

# All for Love and Antony and Cleopatra - A Comparative Study

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Numerous scholars and practitioners, critics, and learners have investigated William Shakespeare, who is considered the most important author of the Elizabethan era. John Dryden, on the contrary end, is acknowledged as a superb author but is hardly recognized due to his enigmatic and complicated writing style. In almost every way, Dryden perfectly encapsulates and surpasses the other works of his era. He occupies a significant position in the history of English literature during the Restoration period. However, few people in the modern era have read any of his masterpieces, particularly his plays (Tatipang, 2022). A comparison between an Elizabethan drama and a Restoration-era neo-classical play was intended with the study of Antony and Cleopatra and All for Love. A reference to the main characters' backstories was made, and the typical plot sources were looked into. In far too many aspects, Antony and Cleopatra, a piece by Shakespeare composed 70 years prior, influenced John Dryden's All for Love in the late seventeenth century. Investigation within each work's overarching storyline advanced the comparative evaluation. Shakespeare's and Dryden's depictions of the central protagonists have been evaluated by comparison. But the real-life romance between historical characters Marc Antony and Cleopatra VII, Philopator of Egypt, served as the foundation for each of these plays (KURTULUŞ, 2021). Shakespeare's worldwide appeal and dominance are reinforced in the discussion by comparing a well-written play from the seventeenth century and a masterwork from the Elizabethan age.

### 1.2 Background

Shakespeare either based his five-act tragedy "Antony and Cleopatra" on a draught of one of these documents that hadn't yet been turned into a playbook or on a novelistic draught that was substantially more in-depth than most of his essential paperwork. Another admired example is John Dryden's valiant drama "All for Love." It is acknowledged as the top example of the many heroic dramas produced mainly during the Restoration era. It impacted eighteenth-century dramatic, impassioned humour (Rutter, 2020). Poets and audiences are more interested and engaged in some of the mythological or archetypal aspects of Antony and Cleopatra rather than in historical authenticity, despite the fact that fictional depictions of the two main characters are historically erroneous.

Additionally, the drama by John Dryden presents love and honour as engaged in a "Machiavellian" binary conflict. This means that rather than focusing on the 30s B.C., a play like All for Love is more likely to speak to political and romantic philosophies in Dryden's day. Instead of articulating anything about the historical characters on that they are shakily based, fictional depictions of Antony and Cleopatra may reveal something more about the current societal collective view of doomed romance and empire (EDMAN *et al.*, 2021).

### 1.3 Research Rationale

In terms of the research's justification, it can be said that the research's reason is founded on locating the data and information related to the topic of this comparison study. This investigation aims to uncover any areas of opportunity and assess whether they can support this comparative study. Analysis of the chosen authors' contributions, backgrounds, likes and dislikes, and the decision to group them on one page led to the rationale being circled. The justification can be developed further because doing so will aid in identifying areas of subject matter where there is still unresearched information (Fleischhacker, 2020). The chosen authors will add to the field of a comparative study on the aspect of literature because they are exceptional. In addition, the goal of this research was to include detailed information about the three writers, focusing mainly on their writings, to give the research a much stronger focus on knowledge

dissemination and give readers a concise yet extensive understanding of the difference that was established in this study.

#### **1.4 Aim and Objectives**

The objective of this research was to compare and contrast Antony and Cleopatra by William Shakespeare and All for Love by John Dryden. To create a comprehensive comparative essay or study, the research's goal is to compile all the information and data discovered via secondary data sources. The research's second objective is to adequately identify the two authors' most significant works and compare them in terms of their contributions to literature, individual approaches to literature, and particular categories in which they fit. Additionally, the result will include a summary of each of their creations, emphasizing the most well-known.

The following are the aims of this study:

- To learn more about John Dryden's writings and literary style
- To learn more about William Shakespeare's literary genius and writing style in his most significant works.
- To draw attention to the importance of William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra and John Dryden's All for Love from the standpoint of literature
- To compare the two authors' respective literary works for any similarities or differences, to gauge each writer's distinctive writing style, and to close the knowledge gap about this particular subject-matter
- To determine how much they contributed to global literature
- To create original and exceptional comparison research in the academic sector.

