Let Rome in Tiber

Give me some music; music, moody food of us that trade in love.

He hath given his empire up to a whore.

POWERPLAY
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INTRODUCTION - ELECTIVE RUBRIC

In their responding and composing, students consider representations of and the interplay of types of power. They analyse portrayals of the powerful, consider how the depiction of particular relationships provides insight into the nature of politics and consider the extent to which power resides with the people.


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Students need to study their prescribed text, *Antony and Cleopatra*, but also need to demonstrate their understanding of the representation of Powerplay through independent selection of additional texts. This synthesis is challenging and means students need opportunities to discuss, evaluate and write about additional texts. However, the focus for this ETA pack is solely on the prescribed text. However, some of the activities could certainly be adapted to include discussion of additional texts.

It is important to keep the focus on the concept of ‘representation’ and for students to be familiar with the syllabus definition of this term. This means that students are not inquiring into the historical accuracy of Shakespeare’s interpretation, but rather focussing on ‘how’ Shakespeare has used language, imagery, structure and dramatic action to represent characters and events.

1. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed to stimulate thinking about broad issues of power both within and beyond the prescribed text.

A. Political Leadership is one of the central issues in *Antony and Cleopatra*. What makes a good leader? How much power should a leader have? Does power inevitably corrupt? Why is power such an attractive concept for some people? Does a leader have to put the good of the nation above all else? To what extent is it fair that a leader’s private life is subject to public scrutiny?

B. The play also explores the way that political power is never really certain but exists in a state of perpetual instability. Questions of trust, betrayal, compromise and individual integrity are all under scrutiny in this play.

1) To what extent do you consider politics to be a game of survival?
   a) Decide on a set of rules, based on your understanding of events in the play, which would ensure political survival.
   b) How would you compare modern day politics with that depicted in the play?
2) Which character/s would you trust in *Antony and Cleopatra*? Why? Record your developing responses in your reading journal. To what extent does your opinion change by the end of the play?
C. Popular appeal cannot be relied upon as the basis of power because ‘the masses’ are fickle in their loyalty.
   1) How is this shown in the play? Consider what Caesar, Antony and Pompey have to say about the masses.

D. To what extent is the world of power politics constructed in terms of gender?
   1) For example, consider the following sets of attributes as depicted in the play and allocate them under the headings: masculine or feminine (or both) as constructed in the play: serious, ambitious, playful, sensual, physical conquest, emotionally restrained, lustful, bullying, manipulative, single-minded, soldierly, courageous, loving, physical prowess.
   2) Find words and images to support your classification of these attributes.

E. Identify any ideas about power or attitudes to power reflected in the following extracts from the early part of Antony and Cleopatra: (the first one is done for you as an example)

   (i) Antony: ‘Let Rome in Tiber melt and the wide arch
       Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
       Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
       Feeds beast and man. The nobleness of life
       Is to do thus…’ (1.1.35-39)

   In his declaration of love to Cleopatra, Antony is rejecting the power politics represented by ‘Rome’ and the ‘empire’. The ironic deflation of the power of Rome and the Empire is captured through the images of it melting and falling, suggesting its insubstantial qualities in comparison to the permanence of ‘love’, wherein true nobility resides. The metaphor, ‘kingdoms are clay’, signifies that political power is fundamentally unstable; the link between ‘kingdoms, ‘clay’, ‘dungy earth’, symbolically destroys connotations of superiority and nobility associated with power. We are reminded that in the end, whether you are king of commoner, ‘beast and man’ share a common frail mortality. Rather the ‘nobleness of life’ is not to be found in power politics but in love.

   (ii) Antony: ‘Our slippery people,
       Whose love is never linked to the deserver
       Till his deserts are past, begin to throw
       Pompey the Great and all his dignities
       Upon his son…’ (1.2.178-182)

   (iii) Cleopatra: ‘O, never was there queen
       So mightily betrayed! Yet at the first
       I saw the treasons planted.’ (1.3.24-26)

   (iv) Caesar: ‘This is the news: he fishes, drinks, wastes
       The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
       Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy’
More womanly that he;’..’ (1.4.4-7)

(v) Messenger to Caesar: ‘Pompey is strong at sea, And it appears he is beloved of those That only have feared Caesar.’ (1.4.36-38)

