

## Essay Score: 9

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

3 XX

One often has to pay heed to the time period in which a novel or play takes place to fully grasp its deeper meaning. William Shakespeare's Othello is no exception to this. The text is rife with misogyny and general cruelty to women, but this was common ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> Elizabethan-era literature. Cruelty to women and female characters in Othello does more than demonstrate gender inequality; it also highlights the shallow values of the male perpetrators like Othello, Iago, and Cassio, providing deeper insight into Shakespeare's work.

Undoubtedly the most glaring example of cruelty and submissiveness of women <sup>in the play</sup> is the fractured relationship between Othello and his wife Desdemona. Most pressingly, Othello murders his spouse because he questions her chastity and fidelity ~~and~~ - thus exposing his insecurities. Othello is so obsessed with his military rank and social standing that even empty rumors of his wife's disloyalty (which are patently false) drive him to murder. Even earlier in the play, as an esteemed military officer, he refuses to show weakness or vulnerability to his wife. When his forehead starts to pain (a metaphor for the horns of cuckoldry)



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XX<sub>2</sub>

and Desdemona offers to care for him, he cruelly casts away her handkerchief and orders to leave him alone. He truly views her as a chattel - prize for his military prowess. He charms her with tales of battles and believes his love is predicated on woman-related respect, so he begins to mistreat Desdemona. Towards the end of the play, he instructs his men to speak of him as a hero, and not as a murderer, so obsessed is he with honor. When he finally does kill her, he dresses up in white robes and strangles her in her white wedding gown, finally stabbing himself. The juxtaposition of the red blood with the stark white clothing is a metaphor for virgin's blood on a night of intimate relations - he effectively takes her virginity for his own after having heard she cheated on him. Put more simply, his cruelty to her is motivated by an irrational obsession with honor and military might.

The heinous Tago also brazenly mistreats his own wife, Emilia, which then shows the reader Tago's true values: he only cares

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about reputation. Indeed, Iago does not care for his wife's feelings at all; he liberally brands her a "whore" in front of his esteemed colleagues and jokes about their sexual exploits in public. Emilia is obviously affected by ~~that~~ <sup>this</sup> cruel slandering, because she confides in Desdemona saying she condones adultery when it serves the husband. Iago only spreads these rumors to preserve a reputation he has; for example, when Emilia offers to tell Othello that Desdemona is innocent, Iago (who created and perpetrated this vicious rumor) threatens to kill her because it would damage his <sup>own</sup> reputation. Iago orders that Emilia remain silent and when she finally musters the courage to speak out and clear Desdemona's name, Iago stabs her and she dies. Essentially, Iago's cruelty is catalyzed by an obsession with reputation. As Cassio puts it when his own reputation ~~has~~ suffers, "reputation, reputation... I have lost the immortal part of me and what remains is bestial."

Cassio <sup>himself</sup> is also rather cruel to his female counterpart of ~~the~~ ~~same~~, who is called Bianca.

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XX<sub>4</sub>

Bianca is <sup>labeled</sup> ~~called~~ a "whore" by Iago, and so even though Cassio loves her, he tells her that he is "womaned" and cannot be seen with her. His cruelty is certainly more subtle than that of Othello or Iago, but Cassio prioritizes the approval of authority figures (Iago, Othello) over his own instinct. For example, even though Cassio knows that a handkerchief he receives is intended for another woman, he gives it to Bianca anyway knowing she will be hurt. He also <sup>partially</sup> ~~guilt~~ <sup>guilt</sup>s Desdemona into advocating him to Othello, which aggravates the Othello-infidelity problem. <sup>because Othello chooses to believe Desdemona loves Cassio</sup> Although Cassio has good intentions and should be concerned about how his superiors see him (Iago, for one, commences the <sup>play</sup> ~~plot~~ with a rant about Cassio's idleness), he still unknowingly is <sup>thereby</sup> ~~thus~~ <sup>thus</sup> proving his weakness: troubling himself with approval.

Thus, the misogyny and cruelty to women demonstrated in Othello provides a compelling portrait not only of standard



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Elizabethan English society, but also of each male character as he subjects his female counterpart to cruelty. For Othello, <sup>Iago and Cassio</sup> this exposes each one's obsession with honor, reputation, and authority respectively.

