

1. *Othello* is a play about the passion of jealousy, how and why it arises. For this paper, explore the reasons for Othello's jealousy as they develop through the story. Why is he so susceptible to Iago's manipulations? Is he "disposed" to be jealous, or does Iago "poison" him with passion? What, if anything, does his racial identity have to do with what happens to him and what he eventually does to Desdemona?
2. Iago is arguably the most interesting character in the play. For this paper, analyze his motives for doing what he does to Othello and to the other characters in the play. Is it thwarted ambition, sexual jealousy, or pure spite? Does he articulate a clear philosophy to explain his behavior (what does he mean when he says "I am not what I am")? Does class identity play a part in his cynicism?
3. For this topic, compare Othello and Iago. Are they "mirror images" of one another? How so? Analyze the differences and similarities between them. Then examine what their relationship reveals about the nature of truth and falsehood in the play. Think in this regard of the Liar's Paradox ("I am lying to you now").
4. What is the relationship between "desire" and "love" in *A Streetcar Named Desire*? Are they different, or do they overlap one another? Are they complementary, or do they cancel one another out? Focus on the play's principal characters (Blanche, Stanley, Mitch, Stella) in terms of how they feel and express (or not) their passions.
5. Examine the dialectic of cruelty and kindness in the play. Who is cruel, and why? What does it mean or take to be kind? Explore the social contexts of the play. What does class have to do with Blanche's kindness, or Stanley's cruelty?
6. For this essay, compare *Othello* and *Streetcar*. Can you see connections between the themes and passions of the two plays? What does race and class have to do with the tragic events in each? One particular avenue of similarity you could explore is the use in both plays of metaphors that refer to light, vision, blindness and (in)sight. Another would be corollary metaphors of darkness and light, blackness and whiteness, "dirty" and "pure."