

Relationships at all levels involve complex powerplay

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



Present this task in the form of a discussion between two personalities. Base your response on your prescribed text and at least three other related texts of your own choosing.

Introductionmusic to 'Oprah' plays. Oprah Winfrey walks onstage, waving to the audience.

Oprah: My my my, how are you today ladies and gentlemen? Well don't I have a special show for you today! An uninterrupted special of Oprah, that's right no advertisements, no newsbreaks, we have a delightful guest and I'm just so, so pleased that she could join us! Now as you know, I'm an open minded person and I just love talking to people, sorry, make that personalities, from all walks of life. This lovely girl has an amazing personality, and faced with a crisis, she remained dignified. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Clover!

Clover trots onstage to a hearty round of applause.

Oprah: Clover, how are you girlfriend?

Clover: I'm great Oprah! Just glad to be away from Animal Farm. Whoops! I still call it that after all these years! Manor Farm it is now.

Oprah: Well just to update our audience, Clover has been one busy babe. After leaving Manor Farm, Clover has gained her doctorate in psychology! You go girl!

Interrupted by round of applause from audience

And today she's here to talk to us about powerplay.

Clover: That's right Oprah. Back at Animal Farm, I guess I was a little slow to learn but they underestimated me. Since I found who I really am, it's just so refreshing! And studying psychology, I became very interested in power and how people gain power.

Oprah: So do you have a hero, or heroine? Someone who you look at, as the epitome of power?

Clover: Well not so much a hero. But I think Shakespeare was amazing, the way he portrayed power play. I mean, look at Othello. Iago is basically a slimy worm, but he gains so much power because he's so intelligent and confident in himself. He plays Othello and as Othello weakens, his strength just grows. It's fascinating. And Julius Caesar.

Oprah: Tell us more about Caesar.

Clover: Well Julius Caesar happens to be a personal favourite of mine actually. Caesar himself was a powerful man. He'd proved himself in battle, sucked up to the leaders of the time, even helped Pompey at one stage to gain power. By getting his foot in the political door early, he was paving his way into power. And oh, was he arrogant! But it was arrogance bred of power. The man spoke of himself in third person "... Caesar commands thy to speak!..." So forceful! He instantly commands power and elevates himself to others by speaking of himself in third person.

Oprah: So you like a dominant man?

Clover: Oh much more than that. I mean, even the very first act, I laugh every time! Marullus is like the majority of the Roman upper class, he sees the mob as a pack of sheep. The bastard even refers to them as "... you blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!" His metaphor, alluding to 'dumb' stones is funny in itself. He thinks the crowd is brainless and nothing more than rocks and stones! But when you think about it, the whole city is built on stones and blocks- the important buildings, the roads and streets. The crowd, the mob, is the foundation of the city on which those in power must sit. So the crowd really does possess a lot of power! They just aren't aware of how to use it.

Oprah: Hmm, so you're saying the mob could make or break a guy in power?

Clover: Well yes. When Murellus and Flavious encounter a couple of tradesmen in the first scene, the tradesman mocks them and hence gains power through their discomfort. There's Murellus and Flavious, speaking at the workmen "... what trade art thou? Answer me directly..." and calling them "... knave...", so the cobbler tells him he's a "... mender of bad soles...".

Quiet laughter in the audience.

But Cassius is more than just a commoner, he has ambition, therefore the powerplay that Cassius and Caesar engage in yields much bitterness from Cassius. I mean, Caesar at the beginning is absolute ruler "... He doth stride the narrow world; Like a Colossus, and we petty men; Walk under his huge legs...". Dramatic, emphatic language is used even by Cassius

here"... doth bestride..." and "... Colossus...", emphasising his power and strength in the society. Whereas Caesar strides, the rest of the "... petty men..." only walk. However Cassius can identify that Caesar is powerful only because the rest of Rome has allowed themselves to be "... underlings...". Like the Chinese Communist Party, Cassius believes those who have proven themselves within the political class should be in power.

