

# Othello, Darwin, and the Evolution of Race in Ann-Marie MacDonald's Work

Identity is a recurring obsession amongst Canadian and other postcolonial writers, and for several decades Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has been a popular metaphor for exploring it. Non-Aboriginal Canadians have often identified themselves in literature with Miranda, as the British Empire's dutiful, white, "daughter" settler-invader colony.<sup>1</sup> However, Canada is a culture in transition. Not only has Canada become a more recognizably multi-cultural, multi-racial society, but Canadians are also seeing that it never was as monolithically white and European as history books and literature often painted it. Consequently, writers are adopting new paradigms for exploring identity in Canada.

This article examines Canadian writer Ann-Marie MacDonald's treatment of racial identity as it evolves over the course of three of her works: the plays *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* and *The Arab's Mouth*, and her 1996 novel, *Fall on Your Knees*.<sup>2</sup> Although MacDonald deliberately avoids dealing with race while parodying *Othello* in *Goodnight Desdemona*, in her subsequent works she uses both scientific and literary paradigms to explore racial identity. In *The Arab's Mouth* and *Fall on Your Knees*, MacDonald evokes competing nineteenth- and twentieth-century scientific theories about race, refuting old biological definitions of the concept in favour of the modern idea that racial identity is a fluid social construct. This latter idea is then applied to a literary paradigm as MacDonald returns in *Fall on Your Knees* to *Othello*. This time she evokes Shakespeare's tragedy to address Otherness, racism, the fuzzy borderline between "race" and "ethnicity," and societal attitudes towards miscegenation.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes she uses the characters and situations of *Othello* without significant alteration,

offering them as accurate portraits of the psychology of racism. Other times she radically alters the play's paradigm in order to illustrate the modern social concept of race. Through these paradigms, MacDonald dramatizes the way people define and redefine racial identity in a multi-cultural community in Canada.

There are remarkable continuities between MacDonald's three works in theme, character, and structure, and it is against this background of similarity that the gradual evolution of race-related issues becomes particularly striking. *Goodnight Desdemona*, *The Arab's Mouth*, and *Fall on Your Knees* are all concerned with "eccentric" heroines who struggle to create an authentic identity in an abusive, conformist, patriarchal society. In *Goodnight Desdemona*, the heroine is a heretical Shakespearean academic named Constance Ledbelly. Although she is a woman and a Canadian "colonial," she nevertheless challenges the theories held about the bard by her male, British boss. Subsidiary heroines in the play include a warrior version of Desdemona and a feisty, lesbian Juliet. In *The Arab's Mouth*, the heroine is Pearl MacIsaac, a Victorian scientist. Like Constance, she struggles to carve out a place for herself in a male-dominated profession and to maintain her own, subversive intellectual theories. In *Fall on Your Knees*, the Piper sisters are the focus: Kathleen, the lesbian opera singer; Mercedes, the religious spinster schoolteacher; Frances, the girl-guide-cum-stripper-cum-performance artist; and Lily, the crippled visionary. The patriarchal forces oppressing the heroines are represented in all the works by sinister father/lover figures: Prof. Claude Night, the exploitive, patronizing boss and love-interest in *Goodnight Desdemona*; Dr. Reid, the scheming family friend in *The Arab's Mouth*; and James Piper, the violent and incestuous father in *Fall on Your Knees*.

In all three works the heroine must explore other people's secret identities in order to find her own. Constance must uncover the identity of the author of the secret-source manuscripts behind Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*; she must also identify a "wise fool" character that transforms these plays into comedies. In the course of her investigation, Constance claims new professional and sexual identities for herself as a legitimate author-critic and as a lesbian lover. Pearl finds her professional and familial/ethnic selves as she uncovers the real identities of the mad woman in the attic (her dog-eared sister Claire) and a mysterious nun (her long-banished, Catholic, Highland-Scots mother). Kathleen must acknowledge the identity of her Lebanese mother, Materia, in order to know herself. Lily must realize that her sister Kathleen is

also her mother, because Kathleen was raped by their father, James. And, as in *The Arab's Mouth*, the recovery of long-lost siblings (here Ambrose and Anthony) helps Frances and Lily to come to terms with who they are. Finally, the identity of Kathleen's secret African-American lesbian lover also provides a key to suppressed aspects of the Piper girls' sexual and racial identities.

As this brief analysis suggests, MacDonald's work is obsessed with the exploration of identity in its various facets. Most critics have focused their attention on *Goodnight Desdemona* (MacDonald's first major success) and its treatment of gender and sexual orientation (for example, Fortier, Hengen, Porter), although Ann Wilson notes that Constance's Canadian "colonial" identity is also important to the play. However, both the suppression and the acknowledgement of yet another facet of identity—race—is critical to understanding the development of MacDonald's work, as I shall show.

A late-twentieth-century reader cannot help but notice that while *Goodnight Desdemona* appropriates Shakespeare's *Othello* (as well as *Romeo and Juliet* and a bit of *Hamlet*) to tackle gender and sexual orientation, it avoids any discussion of race, racism, or societal attitudes towards miscegenation. This omission has drawn comment because today such issues are considered central to *Othello*—certainly in terms of its modern reception. Mark Fortier, who interviewed MacDonald about *Goodnight Desdemona*, notes that this omission was not just an oversight on her part: "MacDonald does this quite consciously, however, acknowledging that someone else could, for instance, broach the issue of a black Desdemona" (51). MacDonald has not publicly specified the reasons for her choice. As a self-identified lesbian woman in the late 1980s—a period of renewed gay activism—she may simply have found gender relations and sexual orientation more personally compelling subjects at that time. (In contrast, when Djanet Sears rewrote *Othello* in her play *Harlem Duet* in 1997, she was motivated by her own experiences as an African-Canadian woman to explore the possibility that Desdemona had a black female precursor.) Furthermore, the practical limitations imposed by modern drama—which is a more concise form than the novel—may also have played a part in MacDonald's decision not to add a complex issue like race to the list of other serious identity topics that she was already addressing in her play. (I shall come back to the issue of genre in the discussion of her novel, *Fall on Your Knees*.)

