

**Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci**

**Pedagogická fakulta**

**Ústav cizích jazyků**

**Bakalářská práce**

**Monika Škrabalová**

**Updating Shakespeare's *Othello* in Tracy  
Chevalier's *New Boy***

Olomouc 2022

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Petr Anténe, Ph.D.

### **Čestné prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma „Updating Shakespeare’s Othello in Tracy Chevalier’s New Boy” vypracovala samostatně pod vedením Mgr. Petra Anténeho, Ph.D. s využitím pramenů, které jsou uvedeny v bibliografii.

V Prostějově dne 17.4.2022

Podpis .....

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Mgr. Petr Anténe, Ph.D. for the professional guidance, patience, valuable comments and willingness he gave me during the elaboration of the bachelor's thesis. I would also like to thank my family and boyfriend for providing support and patience.

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	6
1 Othello .....	8
1.1 William Shakespeare .....	8
1.2 Work .....	9
1.3 Historical background.....	10
1.4 Plot.....	12
1.5 Character analysis .....	17
2 New Boy.....	19
2.1 Tracy Chevalier .....	19
2.2 Work .....	19
2.3 Historical background.....	20
2.4 Plot.....	21
2.5 Character analysis .....	26
3 Comparison of <i>Othello</i> and <i>New Boy</i> .....	28
3.1 Changes in temporal setting .....	28
3.2 Changes in spatial setting .....	29
3.3 Changes in concept of characters .....	29
Conclusion.....	36
Resumé .....	36
Bibliography.....	39
Annotation.....	42

## **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis approaches the update of Shakespeare's play *Othello* in Tracy Chevalier's novel *New Boy*. The key objectives are to examine how *Othello* differs from *New Boy* and how *Othello* is reflected in *New Boy*. In this case, the qualitative method is used. The comparison was carried out by the interpretation of both books and supplied with the analysis of some related reviews and other relevant secondary sources. The results, which are summarized in the end, show that despite the changes in their temporal and spatial settings, the books have many elements in common.

## Introduction

William Shakespeare is one of the most famous writers of all time. He was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon as one of the eight children. He was educated. As a very young man, he married an elder woman, Anne Hathaway. Soon after the wedding, he moved to London where his career began. He was active during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I., during whose reign England flourished in all directions. His earliest plays are *Henry VI* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. His other prominent works include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello*. His latest work is *The Tempest* which is considered to be a valediction. In 1594 he became a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company. During his work, he created new words such as incarnadine. He wrote comedies, histories and tragedies.

Tracy Chevalier was born in October 1962 in Washington DC. After she got her BA diploma from Oberlin College in Ohio, she moved to London. She still lives there. She worked as a book editor. She became famous after publishing her second novel, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999). She was a part of the Hogarth Shakespeare project for which she wrote the novel *New Boy* (2017).

This Bachelor's thesis will compare the update of William Shakespeare's *Othello* in Tracy Chevalier's *New Boy*. The main aim is to compare these two books and to find out the differences between them and how is *Othello* reflected in *New Boy*.

I chose this topic for many reasons. The first one and the most important is that I am interested in literature and I love reading books. I have also read other plays and comedies by William Shakespeare before as well as *Othello*. Besides I have also read *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier which I really enjoyed. Moreover, from the Hogarth Shakespeare project I have read two more books, *Macbeth* by Jo Nesbo and *Vinegar Girl* by Anne Tyler.

This thesis is purely theoretical and is divided into three main chapters. I will work mainly with my primary sources, which are the play *Othello* written by William Shakespeare and the novel by Tracy Chevalier.

In the first chapter, the writer William Shakespeare will be introduced, together with his life. The main milestones of his life will be mentioned and also the process of him becoming a writer. There will be a description of his successful career in London and a brief presentation of his work. I will also focus on the time in which he was active. Then the story of *Othello* will be summarized and also the development of this main character.

In the second chapter, the writer Tracy Chevalier and her work will be presented briefly. Then the Hogarth Shakespeare project thanks to which she wrote the novel *New Boy* will be described. In the background of the origin of the book, there will be presented the Black is Beautiful movement. Then there will be a section on the content of the novel and a description of the development of the main character.

The third chapter will provide the comparison of these two books regarding the sub-chapters dedicated to changes in a temporal and spatial settings as well as in the concept of characters.

# 1 Othello

## 1.1 William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was probably born on St. George's Day on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. This date is celebrated in England nowadays as traditional. The exact date is a mystery but he was certainly baptized on April 26, 1564. His father was John Shakespeare and his mother was a Mary Arden. He was their oldest child out of eight. His father could probably read but couldn't write very well because it was his wife who signed their documents. When William went to school in 1570, his father got a fine for breaking the law when borrowing money. That was the time they weren't good with money. Shakespeare was aware of the financial situation of his family. (Groom, 2004, p. 3-8)

His parents wanted him to be educated. He studied King's New School in Stratford. It was a school with an emphasis on Latin. The education here was only for boys and for free. The school was not easy. They went there six days a week, they used mechanical memorization, text analysis and revision. There was also a threat of violence. They studied Latin mainly by reading and rehearsing antic theatre plays, mostly comedies by Terence or Plautus. (Groom, 2004, p.9)

There are many empty gaps in his life. His parents wanted him to marry an eight years older Anne Hathaway which he accepted and in 1582 they had a wedding. Three years later he became a father of twins, Hamnet who died, and Judith. Soon after that, he moved to London. The correct reason is unknown. Some sources say it was because of poaching. In any case, he started working in theatre which was called The Theatre in Shoreditch where he started to upgrade some plays. That led him to write his own plays and make money from them. He was very successful and bought New Place at Stratford and put money into land and theatre. He retired enjoying his village life in Stratford. He died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1616 at the age of 52. (Campbell, Masefield, 1956)

He was sensitive and a gentleman. According to one of his friends: "he was, honest and of an open and free nature". (Campbell, Masefield, 1956)

As his last work is considered a play *The Tempest*. We can find there a reflection of his life. No letters written by him have survived and the only written document that is left is the last will he wrote himself. He probably had a complicated relationship with his wife because he



barely mentioned her there. He is buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. (Groom, 2004, s. 46-47)

Otherwise, there are three portraits that can be considered as his genuine portraits - a bust which is on the chancel wall in Stratford Church, an engraving by Martin Droeshout which is on the title page of the *First Folio* and a painting on the panel in Stratford. (Campbell, Masfield, 1956, p.12-18)

## **1.2 Work**

Shakespeare wrote and was interested in literary work for his whole life, but the main milestone was when he moved to London. The reason he decided to leave his hometown is not clear, but it is said he wanted to change his lifestyle and devote himself to his career. He was also friends with young men who were stealing, and William got into trouble because of that and was punished. Instead of being angry, he wrote a ballad about that. In any case, he went to London without money or any relatives. (Greenblatt, 2007, s. 125-126)

His real career started around 1590 in London. Among his earliest plays we know Henry VI, The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Titus Andronicus. (Shakespeare.org,2022)

In 1592, his friend and also a dramatist Robert Green first mentioned William Shakespeare as a member of an intellectual scene in London. (Kuiper, 2013)

It is uncertain what exactly brought him and how did he get into the theatre although it is known that he was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company for performers from 1594. The representatives of this society were the best actors performing in the best theatre, which was the Globe, having the best dramatist, Shakespeare himself. The business grew and succeeded. He even devoted his whole life to it. This is also why he wrote countless plays during his life. (Kuiper, 2013)

Mr. William Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* was published in 1623 as a compendium of his work. Later it was titled the *First Folio* including over 900 pages and it is considered the main root of his work. Shakespeare's colleagues John Heminges and Henry Condell committed this collection to the earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Montgomery. *The Second* and the *Third Folio* were also published. (Kuiper, 2013)

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, books were published by pirates and beggarly people who got the materials and got the manuscripts to be printed. Thomas Thorpe is credited for distributing Shakespeare's

sonnets in 1609. During this time people were also trying to gather stories about him, but the actual biography was chronicled in 1709. (Kuiper, 2013)

In his first period of writing, we can find a poem called *Love's Labour's Lost* which is his first play which he wrote in 1589-1592. It is a play from the young man but the one who knows the theatre and knows how to touch one's soul. (Campbell, Masfield, 1956)

*Titus Andronicus* was the first drama to be published in 1594. (Kuiper, 2013)

Shakespeare operated with the extensive use of the language's expressive ability, borrowing expressions from Latin and European local dialects. He was passionate about neologisms and polyglot wordplay too. He created a lot of new words, such as multitudinous and incarnadine. (Kuiper, 2013)

His plays are often instructive and show us the difficulties we have to face as humans. They are prepared to be acted. He wrote comedies, histories and tragedies. (Shakespeare.org.)

