

AS AND A-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE A

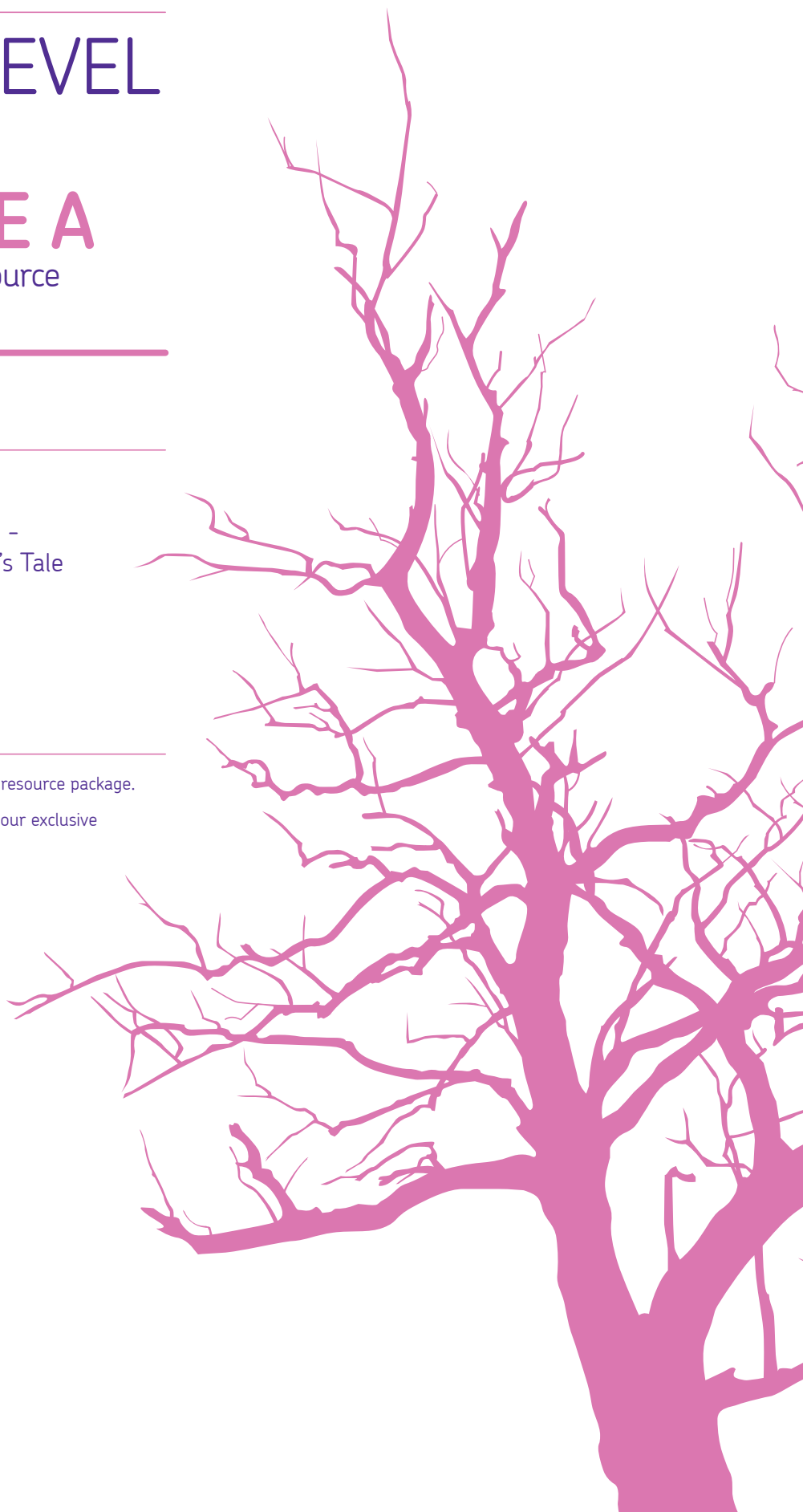
'Love through the ages': resource
package A

For teaching from September 2015
For assessment from June 2017

- Creating your own questions
- Specimen question commentary –
Paper 1, Section A – The Winter's Tale
- Example answer – band 2 – The
Winter's Tale
- Example answer – band 5 – The
Winter's Tale

This resource is part of the Love through the ages resource package.

