



Pearson
Edexcel

A level English Literature

Antony and
Cleopatra
Exemplars

Paper 1: Drama

Section A:
Shakespeare
(9ET0/01)





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Introduction

- The purpose of this pack is to provide teachers and students with some examples of responses to A level English Literature Paper 1: Drama, Section A: Shakespeare (9ET0/01).
- In this pack, you will find a sample of responses; examiner commentaries and marks.
- If you have any enquiries regarding these materials or have any other questions about the qualification, please contact our subject advisor on 0333 016 4120 at TeachingEnglish@pearson.com or via [contact us](#).



Exemplar Scripts



Script 1: June 2017 Question 2

Question papers and mark schemes for 2017.

*Explore Shakespeare's presentation of Antony in **Antony and Cleopatra**. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors and ideas from your critical reading.*

Antony is undoubtedly one of the most crucial characters in the play. He is central to every conflict, with his own actions often acting as the stimulus. Thus it must be considered as to whether he is the tragic hero of this narrative, or the vain fallen soldier, with whom few can sympathise with.

The fall of Antony in the conclusion of the play comes as no surprise to the audience, we learn of his inability to find equilibrium between excess and measure within the first few lines. The first lines in Act 1 Scene 1 illustrate his character flaw: "Nay but this dotage of our General's O'erflows the measure". The use of the metaphor of overflowing affection in contrast to the word "General" seems somewhat oxymoronic. It brings the audience's attention to Antony's willingness to give "dotage" despite being a leader who, as one would presume, would need to retain a solid front to lead his men.

It is important to note that most of the main characters are framed by minor ones, most of our perception of Antony is sourced from other individuals in the play. Notably, as aforementioned, Philo's description of his eyes that "o'er the files and musters of war...now bend and turn the office of devotion of their view upon a tawny front", present Antony to have fallen short of his former self. Here, the "tawny front" is a pun, with front referring to not only Cleopatra but also the battle front, again which reinforces the idea of him falling short, ultimately stimulating antipathy towards his character. Again, he is villified by Enobarbus in Act 2 Scene 6 where he says, "He will to his Egyptian dish again: and shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar". Again, Antony's inability to reason stimulates the audience's dislike of him here whereby his excessive passion for Cleopatra will inevitably override his duty towards Octavia; the use of the word "fire" brings to the forefront how his careless and unreasonable actions will inflame and exacerbate matters. On the other hand, the vicarious presentation of Antony's excessive nature can procure sympathy also. In Act one Scene four, Caesar notes that Antony was "daintily brought up" but nonetheless would "drink the stale of horses and the gilded puddle which beasts would cough at". This here, shows the lengths that Antony would go to, from and gentle upbringing to resorting to drinking urine to survive, to lead his soldiers. It is this admiration from the opposition Caesar himself, that allows the audience to see the true former Antony that has been referred to so frequently.

On a tangent, and in light of this reference to his 'former self', the tragic nature of his downfall can truly be assessed. In his article, Bradley links the idea of the 'tragic hero' to Antony in the play and how he mirrors that of the Aristotelian notion of a former hero falling from grace. Bradley is certainly correct in that Shakespeare employs this as a means of procuring sympathy - the death of Antony perhaps best exemplifies this. His death within itself can be regarded as tragic, but its botched nature arguably



makes it even more so. His death comes from both his losing battle and the supposed death of Cleopatra, historically it was seen as heroic to commit suicide rather than to live with shame, thus Antony's decision to do so itself creates sympathy. The fact that Eros kills himself instead of Antony shows that despite his failure, he still holds a lot of respect, which brings back the idea of the hero having once had status, lost it in the most tragic of circumstances.

The idea of his excessiveness is continued throughout the scenes, but his excessiveness is perhaps best illustrated in his own actions as opposed to his initial vicarious presentation through Philo in the beginning. His hyperbolic language in itself illustrates his passion for Cleopatra: his willingness to "let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch of the ranged empire fall" again reflects his excessiveness. It is ultimately his imbalanced nature that allows the audience to sympathise with Antony, he is so very clearly infatuated with Cleopatra that his more humanistic side is revealed. Alternatively, his excessiveness could be interpreted as egoism. In Act one Scene one, Cleopatra notes that "Antony will be himself", here it appears as though she is referring to his 'unfaithfulness' in his marriage to Fulvia, however his subsequent lines "But stirred by Cleopatra" perhaps suggest that he believed she was referring to his disposition, stating that Antony is strong enough to do as he pleases, which could arguably feed into his egoism. It is his initial presentation of being 'over the top' that helps to shape the audience's opinion of him. Similarly, Antony's young and level-headed counterpart is intended to balance his excessiveness with reason. Caesar is historically about 20 years younger than Antony; he is able to resist the charms of Cleopatra and is calculated and controlled throughout. In an article called Time and Timelessness, it is suggested that Caesar is in time, moving forward and creating history as time does, whereas Antony is lagging behind, frozen in time with Cleopatra. The indulgent and romanticised way of Egypt can be viewed as being in a 'bubble' - there are no significant events in Egypt up until the final scenes. The comparisons drawn between Caesar and Antony here serve to highlight the latter's inability to reason, which almost degrades him, making a fool of him in front of the audience so to speak.