### **1.3 Historical background**

Shakespeare's Drama in England was the result of several centuries of gradual development. Its birthplace is in Greece, in the Classic Drama. However, the drama here does not go beyond minor details. Their effect is to validate the strength of the underlying concepts that underpin and support them. Because of these ideas, it differs from Classic Drama. (Hudson, 2004)

The drama was seen as a mean of spreading the dogma and principles of Christianity. Throughout the time and the changes in people's thinking, Drama prospered. (Hudson, 2004)

Shakespeare was active during the period when the Queen Elizabeth I, from the Tudor dynasty, ruled in England. She ascended to the throne in 1558 after her sister Mary I who was not a great example of the head of state. On the other hand, Elizabeth I frequently referred to herself as a queen and did not want any man to have power over her. That is why right after her coronation she declared that she wants to remain unmarried. During her reign, she truly stayed a virgin queen, but she was aware she is very neat after her mother and used her appearance to blame men to get what she wanted. She presented herself like that as a tactic to become more desired. Many people considered that to be a bad decision because people believed that a woman, even the queen, cannot rule without a man and a woman should give birth to an heir. Nevertheless, the genuine reason she did not want a husband was that the Tudors expected their wives to be subordinate to them. And she was frightened of being exceedingly vulnerable. Her mother was

killed at her father's command when she was a child, therefore her refusal to marry could have its roots there. Under the Tudors, even the smallest violation was punished by death. (Borman, 2017)

Anyway, although Englishmen were nervous about a woman being on the throne, Elizabeth appeared to be well prepared. During her reign, she promoted education, defied palace uprisings made by her brother and she established a strong liberal government. Moreover, even though she was not a Roman Catholic, she established a doctrine of adiaphorism which states that there is a huge variety of indifferent items in religion that can be selected by the government on the basis of pragmatism. Conservative people were stifled by the fact that she was referring to herself as "the supreme governor" and not "the head of the church" and by exchanging the words in the prayer book by more conservative ones. (Kuiper, 2013)

As the number of books increased, by 1640 the majority of men and women were able to read. Public records were spouted in market areas and in local chapels and reading was very frequent. In addition to a large percentage of the population who could get an actual book. There was also a significant increase in the number of new school buildings as a result of the rise in reading. Latin and Introduction to classical civilization were learned there as Tudors did not want children to learn the reading, writing and arithmetic and they saw knowledge of Latin as more efficient. There were also sea cruises taking place at this time. The most known happened in 1497 when John Cabot wanted to sail to China but ended up discovering Cape Breton Island. Sea trades were also important when talking about wool export. (Kuiper, 2013)

The theatre had to deal with a lot of limitations but that changed in 1574 when regular weekday plays were legal and in 1576 the first playhouse called The Theatre was constructed by James Burbage. (Kuiper, 2013)

Theatres in Elizabethan Era were built in a square, circular or octagonal structures. Mostly they had a wooden construction on a stone under-structure. They had three floors. The upper floor and the stage were roofed. People could either stand in the middle under the wide sky or they could sit on the edges. The beginning of the performance was marked by a trumpet. There were no breaks except for the break performers needed or because of diversification of the act. Shakespeare often used a method called sub-plot. While the actors rested, the audience continued to have fun. Entertainers spoke clearly and swiftly. They were dressed in beautiful costumes and performances were accompanied by music and singing. At that time only men

could play. Females were represented by boys. There were only a few coulisses as the aim of the play was to present and celebrate a vision of life. (Campbell, Masefield, 1956)

The Globe Theatre is closely related to The Lord Chamberlains' Men who worked in Shoreditch but in 1598 the theatre was supposed to be demolished. That did not stop them as Richard Burbage and Cuthbert rented a new place and worked on building a new one fast. The conditions of the land were very poor. They build the building in a circle with a rectangular stage and columns looking like marble. A total number of people who could visit it at once was 3,000. Even with inconveniences, they were able to get it done by May 1599. It is called after the figure of Hercules who has a globe on his back. There was also a flag with the Latin motto 'totus mundus agit histrionem', or 'all the world's a playhouse'. (Shakespeare.org)

Shakespeare played a lot of his plays there such as *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear* or *Othello*. Unfortunately, there was a big fire in 1613 and the theatre burned. It was renovated but at that time Shakespeare went into seclusion and moved back to Stratford. Another tragedy happened in 1642 when the theatres were closed and in 1644 the Globe Theatre was torn down and for sale. (Shakespeare.org)

## 1.4 Plot

The full title of this play is *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. The play has five acts. It was written in 1602-1603 after his well-known play *Hamlet*. The story takes place in Italy

### ACT 1

Othello gets married to Desdemona without the permission of her father Brabantio. When he finds out thanks to Roderigo and Iago who tell him, he gets very angry and wants to kill Othello. He comes to Othello and accuses him of engaging his daughter. They are interrupted by the Duke and Senators. The Turkish fleet are near Cyprus. Brabantio tries to complain to the duke about his conviction that Othello charmed his daughter to become his wife. Othello talks about his glorious love for his other half. When Desdemona tells them: "That I did love the Moor to live with him, My downright violence and storm of fortunes May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued." (1.3.283-285). It is done for the duke as they have to solve the attack on Cyprus. The duke wants Othello to get to Cyprus and protect it from the Turks. They are not sure where his new wife will stay during his absence. Her father doesn't want her to be in his house and even proscribes her. Neither does she want to be in his presence, so she decides to go with Othello to Cyprus.

Act 1 ends when Roderigo wants to drown himself but Iago finds him. Roderigo confesses his love to Desdemona. Iago is happy about that. He hates Othello because he nominated Cassio as his lieutenant. This action made Iago bothered because he wanted to be in that position. They associate together and come up with a plan on how to get rid of Cassio and how to win the heart of Desdemona.

## ACT 2

Montano announces that the attack is over. Thanks to a stormy sea the Turkish fleet sank. Cassio's and Othello's ships split up during the storm. Cassio, Iago and Desdemona got safe to the harbour, but there is no message from Othello. Emilia, the wife of Iago, enters. After a while, Othello comes and he is happy about seeing his wife.

Iago tells Roderigo Desdemona is falling in love with Cassio and wants from Roderigo to make Cassio so angry he blows up. Iago also thinks Othello is having an affair with his wife which makes him much more irritated so he wants a tooth for a tooth.

Then comes Herold with a message that the Turkish fleet is completely destroyed and they can feast and celebrate Othello's wedding. Cyprus loves Othello and is its noble king. Cassio promises Othello to look after Iago's night watch, having no clue that Iago wants to get him drunk as Cassio is not used to drinking wine.

They are celebrating and Iago really gets Cassio drunk and they sing English songs. After that Cassio goes to the watch tipsy. Iago seizes the opportunity and slanders to Montana that Cassio drinks every day. Montana wants to tell Othello about this problem, but they are interrupted by the argument between Cassio and Roderigo. Cassio is annoyed because of Roderigo's unwanted reminders. They get into a fight and everybody else joins them. Iago tells Roderigo to leave and to beat a retreat. Othello comes very angry and wants an explanation. Montana is severely wounded. Iago tells it is because of Cassio that he was running after the man with a sword. Othello decides that Cassio cannot work in his services anymore and tells Iago to take care of all the frightened people on the island.

Cassio is destroyed that he lost the good reputation on which he had always relied. Iago tells him he needs to convince Othello. He does not want to do that. He cannot even remember with whom he had the fight and why. He starts to blame the wine and sobers up with rage. Iago won't give up and tells him more lies. Like that the general has his own general- his wife Desdemona. That he should beg her to regain his rank and reputation. Cassio believes him and thinks he is

a good friend who wants to help him. Cassio goes to the bed after a horrible night and Iago is on his way to the guard. During the walk, he is thinking to himself that Desdemona is very kind and would do anything to do a good deed. On the other hand, Moor would do anything for his love and that is why he is a weakling for him because of how much he is devoted to Desdemona. Also, when Cassio pleads with Desdemona, he will whisper in Othello's ears that Desdemona wants Cassio to be Othello's lieutenant so she can have her lover close to her.

His thoughts are interrupted by an angry Roderigo who does not have more money. Iago recommends him to be more patient and wants his wife to talk to Desdemona about Cassio, to speak for him. His plan is that while Cassio will beg Desdemona on his knees, Othello will see it and jealousy will start to devour him.

### ACT 3

In the morning, Cassio meets Iago and his wife. Cassio asks Emilia if he could talk to Desdemona himself and she agrees. Iago says he will take the Moor away so they can have privacy. Desdemona is interceding for Cassio at Othello who is angry at him. He still likes him as a friend and would like to return him his rank. Desdemona is determined to do everything to make sure Cassio and her husband will be friends again. When Cassio sees Othello, he vanishes, but Othello notices him. Desdemona begs him to reconcile with Cassio. Othello promises to talk to him soon. He owes him that because Cassio stood up for Othello during their courtship. Desdemona leaves to share the good news. Othello confesses his love to her for himself.

Iago is surprised by the decision Othello made and asks if Cassio had known about the courtship with Desdemona. Othello replies that from beginning to end. Iago didn't know they knew each other before and that Cassio made Othello a middleman. Iago is confused and detached but says he thinks Cassio is an honest man. Othello can see that it is not true and says: "I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings, As thou dost ruminat, and give thy worst of thoughts The worst of words." (3.3.151-55) He wants him to share his secret. Iago replies that his weakness is to see evil everywhere but he thinks Othello should watch over his wife. After all, she had deceived her father by marrying Othello and pretending to be frightened by him while she was shivering with love. Othello agrees with Iago who is also encouraging him not to rush to return the rank to Cassio.