(vi) Caesar: ‘This common body, Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream, Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide To rot itself with motion.’ (1.4.44-47)

(vii) Pompey: ‘My powers are crescent, and my augering hope Says it will come to th’full. Mark Antony In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make No wars without doors. Caesar gets money where He loses hearts. Lepidus flatters both, Of both is flattered; but he neither loves, Nor either cares for him.’ (2.1.10-16)

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

The action of the play constantly shifts between Rome and Egypt, reflecting the thematic and dramatic struggle between these contrasting worlds. The juxtaposition between Rome and Egypt dramatically enacts the powerplay between Caesar, on the one hand, and Antony and Cleopatra, on the other. However, it is not just a matter of political conflict between opposing players but an examination of mutually exclusive worlds.

ACTIVITY 2A

While you will need to do a close reading of the play, this early activity requires a quick, skim reading to enable you to get an overall sense of the story, actions and characters. Groups can be allocated to each Act. Read the summary and do a quick read of the Act. In groups, prepare a brief role play of the act and decide as a group the three most significant quotes about power that are included in this act. Write these on A3 paper and accompany them with a visual symbol that represents the way you understand the type of powerplay depicted in the particular Act. These initial responses to the play may change or at least develop as your textual analysis deepens.

Act 1
The 5 scenes that comprise Act 1 alternate between Rome and Egypt and establish the historical and political context of the play. The triumvirate of the Western world (Caesar, Antony, Lepidus) that we saw triumphant at the end of Julius Caesar, is divided, distracted and under threat from Pompey. Caesar is angry with Antony for what he sees as the complete neglect of his duty as a member of the triumvirate. Antony is in Egypt with his lover, Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt and has ignored messages and requests for help from Caesar. The tension is exacerbated as Antony’s wife, Fulvia has been reported as joining forces with Antony’s brother against Caesar. Antony receives news that Fulvia is dead and decides to return to his ‘duty’ in Rome.
Act 2

This act has 7 scenes and they are almost entirely based in Rome, except for scene 5 which is in Egypt. We are immersed in the world of power politics and pragmatism in this Act. While there are tensions between the members of the triumvirate and outright hostility between the triumvirate and Pompey, by the end of this act a series of temporary and unstable alliances emerge. The political marriage between Antony and Caesar’s sister, Octavia, is suggested as a way of ‘binding’ the two men. Reconciliation with Pompey is reached as he accepts the offer of Sicily and Sardinia in return for ridding the seas of pirates. Yet beneath the surface alliances, the audience is made aware of the simmering tensions. We see the foiled assassination attempt on the triumvirate by those loyal to Pompey; Enobarbus tells Agrippa and Maecenas that Antony will never abandon Cleopatra and Lepidus is shown to be loyal but naïve – no match for either Caesar or Antony. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Cleopatra is enraged and distressed about the news of Antony’s marriage to Octavia.

Act 3

This crucial and lengthy act comprises 13 scenes. The peace between the members of the triumvirate crumbles. Caesar has successfully disposed of his former enemy, Pompey, and his former ally, Lepidus, whom he accused of treachery and complicity with Pompey. Conflict between Antony and Caesar is the focus of this act. Antony accuses Caesar of denying him his share of the spoils of the victory against Pompey; of not returning the shipping he had lent Caesar for the battle against Pompey and of deposing Lepidus and maintaining all of Lepidus’s revenue. In turn, Caesar is outraged at the injustice done to his sister, Octavia, by Antom’s return to Egypt and Cleopatra. War is now the inevitable outcome of this powerplay. As each side prepares for war, Antony ignores the strategic advice to fight Caesar by land and instead agrees to a sea battle at Actium, encouraged by Cleopatra’s promise of support. Antony is defeated and disgraced during this fateful battle. The Act ends with Antony on the brink of destruction; his army has deserted, and though there is one more battle to fight, there is a sense of doom about prospects of success. In this act, he shifts between great outpourings of love and devotion for Cleopatra and hysterical accusations against her. The clash between the two worlds is mirrored in this division within Antony himself.

Act 4

This act contains 15 scenes, although a number of them are very short. These scenes advance the plot towards the inevitable outcome – Antony’s death. Enobarbus has deserted and Antony, despite some initial successes, loses the final battle with his much younger rival, Caesar. Antony again thinks that Cleopatra has betrayed him and she fakes her own suicide to persuade Antony of her loyalty and love. This leads Antony to attempt his own suicide which Cleopatra belatedly realises is a likely outcome of the revelation of her death. The act ends with their reconciliation but also with his death.