However, his excessiveness and his desire to remain within the 'bubble' of Egypt brings to the forefront the binary of love and indulgence, and duty that ultimately leads to his downfall. The duality of love and duty is one of the most prominent themes throughout the play, which is best exemplified by Antony. In Act one Scene three, Antony's parting words of "that thou residing here goes yet with me, and I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee", show how his love for Cleopatra dictates his life; she is with him in mind even when he is carrying out his duties. This perhaps ominously foreshadows his decision to allow Cleopatra to enter battle with him that ended with fatal consequences. It is within this battle that the issue of love versus duty culminates.

In conclusion the various dualities of excessiveness and measure, love and duty will divide opinion. In some respect Antony can be sympathised with as love is an entirely human emotion, Antony will not have been the first to abandon his duties for love. However, does his copious amount of emotion reflect that he has gone too far in his dereliction of duty?



There is no conclusive presentation of Antony, he is to an extent deserving of his fall from grace, but perhaps more so can be viewed as a tragic hero, which in the words of Kastan lead to "uncompensated suffering".



Script 2: June 2018 Question 2

Question papers and mark schemes for 2018.

*Explore Shakespeare's treatment of the theme of honour in **Antony and Cleopatra**. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors and ideas from your critical reading.*

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, William Shakespeare treats the theme of honour as essential to Roman society. Shakespeare's characterisation of Antony, Caesar and Enobarbus all demonstrate the importance of honour to Roman society, with Antony's loss of honour being a source of embarrassment for him. The theme of honour is largely disregarded in Egyptian culture, so much so that it is deemed less important than power, as Shakespeare shows through his dramatic presentation of Cleopatra and her behaviour when she hears of Antony's marriage to Octavia. This idea is antithetical to treatment of honour in Rome, which sees honour as significantly more important than the theme of power. Finally, the theme of honour is presented as a masculine characteristic, governed by a sense of constancy, due to the importance placed on it by male characters and the neglect shown by Cleopatra who degrades the theme of honour with her changeability, whereas the triumvirate and the men of Rome try to convey honour through their masculinity.

Shakespeare presents honour so that the audience realise the importance of it to Roman society and culture, but also by showing the ramifications of the absence of honour, Shakespeare highlights the dim view that Rome has of people who lack honour. Antony and Caesar are both in agreement that 'the honour is sacred', which goes a long way to demonstrating that the theme of honour was an integral part of Roman society. Their agreement on this would mean as much as it would likely reflect the view of the Roman Empire, given their status as members of the triumvirate and, particularly so given the weakness and eventual defeat of the third member of the ruling trio, Lepidus. The fact that the honour is 'sacred' suggests a sense of loyalty that is almost biblical and therefore to a puritanical English Jacobean audience, this would have deepened the meaning of honour, due to its elevation through the theme of religion. Additionally, the 'sacred' nature of honour also goes some way to suggesting that it was ingrained in society, just as sacred ideas in religion are to a faith. The nature of sacred honour can be seen as a mirror to other Roman values, emphasising the importance of honour to Roman society, given the fact that business and political agreements relied upon people to stay true to 'their word'. Therefore, when Antony loses his honour, the Roman society and, even Antony himself, is mortified. The sense of tragic anagnorisis is felt when Antony announces, 'If I lose mine honour/I lose myself', and the line break is arguably a symbolic manifestation of the two Antonys: one with honour, and one without. This idea may be supported by AC Bradley who has strongly argued that Antony lacks the characteristics of a tragic hero to be one 'of the noblest type'. The fact that Antony subverts Roman honour by joining Cleopatra in Egypt due to his love for her brings a sense of anger to Caesar, who embodies Roman honour. Furthermore, Antony's reasoning for disregarding his honour is that 'the bed i' th' east are soft', suggesting he has been lured in by the sexual attraction of Cleopatra, making his lack of honour all the more tragic, because his honour has been taken away by a woman, even 'a whore'. Therefore, the argument made by AC Bradley is largely



believable and convincing, because Antony's tragic nature is not a noble one and this would have been recognised by a Jacobean audience who may have made such a judgement due to Cleopatra's ability to lure Antony away from his honour to the land of Egypt through her sexual attraction.