Othello starts reflecting that Iago is an honest friend and honest and that his wife is cheating on him and starts to curse the marriage. While he is thinking this, Desdemona comes to him and

chases him for lunch. She finds him acting strangely. Othello pretends his forehead hurts. She feels sorry he is not feeling well and drops the scarf he gave her as the first gift which he said she should always have with her. Afterwards, Emilia finds it and remembers her husband wanted her to get him a sample of it so she decides to give it to him. He is very happy about it and wants to put it on Cassio's bed. He had already poisoned Othello with the hint of jealousy but he still doesn't really believe she is unfaithful to him and wants proof. But the anger bursts out of him as he doesn't know what he should believe. Iago tells him that when he spent the night in Cassio's room because he had a bad toothache, Cassio was talking in his sleep to Desdemona and told her to be careful about hiding their love and then took his hand and started kissing it and then screamed: "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!" (3.3.426) Othello believes him and thinks that this dream means he has her in his arms. Iago starts talking about the scarf with a strawberry pattern. Othello replies that he gave one to Desdemona as the first gift. Iago replies that Cassio wiped his beard with it which is another evidence of their having an affair. Othello screams that there will be blood. Iago kneels and hands over his mind and heart to Othello. He promises Cassio will be dead within three days. Othello thinks of killing Desdemona too.

When Desdemona asks Emilia if she had seen her scarf anywhere, she pretends she hasn't. Desdemona is very sad about losing the gift she received from her beloved one and would rather lose a moneybag full of gold and she is glad her husband is not jealous.

When Othello and Desdemona meet, he wants to see the scarf. She tells him she doesn't have it. He makes up that the scarf is a magic one. As long as the woman has it with her, the man will always come back to her. But if she loses it, she will disgust him and he will find another wife. Desdemona panics and starts talking about Cassio which makes him even more furious.

Desdemona complains to Emilia that she has never seen him being jealous. Iago is pretending to be surprised that Othello is angry and Emilia tells jealousy is evil. Desdemona wants to talk to Othello again and there comes Bianca, the mistress of Cassio, who shows up to see why Cassio didn't visit her for a week. She can see he is wearing a scarf which Cassio says has appeared in his room and doesn't know whose it is. He also tells her to go away because he is waiting for a general and it is not desirable for him to see her with her. Bianca begs him to come to her that night.

## ACT 4

Later, Iago digs up that the scarf Othello gave Desdemona is hers and she can do whatever she wants with it and give it to anyone. Othello responds that the honour is also hers. Then Iago says that Cassio flaunted that he was lying with Desdemona. Othello falls to the ground and there comes Cassio who wants to help him. Iago sends him away but tells him he wants to talk to him. Cassio leaves and Othello wakes up. Iago tells him it is better that he knows she is cheating on him rather than think she is chaste. He also tells him Cassio was there and he wants to talk to him. Othello hides. Little does he know that Iago is going to talk about Bianca so Othello misinterprets Cassio's laughter and unintentional gestures. Othello can't hear them but only see Cassio's smile. There comes Bianca who threatens to break up with Cassio and that the scarf he is wearing is someone else's and to come to her house in the evening. Othello can clearly see the scarf and decides to poison Desdemona. He is worried that he will feel spellbound in her presence.

Lodovico, Desdemona and the party enter. Lodovico says greetings from the senators and asks about Cassio. Desdemona tells him about not agreeing with each other because of an unfortunate affair. Lodovico sends Othello back home and the governor will be Cassio. Othello gets even more furious at Desdemona and tells her she belongs to hell and slaps her in the face. Lodovico is surprised and wants him to apologize for exaggerating. Instead, Othello sends her away and invites Lodovico to dinner.

Lodovico opens up to Iago about the Moor's change in behaviour and that he thinks he is going crazy. Iago betrays Othello again by telling him that this happens very often and that it tends to be worse than just a slap. He urges him to watch every move he makes.

Meanwhile, Othello asks Emilia whether she had seen his wife and Cassio together. She replies she did but thinks his wife is honest and faithful. Othello calls for his wife and accuses her of being unfaithful. Desdemona feels heartbroken and calls Iago. He pretends he doesn't know anything again. Emilia swears at the one who tells Othello such things which he trusts. Desdemona begs Iago to put in a good word for her. Iago reassures her that it is just because of the state's worries that Othello is wreaking his anger at her.

After that, they leave for a feast in the honour of the messengers from Venice. Roderigo is angry and Iago comes up with the idea of killing Cassio when he goes from Bianca's place at night. Othello sends Desdemona to bed and asks her to send the chambermaid away. Emilia is surprised and says she regrets that her mistress ever met her husband. Desdemona disagrees



and confides in her that she feels like she is dying. She is talking about her mother Barbara's maid who died with a song on her lips and Desdemona can't get rid of the melody of that song.

## ACT 5

Iago and Roderigo are about to kill Cassio. Iago doesn't care which one of them dies. Roderigo stabs Cassio, but he has a thick coat and stabs Roderigo in return. Othello sees injured Cassio. He thinks it was done by his friend who wanted to avenge him and leaves. Cassio is calling for help so Lodovico and Gratiano come. There is chaos. Roderigo is screaming that he will bleed to death. Iago kills Roderigo. Bianca is there too and is shaking whilst Iago is interrogating her.

When Othello enters the bedroom, Desdemona is sleeping. He kisses her and that wakes her up. He asks her if she had prayed because he doesn't want to kill an unreconciled soul. Desdemona is scared and asks him if the love she feels for him is considered a sin. He blames her for giving Cassio the scarf. Desdemona denies it but he says that Cassio had confessed even to the fact that he had her as a lover and that he is dead anyway because Iago killed him. Desdemona starts to cry and begs him to kill her tomorrow so she could pray. He tells her it is too late and starts to choke her. Suddenly, Emilia starts knocking and screaming about Cassio killing Roderigo. She finds half-dead Desdemona who doesn't admit that her husband did it to her and says she did it herself. While saying that, she dies. Othello confesses to the murder. Emilia says he is a devil. Othello says he knows it is the truth because Iago told him. Emilia defends her husband and starts screaming that the Moor killed his wife. Montano, Gratiano and Iago hear that and they are shocked. Emilia tells the story about the scarf and Iago grabs her. Her last words are that she wants to be buried next to her mistress. Iago leaves. Othello wants to kill Gratiano but injures Iago who comes in with handcuffs. Othello says he did not kill her out of a hatred but out of honour. Then he asks Cassio where he got the scarf. He replies he found it in his room. Everything is explained and Othello stabs himself. During their conversation, we also discover that Desdemona's father is also dead.

### **1.5 Character analysis**

The whole play represents the changes in Othello's behaviour. In the beginning, he is in the deepest love with Desdemona and in the end, he kills her in a rush of jealousy.

He is a black man who is respected in Venice as even the Duke himself chose him to protect Cyprus from Turkish enemies as he is the general of the forces of Venice. Othello is a quite confident, intelligent and sincere young man. On the other hand, he is an outsider who is aware

of his middle age, the life of a soldier and his origin which makes him anxious in society. Even though he got a higher position in the society where he feels civilized and comfortable, he knows that people talk about him because of his different colour of skin.

When he spends time at senator Brabantio's house, his daughter Desdemona is curious about his life. She is astonished that he survived all the terrible things that happened to him and despite that became so known in Venice. They fall in love with each other and decide to get married in secret. He is very happy and in deep love with Desdemona. He looks up to Desdemona as a guardian who saved him with her adoration.

Because this is his first real love, he is inexperienced and that is the reason why he believed Iago who reshapes step by step his love into hate. It is easy for Iago to give Othello a hint that Desdemona is in love with Cassio. In the beginning, Othello's love is unbreakable but after a few hints from Iago's mouth he becomes more and more jealous and cold-hearted toward his soulmate. The suspicions drive his sanity, and he becomes blind with jealousy. Iago makes him believe Desdemona betrayed him. He acts in affect which will lead to the fact that he chokes Desdemona.

However, in the end, he is aware he made a horrible mistake by killing the best out of him and is very sorry and decides to die with his love. "I kissed thee ere I killed thee, no way but this, Killing myself, to die upon a kiss." (5.2.359-360).

The story did not have to end with death. Even though Othello loved Desdemona and her supposed betrayal destroyed him, he trusted only one man. If he had spoken to Emilia, who was Desdemona's friend, he would have known the truth. The tragic ending was caused also by the fact that Emilia could have given back the scarf to Desdemona and not to her husband.