Whatever MacDonald's thinking at the time she wrote *Goodnight Desdemona*, the act of evoking *Othello* without acknowledging the topic of race raises troublesome historical ghosts. In the past there have been other,

less innocent reasons why artists, critics, editors, and audiences have avoided the racial themes in Shakespeare's play. As Michael Neill notes in his examination of *Othello's* textual and performance history, "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*," white actors and audiences have often been uncomfortable with the issues of race and miscegenation raised by the drama and, consequently, have tried to play them down. The techniques they used to do so are worth elaborating on here because MacDonald deals with these "ghosts" in her later work.

One tactic was to make Othello the Moor less racially "Other," and hence, less controversial as a figure of miscegenation. In the nineteenth century, for example, commentators as respected as Samuel Taylor Coleridge argued that Othello was never intended to be black (see Neill 391-92). In criticism and on stage, Othello was "Orientalized" as people claimed that Shakespeare's Moor was really Arabic African, and hence lighter-skinned (Neill 385, Hankey 65-67). As an Arab, Othello was still exotic and racially "Other," but less so to Caucasian thinking; therefore, he was more acceptable to squeamish white audiences, both as a sympathetic tragic hero and as the lover of white Desdemona. Such beliefs were reflected in bowdlerized texts that removed references to Othello's blackness and in paler performance make-up. There were some dark-skinned Othellos in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—such as those portrayed by Edmund Kean and by the great African-American actors Ira Aldridge and Paul Robeson—but they were rare. However, as thinking about race and miscegenation began to change in the latter half of the twentieth century, the whitening trend was reversed. For example, in the controversial 1964 National Theatre Company production of *Othello*, Laurence Olivier decided to play the title character as unequivocally black (Olivier 252). Now attitudes have changed so much that a theatre company is more likely to be criticized for not hiring a black actor to play Othello, than for making Othello too African.

Similar debates have occurred in non-theatrical contexts over the exact "racial" status of another North African-/Mediterranean-basin-dwelling people: the ancient Egyptians. Martin Bernal's highly controversial book *Black Athena* draws attention to arguments that occurred (particularly in the empire-building nineteenth century) over the question: were the ancient Egyptians really "African" and "black," or were they "white?" At stake was, whose modern "race"—black or white—could take credit for Egypt's monumental achievements and, consequently, claim to be the founders of modern civilization (Bernal 240-46).<sup>4</sup> Both ancient Egypt and politically

loaded debates about the precise racial identities of black Africans and Arabs (and their relative class status in a white-dominated society) become important issues in MacDonald's work. It seems as if Othello's ghost returns to haunt her, as race begins to creep back into her work in *The Arab's Mouth*, and then becomes a central issue in *Fall on Your Knees*.

If *Goodnight Desdemona* explored its heroine's professional and sexual identities, *The Arab's Mouth* focuses on its heroine's professional and familial "ethnic" identities, and the genetic or "blood" inheritance that goes with the latter. In *The Arab's Mouth*, MacDonald enjoys playing with the Scottish aspects of her own "ethnic" background—an identity she claims allegiance to in the dedication to the play, which reads: "For the ancestors." She sets the drama in nineteenth-century Scotland and fills it with parodic images of bagpipes, shortbread, isolated castles, red hair, and so on. But, underneath this cheerful celebration of Scottish ethnicity, anxieties about racial identity and miscegenation are subtly evoked.

MacDonald raises these anxieties by setting her play within a particular intellectual context. Just as she evoked a literary icon (Shakespeare) in *Goodnight Desdemona* in order to challenge patriarchal interpretations of women's roles in both real life and art, here MacDonald evokes a nineteenth-century scientific icon, Charles Darwin (for example, 10-12, 14, 26-27, 28, 46), in order to challenge racist views of biological and cultural differences. *The Arab's Mouth* is a dramatized discourse between late Victorian and late-twentieth-century ideas about the implications of Darwin's theories for how we view human diversity.

In the nineteenth century, European natural historians developed a biologically based theory of permanent racial "types" in which different "races" were seen not as variants on humankind, but as different species. Relationships between racial groups were explained as the result of the properties of these different species, and cultural and biological variations were conflated. Hence, differences in the nineteenth century between white and black groups in terms of economic, military, or political power were explained as biologically determined and, hence, permanent (Banton 5-7)—a comforting thought to white imperialists. The appearance, mid-century, of the ideas of Darwin and other evolutionary theorists presented a problem for this kind of racist thinking. Confronted with evidence of biological and cultural evolution, nineteenth-century race scientists started to argue that evolutionary progress now only occurred in the Caucasian race. They attempted to justify this belief by claiming that failures in earlier stages

of evolution had limited the brain development of non-Caucasian races, and that non-Caucasian evolution was now at an end, leaving non-whites stuck lower on the evolutionary scale as mere “survivals from the past” (Haller ix). Nevertheless, anxiety over the idea that racial categories were not permanently fixed but fluid, eventually led to the fledgling “science” of eugenics, which attempted to preserve the “hereditary qualities” of different “races”—mostly white. “Preservation” involved discouraging miscegenation between whites and non-whites, as well as preventing the breeding of white persons whose deviation from perceived “norms” led them to be seen as evolutionary throwbacks. These ideas have persisted well into the twentieth century, particularly in popular thought.

However, by the latter half of the twentieth century, the scientific inheritors of evolutionary theory had developed a very different view of race. Today, the majority of biologists reject the idea of separate races as biological entities. Theories of “pure” or even “mixed” races have been dismissed by evidence of the enormous genetic overlap between all human populations. Physical variation is explained not by categorizing people at the macro level in separate, contained groups, but by examining the huge spectrum of human variation at the micro level of the gene. An individual’s unique genes, not their racial “type,” determine their basic physical being (Banton 7). In current academic and social policy circles, “race” has become the province of the social and political sciences. It has been blended more and more with other social grouping concepts such as “ethnicity” or “class.”<sup>5</sup> Many so-called “racial differences” are now explained by environmental factors, such as differential access to education, jobs, etc. “Race” is increasingly seen as a shifting social construct used when discussing differences in social, economic, or political status between populations.<sup>6</sup>

A major theme of *The Arab’s Mouth* that connects it to the “race” debates is inheritance: material inheritance, cultural inheritance, and, especially, biological or genetic inheritance. The patriarchal figures in *The Arab’s Mouth* attempt to control all three kinds of inheritance because of their fear that “tainted blood” has infected the Maclsaac family’s “pure” lowland-Scots Protestant line. Appropriately enough, the primary patriarchal villain and inheritance gatekeeper is family friend Dr. Reid, who is a doctor, a natural scientist, and a supporter of the fledgling “science” of eugenics.<sup>7</sup> The lowland-Scots Protestant Reid thinks the “tainted blood” has been introduced by Pearl’s mother, Régine, a Catholic, Highland Scot (24, 29, 30-31). In his thinking, Régine is not only seen as “Other,” but her religious and

cultural differences from Reid and the MacIsaac clan become strangely conflated with genetic, biological “Otherness.” For example:

DR REID: We can give him [Pearl’s brother Victor] all the care and narcotics we would any mental invalid. But I’m afraid as yet there’s no scientific cure for tainted blood.