These are the goals and objectives of this study, which will aid in understanding its significance and methodology.

#### **1.6 Research Significance**

In terms of the value and relevance of the study, it can be claimed that it is based on the principle of finding the facts and information relevant to the subject of this comparative evaluation. This investigation aims to identify any potential growth areas and determine whether they will sustain this comparative analysis. The importance of this study is emphasized following an examination of the contributions, backgrounds, similarities, and differences of the chosen authors and their grouping on a single page. The importance of this study may be further demonstrated by the fact that it will help discover the research areas that are understudied in the field. The significance of this research also lies in its ability to elaborate, set out all the pertinent details, and engage in a more thorough discussion of the two authors while highlighting theirs among the most renowned and important works. Shakespeare and John Dryden are both remarkable and distinctive in their manner. The unique comparative study methodology used in this study, which considers potential overlaps and contrasts between the two, makes it significant (Velissariou, 2020). Most likely, there had never been a study that included these three writers in one investigation before this comparative analysis. William Shakespeare and John Dryden's impact on the world and the early years of writing will also be demonstrated as a further extension of this research.

#### **1.7 Research Structure**

Regarding the research's structure, it is possible to say that it follows a relatively straightforward methodology: introduction, data findings, and discussions. These three end up serving as the research's three fundamental cornerstones. Shakespeare and John Dryden are the two authors whose works have been gathered and used in the discussion. Despite what might be expected, it may be said that the beginning of

this comparative study mentioned all these two authors' important and worthwhile works. By trying to point out any potential parallels and differences between the authors, the close discussion has since decided to continue. Their distinct and individual literary styles help to illustrate how they are compared. Any direct comparisons have been avoided throughout this comparative study's whole framework. Instead, the comparisons were made using statistics and information on the authors' contributions, works, styles, and other characteristics. This professional way establishes a unidirectional comparison throughout the entire study framework. A respectful and healthy comparative analysis seems feasible to conduct thanks to the research design, which has also greatly aided in evaluating and studying literary figures. In this comparison of the renowned works ALL FOR LOVE by John Dryden and ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA by William Shakespeare, the framework is clear and straightforward and avoids convoluted views.

### 1.8 Summary

Shakespeare's fantastic play "Antony and Cleopatra" is one of the greatest tragedies ever written in literature. Shakespeare's play contrasts passion and accountability. How the two most memorable characters desired to be, each other's yet were unable to be because of their circumstances. One of Dryden's objectives in creating the play was to demonstrate the vital force of love. After being banished, Cleopatra decides to return to Antony. She and Alexas try to make up a narrative about Cleopatra committing herself in her room to make Antony feel horrible (Dryden, 2021). After learning that Cleopatra murdered herself, Antony commits a clandestine suicide and collapses. Shakespeare's plays adopt a more specific, historical viewpoint than Dryden's plays, which are more of a romantic tragedy. The main distinction between Dryden's plays and Shakespeare's is this. Whether one favours Dryden's or Shakespeare's staging of the action, it goes without saying that the poetry—the dialogue—in both plays is of the highest grade and is predominantly written in iambic pentameter. To produce black verse in the manner of the "divine" Shakespeare, Dryden deviated from the rhyme scheme that had been established in his initial poem (Putra, 2022). Despite the fact that the main plot of "All for Love" by Dryden and "Antony and Cleopatra" by Shakespeare are the same, there are several significant distinctions between the two works' narrative strategies.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Shakespeare's five-act tragedy "Antony and Cleopatra" was based either on a record of one of these papers that hadn't yet been put into a playbook or on a novelistic draught that was significantly more complete than most of his pertinent paperwork. It is recognized as one of Shakespeare's most insightful and intricately detailed works. The story's main character is "Mark Antony," a triumvirate in charge of the Roman military which appears to be entirely in love with Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen and a former mistress of Pompey and Julius Caesar.