## 2 New Boy

### 2.1 Tracy Chevalier

Tracy Chevalier is a contemporary British- American writer who was born in October 1962 in Washington DC. She moved to London in 1984 after her studies at Oberlin College in Ohio where she studied English. One of her first jobs was as a reference book editor which seems to be very useful for her now as she needed to learn the analysis and the process of editing in writing. She also practiced this experience during her master's degree at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. She became a full-time writer after the success of her second published book. (Chevalier, 2019)

### 2.2 Work

She has written 10 novels so far. She received a WH Smith Fresh Talent award in 1997 after publishing her first book *The Virgin Blue* which she had written during her studies. The book is a parallel telling of two stories in which we can experience living in the French countryside during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Soon she became famous after publicizing her second book *Girl with a Pearl Earring* in 1999. It is a story of a young girl who becomes a maid of Mr. Johannes Vermeer, who inspired her with his poster. The next book she wrote is called *Falling Angels* which was published in 2001. It is about two working-class households who know each other and have their deceased in the same cemetery. Her third book called *The Lady and the Unicorn* from 2003 is also about art. She pays close attention to in-depth research, which she uses while describing the production of tapestry and interpreting the flowers which created the background of the tapestries. Her other books are *Burning Bright*, *Remarkable Creatures*, *The Last Runaway*, *At the Edge of the Orchard* and *A Single Thread* published in 2019. (Thursfield, 2006)

She was granted several awards, such as Barnes and Noble Discover Award in 2000, in 2008 Fellow, the Royal Society of Literature, in 2013 Ohioana Book Award and the Richard and Judy Book Club book both for *The Last Runaway*.

Tracy Chevalier is part of the Hogarth Shakespeare project. The project was created for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death which is in 2016. There was a great interest in participating. Award-winning writers were supposed to choose one of almost forty Shakespeare's plays and rewrite it. Many writers got inspired by Shakespeare, for example, Jane Smiley in her novel *A Thousand Acres*. The first writer who accepted this offer was

Jeanette Winterson who immediately chose *The Winter's Tale*. Her remake is called *The Gap of Time*. It is about a baker and his wife who are supposed to cheat on him. The themes of love and disaffection are kept there. Other authors representing this arrangement are Margaret Atwood who remake *The Tempest* as *Hag-Seed* which she placed in jail. Howard Jacobson chose *The Merchant of Venice*, Anne Tyler *The Taming of the Shrew*, Edward St. Aubyn, who is known for his series *Patrick Melrose*, picked out rewriting *King Lear* and Jo Nesbo, a well-known Nordic writer who is known for his book series with the main character Harry Hole chose to update *Macbeth*. (Alter, 2015)

### **2.3 Historical background**

*New Boy* belongs to Young Adult Literature which changed in the past few years. The origin of YA literature is estimated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the term Bildungsroman appeared in Germany. (Kitchener, 2017). The term young adult is hard to comprehend. It can be defined as the literature which is chosen to be read or produced especially for them. Joan K. Kaywell (2001) found some definitions that can be used with the term young adult, kids between 10-21, adolescents who are 12 to 18, or between the ages of 12 and 22. (Kaywell, 2001, p. 325).

The term young adult literature is sometimes clarified by the following elements: the protagonist is a teenager who tells a story that is related to him. The genre is adapted to the age category and does not necessarily have a happy ending. There is also an obvious omission of adults. The topics are related to maturing. (Cole, 2009)

Themes can be intertwined in all spheres, in present, past or future. Topics such as drugs, sex, racism or romance can be interpreted here, but also paranormal phenomena such as vampires in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga*. (Peterson, 2018)

As the representative of this category is stated *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D.Salinger from 1951 which was written before this categorization as well as *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok. (Cole, 2009)

At a turning point of the millennium, there were many changes in the concept of young adult literature due to migration, which at the time expanded. The writers began to include in their stories the protagonists of other racial cultures. (Cart, 2010)

Adolescents grow up faster than they did three decades ago and therefore there are more cultivated. They also must deal with more problems such as eating disorders, drugs and AIDS, which their ancestors experienced at a later age. We also must take individuality into account.

(Butcher, Hinton, 2009) On the other hand, nowadays, young people often move back home to their parent's house after graduation as it is not common to move out, start a family and stand on their own feet financially at a young age. (Cart, 2010)

Some authors also point out the fact that young adult literature should be for people from eighteen to twenty-five and for twelve to eighteen years old readers it should be called teen. (Cart, 2010)

Young Adult literature is lately read by adults as well. It is because we are still maturing. Adults have gone through this phenomenon and they fantasize about it. The books are also popular because the main characters experience their first times in the story and adults often dream about their first times. Readers do not try to escape but search for their own experiences and to feel those feelings once again. (Kitchener, 2017)

There are some differences between male and female readers. The cover of the book is more important for boys who also enjoy reading about sports, fantasy and comic books more than girls. Young ladies are therefore more interested in fiction and reading in their free time. (Wilhelm, 2001 cited by Butcher, Hinton, 2009)

## **2.4 Plot**

The whole story is set in 1974 in Washington's residential area in a suburban elementary school. The book is divided into five parts as *Othello* by William Shakespeare is divided into five acts. Before every part, there are poems that represent what will happen next.

It seems to be just a regular day when an eleven-year-old Dee goes to school. She does not have enough time to join her classmates to jump Double Dutch, so she went to join a class line near their teacher. And at that very moment, she notices a new boy.

She could notice right away that he was not like the other boys in her class. He was wearing more formal clothing almost like a uniform. She noted the different colour of his skin. It reminds her of the colour of the bear she saw at the ZOO. She could hear teachers talking about him. Mr. Brabant said he was from Guinea or Nigeria. Miss Lode was curious about whether or not he is in her class and if they should tell the kids about him being different. Mr. Brabant did not agree as the boy does not need any special treatment just because he is black. They can see Dee is listening to them and sent her to take the ropes. She runs to her friends Mimi and Blanca who are the best in jumping double Dutch.

The girls spot the new boy too. Dee tells them he is from Nigeria. Mimi is shocked that there is a black boy in their school. Blanca was surprised he is in their class and dared Dee to touch him. She does not pay attention to her and looks at him. She took a note that he has a beautifully shaped head which is smooth and perfectly formed and that he also has a short haircut. Although Washington DC is known as Chocolate City, she did not see a lot of black people. Only when she went downtown or on the TV when she was over at Mimi's house. Her mother was very strict about it as well as other things. She had to dress up as her mother wanted, she had to go straight home after school, even at a lunch break. Her mother also does not like to leave the house.

Mr. Brabant tells Dee she will look after their new classmate and show him where is the cafeteria or bathroom and also to help him in the class. Her friends are shocked that he chose her even though she is the teacher's pet. Everyone was looking at them. She pretends she did not notice and saw a black woman standing near the playground wearing a dress made out of bright fabric and a coat which was strange because it was early May. The watching was interrupted by the boy who explained to her she is controlling him because she thinks he does not know how to be a new boy even though this is his fourth school. That is shocking for Dee because she had lived in the same house, went to the same school and have the same friends all her life. She asks him where he is from and he tells her he is from Ghana. She tries to make an impression on him and asks if his mother wore a dashiki. He replies that dashikis are shirts that men wear and that it was a fabric from his country called kente cloth. He introduces himself as Osei. She does not know how to pronounce it so he tells her to call him O. His sister calls him like that sometimes. In his language Osei means noble. She tells him her name is Dee, short for Daniela.

Even Ian sees the new boy right away when he is bullying other kids on the merry-go-round. He always notices anyone new who enters his territory which is the playground. He is not as tall, fast or popular as Casper but he is the shrewdest. For example, he knows who will win in a fight and takes candy for his guesses which he sells. He is the same as his brothers. He always tries to find a profit in things. Last time when it was raining, he asked his teacher, Miss Lode, if he could put down the flag and he chose Mimi to help him. As they were folding the flag so it is not wet, he kissed her and asked her if she will go out with him. She agreed. Now he did not like the new boy because of how he laughed with Dee when she handed him the jump ropes. But he remembered the phrase his father told him: "Keep your friends close, your enemies closer." (Chevalier, 2017, p.24) and then he went to have a chit chat with him.

Rod, who thought Ian is his best friend cried about the new boy talking to Dee because he cannot go out with her now. Even O starts talking to Mimi which Ian does not like.

Meanwhile, Mimi is worried about Ian. She is not sure whether or not she is happy she goes with him. So, she came up with a plan for how to break up with him. She tells him at the end of the school day and tomorrow she is going to pretend she is sick. After the weekend Ian will not be angry anymore. She also does not like the attention the new boy is getting.

Osei is looking around the playground. He wants to have an ally. The best one would be another black boy which is unlikely. Over time he learned to hide his thoughts. He had known everything he was experiencing like a string of white kids, sizing up, bell ringing, teachers who are not happy he is in their class. But not her. He felt her presence. She was beautiful to him and he was fascinated by her blonde hair. He thought to himself “she was there to make things better” (Chevalier, 2017, p. 33) and she did at least for him. He trusted her.

Embarrassed, he told her about the pencil case with strawberries on it which his mother gave him because they could not find his. This one belongs to his sister Sisi who does not use it anymore. Dee swapped it with him for hers with Snoopy on it. Every girl liked that pencil case running their fingers around each strawberry. He starts thinking about his sister. How she changed. They used to talk about their problems in school and they knew each other’s secrets. Now she does not have time for him and meets people who say that black is beautiful.