PEARL: It’s my blood as well as Victor’s that you malign, Doctor.

DR REID: No, my dear. Your genetic inheritance is pure Ramsay MacIsaac. His is all too clearly Régine MacPhail.

PEARL: Dr Reid. My mother may have been a Catholic, but that hardly convicts her of a genetic flaw. (*He just looks at her.*) (23-24)

Racial difference is never explicitly mentioned, but Reid clearly resembles Victorian scientists who conflated biological and non-biological differences in their studies of other “races.”

Reid seizes upon two particular pieces of evidence to prove that the breeding of a MacIsaac with a MacPhail was a mistake: Pearl’s brother Victor exhibits “degenerate,” “mad” behaviour and Pearl’s sister Claire has dog-like ears. Victor and Claire are not specifically referred to as racially “Other” or mixed-race in the play, but the association of Pearl’s supposedly impure siblings with madness and animals evokes ideas about race common in Victorian scientific circles. One idea held that racial “Otherness” was associated with madness (Gilman 131-49). Another idea, related to the belief that different races were actually different species, claimed that black Africans were closer to animals (especially apes) than whites were (Meyer 161). Dr. Reid alludes to this belief elsewhere when he conflates the supposed biological inferiority of women and “the lower races” with that of “the higher primates” (49-50). Claire’s dog-like ears make her a different species/race for Reid. And, even if her ear were interpreted merely as an evolutionary throwback, rather than a sign of miscegenation, it still situates her down the evolutionary scale with “primitive” racial “Others” in Reid’s mind. Of course, the association of other races with non-human animals was not exclusive to the Victorian period: in Act One, Scene One of *Othello*, Iago describes the union of Desdemona and Othello with bestial images (1.1.86-91, 1.1.111-13, 1.1.122-36).

The scientific corollary to these ideas was eugenics, which Dr. Reid embraces. He attempts to hide the “impurity” supposedly introduced into the MacIsaac bloodline by Régine and to stop its spread by preventing the MacIsaac siblings from breeding. In fact, he hopes to “wrest the infant science of eugenics from its cradle to engender a blueprint for the new man, genetically pure and uncontaminated” (31). This “new man” will conform to white, patriarchal, Protestant norms.

However, Pearl anachronistically holds late-twentieth-century views about human differences. She dismisses Reid's conflation of cultural and genetic differences. She rejects his obsession with preserving "blood purity," and interprets Claire's dog-ears as just another example of evolutionary diversity. Like a modern evolutionary theorist, she teaches us to embrace such diversity, not to crush it:

DR REID: Variety is desirable only insofar as it is useful. If, on his great ascent, man does not cast off the vestiges of his animal origins, he can only revert. Back to your disordered nightmare world. Back to the beast. And therein lies the abyss . . .

PEARL: No, no, no, Darwin tells us that our flaws are signs of our evolutionary journey. But whether such flaws be vestigial stumps or promising new sprouts, who can tell? For the evolutionary tree is still rapidly branching off. (45)

Ultimately, after discovering that the mysterious sculptor/nun lurking near the family castle is really her long-banished mother, Pearl reclaims and celebrates her own "mixed" heritage.

MacDonald's heroine also embraces other kinds of diversity—such as personal eccentricity—when she rejects Reid's idea that Victor's dramatic behaviour is a sign of degeneracy and madness. Going further, one could read Pearl's defence of Victor as a more indirect version of MacDonald's defence of sexual diversity in *Goodnight Desdemona*. In many ways, the flamboyant, effeminate, kilt-wearing, unmarried Victor resembles the stereotype of a gay drag Queen.

Scientific debates are the most obvious way in which issues of racial identity creep into MacDonald's play; however, references to things Arab and Egyptian also evoke these issues, though less directly. At first the Arab and Egyptian references seem incongruous in the play's Scottish setting. For example, in Act One, Scene Four (15), MacDonald makes a seemingly digressive allusion to the murder of the unnamed Arab in Camus' *L'Étranger*. The Scottish Régine's figure is described as "Mediterranean" (66). Victor spends much of the play carting around a copy of *Arabian Nights*, which leads Pearl to comment that Scottish bagpipes are actually descendants of an Arab form of wind instrument (67). These subtle references become more significant in the context of the play's two major Arab and Egyptian allusions. First, and most obvious, is the work's title: *The Arab's Mouth*. Its direct reference is to one of the Egyptian-style hieroglyphs that Régine uses to sculpt a stone version of Pearl's family portrait. Second, there is the presence in the play of Anubis, the dog-headed Egyptian god of the underworld. He appears in Act Two, Scene Fifteen, and enables Pearl to undergo a metaphorical death and rebirth. He functions much like the ghost of Yorick in *Goodnight*

*Desdemona*, arriving like a *deus ex machina* to help the heroine solve the mystery of her true identity. Part human biped, part beast, with blue eyes and a black head (70), Anubis looks like a product of some kind of miscegenation himself and engages in miscegenation with Pearl, impregnating her. The racist Dr. Reid believes the potential offspring of this mixed union will be “a monster.” The more modern-minded Pearl replies: “I prefer to consider it otherwise” (77). She decides, in defiance of the emerging “science” of eugenics, to call her unborn child “Eugene,” which she notes is Greek for “well born” (79).

What are these references doing in a play set in Scotland? Why would MacDonald have a Catholic Scotswoman portray her family in Egyptian-style hieroglyphics? Why not Celtic runes? And why does MacDonald refer to the play’s key round hieroglyphic symbol as the “Arab’s” mouth, when the more expected descriptive would be the “Egyptian’s”? Why is it a dog-headed Egyptian god, not a Scottish ghost or faery, who helps Pearl discover her Scottish family’s past?

