

This is a remarkable essay for someone of school age. The student defines a fascinating and original research question that enables her to take a fresh look at three Shakespeare plays in relation to sixteenth-century national prejudices about France and the French. The introduction is exemplary in the way it sets out the research question, puts it in a carefully researched historical and academic context and makes a good case for its significance. The texts are then skilfully analysed and connected to each other by a vigorous and persuasive argument that draws on impressively wide reading. The writing is fluent and elegant. One might argue that the abstract only implies rather than states how the investigation was conducted, and that references to quotations from the texts would have been better in parentheses rather than in a second set of footnotes, but these imperfections are not enough to deny full marks to such an outstanding essay.