

Themes The Struggle Between Reason and Emotion In his opening lines to Demetrius, Philo complains that Antony has abandoned the military endeavors on which that reputation is based for Cleopatra's sake. His criticism of Antony's "Jolage," or stupidity, introduces a tension between reason and emotion that runs throughout the play (Li. 1). Antony and Cleopatra's first exchange heightens this tension, as they argue whether their love can be put into words and understood or whether it exceeds such faculties and boundaries of reason. If, according to Roman consensus, Antony is the military hero and disciplined statesman that Caesar and others believe him to be, then he seems to have happily abandoned his reason in order to pursue his passion. He declares: "Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch/Of the ranged empire fall" (1. 1.35–36).