These Arab references make more sense when one discovers that the ancestors whom MacDonald evokes in the play’s dedication were not all Scottish: some were Lebanese. And, as we shall see in *Fall on Your Knees*, the exact racial identity of Lebanese people—are they “Mediterranean Europeans” or “Arabs,” “white” or “coloured”?—becomes a subject of racist debate, just as the exact natures of Othello’s Moorishness or the ancient Egyptians’ Egyptianness have been. While ostensibly exploring the “MacDonald” side of her family in *The Arab’s Mouth*, the playwright drops clues about her other heritage. Yet interestingly, she does not yet state this heritage directly; unlike the identities of her characters, which are revealed by the end of the play, hers remains partially hidden. It is in her novel, *Fall on Your Knees*, that she explores it openly.

*Fall on Your Knees* repeats MacDonald’s earlier preoccupations. Like her plays, it features non-conformist heroines (the Piper sisters), each on a journey to recover or create her authentic identity. Again, the women’s identities must be (re)created despite pressure to conform to limited “norms” opposed by an oppressive, white, patriarchal society represented by a sinister father-lover figure (James Piper). The novel also repeats the idea that each heroine must uncover other people’s secret identities in order to find her own, and, as in *The Arab’s Mouth*, the suppressed identity of mothers and siblings plays an important role. However, while the hidden professional, sexual, and familial/ethnic identities that dominated the plays remain, in *Fall on Your Knees* hidden racial identity comes to the fore. The

less restricted genre of the novel seems to allow MacDonald the space and time to explore all her obsessions about identity in one work.

The novel is set mostly in Canada's Cape Breton region very early in the twentieth century. It is a region in which MacDonald's own family has roots (Lawson 53). For a long time this area has been associated with white Scottish immigration. (One can imagine the MacIsaacs settling there.) However, as MacDonald shows, Cape Breton is not as ethnically or racially homogenous as popular stereotypes suggest. Even early in the twentieth century, it was a multicultural, multi-racial society—one that combined relative tolerance with Victorian racism. The mixed demographic of the area is reflected in the characters. MacDonald acknowledges the long-established African-Canadian presence in Nova Scotia through the Taylor family, who live in an African-Canadian community in the Coke Ovens district of Sydney. The Pipers' only friends, the Luvovitz family, are Jewish. The town's wealthy Mahmoud family is Lebanese, and they speak Arabic as well as English. It is through this last family that the Arab connection of MacDonald's earlier work, *The Arab's Mouth*, is reintroduced and amplified.

However, *Fall on Your Knees* does not merely acknowledge the diversity of the Canadian population: it also shows how fraught with complications the *perception* of that diversity is. Groups in the novel make ethnic and racial distinctions between themselves and "Others," but these distinctions are unstable and shift to suit people's professional and personal needs. Some times characters treat the differences between groups as less substantial, as merely "ethnic" differences. At other times—particularly when certain boundaries are crossed or taboos are broken—greater levels of anxiety and prejudice arise and inter-group differences are treated as inherent, insurmountable, and biological: "racial" in the nineteenth-century sense. In dramatizing the social processes by which "race" is constructed, MacDonald often evokes similar behaviours found in *Othello*. However, as MacDonald interprets the literary paradigm through a late-twentieth-century lens, she suggests that Desdemona's "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (1.3.252) ought to be "she saw Othello's visage in *her* mind."

For example, as in Shakespeare's play, the novel shows how differences are often overlooked or tolerated in business relationships, making forms of friendship (or at least amicable acquaintance) between people of different "races" possible. As a successful general, Othello is well respected by the nobles of Venice, including Brabantio. As a piano-tuner, the "*enklese*"<sup>8</sup> James Piper is welcomed into the Mahmoud home and treated like a family friend. British

James, Lebanese-Arab Jameel (the local speak-easy owner), and African-Canadian Leo Taylor (the local truck driver) work together well enough in a bootlegging business. James Piper overcomes his initial prejudices (19, 30) about Jews to become friends with the local storeowners, the Luvovitzes.

However, race becomes “visible” again when sexual relations are concerned. Characters are more inclined to “Other” each other, re-defining identities and re-invoking nineteenth-century-style race barriers. Again, *Othello* offers a paradigm for this behaviour: Brabantio’s change in attitude towards Othello after his friend elopes at night with Desdemona. Othello becomes the “Moor” in Brabantio’s eyes. Similarly, the neighbourly attitude of the Mahmouds towards James changes when he runs off with their thirteen-year-old daughter, Materia. At first, it appears Mr. Mahmoud’s anger is based on James’ behaviour, more than his race:

It wasn't so much that the piano tuner was "*enklese*," or even that he was not a Catholic or a man of means. It was that he had come like a thief in the night and stolen another man's property. "And my daughter yielded." (17)

Nevertheless, thenceforth the two sides in the dispute evoke ethnic and racial differences. In Mr. Mahmoud’s mind Piper is no longer “James,” but the “*enklese* bastard” (118) and the “yellow-haired dog” (17), defined by his ethnicity and biological (colour) difference. In reaction to Materia’s elopement, Mr. Mahmoud chooses his next daughter’s husband, Jameel, on the basis of his Lebanese-Arab ethnic/racial identity alone (315). Interestingly, Mr. Mahmoud later admits, “It was not enough” that Jameel was Lebanese, since Jameel proves to be a poor husband and “no son-in-law of his” (315). In a late twentieth-century vein, the novel suggests that preserving “racial purity” is not a guarantee of marital suitability.

However, while MacDonald evokes the Brabantio-Othello conflict as a good illustration of the psychology of racism, she makes a critical change to the paradigm: her “Othello” is white. Her scenario challenges the assumption that only whites will object to miscegenation—an assumption that presumes white racial superiority. Furthermore, she begins to blur and mix the neat identification of her characters with particular figures from Shakespeare’s play.

MacDonald’s white Othello quickly becomes associated with Brabantio, Iago, and Desdemona. Like Brabantio, James also begins to emphasize “racial” differences in a negative way. Having satisfied his initial lust for Materia, he does what Iago (wrongly) predicts Desdemona will do (1.3.346-48, 2.1.220-34): “disrelish and abhor” (2.1.232) his darker-skinned lover. He refers to Materia’s family as “Oily bastards” (16) and “Filthy black Syrians”

(19). He suddenly notices, as if for the first time, that Materia's skin colour is darker than his, and he no longer wants to be seen in public with her (37). He hopes that the child she is carrying will "be fair" (25). Ironically, just as he begins to overcome his racist attitudes towards Jews by getting to know the Luvovitz family, he becomes more racist towards Materia, no longer classifying her in the same race as himself: "Compared to Materia's family, the Luvovitzes seemed downright white" (30).