The lure of Antony to Egypt and Cleopatra is the overwhelming cause of his lack of Roman honour and it is plausible to suggest that Egyptian culture, through Shakespeare's characterisation of Cleopatra, treats the theme of honour with a sense of disregard, and instead prioritises a desire for power. Cleopatra's identity forms Shakespeare's initial presentation of the lack of honour that is apparent in Egypt. Cleopatra is described as having a 'tawny front', meaning of darker skin and therefore somewhat 'other' to the Roman race. To a Jacobean audience, Antony addressing her as 'Egypt', along with her 'tawny front' would be deemed as insulting because in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term 'Egyptian' was often used in English courts and, along with the term 'gypsy', such language meant that the person accused of being 'Egyptian' or 'gypsy' would be dishonourable. Such an intrinsic link between Jacobean society and Shakespeare's play would suggest that the audience would, in the Jacobean era, initially perceive Cleopatra as disloyal due to her background. Furthermore, the East and Egypt are shown to be dishonourable when Cleopatra inflicts spite on Mark Antony upon hearing of his marriage to Octavia. Cleopatra instructs Charmian to be dishonourable and lie to Antony when she says, 'if you find him sad/Say that I am dancing; if in mirth, report/ That I am sudden sick'. These lines in Act 1 Scene 3 show Cleopatra's willingness to appear dishonourable and deceitful in order to get Antony back. The use of antithesis of 'sad' and 'dancing', as well as 'mirth' and 'sick' emphasises Cleopatra's absence of honour because she is not lying by a small matter, she is in fact trying to panic Antony into returning to Egypt by making false statements and trying to inflict jealousy and (arguably undue) remorse on Antony, which would be viewed as dishonourable. Such dishonourable behaviour by Cleopatra is suggested to be the reason that the play was first performed in 1606 and 1607, because due to the fact that Cleopatra was a powerful female ruler not afraid to boast of military competence (she said 'I have sixty sails, Caesar none better'), much like Elizabeth I, who is accredited with the success over the Spanish Armada in 1588 and a time of international discovery through military competence. Due to the factional nature of the royal court, many have since suggested that Shakespeare delayed the performance of the play to avoid the comparison of Cleopatra to Elizabeth I being made. Critic James Hirsch has made the comment that 'what Rome sees as immaturity, Egypt sees as playfulness', and this can be seen in Shakespeare's presentation of Cleopatra and of Rome, within the theme of honour. Cleopatra is effectively playing on Antony's emotions in saying 'if you find him sad/ Say that I am dancing', with the connotations of dancing being of play and freedom. These connotations suggest that Hirsch's comment has a strong validity because the dishonour that Rome feverishly laments, Cleopatra subverts and indeed plays with, suggesting that overall, there is an absence of honour about her character and arguably the Egyptian culture as a whole.

Though Egypt and Cleopatra largely convey an absence of honour, the fact that they do uphold some honour is very significant. Roman honour is conveyed as a masculine characteristic that is stable and enduring in Caesar, though subverted through the betrayal of Enobarbus from Antony to join Caesar's forces. This is juxtaposed with the feminine aspect of honour explored in Egypt, where honour is presented as changeable and certainly



not constant, which it is more so in Rome. Caesar's characterisation is used by Shakespeare as a construct by which to demonstrate the masculine nature of honour. As a leader, Caesar states, 'Welcome to Rome, nothing more dear to me', showing the honour he feels in representing Rome. The language employed by Shakespeare such as 'nothing' is emphatic in tone demonstrating his love for Rome and its values; however, it is through the final two words: 'to me' that the selfish nature of Caesar's character is perhaps presented, showing him to be Machiavellian in principle and arguably reflective of Machiavelli's Prince. This characterisation also suggests links between Caesar and James I and is furthered by Caesar's claim that 'the time of universal peace is near'. This is read by some as an allusion to James I who not only fused together England and Scotland to a level not seen before, but he also was proclaimed 'rex pactificus' due to his peaceful nature as king. The shift at the end of the play towards one-man rule with the death of Antony is also a reflection of James I, who himself favoured the dominance of one man in leadership, as he believed strongly in the Divine Right of Kings and resented parliamentary influence, particularly in England. Whereas Caesar's honour to Rome is presented as strong, Shakespeare juxtaposes this with the weaker sense of honour helped by Enobarbus, who betrays Antony to join Caesar near the end of the battle. Enobarbus, though, is 'onion eyed' at the changing state of his honour, for Roman society would see honour as an enduring train, but Enobarbus has neglected with concept. This allows the audience to see how Roman society would have treated dishonour, though, because the audience feels a greater affinity to Enobarbus due to his choral role in the play, often speaking in prose, making him a 'man of the people'. Furthermore, Enobarbus seeks to repent for his dishonour at his moment of death, with the exclamatory cry 'O Antony!' being repeated. The 'O' is ambiguous though, and Iqbal Khan, the Director of the play at the Barbican in 2018, portrayed with as an elongated cry of desperation, seeking to repent for his sins, demonstrating how the changing nature of honour was looked down upon by Roman society. Applied to the concept of gender, the absence of honour in Enobarbus commits to is foreshadowed by Shakespeare because 'Strong Enobarb is weaker than wine', which the audience can interpret as meaning that the strong, masculine and honourable Enobarbus is corrupted and therefore emasculated due to the use of the word 'weaker' which is intended to be degrading and this serves to emasculate his previously honourable character. This idea is utilised by Ronnie Bai who has suggested that 'Enobarbus is a mirror of Antony himself' and this can be seen through both characters losing their honour. When Antony claims if he loses his honour 'I lose myself', Enobarbus takes this metaphor and makes it reality, as following his betrayal of Antony which he describes as doing 'ill', he dies of what is claimed to be a broken heart, in disgust at his lack of honour. Cleopatra, though, has her sense of honour fluctuate throughout the play, for she demonstrated her changeable nature when she says 'I am quickly ill and well again', suggesting not only ideas about deceit, but also changeability. This was also argued by Jonathon Gil-Harris who said Cleopatra 'is abundant, leaky and changeable as the Nile' and her lack of honour is her claiming illness supports Gil-Harris' claim, and shows that the honour of Cleopatra is inconsistent, unlike that of Caesar.