Blanca saw them swapping the pencil cases and could not believe it. Mimi asks her about it and she tells her it is true and starts talking about him a lot which makes Mimi irritated and says that he is black and different. Dee gets angry about Mimi accusing O.

Ian chooses O to play kickball in his team. Osei feels the need to show he is good as they think about him because he is black and kicks the ball far beyond the gate. He does not know the game is over because only teachers can bring the ball back. Dee runs towards him and hugs him. Everyone is shocked that she touched him. Both of them pretend they do not hear them and go under the trees, which is the place where boys and girls meet to hang out. They are talking about New York where O lived and how the people were not nice to his family. Their doorman whistled to the other one as O was passing by as if they were waiting for him to do something bad. They also were not able to take a taxi. Then they talk about Ghana. After a while, she touched his head and hair. They started to touch each other while the teacher is whistling as a sign that they are doing something they should not do. Mr. Brabant accused O that he cannot touch others inappropriately and that maybe it is normal where he comes from

but not here. He also sent Dee inside to do math worksheets. She had never been suspended or disciplined like this. Everyone is waiting to see what happens to Osei. Mr. Brabant looked lost. He tells Miss Lode what happened and that seeing his hand on her made him sick. Rod says to Ian that it made him sick too. Ian seizes the opportunity and says O will touch every girl like that. Rod wants to do something about it. Ian thinks about turning him against her and so break them up. As he is walking to the classroom, he sees Dee and Casper chatting and to him they seem like in love. And that gives him a plan.

During the lunch break, Ian goes to Mimi and asks her if she was avoiding him. She tells him she has a headache. He needs her to make a favour for him. He asks her whether Casper gave Dee anything and if so, he needs to get it for him. She goes to the bathroom and along the way she notices Dee kissing O and that her pencil case fell to the ground. She picks it up and looks into it. She can see there a piece of paper with the address and number of O. At the cafeteria O does not know where to sit. Then he sees Ian and Casper waving at him. He pretends he does not see Ian and goes to sit next to Casper. After a while, Blanca comes and they go to the playground where Ian begins with his plan. He can see Dee coming back with strawberries in her hand. She starts to feed Casper. When O sees that it makes him angry. Ian tells him that it must be strawberries that her mother grows and that are so sweet but he has not tasted them yet. He also says Casper always gets what he wants and that the girls are crazy about him. O proves he is a nice person. Ian tells him he is nice to him because he wants to date Dee. He defends that she is going with him. Ian agrees but says it is strange that she did not go to him right away and he should watch out for Casper. During their conversation, Dee notices them and runs after them. She wants to give O a strawberry because she does not know if they grow them in Ghana. He does not want to taste it at first but then changes his mind and takes one and admits that they are very tasty and asks in surprise if her mother really grows them. Then Dee takes him under the trees. Meanwhile, Rod joins Ian and says he does not like how his plan works out. Ian sends Rod to Casper to tell him something that will make him hit him. Rod does not understand why and Ian explains that O has to believe Dee is playing it both ways. She will feel sorry for Casper and talk about him a lot and O will be angry about it. Rod agrees and goes to Casper to whisper something to him. Casper hits him and the fight begins. Blanca starts screaming and crying. Rod said she is dirty and let Casper go all the way with her. Blanca also notices that Dee let her hair down which she explains by saying O wanted to touch it.

Casper is suspended. O does not return the smile Dee gave him and she thinks it is because he is worried about Casper and starts defending him. That makes O even angrier and wonder why



he would care if he is not a friend of his but of her. Then they go to a class where Dee cannot find her case and tell O she must have forgotten it at home. The truth is she would never show the case to her mother.

In the afternoon Mimi takes Ian aside to tell him she has got something for him. She tells him that it is Osei's and that he gave it to Dee. Before she gives it to him, she tells him she does not want to go out with him anymore. And she will give it to him only if he leaves her alone and will not say anything bad about her. He agrees lying and she gives it to him. Mimi feels better and her headache is enabled.

Ian decides to give the pencil case to Blanca as a secret gift from Casper. She is very happy about it and likes it a lot and wants to show it to other girls. He tells her it is a secret and leaves. Ian tells O that Casper has to be crazy about Blanca as he gives her such gifts and that he did not think Blanca is a strawberry girl. That catches O's attention. Ian points out to Blanca who is sitting and playing with the case. At this moment he knows he poisoned him with jealousy. O was slow to get angry as his father taught him that anger is the easy option so he is surprised at how angry he suddenly felt. The last drop for him was to see the pencil case in Blanca's hands.

Dee comes to him but he sends her away and shoves her hard. She falls crashing her head on the asphalt. Mimi saw that and runs to her. Dee opens her eyes and tells her she is ok. Mimi starts shouting at Osei. But when Miss Lode comes to them, Dee tells Osei did not do anything and that she tripped and he only tried to catch her. The teacher does not believe her but sends her to a nurse. Mr. Brabant announces that "this school is not ready for a black boy" (Chevalier, 2017, p. 148) and that "trouble always comes in threes." (Chevalier, 2017, p. 148)

Mimi feels guilty for giving Ian that pencil case and betraying Dee. She asks her about what is wrong and what happened. Dee opens up to her that she does not know why is O angry at her. Mimi tells her about breaking up with Ian. Dee also stands up for O that he did not mean to hurt her. Then the nurse sends Mimi back to class and treats Dee who came back to class later. O does not even look at her. They had an art class and they were creating a card for their mothers. O made a strawberry one for her. Dee made one with blueberries even though her mother did not like them and she felt guilty that she copies his idea.

At the end of class, he tells her to meet him on the playground. Before that, she rushed to Lost and Found where she heard teachers talking about O. Mrs. Duke was talking to his mother. Then they were talking about Dee and that they know he pushed her.

In the meantime, Ian is having a conversation with O about Rod liking Dee. O is surprised. He wanted to tell Dee he is not angry anymore but now he feels like he cannot trust her. Ian digs deeper and asks him why Dee lied to him about the pencil case. As he sees Dee, he leaves. O tells her to look at Blanca's backpack. She does not know how she got the pencil case. She tells him she did not want to upset him. She wants to ask Blanca where she got it. But O says he knows Casper gave it to her and accuses her of two-timing him and that Ian told him everything. Dee responds he cannot trust Ian and that Casper is with Blanca. He wants to grab her hand, but she is already going down. He starts screaming at her not to walk away from him. She is not listening to him and he calls her a whore. Everybody hears it. He also accuses her of wanting to go all the way with him as she did with Casper. Dee runs out of the playground while she is crying. Rod runs to catch her, but she is too fast. O thinks to himself that black is beautiful as his sister Sisi told him many times. Ian throws Mimi off the climbing frame. Kids gather around her. Her head hurts and she cannot feel anything else. Mimi asks O about the pencil case. Casper is shocked and says he did not give it to Blanca and he is not going with Dee. Ian tries to shut her down but she is not listening to him. She confesses she gave it to Ian rather than give it back to Dee because she wanted to break up with him. O asks Ian why he did that and he answers that because he can. Mimi says it is all Ian's fault. There comes Mr. Brabant who thinks Osei did it to Mimi and calls him a nigger. Miss Lode warns him that they do not use this language and that he should calm down. O screams that black is beautiful while having his hand clenched into fist. He jumped down and joined wounded Mimi.

## **2.5 Character analysis**

Osei Kokote is an eleven-year-old black boy. They call him O. He comes from Ghana in Africa. His father is a diplomat and that is why his family is often moving. The school in Washington DC is his fourth one in the past six years. He has got an older sister. The two of them used to have a nice relationship, but as she was maturing, she started losing interest in spending time with him. She started seeing other black people who promoted the cultural movement Black is beautiful.

Osei seems to be used to being a new boy. He is reconciled with the fact that he is the only black kid in the school, that other kids and even teachers are suspicious of him and that most of them are not happy he is there. Otherwise, he is a smart, open-hearted boy.

He immediately falls in love with Dee, a girl in his new school. Her name is Daniela, but everyone calls her Dee. He finds it nice that both of them are called by a letter. She treats him

very nicely and does not judge him according to the colour of his skin. She is as inquisitive as is he. He likes her bright blonde hair. He opened his heart to her about his life and how people saw him and with him having a pencil case with strawberries which he is embarrassed about. She did not laugh at him, but she swapped it with him instead. The feeling he had for her was new to him, but he liked it. During the day his feeling changed. As Ian gave him more and more impulses to be jealous, his anger was increasing. He is not hot-tempered and does not get angry easily which is what his father taught him.

He also meets Mimi and Blanca, who are shocked he is in the class with them and Mimi is jealous because she is the best friend of Dee and now, she only talks about him.

Then he meets Ian. O thinks he is his friend, but Ian does not like him and wants him to break up with Dee. He even leads his classmate Rod against him as he would like to date Dee and therefore wants to get rid of him as well. Ian starts making up that Dee is in love with Casper who is also their classmate. Dee and Casper are good friends and he liked Blanca. Then Mimi gives him the pencil case O gave to Dee as a pass to break up with him. Ian uses the pencil case as bait and makes O very jealous and so succeeds in his plan.