Eventually, James becomes completely alienated from his child-wife. Like Brabantio viewing Desdemona and Othello, he sees their relationship as unnatural. And, in line with racist nineteenth-century scientific theories, he sees her as child-like, mentally inferior, sexually depraved—a bestial racial "Other":

How had he been ensnared by a child? There was something not right about Materia. Normal children didn't run away with men. He knew from his reading that clinical simpletons necessarily had an overdeveloped animal nature. She had seduced him. That was why he hadn't noticed she was a child. Because she wasn't one. Not a real one. It was queer. Sick, even. Perhaps it was a racial flaw. (34)

However, MacDonald makes us aware that attitudes towards sexuality and race are even more complex and contradictory than this. While racial "Otherness" is frequently perceived by characters as a sexual threat, ironically, at other times it can be perceived as a source of sexual safety. As in *Othello*, fathers can be lulled into a false sense of security about their daughters' sexual activities by the belief that interracial relationships are highly improbable. Presumably Brabantio leaves Desdemona alone with Othello because he is confident that she could not be attracted to the "sooty bosom" of a Moor (1.2.70)—especially when she has the "wealthy curled darlings of [her] nation" (1.2.68) to choose from. In *Fall on Your Knees*, James trusts Leo Taylor, rather than any other young man, to drive his daughter Kathleen to her music lessons precisely because Leo is black (58).<sup>9</sup> Of course, as in *Othello*, such racist assumptions are proven wrong. Kathleen's younger sister, Frances, initiates a one-night stand with Leo. Kathleen herself has a doubly unexpected lesbian love affair with her own "Othello"—an African American pianist named Rose. (Lesbianism, like miscegenation, is seen by conservative characters as biologically "unnatural" and, therefore, unlikely.) However, here MacDonald again breaks the boundaries of Shakespeare's paradigm even as she evokes it, expanding Desdemona's initial transgression to include other models of subversive female sexuality: predatory lust and lesbianism.

Once the fear of miscegenation is aroused, it appears to overwhelm any ordinary parental fears about class or female sexual impropriety. Brabantio

rejects Roderigo's suit for Desdemona's hand, until she runs away with Othello. Then Roderigo no longer seems an unworthy match. Says Brabantio to Roderigo: "O, would you had had her!" (1.1.172-73). Before Kathleen falls in love with Rose, she has an illicit sexual relationship with a white male soldier. This pre-marital affair with an undistinguished man—an affair that could have left her pregnant—never garners any attention and remains hidden from the family. However, her affair with Rose prompts Rose's mother to send James Piper a warning letter, which brings him to New York to stop the affair. The girls' relationship breaks both racial and sexual orientation taboos; however, in her letter, Rose's mother only refers directly to the inter-racial aspect of the liaison, the "miscegenation," not its lesbian character (235). As in *Othello*, fears about interracial mixing seem to overwhelm other concerns, although one of the most feared consequences of miscegenation—a mixed-race child—technically could not be produced in this case. The sight of Kathleen and Rose naked in bed together produces a severe reaction in James: he beats and rapes Kathleen, then forces her home to Cape Breton, destroying her musical career and her will to live. Yet, can we believe that it is the racial issue alone that enflames James? What about the lesbianism? Where does it fit into MacDonald's use of *Othello* and scientific paradigms? More will be said about this later.

Certainly the novel demonstrates how what *appears* to be pure racial animosity or anxiety can be fuelled by, or contaminated with, other issues. It is a sociological cliché that economic or social disappointment often produces racialized scapegoating, and the idea is powerfully represented in *Othello*. Iago, for example, cites Othello's granting of a coveted promotion to the upper-class Cassio rather than to him as one of the reasons he hates "the Moor" (1.1.8-40); class resentment is directed into racial animosity. Similar redirections occur in *Fall on Your Knees*. When Jewish Ralph Luvovitz and Scottish-Lebanese-Catholic Mercedes Piper consider marrying, no one objects to the match. However, when Mercedes discovers that Ralph has secretly married another woman (and another non-Jew) while away at medical school, she immediately convinces herself that marriage with a man of a different "race" and religion is ridiculous anyway. In "realizing" this "fact" she decides she is "[l]ucid, in fact, for the first time since she conceived her little crush on the grocer's son. A Hebrew. Heavens" (313). Her beloved Ralph becomes merely "a Hebrew" and her love for him is reduced safely to a "little crush." Similarly, the widowed Lebanese merchant, Mr. Mahmoud, considers marrying his black African-Canadian

housekeeper, Teresa. Race is not really an issue between them. However, when Mahmoud comes to believe (falsely) that Teresa has stolen from him, he drops the idea of marriage and “Others” her racially, re-asserting her blackness as an impediment to any sexual union.

The way in which race shifts between being visible and invisible for the characters mirrors the theme of hidden identity in MacDonald’s work. In *Fall on Your Knees*, she not only foregrounds the hidden multi-racial identity of Canada, but also examines the act of hiding it in a settler-invader society where some origins convey more class status than others. In the community described in the novel, being perceived as “white” and “European” usually confers social and economic advantages, while being perceived as “non-white” and “non-European” usually confers concomitant disadvantages. Perceived race becomes a partial determinant of class. Consequently, many characters on the borderline between being perceived as “white” and perceived as “non-white Other” try to hide their supposed racial difference and construct themselves as exclusively “white.” However, in the course of the novel, their hidden identities are brought into the open.

MacDonald’s treatment of this issue centres on the Lebanese Mahmoud family and their half-Scottish, half-Lebanese Piper granddaughters. The family is perceived in the novel to inhabit a racial liminal zone on the border between “white” and “black.” This liminality is represented by two things: first, by their skin colour (they are darker than the Scots- and lighter than the African-Canadians); and second, by the liminal position of their ancestral home, Lebanon, which lies between the Euro-Mediterranean, African, and Arab worlds. In their racial liminality they resemble the nineteenth-century stage interpretations of Othello, interpretations that portrayed the Moor as a lighter-skinned “Arab,” rather than as a darker-skinned “African,” in order to preserve his exotic “Otherness” while reducing it just enough to make him acceptable to white audiences.