Oprah: So the cobbler gets power over the senators by, well ripping them off? Wow, there you have it ladies and gentlemen, those smart remarks you've been saying in your head, let 'em rip!

Clover: Well, you have to remember that these commoners were pretty darn clever. They gained power by punning their words. But then, Murellus pulled some back soon after. He throws rhetorical questions at the "... naughty knaves...". It's pretty well done on Murellus' part, he fires seven questions at them like "... wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?..." before anyone else can get a single word in!

Oprah: So he has power cause he's the one speaking? Well, lord I must have a hell of a lot of power!

Clover: Pretty much. He's asserting himself again. A lot of stuff can be said through the spoken word. There's this commentator in Australia, Alan Jones. He's a very powerful man down there. I saw a documentary about him. Through his speeches and comments, he gains so much power. His medium is radio, and there are definitely people who call into the show to voice their opinions, but for a large part of the time, Alan Jones speaks uninterrupted.

He himself is a gifted orator- he was the speech writer for an Australian Prime Minister even!

Oprah: So what about at Manor Farm? Or Animal Farm? Who won in the talking steaks there?!

Groan from audience.

Clover: Well actually, that's a very interesting question. The pig who dreamed up the Rebellion, old Major, he drew an audience and we all used to listen- his word was law instantly. It was his quiet way, the regal way he "... sat ensconced on his bed of hay...". But later, Napoleon of course was the public speaker. And he enforced it- with his damn dogs. They had us all scared half to death! His was a physical powerplay, intimidation. And because he used the crowd so to speak, he knew that we would all follow him, he wasn't questioned. But Squealer, well he operated differently. He was a suck up, that's for sure. But we believed him, listened to him, he "... could turn black into white...". Squealer was like an advertisement, a living, breathing propaganda machine. Propaganda in itself is powerplay though. The Times magazine ran an article about the Chinese Communist Party, demonstrating how it uses a great deal of propaganda.

Back to Squealer though, he managed to make everything sound very convincing, he exploited our naivety. One particularly vivid, emotional moment for me was when Boxer was injured. Squealer appeared to be "... full of sympathy and concern..." and he said all these nice things. He told us that Boxer's last wish was to see the "... windmill finished...". That his last

words were "... Forward comrades!...". He used every chance he could to turn the situation around through his clever words to be in favour of 'Comrade Napoleon'. He used us. We weren't the most educated animals, I mean, I admit it. Like Stalin led the uneducated, we never doubted the system because we couldn't fathom any other way.

Oprah: Sounds like a nasty piece of work, doesn't he ladies and gentlemen? Kind of like those men who whisper sweet nothings and then drop you like a hot potato!

Clover: Someone who did use the spoken word well though was Mark Antony. And he knew how to run the crowd as well. Unlike the senators, he didn't abuse his power over the crowd, well not in an insulting manner anyway. Antony respected the crowd and the power they held, but in his own way, he still played them. "... Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!..." He gets their attention and draws them all together. By getting the crowd on his side, he has power behind him. And oh, he does play Brutus too! "... Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man..."

Oprah: Well doesn't that just drip with sarcasm!

Clover: It sure does Oprah. And Antony dishonours Brutus, ridding him of his power because he has dishonoured him in the eyes of the crowd- where the real power lies. I mean, politicians need the crowd, they are only in power when they have the power of the people supporting them. Alan Jones, he had the admiration and loyalty of his students and his team and "... it was a hypnotic power of a charismatic man...". As much as I hate to admit it,

Napoleon had us under his command, through intimidation. And trickery too I might add. The Chinese Communist Party has an uncanny likeness to Napoleon and his way of running things. They play the crowd through intimidation and their hold over the Army, well let's say guns make sure that hold remains firm.

Sorry Oprah, I've digressed again! Antony has something the crowd wants. Well he doesn't really, but he knows the crowd will be pleased with gifts and such- through Caesar's will. He leads the crowd to think what he wants them to think by teasing them, with the promise of reading the will. It's a subtle exploitation and goes to show how much power comes with knowledge! He ensures that the plebeians remain loyal to Caesar "... they were traitors!.." the crowd cries. And then "... The will! The testament!..." and so Antony tells them what they want to hear.