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## Essay Score: 8

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3 WW

If we are to subscribe to the innate innocence of the human being, as accords with John Locke's *tabula rasa*, it must naturally follow that cruelty is a response to the external world, ~~not an inherent trait~~. Indeed, cruelty is often reactionary rather than driven by resentment of others, ~~the~~ our response to accumulated grievances and ills. In *Othello* by William Shakespeare, a potent combination of resentment and insecurity drives cruelty throughout its five acts, ultimately crushing the most redeeming virtues of its characters.

The most extensive instance of cruelty in the novel comes from Iago, Othello's duplicitous ensign. While Iago is generally regarded as "honest," he confesses: "I am not what I am," and indeed, he proceeds to demonstrate capacities for gross injustice. ~~For~~ Iago's evil deeds, ~~the~~ when coupled with ~~the~~ his outward comments, reveal profound insight into his character and motivations. The target of Iago's machinations is Othello, and ~~in~~ on several occasions, Iago expresses frustration that he has been passed over for Othello's lieutenantcy. He also voices fears that Othello has cuckolded him. These cumulative injustices — be they real or imagined — generate an



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unquenchable thirst for retribution within Iago. It is, on a fundamental, a sense of insecurity (in the case of the adultery) and of marginalization (in the underappreciation for Iago's qualifications) that drives this shift.

yet, considering cruelty to be a learned or provoked response to our society, readers see Iago's cruelty spread and multiply. Most potently, it is Othello who is infected, and in a moment of dramatic insight, Shakespeare portrays ~~Othello's~~ a fundamental similitude between the cruelties of Othello and Iago, while they come from different races, backgrounds and social standings, both are fueled by jealousy and a sense of alienation. Indeed, Iago transfers cruelty transfers his marital fears to Othello, convincing him, by way of the symbolic handkerchief, that Desdemona has been lacked fidelity. On a greater level, he transfers his own sense of marginalization, for in Othello's fears of Desdemona's indecency, Othello feels ~~at~~ himself ~~as~~ displaced from a Venetian society in which he was already marked as fundamentally different, as an "other."

However, while Shakespeare demonstrates the



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3 WW<sub>3</sub>

infectious ~~is~~ nature of <sup>cruelty</sup> ~~jealousy~~, he most powerfully displays its potential for imperable destruction. ~~For in~~ ~~the~~ Indeed, consumed by that ~~jealous~~ "monster" that is jealousy, Othello feels compelled to use action, and not merely words. He ultimately executes Desdemona, a paragon of virtue. ~~Symbolically,~~ ~~the message is clear: cruelty can both corrupt and corrupt goodness and morality.~~ This does Shakespeare magnify the necessities ubiquitous in human society, from the ~~the~~ body messenger to the ~~retired~~ - yet ~~racially~~ alienated - war hero.

In a sense, Shakespeare deconstructs the complex problem of cruelty, ~~and~~ ~~plunging~~ linking it to our own self-doubts, without explicitly offering any solutions. Indeed, the damage done is imperable: Desdemona ~~is~~ ~~is~~ slain, and <sup>from</sup> Iago, <sup>who has</sup> ~~having~~ vowed silence henceforth, there is no hope for reconciliation. ~~It is the~~ ~~the~~ Most tragically, however, is that the propagation of cruelty will continue as Iago is tortured. ~~It~~ It is the true shame of human cruelty that too often, "the rest is silence."

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## Essay Score: 7

Question 3

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VV,

~~is~~ Oftentimes in a play or a novel, a villain will use cruelty as a means by which he can get revenge or justice. However, generally the aggressor will ~~to~~ inflict harm himself, and not have the innocent harm other innocent people. In William Shakespeare's tragic play Othello, Iago is the terribly smart villain whose means of cruelty is <sup>Pitting</sup> ~~setting~~ innocent people against each other, eventually leading to all of their deaths. Iago's cruel plot for revenge against Othello ~~is~~ shows how far a person will go in order to achieve what they believe is right.