In the cases of Ralph and Teresa mentioned earlier, the potential for perceived racial difference was always there, but factors other than pure racial prejudice determined whether or not such difference was highlighted or ignored. With the Mahmouds, too, factors separate from racial animus are involved; these factors push the perception of the Mahmoud clan’s identity to one side or the other of the “white”/“non-white” border. James Piper sees his child-bride Materia Mahmoud as white until he becomes sexually and romantically disenchanted with her. The daughters of the wealthy branch of the Mahmoud family are accepted as white by their schoolmates because

“they’re nice girls and rich rich” (97). In contrast, the school girls make racist remarks about Kathleen, who is only half-Lebanese and has whiter skin than her Mahmoud cousins: “She may be peaches and cream but you should see her mother . . . black as the ace of spades, my dear . . . We never should have let the coloureds into this country in the first place . . . Kathleen Piper belongs in the Coke Ovens [the “coloured” section of town]” (97). Why? She is viewed as a social snob who looks down on her schoolmates. Like Iago, the girls use racism to level class.

Living in turn-of-the-last-century Cape Breton, where whiteness conveys class advantages, and belonging to an ethnic group whose racial status is considered ambiguous, the Mahmonds insist on their whiteness. Mr. Mahmoud distinguishes his whiteness from African-Canadian Teresa’s blackness. Confronted with her non-Scottish heritage, Kathleen asserts that she is “pure white” (504) and that the Mahmonds are Mediterranean Europeans, not “Ayrabs” from the interior (503). The implication in her denial is that Lebanese from the interior would be darker-skinned, and hence more racially “Other.”

Not surprisingly, given this environment, miscegenation becomes something to be hidden. Alienated from the Mahmonds and his wife Materia, James Piper sees them as dark-skinned, less white than he is. However, this means the children he has fathered with Materia are mixed-race. Like Dr. Reid in *The Arab’s Mouth*, he consequently tries to stamp out any signs of “tainted blood” associated with the mother. He fears his daughters will inherit their mother’s dark colouring (25), and, to reassure himself, constantly asserts the fairness of his daughters’ skin and hair. Like Dr. Reid, he conflates biological and cultural difference; so, he also tries to suppress their Lebanese cultural heritage—a reminder of their mixed background—indoctrinating them instead with European classics in a kind of cultural eugenics. He forbids Materia to teach Kathleen the Arabic language because he does not want her “growing up confused” (35). In fact, he deliberately makes Kathleen ashamed of her mother and of her Lebanese background (39).

However, as in MacDonald’s previous works, secret identities cannot remain secret forever. The race issues repressed by MacDonald in her treatment of *Othello* in *Goodnight Desdemona*, hinted at in *The Arab’s Mouth*, and suppressed by characters within *Fall on Your Knees* re-emerge in the novel through the daughters’ intimate *Othello-Desdemona* relationships with African-American lovers. Again MacDonald evokes the *Othello* paradigm only to change it to reflect modern concepts of racial identity. Whereas Shakespeare’s *Desdemona* can only wish to be like brave *Othello*

and turns her back on her roots by seeking love with him, MacDonald's heroines recover their mother's cultural heritage and their "coloured" Arab roots through their mixed-race relationships. In the process, the racial line supposedly dividing the Othello and Desdemona figures is radically blurred.

Kathleen's "racial" re-awakening is slow. It starts, while she is studying European opera in New York, with her attraction to African-American music and the blues clubs of Harlem. Then she develops a friendship with her African-American piano accompanist, Rose. Her introduction to "Darktown music" and her relationship with a "coloured" woman start her thinking about her own maternal heritage. She is amused by Rose's stereotypical assumptions about Kathleen's "white" background and wonders if Rose would be shocked to see a picture of her dark-skinned mother, Materia:

She guessed that I came from parents I call "Mother and Dad," that I had "equestrian" lessons, that "Mumsy" is a "frosty blonde" with arch blue eyes and impeccable taste in porcelain and that "Fathah" is a judge from "old money." I played her own game right back at her and didn't tell her if she was right or wrong. I'll let her think she's smart for now. Then I'll show her my family photo. (497)

One can sense in this passage Kathleen's ambivalence. She now acknowledges to herself that she is neither as "white" nor as aristocratic as her appearance and behaviour suggest. She considers acknowledging to someone outside her family the darker-skinned mother whose existence she has largely ignored her whole life. However, she is not ready yet. She allows Rose to believe the WASP fantasy that puts Kathleen in a socially superior position in their society.

While Kathleen flirts with acknowledging her mixed roots, it is Rose who forces her to face up to them fully:

I [Kathleen] waited for Rose to spot the framed photograph of Daddy and Mumma on my dresser. She said, "Who's that?" I said, "That's my father." She said, "Who's that with him?" And I said, "That's my mother." And she just stared at the picture, then looked back at me and said, "Not your natural mother." / "What do you mean?" / "Not your blood kin." / "Yes." / Then she looked back at the picture. "I can't see it." / "No one can." / "What is she?" / "Canadian." Rose blushed. Hurray! But I put her out of her mystery; "She's Lebanese." / "She's an Ayrab?" / "They don't like to be called Arabs. Especially not 'Ayrabs'." / "What's wrong with that, that's how I've always said it." / "Well. Anyhow, a lot of Lebanese come from the coast and they're more Mediterranean, more European, you know. Not like Arabs." / "She musta come from inland." Then she looked at me and said, "Coulda fooled me." / I said, "I'm not trying to 'fool' anyone." / "You look pure white." / "I am pure white. My mother is white." / "Not quite." / "Well she's not coloured." / She smiled—sneered is more like it—and said, "Don't worry, honey, you plenty white for the both of you." / "What's that supposed to mean?" / "Now you're mad 'cause I called you white." / She was laughing at me . . . . But I

wanted her to get the point. "I'm not ashamed of my mother, but I take after my father. My mother is devoid of ambition and not terribly bright, although she is a devoted parent." . . . It was on the tip of my tongue to say "To hell with you" or worse when she got serious all of a sudden and said, / "I'm sorry but you're not being honest with me. You are ashamed of your mother." / I got a hot sick feeling in my stomach. . . . The feeling was coming up through my skin. (503-05)

Kathleen leaves the photo where Rose can see it, but resists its implications throughout their exchange until the moment when she can deny them no longer. Her nausea is symbolic of the resurgent knowledge of her past and Kathleen is forced to acknowledge the "feeling coming up through [her] skin"—her half-Arab, possibly "coloured" skin. While Kathleen has always identified completely with her white, piano-tuning father and attributed all her musical gifts to him, in fact she inherits her talent as much from her piano-playing, Arabic-song-singing mother, as Mrs. Luvovitz tells her. Like Pearl in *The Arab's Mouth*, she learns her heritage is maternal, not just paternal. In a sense, Kathleen recognizes that she sings with an Arab's mouth. Almost immediately after this epiphany it is revealed that Rose is not pure black: her mother is white. It is only after these discoveries—which mock the supposedly inviolable racial divide between Kathleen and Rose—that the two women become lovers.

