by his smile implies a societal tension surrounding interracial relationships, a tension absent from Shakespeare's *Othello*. By centering Desdemona's perspective and introducing Barbary, Morrison injects a layer of racial awareness that recontextualizes Desdemona's motivations and sheds light on the complexities of love and societal constraints.

Toni Morrison further complicates the racial dynamics in Desdemona's afterlife encounter with her childhood maid. Initially, Desdemona seeks comfort and a shared past with her, proclaiming, "We shared so much" (Morrison, 2012, p. 45). However, Sa'ran, the maid's true name, shatters this illusion. The name "Barbary" signifies a geographical location associated with "the foreigner, the savage" (Morrison, 2012, p. 45), highlighting the power imbalance and the dehumanizing way Desdemona viewed her caregiver.

Sa'ran's assertion of "We shared nothing" (Morrison, 2012, p. 45) dismantles the notion of a simple caregiver-child bond and exposes the racial prejudice embedded within it. This conversation exposes the limitations of Desdemona's racial awareness during her life, a stark contrast to the initial subconscious connection she felt with Othello.

The next line furthers the question of Desdemona's earlier attraction to Othello. While she tries to connect with Sa'ran by stating "I wed a Moor" (Morrison, 2012, p. 46), it reveals a troubling disconnect. Her use of the term "Moor," a word often used with connotations of otherness and even insult, suggests that Desdemona might not have been as progressive in her racial views as her initial attraction to Othello implied. This inconsistency exposes the limitations of Desdemona's racial awareness. Furthermore, when Othello confronts Desdemona in the afterlife, his words, "You never loved me. You fancied the idea of me, the exotic foreigner... How comforting it must have been – protected by a loyal black warrior" (Morrison, 2012, p. 50-51), mirror this complexity. He acknowledges being seen as an outsider, a "foreigner" and a "black warrior," by Venetian society. This exchange reveals a tragic misunderstanding: Othello feels used for his difference, while Desdemona's initial attraction may have stemmed from a subconscious connection to her childhood caregiver rather than a full appreciation of Othello as an individual.

The pervasive use of the term "Moor" by characters like Cassio (Morrison, 2012, p. 53) reinforces this point. It's a subtle yet constant reminder of Othello's "otherness" within Venetian society. When Othello himself questions, "Because I am African? Because I was sold to slavery?" (Morrison, 2012, p. 53), he lays bare the suspicion and prejudice he faces due to his race and background. By giving Sa'ran a voice and exploring these complexities, Morrison critiques the societal structures that fostered one-sided

relationships, the limitations of unconscious bias, and the pervasive racism that dehumanizes and isolates Othello. This emphasizes the importance of recognizing the intersection of race and class, and the need to move beyond superficial perceptions.

4.3.2. Theme of Class

Toni Morrison foregrounds the rigid class structure of Venetian society and its impact on the characters' relationships. When Othello's mother and Desdemona's mother are first represented in front of their graves they are represented as follows "One is dressed in simple cloth, the other in a sumptuous gown" (Morrison, 2012, p. 26). This description is a stark visual representation of this divide. We don't only have the background difference we also have the class structure as well. We know that One woman's "simple cloth" indicates Othello's mother that is held in contrast to the other's "sumptuous gown" immediately conveying their different social standings, where the first is held inferior to the later. Thus, the emphasis of the class standing of the two characters are set back to their upbringing.

As the conversation progresses, Morrison paints a disadvantaged background for Othello as he has had to rely on his own skills and resourcefulness to survive. The fact that Othello was orphaned and raised by a "root woman" suggests he comes from a less fortunate background (Morrison, 2012, p. 31). Since she was always hunted for medicinal plants, roots, and flowers, both were poor and from lesser class in the community. The fact that he called her a "root woman" and described what they did for a living indicates that she was a medicine woman or herbalist, at the least. Being raised by a "root woman" also hints at a life on the fringes of society as he "trailed her in forests" (Morrison, 2012, p. 31). Othello might have grown up outside the traditional social structure, possibly even a nomad following the root woman. This new vision of Othello as a child, only widens

the gap of class between the two characters in class. It sets Othello way bellow Desdemona.