Iago's plot originated because he believed he deserved the position of Lieutenant to Othello, the Moorish general. To enact revenge upon Othello, and Cassio (the man who Iago believes stole his position) Iago concocts a plan that is <sup>most</sup> "cruel" because Iago does none of the "dirty work" and remains innocent in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> eyes of the people he's hurting until the conclusion of the play. When ~~the~~ Othello and his new bride, Desdemona, are first married, Iago plants seeds of doubt in Othello's mind that she is cheating on him with the Lieutenant, Michael Cassio.

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Question 3  $\checkmark$   $\frac{1}{2}$

Though the audience is aware that Desdemona has never been unfaithful, and Othello at first is convinced, doubt eats away at him, and he slowly begins to doubt this marriage. The cruelty that Iago shows by slowly ripping this marriage apart is immense, and demonstrates the evil nature of his character.

The cruel nature of Iago's plan becomes more expansive when he involves both his wife, Emilia, and Othello's wife, Desdemona, in driving Othello mad. First, Iago takes a handkerchief that is a token of Othello's love to Desdemona, and has Emilia embroider another one to resemble it identically. Emilia has only the best intentions, and is being treated cruelly, as she is unaware that she is a pawn in a plot to kill her mistress, Desdemona, and her husband's boss, Othello. Also, after Iago has Cassio demoted from his position, he asks Desdemona to speak highly of Cassio around Othello, knowing that Othello will assume that Desdemona is being untrue. While only harming Othello would be evil enough, it is outright cruel to use the innocent as a way to "keep your hands clean."

Iago's cruelty transfers to others in acts



Question 3

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VV<sub>3</sub>

4 and 5 of the play, as people begin to falsely accuse each other, and kill for no reason. After Iago stabs Rodrigo and kills him, he tells Othello that he then must kill Desdemona, due to a deal that they made earlier in the play. Othello then goes to his wife's bedside and kisses her. We see that Othello is <sup>inherently</sup> a good natured man, and does not want to kill his wife. However, because Iago has driven him mad, Othello goes through with the deed and strangles his wife to death. She dies a bloodless death on her wedding sheets, symbolizing her purity and that she did not deserve to die. When Othello finds that his wife had been true, he is devastated, and also angry at Iago. Othello's death represents his good character, but also the cruelty he showed toward his wife. Othello was given the opportunity to take his life into his own hands, <sup>and kill himself</sup> ~~and~~ but when he falls on the bed next to his wife he stains the sheets with blood, showing that he has been cruel. Iago, the master of the plan, is the most cruel. For this reason, Shakespeare puts his fate into <sup>Cassio's</sup> ~~the hero's~~ hands. This is ironic because the entire cruel plan would not have



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Question 3 ✓✓<sub>4</sub>

come into existence had Iago become the lieutenant. Having the innocent man who was the unintentional catalyst for the entire situation determine the fate of cruel and evil Iago shows that Shakespeare wanted to return the situation to relative normalcy, as well as have the <sup>most</sup> cruel man eradicated by a living figure of justice. This conclusion to the play shows that although Iago's plan worked, any <sup>cruelty</sup> motivation fueled by motivation to ruin another person's life will ultimately backfire.

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## Essay Score: 6

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Question 3 DU

In the play "Othello" by William Shakespeare, cruelty is inflicted in various ways on various characters by Iago. In this case, cruelty is both a social factor, as well as political.

In a sense, Iago is instilling cruelty as a political facilitator against lieutenant Cassio because Iago desperately desires his position. On the other hand, cruelty is no more than a social factor because Iago simply "hates the moore." There are many factors that could be responsible for Iago's hatred of Othello, maybe it is a matter of race, or politics; Iago even goes as far as to think that there is a possibility Othello had an affair with his wife, Emilia.

However, no matter what the driving force is behind Iago's hatred for the moore, he is going to go to extreme lengths of cruelty to get the position of lieutenant that he feels he rightfully deserves over Cassio.