In this scenario rests MacDonald's most radical violation of the old *Othello* paradigm. If on the (skin) surface Rose is a female Othello to Kathleen's Desdemona, underneath the roles are blurred. When this Desdemona sees this Othello's "visage," she sees not his mind, but her own hidden face. By breaking down the supposedly fundamental biological division between Desdemona and Othello, MacDonald clearly dramatizes the late-twentieth-century scientific view of race: theirs is a *socially constructed* difference, rather than a biologically significant one.

This pattern of self-recognition through relationships with African-Americans and -Canadians continues with Kathleen's sisters. Frances is drawn to the Mahmouds' black housekeeper, Teresa. Although they are never physically lovers, they develop a strange, almost mystical bond. Perhaps because she is unable to have the married Teresa as a lover, Frances plays Desdemona to the African-Canadian truck driver Leo Taylor. She is obsessively drawn to seduce him in order to bear a "mixed-race" child. Through this motherhood, Frances rediscovers her identity, finally becoming comfortable with her past, her body, and her sexuality (see, for example, 416). When her child is taken away from her, she deteriorates.

Lily, the youngest Piper daughter, has a particularly complex hidden

identity. Raised as the daughter of James and Matera, she is really the product of her father's rape of Kathleen. At an early age, Lily is magically drawn to walk from Cape Breton Island to New York City to search out Kathleen's true love. Lily has discovered that her biological father is James Piper, but she seeks out Rose as her real, spiritual father. The relationship is indicated by a new diagram of their family tree in which Kathleen's name is joined to Rose's by an equal sign, indicating marriage (565). Repeating the father-lover trope often found in MacDonald's work, but in a positive way, Lily and Rose live together and become like an "old couple" (563). In fact, they resemble Othello and Desdemona as they might have become if they had survived Iago's machinations. And again, the supposedly fixed biological distinction between Desdemona and Othello is blurred: not only are both Lily and Rose "mixed race," but Lily repudiates her "unnatural" white father in favour of Rose, whose relationship with her mother was loving, creative, and to Kathleen, "natural." And with bigots like James and Mercedes out of the way, Lily and Rose's "mixed-race", lesbian relationship offers the only happy ending of the novel for Othello and Desdemona.

Only Mercedes Piper forges no multiracial ties. In fact, she tries to deny them, even hiding Frances and Leo Taylor's mixed-race son, Anthony, in an orphanage. Tellingly, the highly repressed Mercedes ends up alone, bitter, despairing, and suicidal (560-61)—a female Brabantio dying of a broken heart. MacDonald seems to suggest this is the price one may pay for extreme conformity and for denying aspects of one's identity. Mercedes's one redeeming act is to reunite Anthony with Lily and Rose—his surviving Piper family members—after her death. It is she who leaves him, in the last chapter, a paper family tree in which all the proper connections and identities are revealed (565), very much like the "three in one" revelation of Constance's multi-part identity in *Goodnight Desdemona* and the complete portrait of the MacIsaac family that appears at the end of *The Arab's Mouth*.

Through their Othello-Desdemona relationships with African-North Americans, and African North-American women in particular, three of the ostensibly "white" Piper girls rediscover their own hidden, multi-racial, multi-cultural identity. It is as if their roots magically draw them to African North-Americans, as if in them they recognize aspects of their hidden selves. In the process, the authority of biologically based racial boundaries is continuously drawn into question.

However, what about the lesbianism in the novel? Where does it fit in MacDonald's use of *Othello* and 'scientific paradigms to explore identity? If

MacDonald ignored race in favour of sexual orientation when she first rewrote *Othello* in *Goodnight Desdemona*, and if she concentrated primarily on race in her science-obsessed *The Arab's Mouth*, she ultimately links the two facets of identity in *Fall on Your Knees*. The scenario surrounding James Piper's discovery of Kathleen's sexual relationship with Rose provides the clearest example. When Kathleen stops observing traditional colour and sexual-orientation barriers and becomes Rose's lover, her father rapes her (549-50). One could interpret the rape as a nineteenth-century racist's reaction to a radical challenge to his ideology. Yet, as was noted earlier, can we believe that it is the racial issue alone that enflames James? Although the warning letter James receives from Rose's mother appears to focus solely on the race issue, at one point it uses a synonym for miscegenation—"crossing nature's divide" (235)—that could also apply to the lesbian nature of Rose and Kathleen's relationship. Both mixed-race relationships and lesbianism are unnatural, according to the kind of conservative thinking critiqued in the novel, because they cross supposedly permanent natural biological barriers, rather than more fluid, socially constructed ones such as class. Having resisted his unnatural passion for his eldest daughter for years, James takes the breaking of other purportedly natural barriers as an excuse to break the incest taboo as well. In fact, when Kathleen dies bearing his child, he even rapes Frances to "comfort" himself. In contrast, MacDonald's Piper heroines find miscegenation and homosexuality entirely natural and fulfilling, while the tragic results of the rapes of Kathleen and Frances suggest that incest is one taboo that truly is biologically based and that should be maintained. MacDonald takes the late-twentieth-century scientific view that race is a social construct and extends it to sexual orientation within her *Othello* paradigm.