The heroic play "All for Love" by John Dryden is another revered illustration. It is recognized as the best of the numerous heroic dramas written during the Restoration Period. It affected the dramatic emotional comedy of the eighteenth century. The drama also portrays love and honour as being in a binary battle in a very "Machiavellian" way.

When it comes to comparative study between these two, there are a lot of differences which may arrive whole the critical judgment is going on. Shakespeare being one of the greatest authors of tragedy, made his version of "Antony and Cleopatra" in a much more elaborated way; his version of the historical event is not just entangled with the love affair of Antony and his beloved, but Shakespeare has here situated,

politics, social elements and attributes which is beyond only the idea of two lovers. On the other hand, John Dryden's "All for Love" is more focused on the love affair of Antony and Cleopatra.

## 2.2 Overview of both of the works

William Shakespeare's tragedy in five acts, *"Antony and Cleopatra"*, was composed in 1606-07, and it was first released in the First Folio in 1623 (Grady, 2022). It was based around a novelistic draught that was considerably more complete than many of his relevant documentation or perhaps on a record of one of these papers that had not yet been turned into a playbook. It is regarded as one of Shakespeare's most profound and richly textured pieces. The plot centres on "Mark Antony", a triumvir and head of the Roman military, who seems to be entirely in love with Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen and a past mistress of Pompey and Julius Caesar (Pet'ko and Faut, 2021). After his wife Fulvia, who may have boldly displeased his friend triumvir Octavius, died, Antony was brought to Rome. Antony mends the remaining political rift by married Octavia, Octavius's sister. The news of the incident incensed Cleopatra. Eventually, counterarguments with Octavius and a passion for Cleopatra drive Antony back to his beloved. So when conflict turns violent, Cleopatra joins Antony at the Battle of Actium, whereby her influence is devastating from a military standpoint. Octavius follows Antony as he pursues her back to Egypt. Enobarbus, Antony's friend and a devoted officer, betrays him and joins Octavius because he knows what will happen in the end. Octavius eventually defeats Antony in Alexandria.

*The second act starts in Sextus Pompey's home*, where he assesses the three triumvirs' vulnerabilities, especially Antony, whom he hopes would remain preoccupied with Cleopatra: *"Let witchcraft unite with beauty, passion with both, / Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts."* (Gerrish, 2019). An argument between "Antony" and "Octavius" in the Lepidus household about Fulvia's uprising and Antony's carelessness threatens their relationship. Octavius' general Agrippa proposes a union between Antony and Octavia, the brother of Octavius.

*On the other hand, John Dryden dedicates "Thomas Osborne"*, an opulent patron, in the opening lines of *"All for Love"* (Alexander, 2022). He commends Osborne for maintaining his devotion to the monarch throughout the English Civil War. *Dryden views the English constitutional monarchy as just the world's greatest government system after more reflection on this admiration for any of it. The debate of a few Egyptian citizens opens the play* (Empiricists et al., 2022). Serapion informs his companions about the bizarre paranormal events he saw last night. Serapion is reprimanded for sharing his concocted dreams with others by Alexas, the eunuch who works for Cleopatra, and is warned against doing so. The Roman knight Ventidius arrives. Though he despises Ventidius, Alexas acknowledges him and informs the populace that he is the most courageous Roman. Alexas declares that Egypt will celebrate Antony's birthday with great pomp and display as he notices Ventidius approaching him (Dobson and Wells, 2020). The statement from Alexas infuriates Ventidius since Antony's life is in jeopardy, and Egyptians are enjoying his misery.

## 2.3 Main characteristics of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra

When it comes to the main characteristics of William Shakespeare's *"Antony and Cleopatra"*, the only point which can proceed further with that is why and how this work of Shakespeare is considered one of the greatest tragedies (KODAL, 2019). "Antony and Cleopatra" is much more of a tale of passion, tragedy, and passion (Cioni, 2021). The way Shakespeare has set two of the main protagonists in this play pours down his poetic prophecy of putting historical events into a play of love, war and passion. Unlike his other famous one, *"Romeo and Juliet"*, "Antony and Cleopatra" is based upon mature love (Rascon, 2020). When Antony met Cleopatra, both of them were at the peak of their power. Shakespeare went back to his



very first great tragedy, "Romeo and Juliet", for his final major tragedy. Antony and Cleopatra is a romantic drama that culminates in a double suicide; However, the protagonists in this novel are middle-aged Antony and Cleopatra, and they struggle to harmonize their wants as well as social duties performed out together with the destiny of the world stake (Rutter, 2020). *Shakespeare dramatizes a romance on a large, world basis here after bringing adolescent love to such a devastating depth in Romeo and Juliet* (Bigliuzzi and Calvi).