To begin, Iago plants seeds of jealousy,



Question 3

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002

"the green-eyed monster," in Othello's head, who Iago tells his wife Desdemona is having an affair with lieutenant Cassio. Iago is ruthless in the sense that he convinces Othello to kill Desdemona and Cassio because of what they have done. In reality neither has done anything, but Iago is pathological and must go to this extent of cruelty for his own political gain. Additionally, Iago is stringing along his stupid "friend" Rodrigo, who believes Iago is helping him win the heart of Desdemona, while simultaneously pretending to help Desdemona deal with her marital problems with Othello. All the while Iago is manipulating one situation and then the next to have each character fully relying on him and his "honesty," but little do they know of all the deceit he has caused.

Iago facilitated all scenarios to ~~be~~<sup>be</sup> on his side so that in the end he'll be lieutenant and Othello will be forever grateful to him. By the

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Question 3 UU<sub>3</sub>

End of the play, Othello has killed Desdemona, and then after finding out the truth kills himself. Othello stabs himself and then lies next to Desdemona's lifeless body. Iago's wife Emilia then ~~argues~~ ~~with~~ argues with Iago because she has figured out all he's done and while arguing facilitates in the killing ~~over~~ of herself because she is so upset over the death of her friend, Desdemona, as well as the monster of a husband she ~~had~~ married. As if that is not enough cruelty in one play, Iago stages a murder in the street by robbers and fatally wounds Roderigo.

Iago commits multiple acts of deceit and cruelty over the course of "Othello" which ultimately reveals sinister and domineering aspects of his ~~to~~ anti-social personality. Iago feels no remorse for his actions because truly his only care in the world is himself. ~~While~~ His motivation ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> not cruelty; however, Iago seems to have no problem going to extreme lengths



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UU<sub>4</sub>

to get what he wants.

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## Essay Score: 5

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In William Shakespeare's tragedy "Othello" ~~the~~ the tragic hero, Othello is taken down by ~~and~~ a victim of Iago's cruelty. Iago's cruelty drives the entire play and leads to the downfall and suicide <sup>of</sup> ~~of the tragic hero~~ Othello. Through manipulative lies and manouvers Iago's evil personality reveals ~~the~~ his true motives.

From the moment Michael Cassio is chosen as lieutenant Iago wants revenge. Iago wants revenge on Cassio for being given the title he wanted and he wants revenge on Othello for not appointing him to the position of ~~at~~ lieutenant. Iago devises an evil and manipulative plan to get revenge and take both men down. Iago's plan and personality are cruel because the way in which he destroys them is not through violence but through trust and friendship. Iago has an outstanding reputation for being an honest man, when he is <sup>anything</sup> ~~everything~~ but honest.

Iago begins by destroying Othello's trust in Cassio. Iago fools Cassio into getting drunk and tricks him into ~~fighting~~ <sup>fighting</sup> ~~bravling~~ with another man, Othello, of course, witnesses the brawl and fires Cassio on the spot. This is only the beginning of Iago's plan, he now becomes close with Cassio and gives him false hope about earning back his title as lieutenant. Iago persuades Cassio to seek help from Othello's Venetian wife Desdemona, and then Iago uses this to convince Othello that his lovely wife is having an affair



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TT<sub>2</sub>

with Michael Cassio. Othello is quick to become jealous and believe Iago, because Iago is his friend and he trusts him. This is the beginning of Othello's downfall. ~~Iago's cruelty is so painful to the other characters because they trusted him.~~

Iago's cruelty and motivation to destroy Cassio and Othello propels the entire play. Without Iago's ~~two~~ cruel motivations there would be no play. The play is completely centered around Iago's devious, two-faced personality. ~~His~~ Iago's cruel personality however, reveals to the reader that although Iago may be extremely tough on the surface his motivation for his cruelty resides in his emotions. This cruelty ~~all~~ began ~~begin~~ ~~begin~~ simply because he was not awarded a position. Iago is hurt, emotionally. He feels his reputation has been tarnished when he is not given this job and because that is the only thing he cares about he reacts in an extreme way.

Iago uses cruelty for revenge. By becoming friends with and gaining the trust of his victims it breaks their hearts and hurts them more than violence will. The pain that ~~they~~ Cassio, Othello and even Emilia (Iago's wife) and Desdemona will feel from Iago's cruel betrayal will hurt ~~more~~ them more than any form of physical violence ever will.