His feelings for Dee and his personality change while Ian gives him more and more reason to be malicious. He is no longer self-confident and starts to have doubts about Dee. He does not know if he can trust her. He thinks she wants to be with Casper and that she only takes advantage of him and betrays his trust.

There is also a clear pressure on his person in the form of racism, whether from classmates or teachers. Even though he is used to being a new boy, mostly the only black one, the fact that he feels used by the person who seemed to accept him, is very painful for him. That is followed by the fact that in the end, his dreams fall apart and he is very upset, he repeats the phrase “black is beautiful.”

### 3 Comparison of *Othello* and *New Boy*

#### 3.1 Changes in temporal setting

The story of *Othello* takes place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century over a period of several days, while the story of *Osei* takes place on a single day in May in 1970s. During this time the Black is Beautiful movement in America spread. The founder Ron Karenga and other theorists stressed the need for art for their community and its well-being. This movement is also inspired by a persistent exploration of African heritage and cultures and its appreciation of peculiarity in food, music, clothing or beauty. (Witonsky, 2019)

An effort for equality has deep roots. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Americans were guided mainly by what a person looked like, and therefore by their skin colour, he had which they associated with the human character. Even during the emancipation in 1865, black people were mostly slaves. (Camp, 2015)

The turning point in racism in America was concerned with issues of race and beauty. The white race was, according to Americans, a symbol of beauty. Europeans attributed themselves to the effigies of the Greek gods, while Africans were considered the opposite. This changed at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Americans stopped considering the issue of skin as the primary marker of racial difference, focusing on other elements such as the jaws. Until then, the black colour of the skin in America was a symbol of slaves. Beauty became a major factor during the Civil Rights and the Black is Beautiful movement in 1954-1978 when black Americans initiated the movement to gain economic and civil rights. In the sixties and seventies, the slogan Black is Beautiful expanded, which also represented the aversion to straight hair and wearing suits and a motivation to awaken one's own genuineness. Afro-Americans were not ashamed of their appearance. On the contrary, they showed their pride in their appearance and thus accepted themselves. Much of this disagreement between white and black people concerned hair which white Americans repelled and saw as something untidy. But we must not forget the skin colour, which meant a huge problem and a wave of condemnation. (Camp, 2015)

In 1970 a black writer Toni Morrison published the novel *The Bluest Eye* which tells a story about a black girl who wanted to have blue eyes as her doll and to feel love. This novel is a representation of the idea of the white race. (Camp, 2015)

We still encounter this problem now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when, for example, there is a greater representation of white actors on television than the black ones. This phenomenon is caused by

ideas of beauty and ugliness. In order for a change to take place, there would have to be changes in American ideas as well. (Camp, 2015)

### **3.2 Changes in spatial setting**

*Othello* takes place in Venice and Cyprus in multiple places, such as a saloon, bedroom, hall, outside the street and even partially at sea. Choosing these places makes the story more dynamic and varied. Whereas the story of *New Boy* happens only in the school in Washington DC. The main places where the story takes place at school are its playground, classroom and cafeteria. The location is understandable because the school is where children spend most of their time. Related to this is the fact that teachers also play a very important role in creating the atmosphere of the story.

The school playground plays a very important role in the story. It is a place belonging to Ian who guards it and has an overview of who will enter. The moment he sees a new classmate on the field, he feels a baseless fear that Osei will take him away from his territory.

On the other hand, in the play *Othello*, Iago admits his unfounded hatred of the Moor, but there are some obvious reasons that led him to do so. Namely because Othello promoted Cassio instead of him or because Othello was supposed to have an affair with his wife. The author of the review (Elle Thinks, 2017) devalues Chevalier's decision to make Ian act in a paranoia. This may be caused by him being just a child who acts unreasonably. Such a young person is not yet aware of the possible consequences that his behaviour can cause.

### **3.3 Changes in concept of characters**

There are some obvious similarities in the concept of characters, even the names in *New Boy* are similar to Shakespeare's model. The characters' behaviour is quite similar, although we can find some differences there. As an example, Othello is a respected citizen and the people in Venice accepted him. Whereas Osei in Tracy Chevalier's novel is an eleven-years-old schoolboy who is aware of being disadvantaged due to being black.

Another one is the age gap between Othello and Desdemona. Othello is in his middle age whereas Desdemona is around 20-years-old as she can be married without her father's consent but she is not as old as her husband. However, as classmates, Osei and Dee are the same age.

There is also a resemblance in the relationship between Othello and Desdemona and between Osei and Dee. Although the passion between Othello and Desdemona is not projected there as

distinctly, there is evident a certain sense of belonging, love and understanding. Desdemona's devotion and perseverance are illustrated for example in (4.3.18-20) when she says: "My love doth so approve him, That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns- Prithee, unpin me,- have grace and favor in them." O was immediately fascinated by Dee and very soon an intimate bond arose between them. Dee was stunned by O. She was amazed by his skin colour and features. This particular desire to get to know each other was felt by O too. He was also amazed by her blond hair. On that day, she had them braided into two plaits, and they smelled like flowers. He was familiar with the scent because her sister bought the same shampoo even though she could not use it. His hair was unruly and he had to apply special oils to contain it. This was very new for Dee and she was astonished by that information. His mother forced him to get a haircut, so that is why he does not have Afro which is popular and expected of blacks. Overall, the author paid a lot of attention to hair and they play a big role in the story, not just in describing the development of the relationship of the main characters. Other examples are when Dee's classmate is described as having "straight mousy-brown hair, with carefully trimmed bangs crossing her forehead" (Chevalier, 2017, p. 40) or the following description of Casper: "his easy grin, combined with his wavy shoulder-length blond hair and sky-blue eyes, made him by far the best-looking boy on the playground." (Chevalier, 2017, p. 47) There is a frequent description of them talking near the playground during the break and the moment when Dee dissolved her braids because of Osei's curiosity, which was noticed by the teacher Brabant who was not happy about it and her friend Mimi had to braid them again to her. The teacher was afraid about the reaction of Dee's mother.

Dee's mother is authoritarian and strict. She does not leave the house much and expects Dee to behave appropriately. For example, Dee had to be suitably and neatly dressed, or she had to go home during the lunch break and she had to go straight home after school ended. Her mother also did not like when Dee invited a friend to their house and she did not allow her daughter to watch television shows where African Americans sing or dance. Dee could watch these shows only at her friend's Mimi house whose parents were milder in this way. The relationship with her father is not mentioned much. He seems to work a lot and Dee wants to make him happy.

In a submission to Othello's play, Desdemona had a father who was opposed to his daughter's and Othello's relationship. He loved Othello and respected him, even invited Othello to their house and listened to Othello's stories and battle experiences. Othello says: "her father loved me; oft invited me; still question'd me the story of my life." (1.3.128-129) These feelings passed and Brabantio wants Othello send to the dungeon. He thinks he deceived his daughter because

she did not want to get married and rejected all the suitors who proposed to her. To that Othello defends himself by saying that Desdemona has fallen in love with him because of his danger and he has fallen in love with her because of her compassions. When Brabantio clues in about their marriage, he announced that she is dead to him “she is abus’d, stol’n from me, and corrupted by spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.” (1.3.60-61) Later he even disinherits his daughter.

Othello’s family is not mentioned in the book. The reason is that he was removed from his family at a young age to concentrate on becoming a soldier. Since the end of the training, he travelled and participated in wars which guaranteed him a good reputation.

On the other hand, Osei’s mother was worried about him fitting into his new environment. She also accompanies him to the school on his first day. His father was a diplomat who had to move places a lot. He tried to raise him as a good man. But he was also self-centred. He liked to talk about himself, how was his day, and how hard it was to fit in a new job, but he did not ask how the day of his son or his family was. Through that Osei learned to appreciate elders and not to ask them questions. O also had a sister with whom they gradually became estranged from each other. The two of them were very close to each other when they were younger. She protected her little brother and defended him in the school from bullying, which they chose not to tell their parents so they do not give them more worries. They mutually covered up when someone in school stole or destroyed something from them or did something bad to them. But when she advanced to the next year, everything changed. She was not talking to him or their parents. She was talking over the phone with her friends only. When O came to her room to see her, she sent him away. His mother attributed that to growing up. When they moved to New York, she started meeting people who were also Afro- Americans and slowly started promoting Black power. His mother also gave him her pencil case with strawberries which caused the tragedy.

In *Othello*, Roderigo is portrayed as a man who is secretly in love with Desdemona and wants to win her heart. That is why he teams up with Iago and wants to take an act of revenge on him. He also buys gifts for Desdemona and even on Iago’s instigation, attacks Cassio when they set up a trap for him that wakes up jealousy in Othello. However, Cassio is not interested in having a relationship with Desdemona. In particular, because he is a friend of Othello and helps them hide their relationship. He also has a girlfriend, Bianca.

In the novel, the character of Cassio is transformed into a boy named Casper, who is in a relationship with Blanca who is a friend of Dee. He is a good, popular and handsome boy with

whom everyone wants to be friends with. He also starts talking to O. He is a friend of Dee which Ian uses as well as Casper's and Blanca's relationship to make O jealous.