Act 5

This final act has only two scenes and concentrates on the two remaining ‘players’ – Caesar and Cleopatra. Caesar’s plans are to ensure that she stays alive so that he can parade her as a symbol of his victory in Rome. Cleopatra is wary of Caesar’s appearance of friendliness and seeks confirmation from one of Caesar’s followers (Dolabella) about what Caesar intends to do. As a result of this confirmation, she makes arrangements for her own suicide. The play
ends with Caesar’s unwelcome discovery of her death and a belated recognition of the
greatness of the two lovers.

3. TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

We will now explore the play in more detail and consider the complexities of powerplay
involved. The structure of the play emphasises contrasting locations, courts, characters and
values. What then is the significance of such obvious contrasts for our understanding of
powerplay? As we examine specific extracts, we will be considering the ways in which power is
represented in this play and the particular ways in which gender and race shape with ideas
about and attitudes to power. Since your elective requires you to focus on ‘representation’
rather than evaluating the play as a historically accurate document, you need to focus on
‘how’ ideas and values are represented. In a dramatic text, this requires you to be alert to
what an audience would see and hear during a production, and not just to approach this as a
written text that is silently read.

ACTIVITY 3A

This activity can be done in pairs, with each pair taking one or two scenes and then sharing
their findings with the rest of the class. Keep a separate page for each scene of the play and record your ideas under the following headings:
  · What do you see?
    o eg entrances, exits, use of asides, soliloquies and group scenes; dramatic action etc
  · What do you hear?
    o types of language – pace, volume, tone, imagery etc
    o other sources of sound – music, battle sounds etc
  · What are the effects in terms of powerplay?
It is vital that you consider the effects on other characters and the audience. This is much
more important than trying to search for ‘the’ meaning.

Modelled response for Act 1 Scene 2

Act 1, scene 2, takes place in Cleopatra’s court in Egypt.

  · What do you see?
    o A combination of Roman (Enobarbus, Lamprius, Rannius, Lucillus) and Egyptian
      characters (Charmian, Iras, Mardian, the Eunuch, and Alexas)
    o soothsayer holding the hands of Cleopatra’s women, reading their palms
    o entrance of Cleopatra
    o entrance of Antony with a messenger from Rome
    o exit all but Antony and the messenger
    o a second messenger enters, and another is waiting at the door
    o second and third messengers exit
    o a fourth messenger appears with a letter for Antony
    o this messenger exits
Antony alone on stage delivers a soliloquy
Enobarbus enters – he and Antony are alone on stage
Enobarbus exits

What do you hear?
- the first part of the scene consists of humorous, playful and bawdy dialogue as Cleopatra’s attendants, flirt with Alexas and then take turns to have their fortunes told.
- the Roman characters are present but silent throughout this part of the scene. Enobarbus is the only one to speak, as he calls on the servants to bring in the wine.
- The second part of the scene contrasts in tone and becomes increasingly serious as Antony hears the news of the messengers from Rome that his wife, Fulvia, she and his brother had joined forces against Caesar but that Fulvia was now dead.
- Antony’s description of Cleopatra: ‘strong Egyptian fetters’, ‘enchanting queen’. He describes his behaviour at Egypt as ‘idleness’.

What are the effects in terms of powerplay?
- the scene provides glimpses of both Egypt and Rome and reveals significant differences. The Egyptian court is represented as feminine, playful, indulgent, while the world of Rome is serious and politically dangerous. Antony’s absence from Rome has provided opportunities for Caesar’s enemies to try and take advantage of him.
- the world of Rome increasingly intrudes (literally and metaphorically) into the world of Egypt, as represented by Cleopatra’s court. Antony is determined to live up to his Roman responsibilities and we see him torn between these responsibilities and his love for Cleopatra which he describes as a kind of spell from which he needs to be freed.

ACTIVITY 3B

After collating and sharing this scene-by-scene analysis, try to synthesise your understandings in the following paragraph responses:

1. Summarise the contrasting values of Egypt and Rome, using textual evidence in support of your answer. (eg select two contrasting excerpts that reflect the different values)

2. The staging of this play is complex because of the rapid scenic shifts between the contrasting worlds of Rome and Egypt.
   (i) Describe how you could stage the play using a simple set for Proscenium stage.
   (ii) Explain how your ideas for the staging would help shape the audience’s response.