Further resource packages are available as part of our exclusive
resource collection.



Love through the ages - resource package A

AS and A-level English Literature A (7711/7712)

For teaching from September 2015

Introduction

We have developed a range of resources to help you plan your teaching and to create practice exam questions for every component of AS and A-level English Literature A.

In this package you find a variety of resources related to Love through the ages, including:

- creating your own questions guidance document, to give you the power to create your own practice exam questions
- sample assessment materials, which include question papers and mark schemes
- specimen question commentaries, which explain how a question taken from the sample assessment materials addresses the assessment objectives, and which give some suggestions of how the task might be approached
- exemplar student responses with marking commentary, including two responses of different mark bands are given to a specific question from the Sample Assessment Materials.

Resources in this package

- Creating your own questions
- Specimen question commentary - Paper 1, Section A - *The Winter's Tale*
- Example answer - band 2 - *The Winter's Tale*
- Example answer - band 5 - *The Winter's Tale*

How to use these resources

These documents are clearly an excellent starting point when planning your teaching. If you haven't yet decided on which texts or text combinations to teach, the sample mark schemes give you details about some of the aspects of the theme of love each text covers, which can help you decide. Don't forget to consult the specification for a list of possible aspects. Once you have decided, these documents will help you to focus your teaching on those aspects and to work towards the relevant exam question in the sample mark schemes. The exemplar student responses with marking commentary act as models for the students and help you to assess their work.

Visit aqa.org.uk/love-is

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Creating your own questions

AS and A-level English Literature A (7711/7712)

Love through the ages - resource package A

For teaching from September 2015

Introduction

Below you will find instructions on how to use the accompanying resources to create your own exam practice questions. This example shows you how to use the Love through the ages resource package A to set questions for Paper 1, Section A.

Paper 1, Section A

If you have used the relevant question from the sample assessment materials and want to set a question on a different passage, you can use these documents in the following way:

1. Look at how the relevant question from the sample assessment materials is constructed:

[Extract from *The Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 264-318]

'Paradoxically, texts often present jealousy as springing from the very deepest kind of love.'

In the light of this view, discuss how Shakespeare presents Leontes' feelings for Hermione in this extract and elsewhere in the play.

The question stem can remain unchanged i.e. 'In the light of this view, discuss how Shakespeare presents...in this extract and elsewhere in the play.'

2. You will need to choose a different passage from the text depending upon the aspect(s) of love you want the students to explore.

- Read the specimen question commentary to help you choose a different passage for analysis: consider the different possible aspects of love, the various characters who might be involved and the action in the play which might provide the best passages.

3. You will need to construct a different 'view' to debate. Look for aspects of love which occur in the text but don't forget that the absence of aspects in a text is equally valid for debate. Other sources can be used to construct a view:

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- look at the list of aspects of love in the specification and make up a critical view around one of these
 - research critical views on this text around which to structure a debate
 - research critical views on another text about 'love' (non-set texts included) and adapt the quote in a more general sense so that students can consider how far this can be said to be true of the text they have studied.

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Exemplar student response and examiner commentary

AS and A-level English Literature A (7711/7712)
Love through the ages – resource package A

For teaching from September 2015

Introduction

Below you will find an exemplar student response to a Section A question in the sample assessment materials, followed by an examiner commentary on the response.

Paper 1, Section A

[Extract from *The Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 264-318]

'Paradoxically, texts often present jealousy as springing from the very deepest kind of love.'

In the light of this view, discuss how Shakespeare presents Leontes' feelings for Hermione in this extract and elsewhere in the play.