*In contrast to the expected sadness as well as dread at the end of "Hamlet", "Othello", "King Lear", and "Macbeth", Antony and Cleopatra end with sympathy but also glory as the title couple, who had lost the world, perform a sort of joyful marriage in death* (Burton, 2021). They gain far more by choosing love over material wealth and power while losing all of it. The final drama in a cycle that began with Romeo and Juliet and also included "Troilus", "Cressida", and "Othello", *Antony and Cleopatra examine the relationship between both love and tragedy*.

The structural quality of Antony and Cleopatra is outstanding. *The play comprises 44 scenes*, nearly double the typical number in a Shakespearean play, and it spans the Mediterranean region, from Egypt to Rome to Athens, Sicily, and Syria (Yargo, 2020). The result is a chaotic flurry of events resembling a movie ensemble. Shakespeare's early tragedies were organized around a select number of key moments.

#### **Adult in adultery**

A romance for adults, this. When Antony and Cleopatra met, both of them were at the pinnacle of their authority. They led quick and difficult lives until the very end while having a blast doing it.

#### **Cinematic values of Shakespeare's penning**

battlefields, castles, tombs, and ships. Forty-two sequences are included in Antony and Cleopatra. In this play, our movements are erratic. Using a crew of 100 oarsmen, it is said it took at least 10 days to go by water from Egypt to Rome. Shakespeare makes it seem simple by reducing time and place.

#### **Poetic prophecy of Shakespeare**

King Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet served as Shakespeare's training plays. He was at the pinnacle of his creative prowess by the time he wrote Antony and Cleopatra, so indulge in.

Shakespeare's marvellous creation, *"Antony and Cleopatra"*, is one of the greatest tragedies ever written in literature. This play by Shakespeare shows the *conflict between passion and duty* (Dryden, 2021). Both of the greatest characters wanted to be each other, but their surroundings did not allow them to be. The way Shakespeare has penned the whole story of this historical event has been one of the noted tales of love and passion, along with historical and political tales. From the modern perspective, *"Antony and Cleopatra"* is an asset for world literature containing the one and only Shakespeare's prophecy.

#### **2.4 Main characteristics of Dryden's All for Love**

*Another classic example of a heroic play is John Dryden's All for Love (1677). Among many of the heroic plays produced during the Restoration Period, it is regarded as the best* (Dryden, 2021). It had an impact on the emotional comedy of 18th-century dramas. *The idea of the fight between love and honour is the primary trait of heroic plays*. At the play's start, "Ventidius" informs "Antony" that Syria will back him if he decides to conduct war against them. Still, he also grants him a favour by telling him that he must leave "Cleopatra", establishing Antony's obligation. Cleopatra knows he's going to abandon her when he does. She sends Alexas to Antony to deliver a shattered heart ruby, forcing him to admit his love and desire for Cleopatra and reinstating the tension between duty and passion.

*Additionally, the play presents love and honour as a highly "Machiavellian" binary conflict* (Wallace, 2021). When Alexas advises "Cleopatra" to flirt with "Dollabella", it gives a character a chance to be

crafty in the "*Machiavellian*" sense to convince "Antony" to stay with "Cleopatra" and establish the glory of love. When Octavia and Ventidius decide to use Dollabella kissing Cleopatra's hand to facilitate their false illegal romance to force Antony to depart, this ingenuity is also demonstrated to kill love. Cleopatra reinstates the opposition.