3. How does the use of asides contribute to the menacing and conspiratorial atmosphere of the play. (In your answer, select ONE example – eg on board Pompey’s ship when the triumvirs and he are ‘celebrating’)

4. This play is characterised by its lack of soliloquies. (Check who does soliloquise) What effect does this have on our understanding of the major characters?

5. Select contrasting extracts of Cleopatra that demonstrate (a) her regal behaviour (b) her love for Antony (c) her passionate and violent nature (d) her shrewd judge of character. Write a paragraph entitled, ‘The Many Faces of Cleopatra.’
4. SEX AND POWER

Antony and Cleopatra has much to say about power. We witness betrayals, changing alliances, manipulation of others, conquest of territory, violence against others and singular ambition. However we also witness a nexus between power and sexuality. If Caesar gains power through his single-minded ambition, which involves denial of his emotions and sexuality, Antony’s defeat is attributed to his being entranced or bewitched by his desire for Cleopatra. The common element in these seemingly irreconcilable positions is the role of Cleopatra as the dangerous woman – the quintessential temptress who can be traced intertextually to mythical figures such as the sirens, or forward to the ‘femme fatale’ or a contemporary ‘Madonna’ figure. She is dangerous to Antony because she distracts him from his duties, weakens his resolve, ‘emasculates’ him. She is dangerous to Caesar because he cannot understand her and she cannot be defeated by him. While he may be inured to her charms, he is also inadequate in the face of both her tactical shrewdness and her threatened ridicule of him.

The rivalry between Antony and Caesar is also one of masculine strength and virility. There are repeated mutual taunts about the differences in age and capability between the two. Caesar’s response to the challenge by Antony to personal combat is one of outrage: ‘He calls me boy.’ and then, condescension: ‘Let the old ruffian know/I have many other ways to die, meantime/Laugh at his challenge.’ (4.1.1-6)

The construction of Cleopatra as the archetypal whore is immediately demonstrated in the opening scene of Antony and Cleopatra. The Roman, Philo, does not refer to Cleopatra by name but signifies her through the following epithets – tawny front, Gypsy, strumpet – that define her solely in terms of sexuality. The fact that she is a powerful ruler in her own right as Queen of Egypt is one of the great silences of the speech. Antony is described as being in her thrall and unable to be the great soldier that his standing and reputation in Rome demand. He is presented as a ‘fool’ as he will never be able to satisfy Cleopatra’s insatiable desire. This is revealed through the paradoxical image of the ‘bellows and the fan’; bellows are used to blow up a fire (a fire of desire – ‘come on baby, light my fire’) and as makers of wind, they are also cooling.

Act 1. Scene I (Alexandria. A room in CLEOPATRA’s palace.)

Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO.
PHILO
Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust.

Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train, with Eunuchs fanning her

Look, where they come:
Take but good note, and you shall see in him.
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool: behold and see.

ACTIVITY 4A

In the box below, allocate the following words and images to either Rome or Egypt: general, tawny front, dotage, triple pillar of the world, gipsy, lust, glowed like plated Mars, bellows and fan, strumpet, fool, captain’s heart, great fights. Indicate whether the term has positive or negative connotations, according to Philo. The first is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROME</th>
<th>EGYPT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General - positive</td>
<td>tawny front - negative</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Explain in your own words the ways in which Cleopatra is represented here. How important, for example, is her sexuality to this representation?

(iii) How does the audience immediately know that Rome values Antony’s qualities as a soldier above all else?

(iv) Why is Antony seen as a fool by his fellow Romans?

This Roman view is one slice or fragment of narrative information that we receive. It is developed through repetitive references throughout the play to Cleopatra in terms of sensuality and sexuality. The epithets used include: ‘harlot’, ‘whore’, ‘strumpet’, ‘trull’, ‘nag’, ‘serpent’. Her power is one of ‘enchantment’. She’s a ‘witch’ – magical and poisonous. She is addressed metonymically as ‘Egypt’ or the serpent of the Nile, suggesting that she and Egypt are one. She is also called the goddess of Isis, the principal goddess of Ancient Egypt,
Thus it is not simply her gender that helps construct her as ‘other’ to the ‘rational’ world of power politics in Rome, it is also her exotic and mysterious Eastern qualities. She is constructed through her contrast or opposition to the world of Rome – both to the single-minded political ambition of Caesar as well as the ‘holy, cold and still’ character of Caesar’s sister, Octavia, whom Antony marries for political gain.