This class difference bleeds into the dynamics between the women. Emilia, Desdemona's lady-in-waiting, confronts Desdemona in the afterlife, exposing the one-sided nature of their friendship. Both women are of higher social status as Emilia states initially "Noble as we tried to be," (Morrison, 2012, p. 43). She criticizes Desdemona's constant demands and patronizing behavior, that reaches the level of orders. Thus, leading her to the conclusion; this is "how you treat a servant" (Morrison, 2012, p. 43). By highlighting Emilia's perspective, Morrison critiques the way social structures limited genuine connection and created a sense of entitlement within those of higher rank. It forces the reader to consider the emotional complexities within seemingly straightforward social dynamics.

Similarly, Sa'ran, Desdemona's former maid, dismantles the notion of friendship. Upon meeting Sa'ran, Desdemona's former maid, she states that Sa'ran was her best friend. Sa'ran reminds Desdemona, "I was your slave" (Morrison, 2012, p. 45). Desdemona might have had joy from the company of Sa'ran but that was not the case for Sa'ran. She was there doing her job as a slave. She was not there by choice. This only highlights the power imbalance and the fact that her service was not an act of friendship, but a duty forced upon her by her station. Sa'ran's poignant description of tending to Desdemona's every need "kissed your every cut and bruise... held you when fever made you tremble" (Morrison, 2012, p. 48) underscores the chasm between their social positions.

By giving voice to these women, Morrison critiques the societal norms that perpetuate such unequal relationships. She exposes the illusion of friendship between

classes and the emotional toll it takes on those relegated to servitude. This challenges the reader to see beyond superficial connections and acknowledge the inherent power dynamics embedded within a stratified social structure.

4.3.3. Representation of Women

Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* rewrites Shakespeare's tragedy through a feminist lens, amplifying the silenced voices of women and critiquing the societal constraints that limit their agency. Toni Morrison amplifies the constraints faced by women in Venetian society through Desdemona's own voice. In her opening monologue, Desdemona declares, "Perhaps being born a girl gave them all they needed to know of what life would be like...subject to the whims of my elders and the control of men" (Morrison, 2012, p. 13). This statement sets the stage for a world where women's lives are predetermined by societal expectations. They are expected to "follow" the rules established by men, with little to no agency over their own destinies. This lack of control extends to their choices in marriage, as demonstrated by the lack of say they have in who they wed.

Furthermore, societal expectations stifle any dreams or thoughts women might have for themselves. Desdemona emphasizes this point in her poetic verse, questioning the very definition of strength: "Is it a question of deciding who is strongest? Between He who represents strength and She in whom all strength is rooted, grows, and is given meaning and purpose?" (Morrison, 2012, p. 15). She doesn't provide a definitive answer, but rather opens the question for exploration. Despite the direct meaning of the question about who is truly strong: a man who embodies the traditional concept of strength; physical prowess and dominance, or a woman who represents the source of all strength; giving birth and nurturing life, it suggests that true strength lies not just in physical power, but also in the life-giving and sustaining qualities associated with the feminine. This

suggestion in itself challenges the patriarchal view that equates strength solely with masculinity and highlights the power women hold as the source of life and the foundation of society. Morrison suggests strength has multiple dimensions, not just the physical aspect traditionally associated with men. The use of pronouns ("He" and "She") adds a sense of universality to the question. It's not about a specific man or woman, but about broader societal concepts.

The stifling nature of these expectations is further underscored by Desdemona's admission that she had to keep "her desires, my imagination must remain hidden" (Morrison, 2012, p. 17). This silencing of women's voices is further illustrated in her experiences with suitors. Her refusal to accept the proposals sent her way led to disappointment, not just for her, but for her society. As she states, becoming "a single female of a certain age, un-nunned, sitting at his sumptuous table instead of fasting in a convent" (Morrison, 2012, p. 21). This describes Desdemona as unmarried and past the age typically considered desirable for marriage. As she has not chosen the path of becoming a nun and living a life of religious devotion, she is enjoying a luxurious meal, suggesting wealth or a comfortable lifestyle. This points to the fact that women were often expected to marry young and dedicate themselves to their husbands and families. The convent offered an alternative path for unmarried women, but it required a life of austerity and devotion. By choosing to remain single and enjoying a life of comfort, Desdemona is seen as a source of disappointment or even shame. This implies that others might view her with judgment for not conforming to societal norms, which stresses the constraints placed on women in the Venetian society and the limited options they had.

