alluringly by Cleopatra, but rather one in which Antony commits himself alternately to one and then the other, until he finally achieves a reconciliation of the two in which his private loyalties become the best measure of his public honor.

Mr. Markels suggests that Cleopatra’s decision to join her lover in death indicates her ultimate ability to share Antony’s vision. It is on the basis of this treatment of death as apotheosis—as opposed to mere catastrophe or, as in King Lear, final release from the demands of existence—that Antony and Cleopatra can be said to exemplify in a particularly impressive way that transition from a political to an ethical concern that distinguishes Shakespeare’s most mature creations.

Julian Markels is professor of English at the Ohio State University.
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