What is presented about Cleopatra is a series of fragments made up of the following elements:

- **what she says**
- **what she does**
- **what others say about her**

However, our understanding of Cleopatra is not just the sum total of the information gained by these fragments. There are still gaps to be filled in our understanding of her as a character and the effect she has on Antony and Caesar. We fill in those gaps intertextually from our reading and viewing of women like her. In this sense, Cleopatra is ‘already read’ by the time we start the play. We recognise her as the evil temptress, the femme fatale, the siren, the dangerous but alluring woman. We don’t make these readings up; they are already available as socially constructed readings of women. So, it is misleading to suggest that we can have our own interpretation of her that is not already coloured or shaped by our intertextual understanding. This doesn’t mean, however, that there is no room for readings other than the dominant ones available. Shakespeare provides different perspectives in the play and also gives Cleopatra a voice. As readers or viewers, we can also challenge the dominant representation by ‘deconstructing’ the binary oppositions of the play and the language and imagery that help to ‘construct’ Cleopatra.

**ACTIVITY 4B**

Examine the following images of Cleopatra from past productions of the play. How would you describe the way she is represented visually? Is it consistent with the view in the play? The profiles image on the side of the coin is the only historical evidence of what she looked like. How would you compare this with the other visual images?

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1 see 3.6.16-18; 3.13.157-158; 5.2.238-239
**ACTIVITY 4C**

Read the following extracts referring to Cleopatra that link sexuality and power. Analyse the language (word choice, imagery, tone, connotation) that contribute to this representation. Take note of motif of food and feasting to describe Cleopatra and by extension, Egypt as a whole. Together with the repeated references to magic and enchantment, the role of Cleopatra as a serious political player is denied. Rather, she is represented almost entirely in terms of her gender, her sexuality and her exotic Eastern ethnicity. The first few have been completed for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract</th>
<th>Language features</th>
<th>Effect in terms of understanding of powerplay</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Antony: I must from this enchanting queen break off. 1.2.125</td>
<td>'enchanting queen’ connotes ideas of magic and witchery</td>
<td>This contributes to the idea that Antony is helpless in the face of extraordinary powers that Cleopatra has. She is not an ‘ordinary’ woman or queen; she is ‘other’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Cleopatra: If you find him sad./Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report/That I am sudden sick. 1.3.3-4</td>
<td>Petulant tone in which the focus is clearly on her own feelings and the way she can manipulate Antony.</td>
<td>Cleopatra seems complicit here in the depiction of her as a manipulative woman who sees relationships with men as a competitive game.</td>
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<td>3. Cleopatra: Your honour calls you hence./Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly./And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword/Sit laurel victory</td>
<td>Repetition of ‘you’ and ‘your’ emphasises her concern for Antony. Juxtaposition of his ‘honour’ and her ‘unpitied folly’.</td>
<td>In this short extract, we see Cleopatra dispense with games and dissembling and express love and care for Antony sincerely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Caesar: This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes/The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike /Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy/More womanly than he.,’1.3.4-7</td>
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<td>5. Caesar: If he filled/His vacancy with his voluptuousness./Full</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Caesar: Antony. Leave thy lascivious wassails. 1.4.567</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Pompey: But all the charms of love. Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip! Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both! Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts. Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks/Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite; That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour/Even till a Lethe'd dulness! 2.1.20-27</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Enobarbus: The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne. Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold; Purple the sails, and so perfumed that/The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver/Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made/The water which they beat to follow faster, As amorous of their strokes. For her own person/It beggar'd all description: she did lie/In her pavilion--cloth-of-gold of tissue/O'er-picturing that Venus where we see/The fancy outwork nature: on each side her/Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids/With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem/To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool./And what they undid did. 2.2.201-214</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Enobarbus: Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/Her infinite variety: other women cloy/The appetites they feed: but she</td>
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makes hungry/Where most she satisfies; for vilest things/Become themselves in her: that the holy priests/Bless her when she is riggish. 2.3.245-250