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## Essay Score: 4

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3 SS,

In the play "Othello" by William Shakespeare, Iago acts as an agent of evil to manipulate other characters and reveal the nature of evil in humanity.

Iago wants Cassio's title of lieutenant because he believes Cassio is unqualified and he is jealous that Othello promoted Cassio and not him. Iago ultimately proposes a plan to strip Cassio of his lieutenantcy by provoking him and denouncing him to Othello. To keep up with his evil plan, Iago must manipulate every character to uphold his lie of Cassio and Desdemona being lovers. Iago implants the suggestion of Cassio's and Desdemona's sexual relationship and love in Othello's mind. As a result, Othello enraged with jealousy accuses Desdemona of being a whore and vows to kill her as well as Cassio.

However, Othello's tragic flaw is his inability to see the truth because he is

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SS<sub>2</sub>

blinded by jealousy, a product of ~~the~~  
~~the~~ Iago's ~~evil~~ evil man relations  
 Although Othello is coerced by Iago,  
 Othello's true evil nature is revealed  
~~as~~ it is he who decides to kill  
 Desdemona. Iago only spots the  
 human capacity of evil in Othello which  
 reveals that evil is part of human  
 nature. Furthermore, Iago's evil  
 nature reveals that he is drawn  
 to manipulation to achieve his  
 desires and ultimately enjoys  
 torturing people.

In "Othello" by William Shakespeare  
 Iago's nature of evil suggests that  
 he enjoys manipulation and ultimately  
 that humans have true evil within.  
 Iago uses manipulation to get what  
 he wants but his capacity for evil  
 turns into cruel torture to other  
 characters. ~~His~~ His power of suggestion  
 fuels Othello's desire to kill Desdemona  
 which reveals that evil is found within  
 the human heart.

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## Essay Score: 3

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Question 3 RR,

In literature, many antagonists are cruel for their own selfish reasons. In Othello <sup>the play</sup> by William Shakespeare, Iago is cruel to Roderigo, Cassio, ~~Desdemona~~ and Othello mostly for political gain. This relates to the theme of betrayal. Iago's main target is the title character of Othello but in order to carry out his evil plan he first must use Roderigo, a man who is desperately in love with Desdemona, Othello's wife. Iago gains his trust but will soon literally stab him in the back.

Iago hates Othello because he gave a military position <sup>that Iago thought he deserved</sup> away to Cassio, so naturally Cassio will be a victim too. Iago gains the trust of Cassio while slowly framing him for sleeping with Desdemona and turning Othello against him.

Cassio's <sup>own</sup> fall is not enough for Iago, his plan must end with Othello's demise. Iago is Othello's ancient so he knows Othello will trust him with anything. Iago plants the seed in Othello's head that Desdemona is unfaithful to him, and this slowly turns Othello crazy until he kills Desdemona and then himself.

Iago's cruel acts of betrayal self throughout the play reveal that Iago knows what jealousy can do to Othello because it is happening to him as well. Iago's deeds relate to the theme of betrayal and the meaning of the work as a whole.



Question 3

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RR<sub>2</sub>

The cruelty done by Iago was done because Iago was jealous and wanted Othello to ~~feel~~ feel the same things that he did.

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## Essay Score: 2

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Question 3 QQ

In the novel "Othello" the author portrays and develops a dramatic story with cruelty, ~~and love~~ and ~~lust~~. A novel ~~created~~ filled with lies and backstabbing. "Othello" is a novel about a man named Othello and how his right hand man betrayed him because of jealousy. In the novel there is a character named Iago. Iago plays the antagonist, he is a man full of cruelty. Iago was upset with Othello because of the fact that Othello ~~was~~ picked someone else to be his

~~The play~~ The play "The Crucible" is an allegory about McCarthyism and ~~is~~ about the real scare. In the play ~~the~~ the protagonist, Proctor, has an affair with young teenaged Abigail and his wife <sup>(Elizabeth)</sup> was suspicious about them two she had fired ~~Abigail~~ Abigail. Abigail was upset so she came up with the idea of witchcraft. ~~Abigail~~ In that time period if you were accused of witchcraft then you were automatically sentenced to death. So Abigail took her chance and claimed that ~~Proctor~~ and Elizabeth was using witchcraft on her and her friends, which sentenced Elizabeth to death roll. Proctor stood up for his wife and told the truth but



Question 3

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QQ<sub>2</sub>

Elizabeth would not go ~~thru~~ through with it for the sake of Proctor's name. So that sentenced ~~both~~ both of them to death. This ~~is~~ shows that cruelty can function in many ways and one way is by jealousy. What cruelty reveals about ~~the~~ Abigail is that her jealousy turned into revenge.