And he did a good job of it too. Alan Jones, in his early days as a teacher gained his power through his crowd, but unlike Antony, Jones was able to choose his crowd to some degree. He valued "... more highly those who were prepared to follow an established game plan...". This in itself is very demanding and forceful. He gains power through establishing a clear set of rules- his own rules. Jones went through a tough time, he was in trouble because it was alleged he accepted endorsements. However, he remained as powerful as ever. It was said in the documentary that if Jones "... didn't lose his audience, he didn't lose his power...". This acknowledges to an even greater extent just how important the crowd is in giving power. The powerful know how to work the crowd in their play for power.

And particularly in Julius Caesar, we can see that power often corrupts. Powerplays are about power transferring from one party to another. When this balance of power inevitably becomes unequal, corruption and evilness often creep into the equation. Even Antony, after gaining the crowd's support with Caesar's will, manipulated them to his own advantage, calling Lepidus an "... ass..." and likening him to a horse. Although I myself believe that this is a great compliment! Actually, in Rome at this time it seems that likening one to an animal inflicted a great deal of insult. In Brutus and Antony's exchange animal imagery shows just how fundamental power plays are- within nature and within human nature "... you showed your teeth like apes and fawned like hounds...". Yes even those who possess great power can stoop to childish name calling!

Oprah: They seem to be very strong, very forceful.

Clover: Jones in particular was. He "... didn't accept fence sitters..." They were either on his side, or against him. By defining those clear boundaries, Jones is commanding power from those who are with him, because they support his opinion and their loyalty lies with him, and from those against him, because they are still playing by his rules, he forces them to make a decision and lets them know that he's not afraid of it. However, in Julius Caesar, Cassius isn't so forceful with Brutus. He is quite gentle, very subtle and strokes Brutus' ego to win him over. "... no man here; But honours you..." says Cassius to Brutus. Cassius does actually recognise that the power in politics lies with the people, as does Cinna "... O Cassius, if you could; But win the noble Brutus to our party...". He knows that Brutus'

reputation precedes him and basically, wants a piece of it. If Brutus is on his side, then Cassius is going to look a whole lot more reputable. Brutus' honour will garner the crowd.

Oprah: well it sounds to me like the people in power get all the perks! But if there's so much power in the crowd, then how come it's the leaders that get all the glory?

Clover: Cause they've won the war. Won the powerplay, the struggle. In reality, the power of the crowd disseminates to support the ruling class, ruling party. The most powerful. Like I said before, the Chinese Communist Party are alike Napoleon and his pigs. Napoleon stopped the Sunday meetings, he wouldn't let us in on anything, wouldn't let us have a say anymore. The Chinese Communist Party are insiders, "... picked, then rotated through a series of jobs to test their loyalty. They use secrecy as a weapon, "... part of an old fashioned weapon of rule...".

If no one knows anything, then they have the advantage of the element of surprise, if it is others trying to discover their secrets, then the power is shifted to the Communist Party- power lies with knowledge. At the farm, Moses was asleep in the barn when Major first told us of the Rebellion. He didn't approve because he didn't have in. Like the church when communism was introduced- they missed the boat and hence the communists had the power.

Oprah: So what if two big names clash? Like the Sunday night movie and you're trying to figure out whether to watch Mel Gibson or Tom Cruise? What happens then?

Clover: Well personally I prefer Mr Ed...

Oprah: Hey, whatever floats your boat hun!

Clover: But the answer to your question is simply, one of them has to go. Just like Stalin ousted Trotsky, Napoleon got rid of Snowball when he became too much. Napoleon was smart, he knew the windmill would be a great idea. He knew that this would make us look at Snowball more favourably, and Napoleon couldn't afford to lose the support of the crowd! We all "... came to look at Snowball's drawings at least once...". "... Only Napoleon held aloof...". It even came to the point where half of us were in full support of Snowball- we wanted him in power. "... Vote for Snowball and the three day week!...". So he got rid of him- powerplay using force. Snowball was a better orator than Napoleon "... in a moment Snowball's eloquence carried [us] away...".