10. Maecenas: If beauty, wisdom, modesty can settle/the heart of Antony, Octavia is/ A blessed lottery to him. 2.3.251-253

11. Antony: I will to Egypt;/And though I make this marriage for my peace,/ I’th’East my pleasure lies. 2.3.38-40

12. Caesar: No, most wronged sister, Cleopatra/Hath nodded to him to her. He hath given his empire/Up to a whore. 3.6.67-69

13. Enobarbus: He will to his Egyptian dish again. Then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is. He married but his occasion here. 2.6.122-127

14. Enobarbus: Your presence needs must puzzle Antony./Take from his heart, take from his brain, from’s time/What should not then be spared. He is already/Traduced for levity, and ‘tis said in Rome/that Pnotinus, an eunuch, and your maids/Manage this war. 3.7.10-14

15. Cleopatra: Sink Rome, and their tongues rot/That speak against us! A charge we bear I’th’war./Ans as president of my kingdom will/Appear there for a man. 3.7.-1814

16. Canidius: So our leader’s led./And we are women’s men. 3.7.69-70

17. Scarus: We have kissed away/Kingdoms and provinces.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>3.9.7-8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18. Scarus:</strong> She once being loofed,/The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,/Claps on his sea wing, and, like a doting mallard,/Leaving the fight in height, flies after her./I never saw an action of such shame./Experience, manhood, honour, ne’er before/did violate so itself. 3.10.16-23</td>
</tr>
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| 19. Antony: | O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? 3.11.50 |

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<tr>
<th>3.11.55-67</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>20. Antony:</strong> Egypt, thou knew’st too well/My heart was to thy rudder tied by th’strings,/And thou shouldst tow me after…You did know/How much you were my conqueror, and that/My sword, made weak by my affection, would /Obey it on all cause.</td>
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<th>3.12.29-31</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21. Antony:</strong> Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates/All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss. 3.11.68-69r</td>
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<table>
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<th>3.13.113</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>22. Caesar:</strong> Women are not/In their best fortunes strong, but want will perjure/The ne’er-touched vestal. 3.12.29-31</td>
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<thead>
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<th>3.13.119-124</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>23. Antony:</strong> You have been a boggler ever. 3.13.113</td>
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<tr>
<th>3.13.162</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>24. Antony:</strong> I found you as a morsel cold upon/Dead Caesar’s trencher; nay, you were a fragment/Of Cneius Pompey’s; besides what hotter hours,/Unregister’d in vulgar fame, you have/Luxuriously pick’d out: for, I am sure,/Though you can guess what temperance should be,/You know not what it is. 3.13.119-124</td>
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<tr>
<th>3.13.162</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>25. Cleopatra:</strong> Not know me yet?</td>
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<th>3.13.162</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>26. Antony:</strong> All is lost;/This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me;/My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder/They cast their caps up and carouse together/Like friends long lost. Triple-turn’d</td>
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<td>Line</td>
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<td>27.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
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<td>31.</td>
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<td>32. Cleopatra:</td>
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<td>33. Cleopatra:</td>
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<td>34. Cleopatra:</td>
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<td>35. Charmian:</td>
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<td>36. Caesar:</td>
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5. POLITICS: IT’S A MAN’S WORLD

If Cleopatra and her court are represented as ‘feminine’ – peopled by women and eunuchs, typified by feasting, humour, play acting, displays of emotion and unbridled sexuality, Rome is the masculine response. However, Shakespeare presents us with divergent types of masculinity in the figures of the three triumvirs, and Enobarbus. One of the questions to explore is whether or not Shakespeare is suggesting that a particular kind of masculinity is required for political success. Given that Caesar is the successful leader at the end of the play, then is he the model of the powerful man? Constructed as Egypt’s binary opposite, Rome, as represented by Caesar, is a serious political stage. There is no time here for romance, cross-dressing or parties; everyone is too busy ensuring their own political survival. Questions about legitimacy of authority, changing alliances, pragmatic solutions, betrayal, trust and utilitarian
approach to ethics are amply demonstrated in those scenes set in Rome. If Antony is the old
soldier, feted for his sheer physical prowess and courage, Caesar is depicted as the modern
politician – the Machiavel. He cannot afford a private life or even close friends, according to
the way Shakespeare has presented him. There is no division between Caesar the politician
and Caesar, the private individual. The only relationship wherein he demonstrates deep
concern is for his sister, Octavia. However, he is prepared to endorse her political marriage to
Antony, in spite of its unlikely happiness for her.