When comparing Mimi and Emilia they have some similar signs but different intentions. Both of them are girlfriends of the tyrant Ian and Iago. They are also good friends with Dee or Desdemona. The difference is that Mimi wants to get out of Ian's clutches and break up with him because she is not happy with him. But she is afraid of him taking revenge on her. That is why she will use the lost pencil case and give it to him as a guarantee that they will break up and he will leave her alone. While Emilia gives her husband Desdemona's lost scarf because he asked her to and she loves him. Neither of them realizes how can this innocent act go down. When comparing Othello's and Osei's relationship with these characters, Othello has a deeper connection to Emilia than Osei has with Mimi. This connection can be seen when he confides in her saying: "She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell: 'Twas I that kill'd her." (5.2.129-130) That is probably due to the fact that Emilia is not only Desdemona's friend but also her maid and they know each other longer. Mimi was also sceptical about the relationship between Dee and O and she felt lonely, useless and a bit jealous of O.

Teachers also play a very important role in the story of *New Boy*. Teacher Brabant is against having blacks in their school from the very beginning. When students were forming lines before lessons, he tells his colleague, Mrs. Lode, that their school is not ready to have black people there. Throughout the story, his hatred for O and his race can be felt. When he sees O touching Dee's hair, he gets very angry and punishes them and declares that he felt sick when he saw a black man touching a white woman. He even punishes Dee because of this act even though she is Mr. B's pet as her classmates say. At the end, when Ian throws Mimi off the climbing frame, he cannot stand it anymore and shouts at Osei: "Get down from there, nigger!" (Chevalier, 2017, p. 187), which makes his racism very clear.

On the other hand, Miss Lode was a younger teacher whose habit was to touch her earrings. She had short blonde hair and she dressed pleasingly and colourful. She also watched and imitated Mr. Brabant in order to learn how to be a better teacher. Children also called her Cry Baby Lody because she cried in the classroom twice. Otherwise, she tried to be nice to O, for example, before the school started, she wanted to introduce the new boy, but Mr. Brabant said no and that he does not need a special approach just because he is black. She also explained to Osei that students do not have to call their teachers 'sir' or 'ma'am' but to call them by their names. She probably has not met a lot of black people, because she was amazed when her colleague told her he met many of them. She was present when O pushed Dee, who then fell



and hit her head. She was probably afraid of Ian, or at least he thought so, which he used on the playground after lessons. He knew she would be reading a book as she always did. When she saw Ian pushing Mimi off the climbing frame, she started to panic and cry and sent other children for Mr. Brabant. Throughout the whole story, she is trying to stand up for O and moderate Mr. Brabant with his expressions. She was also the one who begged O not to jump.

Both of the stories are about disloyalty which in *Othello* is represented by Iago and in *New Boy* by Ian who wants to split up Osei and Dee. However, there are some transformations mainly in the political background when referring to Osei's sister Sisi who is promoting the black movement. Osei stops seeing her as the very close person she was to him previously and feels that they are alienating. Sisi is greatly influenced by the ideas of commission to the black power which affects her brother as well. He was feeling isolated and lonely which contributed to his ending. (Allfrey, 2017). The author of the review says that she, "found it difficult to believe that I was reading the true lives of 11-year-olds", which seems to be true. Also summarizing the whole story in one day, even less than that, can be seen as a drawback. The author (Allfrey, 2017) also stated that the observation of the template is a bit unsuccessful and that the characters should be more described there as well as their evolution.

As mentioned in the review (McCrum, 2017), Tracy Chevalier transformed *Othello* into a school-age boy, therefore, the ideas of marriage and passion are missing. The story focuses primarily on the character Osei and how he manages to be an outsider. That seems to be true. It is a story about two young-age pupils who do not and even could not experience the passion two adult people feel.

The author of the review (Elle Thinks, 2017) sees some issues with the adaptation of *Othello*. In contrast to Margaret Atwood's book the *Hag-Seed*, which she describes as the most successful one of all books published in the Hogarth Shakespeare project, mainly because she sincerely tries to adapt the story to the present using emotions and the structure of the plot used by Shakespeare himself.

The author (Elle Thinks, 2017) also does not like the selection of a place where the story is set or that the main characters are such young children and lastly that the whole story is about the new boy's skin colour. *Othello* was a successful and respected man who was married to a much younger woman, but also who was aware of his skin colour. In the case of *Othello*, the signification 'Moor' does not mean an insult to his personality, but a simple salutation meaning difference. The reason why Chevalier puts such importance on this issue is the fact that it is

well known that Othello is a story about a black man. Due to this, she thinks, the character Sisi, who is a sister of Osei, and her fascination and promotion of the 'Black is Power' and 'Black is Beautiful' movement was created. In Shakespeare's play, Othello does not have any parents or sisters. This character is created mainly for the political reason.

Another problem, according to her (Elle Thinks, 2017), is the illustration of the character Ian. Ian sees O as a possible threat to his removal from the throne, which is the playground, which would correspond to the mind of an 11-years-old child. In the sense of the story, it unfortunately does not make a sense. In order to provide such story, O would have to have power over Ian for some time before the actual story happens. At the same time, O would have to owe him something. Which is not mentioned in the novel due to the fact that the story takes place in one day. That is why the story slowly becomes completely different from the original. Moreover, Iago has always only taken advantage of the situation and left the result to chance. He was lucky that everything was on his side. But Ian plans everything and wants Dee and Osei split up as well as to have Mimi just for himself and also to cut off O in every way, which is clearly not the case in Shakespeare's tragedy. Planning the destruction is shown for example when Mimi snatched the pencil case Dee got from Osei and wondered how could he hurt him, "it would be much more useful in stirring things up out on the playground rather than exciting him in the cloakroom." (Chevalier, 2017, p. 133) The fixation to the playground is obvious there too.

The author of the review (Elle Thinks, 2017) can also see the problem in Chevalier's automatic posture of the plot while her own decision about the characteristics and motive of the story. The fact that Dee, in full named Daniela Benedetti, has Italian roots, which does not create a dynamic love between her and Osei as it was in the case of Othello and Desdemona, is a difficulty for her too.

This review (Elle Thinks, 2017) does not evaluate Tracy Chevalier's final work very positively, but it seems to be very reasonable. In my opinion, creating a whole new character in the form of the main character, Osei's sister, Sisi, was somewhat useless. It is obvious that she influenced her brother in many aspects, for example, by starting to avoid him, but this is a common phenomenon in the relationship of siblings, especially when there is an obvious age gap. Other than that, she influenced him by promoting anti-racist movements. But if this character was not created, the content and essence of the book would remain more or less unchanged. Osei felt lonely, which could be also because his father was not interested in his son's feelings. He may have been influenced by anti-racist allusions from his surroundings or from television.

It seems impossible that 11-years-old children would have such bad behaviour and action. At this young age, they should have clear intentions and not be so malicious. In the book, there were presented attitudes and opinions that would be expected more from adults or older children.

Ian's interpretation is also confusing. Almost as soon as he sees a new student, Ian creates an enemy out of him without even first making contact with him. This unjustified thread cannot be explained by the fact Osei is black. Sure, especially such young children will notice differences in others, but from the story, it seems like Ian would react the same way even if the new boy were white.

The author of the book, Tracy Chevalier, tries so hard to match the pattern of *Othello* and at the same time incorporate it into the contemporary world. Of course, like is mentioned earlier, there were many common elements that the reader must have noticed immediately when reading *Othello* first.

As a rather positive review, I would like to mention the one that emphasizes that the author of the book focuses more on the politics of playgrounds and children in it. He also mentions certain kinds of scenes due to the changing perspective of the main characters. He does state the plot is predictable which is understandable to the reader who read *Othello*. It also emphasizes a more modern concept of the problem in contemporary society that uses facts mentioned by Shakespeare. The choice of projection of the story into the children's world which is perceived by him as touching is also evaluated positively because the book shows that racial tension has hardly changed over the years. (Spines in a Line, 2017) The claim that it is a more heart-breaking story just because the main characters are children is true. Individuals at that young age should not experience such problems. On the other hand, racism and bullying have their origin in children's groups. Children do not have the ability to discern what is good and bad in this regard. They only know when something or someone else is different or acts in different ways.

## Conclusion

This bachelor thesis dealt with the issue of updating Shakespeare's play *Othello* in Tracy Chevalier's novel *New Boy*. The aim of the thesis was to compare these two books and to find out the differences between them and the process of the actualization. The research method that was used was qualitative.

The thesis was divided into three chapters. The first one was dedicated to William Shakespeare, his life and his work. I also presented Queen Elizabeth I.'s reign and the development of English drama and theatre. Then the plot of *Othello* was described as well as the character analysis. The second chapter was dedicated to the second author, Tracy Chevalier, where I wrote about her life and work and also about the issue of racism in American society. Then I moved to the plot and character description. The third chapter was a comparison of the two texts in terms of temporal and spatial setting as well as the concept of the characters and it also referred to some interesting reviews of *New Boy*.