And it was then Napoleon knew he was in trouble, so out came the dogs. It was terrifying we were terrified and "... scared...". Napoleon's answer to any threat to his power was simple- force. Like the Communist Party. The magazine article left no question as to the forceful nature of the group: "... Whatever the leadership lineup that parades before the cameras this week, the message will be the same: leave the driving to us...".

Oprah: Do all people who gain power tend to have this group mentality? You know, strength in numbers?

Clover: Well Caesar didn't need anyone but himself! But neither does Allan Jones really. I mean, they all use other people to gain power. But it has been said of Jones that he was able to "... polarise people...", that he was very much a "... solo performer...".

Oprah: All this talk about all these men! What about our sistas hun, there has to be some powerful girlfriends in this men's club!

Clover: Brutus' wife Portia, she's a woman and a half. Now, I don't know about you Oprah, but I'd do nearly anything to get the truth outta my hubby. I'd willingly kick him in the leg, you know, throw a feed bin at him, that kind of thing. She doesn't think much of her sex "... I grant I am a woman..."...

Oprah: Wow those hunnies really needed someone like me around, right ladies?!

Cheer from the audience

Clover: But instead, she gave herself "... a voluntary wound...".

Oprah: Hell, now wouldn't that make the hubby shake in his boots!

Clover: Yes, it did! But it worked, Portia gained power in Brutus' entrusting her with his men's secrets by this act of, well I like to call it insanity but some would say determination.

Oprah: Well if that's that kind of guy Brutus is, I don't think I'd want to know his secrets!

Clover: Brutus is a very complex man. His way of having power is by being unemotional... he holds his passion at bay and tries to rely on reputation and form and nobility rather than feelings. He is "... vexed... with passions...". Although Brutus tries to regain some power in his exchange with Cassius "... Would not; Be any further moved..." by detaching himself from his emotions, Cassius appeals to Brutus' sense of personal worth "... Men at some time are masters of their fates; The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars; But in ourselves, that we are underlings...". However, the guy is only human, and Cassius knows that he can seduce Brutus into complying, he can flatter his way into gaining power over Brutus "... Who is so firm that cannot be seduc'd...".

Oprah: It's fair to say Clover hun, that you've had some well, quite negative encounters with leaders and power in your lifetime. What are your views on it all now?

Clover: It's human nature Oprah. And animal nature too I guess. I mean, out in the wild it's survival of the fittest, but in this day and age it's survival of the fittest, smartest, best talker, the one who can get into the head of the crowd. We need leaders. Hell, even a farm of animals need a leader! I mean, under Jones, we were miserable. He was someone in a position of power who exploited us. We weren't as educated as he, hence less powerful and his routine made the farm like a well oiled machine- at our expense. On our own,

it would have been fine, except Napoleon became corrupted also, by power again exploiting us. The Chinese Communist Party, they are a self-perpetuating group who breed their own leaders- sacrifices made by the party for the party.

Alan Jones tended to apply favouritism to his students, selecting the strong and talented and dedicated. There are flaws in all these powerful people, even Caesar's arrogance and Antony, his manipulation of the crowd. But powerplays are exchanges I guess, and power is gained by exploitation of the opposition's weaknesses. By reducing the power of one, your own is strengthened. That's just the way it is I guess. Old Major, he wanted a perfect place, his own version of 'Sugarcandy Mountain' I guess. "... Above all, no animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers...".

All that said, I'll repeat- it's human nature. At the conclusion of Julius Caesar, we can know as an audience that this scenario will repeat itself. More people will suffer, sacrifice, die for power, it is the nature of humanity.

Oprah: Well Clover, that's about all we have time for. It's just been an amazing story you've had to tell, you've certainly opened my eyes. I'd like to thank you for coming on the show today...

Clover: It's my pleasure Oprah. Thankyou for having me!

Oprah: You're welcome, you're welcome darling, now ladies and gentlemen let's thank Clover!

Round of applause from audience

Music plays and credits roll.