Band 2 response

Throughout the play, Shakespeare uses the idea of duality and contrasts between different ideas. In the passage alone, there is ideas of love and jealousy and pastoral aspects juxtaposed with courtly aspects.

In the passage, Leontes' jealousy is very clear. He mentions a "cuckold's horn", which identifies that he is ashamed of what has happened to him. During Shakespearean times, a husband being a "cuckold" was shameful, especially a king, which Shakespeare includes in this passage, and continues throughout the text. Leontes also calls his wife a "hobby-horse", which appears to be an insult towards Hermione. However, this "horse" links to pastoral ideas and hints at the connection between the courtly and pastoral aspects of the play. Shakespeare also includes lots of punctuation at the end of lines, which create pauses in Leontes' dialogue. This hints at the idea that Leontes is overcome by emotion and could possibly be losing control on what he's saying. However, it could also suggest that he is just looking for attention and pauses to think very carefully about what he's saying to try and incriminate Hermione even more. This indicates his rage at what she has done, which could arguably be a match for his jealousy. Yet, there is no clear reasoning behind the use of punctuation, and the meaning comes down to how it is portrayed by an actor. The passage also seems to get more extreme as it goes on. Leontes appears to be overwhelmed with his own emotion, which is portrayed through the erratic punctuation – "cuckold's horn – or heard – for to a vision . . ." He then starts asking rhetorical questions, such as "is whispering nothing?" This indicates that he is trying to get Camillo to agree with him about the

severity of Hermione's actions, and could arguably suggest that he is trying to convince himself as well. Yet, by the end of the passage, his jealousy has turned to rage, and threatens to poison her – "might bespice a cup". This highlights that perhaps his jealousy can be matched by his rage. There are aspects of the play that hint at the idea of Leontes' love being the reasoning behind the jealousy. His friend Polixenes says "this jealousy is for a precious creature." This indicates that the jealousy Leontes is experiencing is a result of Hermione being too "precious" to him. He then goes on to say "as she's rare, it must be great . . it must be violent." This arguably suggests that the severity of his rage must have come from his deep love for her.

The idea of jealousy somehow being linked with love introduces the idea of duality to the play. In the extract there are also signs of the contrast between pastoral themes and royal aspects of the play. This is directly linked to the main themes of the play, tragedy and comedy. The genre of the play is tragicomedy, and Shakespeare highlights this with a clear distinction between the two main ideas. He does this by including a home for comedy, Bohemia, and a home for tragedy, Sicilia. It is clear that Bohemia is the home of comedy because it is the pastoral realm in the play where true love can flourish. Shakespeare introduces Shepherd to the audience, with his obvious rural language – "Mercy on's, a barne! A very pretty barne!" and the way he would have been dressed, the audience would have seen the clear shift between tragedy and comedy. Furthermore, the audience are then introduced to Clown, who acts as comic relief, which further highlights this transition from tragedy to comedy. Yet, even though the shift has been made, the links back to tragedy still remain. The baby Perdita, who belongs in Sicilia, remains in Bohemia. This links the two realms together, and this bond is strengthened by the relationship between Perdita and Florizel. (Shep.) "He says he loves my daughter: I think so too."

A common aspect of comedy that Shakespeare includes in this play is disguise. This also strengthens the ideas of duality and also indicates the theme of comedy. Polixenes and Camillo both disguise themselves as commoners, and visit Perdita and Florizel. This also links to the idea of pastoral or comic, and royal or tragic aspects of the play being mixed in with each other, where the love between Leontes and Hermione can be compared with the love between Perdita and Florizel.

The depth of Leontes' jealousy has clearly come from his love for Hermione, which suggests that they must be equal to each other. However, the comedic aspects of the play are much stronger and even take up more of the play. This shows that comedy will overcome tragedy, and therefore love will over power jealousy. Yet, there is still Leontes' rage that sprung from his jealousy, which could also be equal to each other. Leontes' jealousy can be matched by his rage, but still overpowered by his love for Hermione which is seen at the end of the play when he sees her statue and says, "O thus she stood . . when first I woo'd her."

Examiner commentary

AO1

A simplistic argument for which there seems to have been little careful planning: the selection of ideas and their organisation are flawed. Terminology is generally appropriate. The answer is reasonably accurate in respect of spelling, punctuation and grammar, but the expression is narrow in range, inexact and repetitive. A conspicuous error of interpretation occurs in paragraph 2: it is Polixenes that Leontes suggests Camillo might poison, not Hermione.

AO2

There is simple analysis of the extract - with textual reference to Shakespeare's language choices, punctuation, rhetorical questions and comment on their effect - and an awareness of the play in performance.

AO3

Mention is made of cuckoldry and its repercussion for husband and wife. There is awareness of the context of the court. Two loving couples are compared in a generalised way, but only to illustrate a dubious argument about the 'duality' of tragedy and comedy, royal and pastoral.

AO4

Comment is offered on the idea of tragic-comedy and the place of a jealous lover in that kind of drama. There is discussion of Leontes' jealous behaviour towards his wife; thereby connecting with the theme of love and offering some exploration, with some references chosen from 'elsewhere in the play'. The attendant paradox is only tentatively identified.

AO5

An attempt is made to present a debate focused on the key words in the questions ('jealousy', 'springing from', 'deepest', 'love'), but it is only partially successful. Material is introduced which is not made relevant, e.g. on 'duality' and on disguises.

[A Band 2 mark would seem appropriate]

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Exemplar student response and examiner commentary

AS and A-level English Literature A (7711/7712)

Love through the ages – resource package A

For teaching from September 2015

Introduction

Below you will find an exemplar student response to a Section A question in the sample assessment materials, followed by an examiner commentary on the response.

Paper 1, Section A

[Extract from *The Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 264-318]

'Paradoxically, texts often present jealousy as springing from the very deepest kind of love.'

In the light of this view, discuss how Shakespeare presents Leontes' feelings for Hermione in this extract and elsewhere in the play.

Band 5 response

It could be said to some extent that the depth of Leontes' jealousy is matched only by the depth of his love for Hermione, however irrational that may seem. In his conversation with Camillo, the depth and intensity of his jealousy towards the relationship between Hermione and Polixenes is clearly demonstrated through both Shakespeare's use of language and contextual factors. Shakespeare has created, in the character of Leontes, a man who does not hesitate to belittle his wife, accusing her of being a woman of a promiscuous nature, describing her as a 'hobby-horse', which has connotations of being ridden and here has a sexual meaning. He also describes Polixenes as 'he that wears her like her medal', which objectifies her into something merely to be worn. The jealous nature of Leontes causes him to insult his wife, and Polixenes who he has loved until now as a life-long friend ('there rooted betwixt them such an affection which cannot chose but branch now').

A particular phrase used in this passage is the 'cuckold's horn', which was a common expression in the Jacobean era and refers to a man's fixation on being made a cuckold through his wife's having sex with another man, which Leontes later calls being 'a bed-swarver'. A large proportion of Shakespeare's audience would recognise that reference as a shameful thing to admit to. The idea that the woman in the relationship would have the upper hand and be more powerful than her husband would have been controversial and frowned upon in the patriarchal society in which *The Winter's Tale* is set, as well as in 17th century England. Leontes is afraid his reputation as King of Sicily will be damaged in this way, which increases his rage.

A technique that Shakespeare employs to demonstrate to the audience the depth of Leontes' feelings in this extract is the use of caesural pauses, with phrases such as 'man that does not think – My wife is slippery?' and 'If thou wilt confess – Or else be imprudently negative.' Such pauses reflect the speaker's aggression; he is so full of jealousy and anger that he cannot form complete or coherent sentences and must often add alternatives into phrases such as 'mute – or thought –' in order for them to make sense. Moreover, from a dramatic perspective this can easily be enhanced by the actor cast in the role of Leontes since much of the tone of this passage depends upon the way the actor speaks his lines and uses gestures and other movement, like pacing up and down or seizing Camillo's clothing and thrusting his face into his.

Shakespeare also conveys the intensity of Leontes' jealousy through the responses and reactions he gives to Camillo, supposedly Leontes' most trusted advisor, yet in the middle of the extract Leontes accuses Camillo of lying and claims to 'hate' him, calling him 'a gross lout' and 'a hovering temporizer'. This shows how Leontes is so fired up by his jealous suspicions that he would even believe a 'gentleman' of Camillo's formerly untarnished reputation would lie to him and eventually thinks he must be a 'false villain' and 'pandar' who has plotted with Polixenes against his life. Such extreme behaviour can only be explained by the sheer depth of feeling Leontes has for Hermione. This is a paradox. It seems the opposite of what you would expect from a man who loves his wife. Leontes resents the friendliness between Hermione and Polixenes. We have to think he loves his wife deeply because in the earlier part of Act 1 scene 2 he reminds her in front of the court how hard he had to woo her before she agreed to marry him and say 'I am yours for ever'. Such a strong love makes it difficult to believe in one's partner's treachery and to face the possibility of losing her. Leontes is vulnerable to his own worst imaginings and feelings. The depth of his love for Hermione is shown again in the final scenes of the play, first of all in his behaviour before her statue moves ('she was as tender As infancy and grace') and afterwards ('this is a match, And made between's by vows') where no jealousy interferes because the rage is all burnt out and replaced by sincere repentance for his unjust accusations. Leontes has realised the error of his ways, feeling 'more stone' than the statue itself, and almost worshipping Hermione who has 'such majesty of life' and 'a taste as sweet As any cordial comfort.' He openly wants to kiss the statue as a sign of his love.

On the other hand it could be said that it is Paulina who causes Leontes to reconsider his jealous actions and admit the error of his ways. Paulina's love for Hermione and her belief in the queen's innocence is in every way a match for Leontes' jealousy. When she appeals to him to acknowledge the terrible wrong he has done, Paulina uses much more delicate language than Camillo does. Camillo says that Leontes has a 'diseased opinion' and that his words have never been less becoming of him than now. Paulina, however, says that she will not call him a tyrant but that his actions are reminiscent of tyranny and will 'ignoble' him. This is an example of Paulina appealing to Leontes' own view of himself which is shown to the audience when he talks of being made a cuckold. It could be said that it is Leontes' realisation of the serious repercussions his actions will have on his reputation that makes him repent. This, however, does imply that his love for Hermione is not as strong as his jealousy because his mind is easily altered by the reminder of the damage to his status as king. Perhaps Paulina's platonic love for Hermione runs much deeper than Leontes' ever could. She certainly shows absolute devotion to 'her' Antigonus. In addition, it is only after Mamillius dies that Leontes truly begins to think about the evil of his actions. The death of his beloved son is a catalyst for his eventual redemption.

To answer the question, I would say that Leontes' love for Hermione is strong or deep enough to be the cause of his jealousy. They are both overwhelmingly powerful feelings and one 'springs from' the other because if you love someone so very much you are vulnerable to the fear of losing them. Strangely, it is as though jealousy is like the other side of the same coin as love. Although Leontes is temporarily blinded by an irrational anger (which is also directed towards his friend

Polixenes and his loyal advisor Camillo) he soon realises what he has lost, and slowly regains his better nature in humility, and rediscovers his love for his wife who he thought was dead but is overjoyed to find is alive.

Examiner commentary

AO1

Ideas are organised and almost always well-expressed. There is no slavish plodding through the extract from start to finish, but a confident, perceptive and wide-ranging exploration of the issues through argument or debate. The question is answered, and focus on the key words is sustained. Appropriate terms are used and technical accuracy is of a high standard. Just occasionally the style becomes awkward but this is work produced under the pressure of exam conditions.

AO2

Assertions are supported with direct or indirect reference to the passage and, importantly, to other parts of the play. Attention is paid to the detail of the text, i.e. the words and actions of significant characters. Quotations are skilfully embedded, and often accompanied by perceptive explanation and/or analysis.

AO3

Contextual material is used appositely to demonstrate the 'reception' of the play and the impact on audiences, including those of Shakespeare's time - e.g. the material on cuckolds - which frequently and genuinely enhances the argument.

AO4

The representation of Leontes' passionate nature and consequent behaviour through the play - as it moves from love to suspicion to jealous rage to regret to penitence - is perceptively explored, and thereby connected to the broader representation of jealousy as a central issue of the 'love through the ages' theme.

AO5

Alternative interpretations are investigated and expounded with understanding, assurance and some insight, evidence of a personal and well thought-out response to the play.

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Specimen question commentary

AS and A-level English Literature A (7711/7712)

Love through the ages – resource package A

For teaching from September 2015

Introduction

This resource explains how a question taken from the sample assessment material addresses the assessment objectives, with some suggestions of how the task might be approached. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every point that could be made but it gives teachers and students some guidance that will support their work on this paper.

Paper 1, Section A

As this is a closed book exam students will need to know their texts very well and be able to recall specific details that can be used in their responses.

Sample Question

Question 4: The Winter's Tale

[Extract from The Winter's Tale, I. ii. 264-318]

'Paradoxically, texts often present jealousy as springing from the very deepest kind of love.'

In the light of this view, discuss how Shakespeare presents Leontes' feelings for Hermione in this extract and elsewhere in the play.

How the question meets the Assessment Objectives

In this question, as throughout the paper, the assessment objectives are all assessed. As a result, almost all the words in the question should be addressed, as these are clearly connected to the assessment objectives: paradoxically, jealousy, springing from, deepest kind of love; in the light of this view, discuss how, Shakespeare, presents, feelings, this extract, elsewhere in the play.

AO1 is tested through the ways the students organise and express their ideas as they are analysing the passage and exploring the view. Value is placed on technical accuracy, appropriate use of terminology and the structure of the argument.

AO2 is set up in the requirement to 'discuss how Shakespeare presents Leontes feelings for.....' This requires analysis of Shakespeare's dramatic methods through a consideration of his use of language, imagery and other stylistic devices which determine how meanings are shaped.

AO3 is addressed when students demonstrate an understanding of the literary, dramatic and cultural contexts in which *The Winter's Tale* is placed. Students will show their understanding of the wider social and cultural expectations of marriage; they will also be able to explore contexts of audience reception through awareness of the different ways in which this scene can and has been performed.

To address **AO4** students should link the typicality of the extract and the play as a whole to the theme of 'Love through the Ages', with particular reference to the destructive power of jealous behaviour, what may cause it, how it affects other characters and influences events. They could usefully explore the idea of tragic-comedy and the characteristic features of Shakespeare's so-called 'romances' or 'late plays'.

Finally, **AO5** tests students' skill when engaging with different interpretations arising out of the point of view at the beginning of the question.

It may be helpful if students begin their answer by establishing where the extract comes in the text of the play and by saying what it is about. For example: 'At this stage of the play, Leontes' life-long friend Polixenes has been a guest in the Sicilian court for nine months. He says he must now return home to Bohemia. Egged on by Leontes, Hermione urges him to stay. In the course of their conversation she 'gives her hand to Polixenes', an action which galvanises Leontes into suspicion of their motives ('Too hot, too hot! . . . O, that is entertainment my bosom likes not, nor my brows.'), which very quickly turns to an irrational and jealous rage. Camillo, a hitherto trusted friend at Leontes' court, feels he has to speak up.'

Possible content: the extract

Students could choose to write about the following dramatic features in the extract: the rapid deterioration of the relationship between Leontes and Camillo which turns to abuse ('gross lout', 'mindless slave') and accusations of lying; the excessive nature of Leontes' jealous outburst; the sudden build-up of anger in Leontes' first speech; his latent anxiety about being cuckolded; Camillo's defence of Hermione – who he believes to be innocent – and concern for her husband's sanity; the torrent of offensive language, suggesting that Hermione is guilty of unfaithful, licentious behaviour ('slippery', 'hobby-horse', 'flax-wench that puts to Before her troth-plight', 'horsing on foot'); the listing of physical intimacies, in which Polixenes is also implicated ('meeting noses', 'kissing with inside lip'); the imagery of infection, disease and cure; the chilling, categorical and emphatic repetition of 'nothing'; the closing lines in which Leontes contemplates having Polixenes murdered ('mightst bespice a cup') thereby placing an intolerable burden on Camillo's loyalties to both men.

Possible content: the wider context

In investigating Leontes' jealousy, which seems to be at such odds with ('paradoxically') the deep love he shows for his wife elsewhere in the play, students will be connecting with one of the central issues of the theme of love. Jealousy and suspicion are represented as having a devastatingly destructive power (as they are in other plays by Shakespeare, e.g. *Othello* and *King Lear* and even in *Much Ado About Nothing*). Thus the extract offers a way into a broader and richer understanding

of 'literary representation'. Candidates could provide comment on the idea of tragi-comedy or 'romance'; the high price typically placed by husbands upon the purity and fidelity of their wives; the fear and shame of being mocked as a cuckold, by other men and by society at large.

Examples of 'love' between characters are provided by Leontes and Hermione; Mamillius and his parents; Paulina and Antigonus; Perdita and Florizel; Old Shepherd and Perdita (although the emotional tie here is primarily one of fatherly pride); Camillo and Leontes and Polixenes (love expressed in loyal service to a king).

Significance

Candidates might enlarge upon any of the above points and suggest what 'meanings' arise from the ideas contained in them. Observations could be made about the following: how Leontes' moves in a trice from speaking lovingly of his wife (1. ii. 87-106) to suspecting her of adulterous behaviour; the precipitate development of his jealousy which is to drive the plot of the play and result in his ordering Camillo to kill Polixenes, his rejection of his new-born daughter, and to Hermione's supposed death; the social and cultural expectations of marriage from an early 17th century point-of-view (cp. the ideal marriage of Paulina and Antigonus, and the good omens for the imminent marriage of Perdita and Florizel); the great value placed on a queen's virtue in the patriarchal context of a court; contemporary ideas about love as a sickness; a woman seen as a man's possession in every sense; pure women; cuckoldry.

Debate could centre on questions such as: Is Leontes fully responsible for his thoughts, feelings and actions? Is he suffering some form of mental breakdown? Should the audience feel pity for him, as well as for Hermione and Camillo?

Consideration might be given to: Leontes' horror immediately the Oracle's pronouncements are read out (3. ii. 149ff.); Polixenes' and Camillo's acknowledgement that Leontes' jealousy must spring incomprehensibly from his love for Hermione; Leontes' behaviour in Acts 4 and 5, where he passes successively through stages of sorrow, mourning, penitence and reverence before Hermione's statue; the conclusion that true love outweighs or triumphs over jealousy in the end.

Students might spot a possible parallel between Leontes' love for Hermione and that of Florizel for Perdita, each man recognising in his love something stronger than the rational, a kind of 'madness' even (Florizel at IV.4.483ff and Leontes at V.3.72-73).

Of course, students can disagree with the view put forward in the question, asserting with appropriate textual illustration that: jealousy – at least temporarily - is stronger than love; Leontes is fickle, foolish, stubborn, arrogant ('There is no truth at all i' th'Oracle . . . this is mere falsehood.'), possessive and tyrannical, shown best of all by his persisting with the trial of Hermione, which seems particularly callous seeing she has just given birth.

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