*The heroic drama portrays love as an enduring, strong force. Dryden aimed to describe the potent force of love in the play* (Alazraki, 2022). When Cleopatra decides to reunite with Antony after being banished, she tries to concoct a lie with Alexas to make Antony feel bad by saying that Cleopatra murdered herself in her room. When Antony learns Cleopatra has murdered herself, he kills himself secretly and lies on the ground.

There are several significant contrasts in the narrative styles between Dryden's *All for Love* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, even though both works cover the same core plot. *Shakespeare's play focuses on a toxic connection between two people that results from their shared feelings of lust, possession, and obsession* (Stritmatter and Maycock, 2022). To test Antony's sincerity in his love for her, Cleopatra sends her servants to inform him that she is deceased. *A pair in love torn apart by their surroundings and the outside world is the subject of Dryden's play All for Love* (Gulya, 2022). Cleopatra and Octavia square off in Dryden's play to determine who can claim Antony.

*The conflict between love and honour is the fundamental theme of Dryden's play "All for Love"* (SHIMIZU). Antony and Cleopatra must deal with this as their main problem. *For the duration of the play, Antony struggles to balance his loyalty to Rome and his love for Cleopatra. Ultimately, his failure to fully dedicate himself to either cause brings him to ruin* (Dryden, 2021). Like Aphrodite, *Cleopatra is prepared to jeopardize her honour for a lover. She devotes herself wholeheartedly to her love for Antony, but she disregards her obligations and the honor of her position as Egypt's leader, ultimately bringing about Egypt's downfall.*

## 2.5 The comparison between both the works

*Shakespeare's plays take a more historical, comprehensive perspective, whereas Dryden's plays are more of a romantic tragedy* (Chaubey, 2022). This is the primary distinction between Shakespeare's and Dryden's plays.

*"The Aristotelian unities", particularly those of space and time, are upheld in "All for Love". Therefore, Dryden's version of the story is limited to Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, and a few days in the relationship between Cleopatra and Antony, as opposed to Shakespeare's version, which spans the Roman and Egyptian empires over a long period of time with several jump cuts between scenes* (Little Jr, 2022). (Actually, according to the Greek unities, everything must occur in a single day, but this would not have been feasible.) And to present a sense of unity of action, the play concentrates on that relationship while reducing the number of characters and trimming the subplots. In the traditional sense, it is also a tragedy without a question.

Shakespeare's *Cleopatra* tragedy may not appear on the list of the greatest plays ever *because it is not among the Bard's absolute best*. Due in part to its dispersed characters and convoluted sub-plots of conflicts, intrigues, and counter-intrigues involving individuals who don't leave a large imprint, it is more situated in the centre of such a pack.

*The Egyptian queen, who serves as the play's subject, is one of Shakespeare's most fascinating female characters and is known for having an "infinite diversity."* However, the production is disjointed until Cleopatra assumes centre stage toward the end of the play. As a result, *critics continue to debate whether the play is a tragedy, a comedy, a romance, a work of history, or something else entirely.*

After the English world had been turned upside down numerous times and everyone had lived through decades of war, intrigue, and counter-intrigue, *the poet Dryden attempted to retell the well-known tale about 70 years after Antony and Cleopatra's release and 60 years after Shakespeare's death. And it was a return to even more archaic dramatic conventions this time.*

*There is not as much time to depict Cleopatra's complex personality, thus, the characters are drawn more simply.* Additionally, Antony comes out as flighty due to his complex personality, displayed through frequent, abrupt shifts in direction.

However, their relationship is straightforward in the end. *"All for Love", the play's full title, encapsulates its central subject.* They sacrificed everything for love, in other words, and that's admirable. *However, unlike in Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, the lovers pass away separately due to miscommunications rather than exchanging a loving farewell to the world* (Rudnesky, 2022).

Naturally, the quality of the poetry—the dialogue—in both plays is written mainly in iambic pentameter, *independent of the debate about whether Dryden or Shakespeare better arranges the drama. Dryden abandoned his earlier rhyme scheme in his attempt to produce blank verse in the manner of the "divine" Shakespeare.*

Shakespeare is superior in this instance. *However, many contemporary readers and playgoers might find Dryden's simpler, more sardonic dialogue to be more amusing and easier to understand* (Coldham-Fussell, 2020). It makes sense why audiences and theater companies chose Dryden's telling of the Antony and Cleopatra story for many hundred years. Only until the playwright's entire body of work was rediscovered did The Stratfordians Play surpass the number of productions.