The afterlife, however, offers Desdemona a space for liberation. She now "exists in places where [she] can speak, at last, words that in earth life were sealed or twisted into

the language of obedience" (Morrison, 2012, p. 14). This newfound voice allows her to express the frustrations and limitations she previously had to suppress. As Peter Sellers observes, the play creates "a safe space in which the dead can finally speak those things that could not be spoken when they were alive" (Sellers, 2012, p.9). This extends not only to Desdemona herself, but also to previously voiceless characters like Othello's mother. Through these newfound voices, "hidden histories are shared and begin to flow" (Sellers, 2012, p.9), enriching our understanding of the characters and the societal forces that shaped them. By giving Desdemona a voice and highlighting the societal constraints placed upon women, Morrison critiques the patriarchal structures that confine them. She also explores the yearning for agency and self-expression that lies beneath the surface of a life lived in obedience.

Desdemona confronts Emilia, her former confidante, accusing her silence and obedience of contributing to her demise. She asks pointedly, "Your deception, your dangerous, murderous silence lead to my death" (Morrison, 2012, p. 42), highlighting the potential power women hold by speaking up against injustice. In contrast to Shakespeare's portrayal, Toni Morrison imbues Emilia, a character who was once a mere observer, with a powerful voice. This "new dimensionality" (Sellers, 2012, p.10) allows Emilia to confront her role in the tragedy. Despite being the one person who possesses the truth about the handkerchief, her silence ultimately contributes to the devastating events that unfold. This challenge extends to Sa'ran, Desdemona's maid, which compels her to conclude: "afterlife is time and with time there is change. My song is new" and then she continues a new song (Morrison, 2012, p. 48). Sa'ran's declaration echoes a sentiment found throughout Shakespeare's works – the transformative power of time. While Shakespeare explores this concept in the context of characters grappling with past

mistakes or seeking redemption, Sa'ran's experience highlights the possibility of overcoming societal limitations in the afterlife. Her "new song" becomes a symbol of liberation and the power to finally find her voice. Sa'ran's declaration in *Desdemona*, "afterlife is time and with time there is change. My song is new," offers a unique perspective on time that stands in contrast to the portrayal found in Shakespeare's sonnets. While Shakespeare emphasizes time's destructive nature and the inevitability of loss, Sa'ran's experience highlights the possibility of transformation and liberation in the afterlife. This shift reflects Morrison's feminist reinterpretation, where silenced characters like Sa'ran are given the opportunity to find their voices and overcome the limitations they faced in their earthly lives.

In the afterlife, *Desdemona* attempts to forge a connection based on shared experience, repeating, "We are women" (Morrison, 2012, p. 48), to establish a shared identity. It creates a sense of solidarity and shared experience between *Desdemona* and Sa'ran. This transcends their social differences and emphasizes their common ground as females in a patriarchal society. Later she states "I had no control over my life than you had" which acknowledges the lack of agency both women had in shaping their own destinies (Morrison, 2012, p. 48). Despite their different stations in life, both were likely subject to societal expectations and limitations on their choices. "My prison was unlike yours but it was a prison still," she states the difference in the nature of their confinement (Morrison, 2012, p. 48). *Desdemona*'s "prison" might have been the constraints of her social class, expectations of marriage, or societal pressures to conform. This is contrasted with Sa'ran's more literal confinement as a servant, possibly enslaved or indentured. However, despite the difference in form, both women were ultimately restricted. By admitting her own limitations, *Desdemona* attempts to bridge the class divide and connect

with Sa'ran on a deeper level through their shared experience as women. Women's oppression can manifest differently based on class, but the underlying truth remains – their agency and choices were restricted by societal expectations. Morrison highlights overarching theme of female oppression within the play. Social structures limited women's choices regardless of class.