Lepidus

We need to explore then the relationship between masculinity and power. We can
perhaps dispense with Lepidus as quickly as Caesar does. Lepidus is represented as naïve,
‘weak’, well-meaning but ineffectual.

· He adopts the role of peacemaker between Antony and Caesar, but it is Agrippa who
arrives at the pragmatic solution to the ‘quarrel’ between Antony and Caesar.
· He fawns on both Antony and Caesar
· He is the butt of jokes on the occasion of the temporary agreement between the triumvirs
and Pompey. Even the servants are shown to have little respect for him
· Caesar deposes of Lepidus and Shakespeare represents this as a ruthless elimination of an
annoying but non-threatening bumbler
· Lepidus’s removal provides Antony with a pretext for waging war on Caesar

ACTIVITY 5A

Read the opening lines of Act 2 scene 2 where the servants on board Pompey’s galley are
discussing Lepidus.
Describe the dramatic aspects of the scene that have the effect of ridiculing Lepidus. (eg
consider the roles of the characters, irony, farce, proxemics, imagined gestures and actions)
Second Servant
Lepidus is high-coloured.
First Servant
They have made him drink alms-drink.
Second Servant
As they pinch one another by the disposition, he cries out 'No more;' reconciles them to his
entreaty, and himself to the drink.
First Servant
But it raises the greater war between him and his discretion.
Second Servant
Why, this it is to have a name in great men's fellowship. I had as lief have a reed that will do
me no service as a partisan I could not heave.
First Servant
To be called into a huge sphere, and not to be seen to move in't, are the holes where eyes
should be, which pitifully disaster the cheeks.

2 The first great political philosopher of the Renaissance was Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527). His famous treatise,
stands apart from all other political writings of the period insofar as it focus on the practical problems a monarch faces in staying
in power, rather than more speculative issues explaining the foundation of political authority. As such, it is an expression of
reaplopolitik, that is, governmental policy based on retaining power rather than pursuing ideals. The most controversial aspects of
Machiavelli's analysis emerge in the middle chapters of his work. In Chapter 15 he proposes to describe the truth about surviving
as a monarch, rather than recommending lofty moral ideals. He describes those virtues which, on face value, we think a prince
should possess. He concludes that some "virtues" will lead to a prince's destruction, whereas some "vices" allow him to survive.
Antony
Antony is older and more experienced than Caesar. His reputation is as a soldier who is ‘larger than life’. The model of masculinity here is quite different from that represented by Caesar. Antony expresses a range of emotions throughout the play: anger, sadness, joy. He laughs, cries and loves. He could be said to embody qualities of both worlds – Rome and Egypt. He loves the Alexandrian life of excess but also prides himself on notions of honour that are bound up with military victory.

ACTIVITY 5B

Act 1, sc 4
Read the following excerpts that reflect the opinions of others. Caesar is expressing his anger at Antony for the impact of his indulgent behaviour on the triumvirate. This is followed by news of Pompey’s imminent attack, and Caesar’s - pattern of imagery built around contrast between wanton luxury and spare diet.

Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew’st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did famine follow; whom thou fought’st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer: thou didst drink
The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at: thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed’st; on the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on: and all this--
It wounds thine honour that I speak it now--
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek
So much as lank’d not

(i) How does the pattern of imagery here, built around contrast between wanton luxury and spare diet, reveal insights into both Antony and Caesar?

(ii) Compare Caesar’s description with the following one by Cleopatra after Antony’s death. What aspects of Antony’s character does each extract value?

The crown o’ th’ earth doth melt. My lord!
O, withered is the garland of the war;
The soldier’s pole is fall’n! Young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon. 4.15.65-70
**ACTIVITY 5C**
Write the farewell letter that Enobarbus might have left for Antony when he deserted.

**ACTIVITY 5D**
The sword is an important signifier of masculinity in relation to Antony. Read the following references and explain the confluence of power and sexuality suggested by the imagery.