In conclusion, Shakespeare treats honour with the utmost importance in Rome, and suggests that it is an essential value to their society. Comparatively, the absence of honour is evident in the presentation of Egypt and Cleopatra. Honour is changeable and inconsistent in Egypt, but in Rome it is more constant, and therefore when its constancy is



broken, such as Enobrabus's betrayal of Antony and Antony's betrayal of the state, it is dramatized by Shakespeare to highlight the importance of honour to Rome.



Exemplar Script Commentaries



| Script number | Examiner commentary and mark |
|----------------------|---|
| Script 1 | <p>In the opening paragraph, the student sets up a clear thesis around which the argument will be based. Shaping like this suggests a discriminating approach (AO1). Plenty of attention is paid throughout to the writer's craft (AO2), e.g., use of metaphor; features of tragedy; hyperbolic language; shaping audience opinion and foreshadowing. However, a relative weakness of the response is the failure to address context. The student does not take the opportunity, for example, to link the play's treatment of the love v duty theme to social or political concerns at the time of writing; or to make more of the contextual links to the tragedy genre. Thus, although the response is very strong on AOs 1 and 2, the performance on AO3 brings it down towards the bottom of Level 4.</p> <p>In terms of its engagement with critical ideas, the response is a little under-developed. The Bradley quote about the 'tragic hero' is clear and straightforward. The concept of Antony being frozen in time with Cleopatra is an interesting one but there is no link made to the text, either to show how Caesar is 'moving forward' or to demonstrate the 'indulgent and romanticised' presentation of Egypt. Assertion here is not enough; the student must show 'discriminating' understanding for higher levels. In order to meet Level 4 criteria, responses must explore critical ideas in 'developed' and 'integrated' ways. Thus, this response has been placed in Level 3 for AO5.</p> <p>AO1, AO2 and AO3 – Level 4: 14 marks</p> <p>AO5 – Level 3: 7 marks</p> <p>21 marks</p> |



| Script number | Examiner commentary and mark |
|----------------------|---|
| Script 2 | <p>The opening paragraph indicates that the student has considered the topic of the question from a number of different and interesting perspectives. This suggests a discriminating and sophisticated response (AO1). Throughout, there is sophisticated comment on the writer's craft, e.g., shaping audience response; tragic anagnorisis; symbolism in verse structure; characterisation; antithesis; tone; allusion; choral function; foreshadowing. There is excellent, detailed and highly relevant consideration of context, e.g., the extended consideration of the notion of 'sacred honour' and its potential resonance with a Jacobean audience; the detailed exploration of possible links between the presentation of Cleopatra and Elizabeth I and the sustained paralleling of Caesar with James I. Thus, this student's performance on AOs 1–3 lies in Level 5.</p> <p>In terms of its engagement with critical ideas, the Bradley point about Antony not being 'of the noblest type' is pertinent and well-integrated. There is interesting use of Hirsch's argument, productively linked to the text ('Say that I am dancing') and to the student's overall argument. Similarly, Bai's suggestion that Enobarbus 'mirrors' Antony is effectively integrated. Overall, a highly effective performance at AO5 that fulfils all Level 5 criteria.</p> <p>AO1, AO2 and AO3 – Level 5: 20 marks</p> <p>AO5 – Level 5: 14 marks</p> <p>34 marks</p> |