Toni Morrison shatters the mold of Shakespeare's silent, idealized women. Unlike Desdemona, Virgilia, and Cordelia, Morrison's Desdemona is a woman empowered by voice (Sellers, 2012, p.9). This newfound ability allows her to express not only her aspirations and desires, but also the vulnerabilities and flaws that make her a richly human character. Juxtaposed against Shakespeare's portrayal of Desdemona as a paragon of virtue, Morrison's Desdemona is free to grapple with mistakes and, through them, embark on a journey of self-discovery and understanding of the complexities of the world around her.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the study and answers the questions that are listed in chapter one of this study. It also presents some recommendations that may reveal other issues concerning the adaptations of Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* for further research.

1. To what extent can Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* be an adaptation of Shakespeare's play *Othello* in terms of the theme of race, class, and the representation of females?

Nicole Galland's novel *I, Iago* is a retelling of Shakespeare's play *Othello* from the point of view of the character Iago. The novel is made up of two sections. In the first section, Iago talks about his childhood, explains how he got into the army, and talks about how he met and married his wife, Emilia. The first section ends with Othello choosing Cassio to be his lieutenant instead of Iago. The second section begins with Iago plotting for revenge from Othello and Cassio in order to get the lieutenantcy that he deserves. The second section is where the events are aligned with the events in Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

The writer retells the events in the play from the point of view of Iago, giving readers a reason for his actions and thoughts which were ambiguous in the original play. Nicole Galland used some of the same expressions and words used in the original play and incorporated them in her novel. She also stayed true to the sequence of events of the

original play. This study analyses the novel in comparison with Shakespeare's play based on the themes of race, class, and the representation of females.

To summarize, Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* can be considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* based on the evidence that supports the themes of race, class, and the representation of females. The evidence shows how the novel took the events of the play and retold them from the point of view of Shakespeare's antagonist Iago.

2. To what extent can Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* be an adaptation of Shakespeare's play *Othello* in terms of the theme of race, class, and the representation of females?

Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* sheds light on the female characters of Shakespeare's *Othello*. She gives the characters a place to speak their minds and explain their stories. Morrison's play takes place in the afterlife since the female characters in Shakespeare's play were all murdered. In the afterlife they confront each other and other characters they encountered in their life including Othello himself. Desdemona gets a chance to explain her point of view of her life and confronts Othello as to why he murdered her. She also meets her maid from the past who is a woman of color. She is able to understand her maid's view on her own life. Desdemona also gets a chance to speak with Emilia.

Morrison shows how the characters lived in a patriarchal society and that after death they are no more rules and they are free to express themselves. Toni Morrison's play is considered a sequel to the events of Shakespeare's play where the characters get to apologize to each other and express their honest feelings. The themes of race, class, and the representation of females are analyzed in this study in comparison with Shakespeare's play. Toni Morrison shows each theme in the way the characters interact with each other.

To summarize, the play *Desdemona* is considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* as she further explains the events of the play by giving a voice to the voiceless characters in Shakespeare's play.

3. What are the differences between the two adaptations in terms of the themes of race, class, and the representation of females?

Both literary works, Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*, shed light on ambiguities in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Galland's novel explains the intentions of the character Iago and gives him a way to express all his thoughts and desires while Morrison's play explains the point of view of Desdemona and gives her a voice to finally state how she feels and what she went through.

Galland's novel starts with events that took place long before Shakespeare's play and gives readers a better understanding of the events from the perspective of Iago. It can be considered as a prequel to Shakespeare's play. As stated before, Morrison's play can be considered a sequel to Shakespeare's play as the events take place long after Shakespeare's play.

In conclusion, both literary works are considered adaptations as they stay true to the events of the play *Othello* but at the same time, they are told from the perspective of different characters.

5.2. Recommendations

1. More studies could be done on how Nicole Galland's *I, Iago* and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* are considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*.
2. More studies could be done on Shakespeare's recent adaptations.

3. More studies could be done on how the themes of class, race and representation of women are rewritten in Shakespeare's adaptations.

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