

The context of anthony and cleopatra act 4 scene 15



The death of Anthony, as with all stage deaths, this is carefully staged ensuring the required response by the audience. Anthony might be cradled in Cleopatra's arms, but the delivery of their final lines has to be heard by the audience creating dramatic effect. Cleopatra's disintegration is apparent after Anthony's death as she wishes to commit suicide "but resolution, and the briefest end". As Cleopatra falls to the ground, her followers assume she has died, as she stares she regains a certain amount of self-control and calmly contemplates suicide.

Her followers appear dismayed, but are positively encouraged to cheer up. Anthony's body is transported out a differing way from his entry. There appears on the whole a lack of activity in the scene in comparison to previous scenes. Anthony dies in Cleopatra's arms, and now contemplates suicide in her lament subsequent to Anthony's death "come we have no friends". Caesar seems adamant that she must live to be paraded through the streets of Rome as part of his triumphant victory. Cleopatra views herself as a trophy of war and an exhibition of Caesar's achievements.

Cleopatra has made a subconscious decision to die than be paraded like an object. A battle of wishes ensues and readers look to see who will fulfill their goals in the following scenes. In the prior scenes we see rapid and decisive changes in his fortunes. In the war "Actium" Anthony loses to Caesar and is therefore lost his confidence and is no longer the great general he once was. His loss can't just be a result of a poor army many of his own failings cause his downfall in battle like his "passion" for Cleopatra. His allies' desertion has a profound impact on Anthony whose left at a low ebb.

However there's consolation for Anthony as Enobarbus commits suicide as a result of his treachery. His relationship with Cleopatra is volatile and passionate but eventually the two great lovers are re-united in this scene prior to their impending deaths. Anthony's care and affection for Cleopatra is still apparent within this scene, he appears selfless in death and is concerned for her safety as he bids her trust no one about Caesar except Proculius. Cleopatra's reply is typically selfless as she replies she will put her trust in her own hands.

Anthony pronounces his own epitaph following this " a Roman, by a Roman/ Valiantly vanquished" L. 15/57. Cleopatra faints on his death prior to passing a moving lament to her lost Anthony. In Anthony's death scene, the presentation of the lovers confirms and consolidates the impression they have made throughout the play. What is new in the case of Anthony is a touching concern for Cleopatra's safety and honour. Anthony's passion is still apparent as he wishes to kiss Cleopatra one last time showing his love for Cleopatra is still there even after his defeat in battle.

Anthony appears to be entirely self focused as he reminisces on his own honour and reputation as a soldier. In a formal speech he asks to be remembered for his former glory, concluding with a dignified assertion that a fellow " Roman" is killing him. It may be that he has in mind his defeat to Caesar or perhaps his earlier comment to Cleopatra " not Caesars valour hath overthrown Anthony/ but Anthony has not triumphed on itself". The act of suicide would have been valiant in Roman times and Cleopatra recognises this at the end of the scene when she contemplates doing " what's brave, what's noble".

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However after Anthony's botched suicide attempt he appears to put a brave face and the best possible gloss on a sorry state of affairs. Until Anthony's death Cleopatra's thoughts are primarily of her own safety and honour. This is shown as Anthony has to be brought to her rather than the usual she goes to him; this is no doubt because of the prominent thought that Cleopatra believes she will become an ornament "be brooched". Far from being absorbed in each other to the exclusion of all else, therefore the lovers exhibit the intense self-regard that they have shown from the beginning.

Anthony's sense of himself as a valiant, indeed triumphant, Roman is matched by the regal imperiousness of Cleopatra, reflected in many of the images used by her and those about her. She is sovereign "Royal Egypt" and empress; she talks of a crown, her sceptre and a jewel. She associates herself with divinity when she wishes she had Juno's power to set Anthony by Jove. Her grand extravagance is reflected in characteristic hyperboles: she would rail so strongly that Fortune might break her wheel, she would find it becoming to throw her sceptre against the gods that permit this harm and hurt.

Yet the imperial note is only one of several sounded in her language in this scene: there is ironic awareness in "here's sport indeed" and in the word play on weighs that follows, meaning both physical and the weight of grief, her smart verbal intelligence is harnessed to pathetic effect. It's difficult to comprehend what Anthony's thoughts are in his last moments held in Cleopatra's arms. There's many different aspects to consider. He may be thinking about recent losses against Caesar but more likely, focusing to the act of taking his own life, something noble in the eyes of Roman beliefs.

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This is recognised by Cleopatra later on in the passage when by she contemplates taking her own life herself. She wishes to die in peace rather than be treated like an idol “ broached” Until Anthony demise, Cleopatra’s thinks about her own personal health and safety but primarily on her honour as graceful queen of Egypt. She believes that when Caesar attains power, she will become a pawn “ an ornament” whereas Octavia will gain the “ honour”. After Anthony actually dies, Cleopatra’s grief stricken, fainting from the shock of his death, this is the most human action that Cleopatra pronounces to the audience.

Anthony final speech is restrained and formal and he begins to show acceptance of the inevitable end. Cleopatra’s speech, is an antithesis compared to her lovers’. She portrays a more characteristically varied way with greater emotional range and is more fluid in movement. She humbly identifies herself with “ the maid that milks but by the end she’s identifying with the gods themselves. Her thoughts inevitably turn to death, and looks beyond herself to her maidservants. After the shifts and swings in her mood and thoughts she re-identifies herself in calm resolution as the close draws near.

The language style that’s used by Shakespeare in Anthony and Cleopatra has dramatic seemingly constant shifts in pace and mood from highs to lows within the text. The death scene is an obvious low for Anthony followed by a low for Cleopatra. The language of the play is very much stylistic which can be viewed upon reading a varied variety of Shakespeare texts. The style and layout of the play is quite contrary to other plays as the scenes are quite short which is a criticism by many readers of Shakespeare works i. e. ritics. <https://assignbuster.com/the-context-of-anthony-and-cleopatra-act-4-scene-15/>

In act 4 Scene 15 there is varied use of Hyperboles used to create dramatic effect and a sense of urgency for readers these hyperboles are apparent throughout their speeches in this scene. The language that Shakespeare uses is quite counter to plays that were out at the time there are many short scenes and vivid images are used to create effect for the readers. Humour is used in order to emphasis points that are important as well as add a comical and humorous aspect to the pathos surrounding Anthony's death.

The atmosphere in the last stages of their lives is filled with Pathos, Grandeur and sombre and solemn laments to each other. The once happy mood that surrounded the couple has now been removed as the shadow of death appears to hover over them and the imminent end seems near. Shakespeare uses this to great effect as the text picks up pace and loses pace at the end prior to their demise. The pathos of the play is included at the final close were Cleopatra implements her plan and kills herself to remain with her beloved Anthony. This can be seen by the audiences as the ultimate sacrifice.