One of the findings was that there are clear elements of the update. The author of the novel used names similar to *Othello's* heroes. Chevalier used the school and the school playground as a place where the action happens. She set it up in 1970s in America, when racial hatred reigned there and the Black Power and Black is Beautiful movement prevailed.

Common features are the love between the two main characters and the effort of the third person to destroy their love. It is also their love and repulsion for their love of those around them. In the case of Othello and Desdemona it is represented by her father Brabantio, in the presentation of O and Dee by teachers, her mother and partly by her classmates. Also similar is a betrayal of friends, Dee and Desdemona, by handing over the belongings to the one who wants to destroy the great love.

The main difference is the age gap between the main characters and lacks of it. In the case of Othello and Desdemona, there is a big age difference, while Osei and Dee are the same age. While the contrast makes the central relationship in *New Boy* somewhat less complex than the one in *Othello*, Osei and Dee being classmates goes well with young adult fiction, a currently popular field of literature.

A similarity may be seen in the traitors of Desdemona and Dee. In both books, it is a very close person to them who they trust. In the case of Desdemona, it is her chambermaid Emilia who gives Desdemona's lost scarf to her husband Iago who wanted it.

In *New Boy*, it is Dee's best friend Mimi, who gives to her boyfriend Ian Dee's lost pencil case because she does not want to be with him anymore and wants to get out of his influence. However, the results of Emilia's and Mimi's actions differ.

The characters of Ian and Iago also differ. Iago hates Othello and wants revenge on him because he promoted Cassio instead of him, even though Iago served him well and they had known each other for a long time. Ian wants to destroy O because he feels threatened by him and is afraid that he could lose the power and influence in his favourite place, which is the playground. However, Ian does not know O and therefore has no reason to see him as a threat and take an act of revenge on him.

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá aktualizací Shakespearova *Othella* v románu Tracy Chevalierové *Ten černý vzadu*. Je zde shrnut život obou autorů, stejně tak jejich díla, společensko-historické pozadí vzniku děl, jejich obsah a analýza postav. V poslední kapitole jsou obě knihy porovnány v kontextu změny času, místa a také v pojetí postav. Jsou zde zmíněné i některé zajímavé recenze románu *Ten černý vzadu*. Důkladným prostudováním obou knih a jejich analýzou byly nalezeny patrné shody, stejně tak jako rozdíly.

## **Bibliography**

### **Primary literature**

CHEVALIER, Tracy. *New Boy*. Penguin Random House UK. Vintage, 2017 ISBN 9781784700249

SHAKESPEARE, William. *Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Pan MacMillan. Macmillan Collector's Library. 2016 ISBN 978-1-909621-91-6

### **Secondary literature**

BORMAN, Tracy. *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2017. ISBN 9781444782899

BUTCHER, K.T., HINTON, K. *Young adult literature: exploration, evaluation, and appreciation*. Upper Saddle River, N.J, Allyn & Bacon. 2009. ISBN 9780137145324

CART, Michael. *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism*. ALA Editions, 2010. ISBN 9780838910450

COLE, Pamela Burress. *Young adult literature in the 21st century*. Boston, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009. ISBN 9780073525938

GREENBLATT, Stephen. *William Shakespeare: velký příběh neznámého muže*. Praha: Albatros, 2007. Albatros Plus. ISBN 9788000019307

GROOM, Nick. *Introducing Shakespeare: A Graphic Guide Edition*. Second Edition. Icon Books, 2006. ISBN 9781848311152

KUIPER, Kathleen. *The life and times of William Shakespeare*. New York: Distributed exclusively by Rosen Educational Services, c2013. ISBN 9781615309269.

WILHELM, Jeffrey. (2001) It's a guy thing. *Voices from the Middle*, 9(2), 60-63.

### **Online sources**

ALLFREY, Ellah Wakatama. *New Boy by Tracy Chevalier review—if Othello were a schoolboy*. *The Guardian*. [online]. 2017 [cit. 2022-04-06] Dostupné z:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/17/new-boy-by-tracy-chevalier-review-othello>

ALTERM, Alexandra (2015) Novelists Reimagine and Update Shakespeare's Plays. The New York Times- Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos [online]. 2015 [cit. 2022-04-08] Dostupné z: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/books/novelists-reimagine-and-update-shakespeares-plays.html>

CAMP, Stephanie M.H. Black is Beautiful: An American History. The Journal of Southern History, 08, vol. 81, no. 3, pp. 675-690 ProQuest Central. 2015. ISSN 00224642. Dostupné z: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1702714008?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true#center>

CAMPBELL, Oscar James, MASEFIELD, John. William Shakespeare. *Shakespeare Quarterly* [online]. 1956, 7(1) [cit. 2022-03-10]. ISSN 00373222. Dostupné z: doi:10.2307/2866124

Elle Thinks. New Boy, by Tracy Chevalier- Elle Thinks. Elle Thinks- lit crit for the general reader [online] 2014. [cit. 2022-04-06] Dostupné z: <https://ellethinks.wordpress.com/2017/07/04/new-boy-by-tracy-chevalier/>

HUDSON, Henry, Norman. *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, And Characters, Volume I. With An Historival Sketch Of The Origin And Growth Of The Drama In England*. Free eBooks. Project Gutenberg [online] EBook-No. 13387. Dostupné z: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13387>

KAYWELL, Joan F. (2001). *Preparing teachers to teach young adult literature*. English Education, 33(4), 323–327 [cit. 2022-04-08] ISSN: 0007-8204

KITCHENER, Caroline, 2017. Why So Many Adults Love Young-Adult Literature. The Atlantic [online]. [cit. 2022-04-05] Dostupné z: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/12/why-so-many-adults-are-love-young-adult-literature/547334/>

McCRUM, Robert. New Boy by Tracy Chevalier review – a vexed retelling of Othello. The Guardian. [online]. 2017 [cit.2022-04-06] Dostupné z: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/14/new-boy-tracy-chevalier-review-othello>

PETERSON, Valerie, 2018. Young Adult and New Adult Book Markets. Young Adult Book Market Facts and Figures. The Balance Careers [online]. [cit. 2022-04-05] Dostupné z: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/the-young-adult-book-market-2799954>



Shakespeare's Career. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust [online]. Copyright 2022. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Registered Charity Number 209302 [cit. 2022-01-29] Dostupné z: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/william-shakespeare/shakespeare-career/>

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust [online]. [cit. 2022-03-31] Dostupné z: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-globe-theatre/>

Spines in a Line. Review: New Boy by Tracy Chevalier. Spines in a Line. Spines in a Line, books, libraries, life [online]. 2017 [cit. 2022-04-09] Dostupné z: <https://spinesinaline.wordpress.com/2017/08/07/review-new-boy-by-tracy-chevalier/?fbclid=IwAR2vZD4q6JWWJfZPD3GzO-FAxhpL-BncjsE9mQXcliWGa7cWsGknpXbHzGs>

CHEVALIER, Tracy, 2019. Tracy Chevalier-About me. [online] [cit. 2022-03-12] Dostupné z: <https://www.tchevalier.com/about-me>

THURSFIELD, Amanda, 2006. Tracy Chevalier-Literature. British Council. Literature [online] [cit. 2022-03-12] Dostupné z: <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/tracy-chevalier>

Tragedies, comedies and histories. Royal Shakespeare Company. Royal Shakespeare company RCS [online] Royal Shakespeare Company [cit.2022-01-28] Dostupné z: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-plays/tragedies-comedies-histories>

William Shakespeare Plays. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust [online]. Copyright 2022. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Registered Charity Number 209302 [cit. 29-1-2022] Dostupné z: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/>

WITONSKY, Trudi D. (2019) 'Black Is Beautiful movement', Salem Press Encyclopedia. [cit. 2022-04-06] Dostupné z: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=ers&AN=96397180&authtype=shib&lang=cs&site=eds-live&scope=site&authtype=shib&custid=s7108593>

## Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Monika Škrabalová
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Petr Anténe, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název práce:	Aktualizace Shakespearova <i>Othella</i> v románu Tracy Chevalierové <i>Ten černý vzadu</i>
Název práce v angličtině:	Updating Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i> in Tracy Chevalier's <i>New Boy</i>
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá aktualizací Shakespearova <i>Othella</i> v román Tracy Chevalierové <i>Ten černý vzadu</i> . Je zde přiblížen život a dílo obou spisovatelů, společensko-historické pozadí vzniku děl, jejich obsah a analýza hlavních postav. Obě knihy jsou porovnány v kontextu času, místa a v pojetí postav.
Klíčová slova:	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Tracy Chevalier, <i>Ten černý vzadu</i> , Black is Beautiful, literatura, aktualizace, doba alžbětinská
Anotace práce v angličtině	This bachelor thesis deals with the update of Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i> in Tracy Chevalier's <i>New Boy</i> . The life and work of both authors are described as well as the historical background, plot and the analysis of the main characters. Both books are compared in terms of their changes in temporal setting, spatial setting and concept of characters.

Klíčová slova v angličtině:	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Tracy Chevalier, <i>New Boy</i> , Black is Beautiful, literature, updating, Elizabethan Era
Přílohy vázané v práci:	
Rozsah práce:	43 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický