**CPD 2017**

**Component 2: Assessing Shakespeare**

Look at the following paragraph, taken from an essay produced by a candidate in the summer 2017 series, in response to the question:

**‘*King Lear* is a tragedy of family life.’ How far do you agree with this interpretation of *King Lear*?**

* Consider how relevant the context supplied actually is.
* Assess the paragraph for AO1, AO2 and AO3.

**Example 1**

Firstly, *King Lear* can be seen as a ‘tragedy of family life’ due to the pride and selfishness of Lear in the opening of the play. Instantly, he decides to divide his kingdom in three as shown through the imperatives ‘Give me the map’ and ‘know tis our fast intent to divide into three our kingdom.’ A contemporary audience would have grown suspicious with regards to Lear’s actions as they were familiar with the dangers of dividing Britain, Through this, Shakespeare not only overtly praises the monarch of the time – James 1 – on unifying Britain but also covertly warns him of the dangers to come if Britain were ever to split. In splitting the kingdom, Lear selfishly commands his daughters to express their ‘excessive love’ for him through a love contest which later leads to chaos and disloyalty in family life. Lear’s continued use of imperatives – ‘Our eldest born, speak first’ – force his daughters to exaggerate his worth within the family unit and to compete for their inheritance in the public arena of the court. Through greed and false flattery, Goneril and Regan go to extreme measures to express their undying love for their father as shown through the comparative adjective ‘dearer’ in the triadic structure ‘Dear than eyesight, space and liberty’. Goneril’s extraordinary remarks are clearly untruthful as she compares her father to ungraspable and grand elements. Instantly, such dishonesty and greed – while satisfying Lear’s ego – pushes him to see his youngest daughter’s honest declarative utterance – ‘I love your majesty, according to my bond, no more no less’ - as all the more outlandish and disobedient. The presence of the juxtaposition of ‘more’ and ‘less’ with the mitigating negation ‘no’ to Lear is cruel in that it limits her love, fails to satisfy his selfish needs and is perceived as a direct challenge to his patriarchal authority. Lear sees this as an act of defiance and becomes so enraged he ‘disclaims’ all ‘paternal care’, ‘propinquity’ and ‘blood’. The repetition of plosive sounds convey Lear’s fury and through the stative verb ‘disclaims’, Lear breaks not only the filial bond with his daughter but also the Great Chain of Being. This disruption of the natural order has catastrophic consequences within both the domestic and political realms.

**CPD 2017**

**Component 2: Shakespeare Essay Questions**

***Antony and Cleopatra***

1. Examine the different ways in which Shakespeare presents male power in *Antony and Cleopatra*.
2. "When a man falls in love with a woman, she becomes his weakness." Explore the presentation of different attitudes towards love in *Antony and Cleopatra.*

***King Lear***

1. "Edgar, I nothing am." Consider the dramatic functions of Edgar in *King Lear.*
2. "*King Lear* is a tragedy of family life." How far do you agree with this interpretation of *King Lear*?

***Much Ado About Nothing***

1. Examine Shakespeare's presentation of attitudes towards women in *Much Ado About Nothing.*
2. "Comic disorder is at the centre of the play." In the light of this statement, examine the significance of the title of the play *Much Ado About Nothing.*

***Othello***

1. "Love never betrays. People do." Explore Shakespeare's presentation of the theme of betrayal in *Othello.*
2. *"*He has no moral code, only a passion for destruction." Consider Shakespeare's presentation of Iago in the light of this statement.

***The Tempest***

1. "Parental power and control." Consider how far Shakespeare's presentation of Prospero's relationship with his daughter conforms to society's expectations.

1. Examine Shakespeare's presentation of the themes of deception and trickery in *The Tempest*.

**CPD 2017**

**Component 2: Context**

**Question:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Section of the play* | *Relevant contextual detail* |
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