(i) Antony: Yes, my lord, yes; he at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer; while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I
That the mad Brutus ended: he alone
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practise had
In the brave squares of war; yet now--No matter. 3.11.35-40

(ii) Antony: You did know/How much you were my conqueror, and that/My sword, make weak by
my affection, would/Obey it on all cause. 3.11.64-67

(iii) Antony: I dare him therefore
To lay his gay comparisons apart,
And answer me declined, sword against sword,
Ourselves alone. 3.13.25-28

(iv) Antony: If from the field I shall return once more/To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood;/I
and my sword will earn our chronicle. 3.13.177-179

(v) Enobarbus: When valour preys on reason,/It eats sword it fights with. 3.13.203-204

(vi) Antony: ‘O , thy vile lady! She has robbed me of my sword.’ 4.14.22

(vii) Antony: Come then, for with a wound I must be cured./Draw that thy honest sword, which
thou has worn /Most useful for thy country. 4.14.78-80

(viii) Antony: Since Cleopatra died,
I have lived in such dishonour, that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; 4.14.55-60

(ix) Antony: But I will be/ A bridegroom in my death and run into’t (his sword)/
As to a lover’s bed. 4.14.99-101
(Here Antony falls on his sword, but in almost farcical suicide attempt does not die.)
Caesar
For Caesar, power seems to be about power or dominance over others. He says at Antony’s death, ‘we could not stall together/In the whole world.’ (5.1.39-40), suggesting that they would never have been able to share power.

**ACTIVITY 5E**
Make some notes about Caesar’s character, abilities and attitudes, using the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caesar</th>
<th>Examples from the play</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principles guide his behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty to the triumvirate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude to women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment of Antony’s soldiers who deserted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tactical skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does he</td>
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regard as the most important aspect of his life?

Attitude to ‘the people’

ACTIVITY 5F

Read Pompey’s assessment of the triumvirate from Act 2, sc 1. How consistent is it with the way each is represented in the play?

I shall do well:
The people love me, and the sea is mine;
My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope
Says it will come to the full. Mark Antony
In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make
No wars without doors: Caesar gets money where
He loses hearts: Lepidus flatters both,
Of both is flatter’d; but he neither loves,
Nor either cares for him.

ACTIVITY 6A

Read the following extracts.
(i) Select one that you will respond to in the form of a soliloquy by Caesar. Write about 250 words.
(ii) Explain how this soliloquy reveals the cost of Caesar’s triumph.

6. THE COST OF POWER

If Caesar is the ‘winner’, then it comes at a certain cost.

Messenger : Pompey is strong at sea./And it appears he is beloved of those/That only have feared Caesar.
1.4.36-38

Soothsayer : O Antony, stay not by his side.
Thy daemon - that thy spirit which keeps thee - is
Noble, courageous, high unmatchable,
Where Caesar’s is not. 2.3.18-21

Caesar : What would you more? Pompey, good night. Good brother,
Let me request you off: our graver business
Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let’s part;
You see we have burnt our cheeks: strong Enobarb
Is weaker than the wine; and mine own tongue
Splits what it speaks; the wild disguise hath almost
Anticked us all. What needs more words? Good night 2.7.113-118

Antony : Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates/All that is won and lost. 3.11.69-70

Caesar:  Give her what comforts
The quality of her passion shall require,
Lest, in her greatness, by some mortal stroke
She do defeat us; for her life in Rome
Would be eternal in our triumph. 5.1.61-66

Cleopatra : 'Tis paltry to be Caesar;
Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave,
A minister of her will: and it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds;
Which Shackles accidents and bolts up change;
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
The beggar's nurse and Caesar's.5.2.2-7

7. FINAL ACTIVITIES

1. Choose three important moments from the play (eg the battle of Actium) and write
newspaper headlines to accompany the event. Then write an editorial in response to one of
these headlines. You can make the context a contemporary one. Make the editorial about 200
words.

2. Write a political speech for Caesar designed to win public approval for his defeat of Antony.
Write approximately 300 words.

3. Real Power is not always obvious.
A student panel of three has been asked to discuss this proposition. Write a transcript of this
discussion.
Base your transcript on the various representations of power play found in Antony and
Cleopatra, and ONE other related text of your own choosing.

4. How has your understanding of the elective Powerplay been shaped by its representation in
Antony and Cleopatra, and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

References:

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