Another way ~~more~~ cruelty works in jealousy is in the novel "Othello". In the novel "Othello" Iago manipulates Othello into believing that his wife, Desdemona, is cheating on him with ~~his near neighbor~~ <sup>ca 55, 0</sup> ~~man~~. Now Iago is only does this out of pure jealousy and hate because Othello did not <sup>choose</sup> ~~pick~~ him. Iago uses this ~~cruelty~~ cruelty to get Othello to kill his right hand man and his wife so the only person left is Iago. By using this cruelty Iago faith was not happy because he is paralyzed for life.

Sometimes revenge and cruelty does not work and you ~~end~~ end up getting a taste of your own medicine.

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## Essay Score: 1

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PP

Cruelty serves as a purpose of motivation to a major ~~social~~<sup>social</sup> or political factor in the novel "Othello" by William Shakespeare. Cruelty is the fuel for Othello's purpose to serve his people in the righteous manner.

Othello was a black male in medieval times who shared a passionate love with the king's daughter.

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## Table Leader Notes

## Question #3

*Othello* Full Run 1–9

- 9 (XX) Well-focused, persuasive, and sophisticated analysis of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Writing is effective and provides a detailed discussion of theme, meaning, and characters (Iago as victim and perpetrator) as they relate to cruelty: **"Thus, the misogyny and cruelty to women demonstrated in *Othello* provides a compelling portrait not only of standard Elizabethan English society, but also of each male character as he subjects his female counterpart to cruelty. For Othello, Iago, and Cassio, this exposes each one's obsession with honor, reputation, and authority respectively."**
- 8 (WW) Persuasive in theme and characters in relation to cruelty. The essay provides sufficient details to support thesis and has effective control of language and vocabulary. Uses apt quotations throughout the essay embedded in analysis. Essay culminates with the meaning of the work as a whole: **"In a sense, Shakespeare deconstructs the complex problem of cruelty, linking it to our own self-doubts, without explicitly offering any solutions."**
- 7 (VV) This essay has a strong introduction and strong conclusion, particularly the last sentence of the conclusion: **"This conclusion to the play shows that although Iago's plan worked, any cruelty fueled by motivation to ruin another person's life will ultimately backfire."** More analytical than the 6 essay, the writing in this paper is more fluid and provides an insightful discussion of theme and characters. Analyzes how cruelty represents theme and the meaning of the work as a whole.
- 6 (UU) Analysis is less thorough than the 7 essay, and provides a reasonable analysis of cruelty and theme. This essay is less perceptive and the thesis is supported by less specific details. The introduction implies the meaning of the work as a whole.
- 5 (TT) Plausible, yet superficial analysis of *Othello*. Essay generally relies on plot summary alone, with thin analysis of the significance of cruelty in paragraph four: **"Iago's cruel personality, however, reveals to the reader that although Iago may be extremely tough on the surface, his motivation for this cruelty resides in his emotions."**
- 4 (SS) Clearly lower-half, this essay relies on plot summary alone, particularly the two body paragraphs. Confuses "nature of evil" with cruelty. Though brief, the writing is slightly better than the 3 essay.
- 3 (RR) Fails to offer an adequate analysis of the play. The analysis, mostly plot summary, is partial and reflects an oversimplified understanding of cruelty and how it functions in the play to reflect theme.
- 2 (QQ) This student writer chooses two texts (*The Crucible* and *Othello*, with a brief discussion of *Othello* in the second paragraph).
- 1 (PP) Unacceptably brief in its discussion of the play (two sentences).