In conclusion, developments within the novel mirror developments that occur over the span of MacDonald's works. If one looks at the evolution of identity in *Goodnight Desdemona*, *The Arab's Mouth*, and *Fall on Your Knees*, MacDonald herself seems slowly drawn towards her own "hidden" roots. In *Goodnight Desdemona* she confronts her identity as a woman, an artist, and a lesbian. In *The Arab's Mouth* she explores her "ethnic" Scottish identity, and hints obliquely at her Lebanese heritage. And, in *Fall on Your Knees*, she examines her possible "racial" identity as defined by her mixed European and Arabic roots.<sup>11</sup> Over the course of her three works, not only does *Othello*'s blackness return, but *Desdemona*'s becomes evident too. However, like most modern-day biologists, MacDonald rejects older racial ideologies and suggests that there is more overlap than distinction, more similarity than difference,

between so-called “races.” Radically altering the *Othello* paradigm to reflect modern science, race is revealed in her work to be a powerful category, but a socially constructed one. And finally, MacDonald’s novel suggests, in a country of immigrants like Canada, even constructed racial boundaries break down as different settler-invader groups begin to intermingle. The observation Mrs. Luvovitz makes about her grandchildren near the end of the novel seems to express this idea: “They speak French at home, English at school and Yiddish with every second shopkeeper. Real Canadians” (559).

#### NOTES

- 1 See Brydon’s “Re-Writing *The Tempest*” and “Sister Letters: Miranda’s *Tempest* in Canada.”
- 2 I am not concerned in this article with pieces that MacDonald wrote collaboratively with other writers, such as *The Attic*, *the Pearls and Three Fine Girls*. While recognizing that contemporary playwriting almost always has a collaborative aspect, I am nevertheless assuming that it is easier to isolate and trace the development of a writer’s personal vision in her solo-authored works than in her co-authored ones. My perusal of MacDonald’s collaboratively written efforts seems to bear this out: they do not deal with racial identity.
- 3 See Sears and Mitchell. Some non-Canadian playwrights have also used *Othello* to examine interracial relationships and interracial conflict, such as Carlin and Wesker.
- 4 Bernal’s book not only drew attention to such debates, it rekindled them. For responses to his work see Lefkowitz and Rogers.
- 5 See Banton, chapters five and six. See also Rex and Mason.
- 6 See, for example, the “social construct” model of race that Banton offers in chapter seven.
- 7 Prefiguring the incestuous father James Piper in *Fall on Your Knees*, Dr. Reid offers to be both a husband and a second father to the much younger Pearl (31-32, 33). Like James, his loving concern is eventually revealed to be sick and destructive.
- 8 James is annoyed that the Mahmouds call him “*enklese*” (“English”) when he is in fact of Scottish background (19). In an ironic reversal of the way many British people have tended to lump people from extremely diverse African or Asian backgrounds together, the Mahmouds think all British people look alike.
- 9 Recall that *Othello*’s nighttime elopement with Desdemona is also described as thievery (Shakespeare 1.1.76-83).
- 10 Interestingly, Leo’s African-Canadian wife, Adelaide, is never so sanguine about Leo’s friendship with Kathleen’s younger sister, Frances (345-6, 350, 353, 358, 367). Like the abandoned African-American wife in Sears’ *Othello* adaptation, *Harlem Duet* (1997), she is painfully aware of the allure of the forbidden white Desdemona.
- 11 These mixed roots are reflected in a symbolic geography that underlies MacDonald’s three works, although the plot actions do not actually take place in these regions. *Othello*, Anubis, and the Mahmouds evoke an area along the southern Mediterranean coast (comprised by “Moorish” North Africa, Egypt, and Lebanon) that functions imaginatively as a racial borderland where distinctions between “white” and “coloured” are confused.

## WORKS CITED

- Banton, Michael. *Racial Theories*. 1987. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Vol. 1. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1987.
- Brydon, Diana. "Re-writing *The Tempest*." *World Literature Written in English* 23.1 (Winter 1984): 75-88.
- . "Sister Letters: Miranda's *Tempest* in Canada." *Cross-Cultural Performances: Differences in Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*. Ed. Marianne Novy. Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1993. 165-84.
- Camus, Albert. *L'Étranger*. Paris: Gallimard, 1942.
- Carlin, Murray. *Not Now, Sweet Desdemona: A Duologue for Black and White within the Realm of Shakespeare's Othello*. Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1969.
- Fortier, Mark. "Shakespeare with a Difference: Genderbending and Genrebending in *Goodnight Desdemona*." *Canadian Theatre Review* 59 (Summer 1989): 47-51.
- Gilman, Sander. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Haller, John S. Jr. *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1990*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1971.
- Hankey, Julie. Introduction. *Othello*. By William Shakespeare. Plays in Performance Series. Bristol: Bristol Classical P, 1987. 1-134.
- Hengen, Shannon. "Towards a Feminist Comedy." *Canadian Literature* 146 (Autumn 1995): 97-109.
- Lawson, Guy. "The New Spellbinder." *Macleans* 17 June 1996: 53-54.
- Lefkowitz, Mary R., and Guy MacLean Rogers, eds. *Black Athena Revisited*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1996.
- MacDonald, Ann-Marie. *The Arab's Mouth*. Winnipeg: Blizzard, 1995.
- . *Fall on Your Knees*. Toronto: Vintage, 1997.
- . *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*. Toronto: Coach House P, 1990.
- Meyer, Susan. "Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of *Jane Eyre*." *Macropolitics of Nineteenth Century Literature*. Ed. Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvo. London: Duke UP, 1995.
- Mitchell, Ken. *Cruel Tears*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1977.
- Neill, Michael. "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.4 (Winter 1989): 383-412.
- Olivier, Laurence. *Confessions of An Actor: An Autobiography*. New York: Simon, 1982.
- Porter, Laurin R. "Shakespeare's 'Sisters': Desdemona, Juliet, and Constance Ledbelly in *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*." *Modern Drama* 38 (Fall 1995): 362-77.
- Rex, John, and David Mason, eds. *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- Sears, Djanet. *Harlem Duet*. Canada: Scirocco Drama-Shillingford, 1997.
- Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. Ed. M.R. Ridley. Arden ed. 1958. London: Methuen, 1965.
- Wesker, Arnold. "Lady Othello: A Love Story." *Lady Othello and Other Plays*. Vol. 6. London: Penguin, 1990. 189-258.
- Wilson, Ann. "Critical Revisions: Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*." *Women on the Canadian Stage: The Legacy of Hrotsvit*. Ed. Rita Much. Winnipeg: Blizzard, 1992. 1-12.