## **2.6 Their contribution to world literature**

Shakespeare made a significant contribution to English literature. He composed 37 plays, including historical dramas, comedies, tragi-comedies, and tragedies, among his well-known plays "King Lear," "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth," "Romeo and Juliet," and "The Merchant of Venice," among many other plays. Traditionally, romance was not seen as respectable (Murphy, 2019). However, Shakespeare reversed this tradition for tragedy. His masterpieces greatly influenced the theatre that followed. By raising the standard for what narrative and vocabulary might achieve; he revolutionized English theatre. In "Romeo and Juliet", Shakespeare's mingling of tragedy and comedy produced a new romantic-tragedy genre. Shakespeare purposefully incorporates two plotlines from various sources into King Lear. He makes extraordinarily violent jokes to combine comedic characteristics with a severe tragedy. Shakespeare brought together the three significant literary genres of verse, poetry, and theatre. His eloquence and variety contributed to the versification of the English language by providing the most significant expressions and linguistic pliability. Because many of Shakespeare's phrases and expressions have been incorporated into the English language, he has been empowered to standardize the vocabulary. Shakespeare avoided using misleading language in his poems and plays and infused it with reality and visual imagery. Shakespeare's writings served as a catalyst for the modernization of the English language because the average educated today only know around 17000 English terms used in his works.

On the other hand, since John Dryden had such a severe influence on the new generation of classicism, he continues to be regarded as the most outstanding literary personality of the Restoration period. This could be summed succinctly by highlighting the three unique characteristics he contributed to literature. In his final years, Dryden spoke about himself as someone "who had done everything he could to beautify the language" in his homeland (Keymer, 2019). And he had some justification for his statement. In addition to his poetry and plays, Dryden contributed substantially to English literature by establishing a



straightforward and unambiguous literary criticism design aesthetic. He was given the distinction of being the individual who first introduced the comparable and magistratorial style of criticism (Marshall, 2019). Dryden, a modern reviewer, originally attempted the Historical Method of Criticism.

## 2.7 Conclusion

One of the greatest tragedies ever produced in literature is Shakespeare's magnificent work "Antony and Cleopatra." Passion and responsibility are at odds in Shakespeare's drama. The two most notable characters yearned to be each other's, yet their circumstances prevented them from being. The play's powerful force of love was one of Dryden's goals in writing it. After being exiled, Cleopatra decides to go back to Antony. To make Antony feel bad, she and Alexas try to make up a story that Cleopatra committed suicide in her room. Following his covert suicide, Antony lies on the ground after learning that Cleopatra killed herself. In contrast to Dryden's plays, which are more of a romantic tragedy, Shakespeare's plays take a more comprehensive, historical stance. Shakespeare's plays and Dryden's plays differ primarily in this way. The poetry—the dialogue—in both plays is of a high caliber, and it is primarily written in iambic pentameter, regardless of whether one prefers Dryden's or Shakespeare's staging of the action. Dryden strayed from his original rhyme structure to write black verse in the style of the "divine" Shakespeare. Even though the central plot of both works—"All for Love" by Dryden and "Antony and Cleopatra" by Shakespeare—is the same, there are several notable differences in the narrative techniques of the two. Shakespeare's play is about a toxic relationship between two people that develops due to their shared sentiments of passion, possession, and obsession. To end this, the whole conclusive evidence can be considered as both of the plays have their own essence of expressing tragedy and love. The structural equations in both of the author's plays are evidently different; each of the characters, events, and everything has been placed differently. Dryden's version has only emphasized the protagonists' love; it overshadows other happenings through their surroundings. On the other hand, Shakespeare has placed Antony and Cleopatra among the chaos of power, war, politics and social elements. His work is much more neutral and feels more historical than Dryden's "All for Love".

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