

Cosmopolitanism, Mobility and Hybridity in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

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Abstract: Detecting divergence in a play that is set in a different country than the one from whose culture its text is nourished, and in a different time that qualifies the text as a piece of historical fiction is a challenge even in the eyes of the playwright's contemporaries. In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, every example of divergence is defined with the norm it transgresses and the norms have various sources. Elizabethan conventions of drama make the setting of the play a domain for a political discussion stretching over centuries. Yet, a more socially reflective source of conventional notions is the Elizabethan era itself. The play is set in Alexandria and Rome, foreign destinations to veil the political allegory that exists between the fictional characters and real political figures. Italy and Egypt, therefore, serve to make the audience alien to the physical sphere of the discussion and blur the most direct of these allegories. This essay aims to discuss ways in which Rome and the West are portrayed as opposed to Egypt and the East and to explore how the West and the East consider each other on a mutual basis and how they interact with one another in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Along with representations of the West and the East, the paper aims to explore political references integrated into the play through the use of concepts like cosmopolitanism, mobility, and hybridity.

Keywords:

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Shakespeare'in *Antonius ve Kleopatra* Eserinde Kozmopolitlik, Hareketlilik ve Melezlik

Öz: Bir tiyatro metninde olaylar ait olduğu kültürün dışında farklı bir ülkenin topraklarında ve zamanda geçiyorsa iki kültür arasında benzerlikler aramak iddialı bir çabadır. Hele bir de oyun, yazarın yaşadığı dönemdeki insanların gözünde tarihi bir edebi kurgu olarak tanımlandığı zamandan çok farklı bir zaman dilimini oyunun geçtiği zaman olarak alıyorsa, farklılıklar biraz daha tartışmalı bir durum haline gelir. Uyuşmazlık ve uzaklık gibi kavramlar ihlal edilen standartlarla ölçülür ve Shakespeare'in *Antonius ve Kleopatra* adlı eserinde standartlar çok farklı kaynaklara dayanır. Elizabeth çağı tiyatro geleneği sayesinde oyuna ait yeri ve zamanı yüzyıllara yayılan bir süreçte tartışılan politik görüşlerin sergilendiği platform olarak değerlendirmek mümkündür. Elizabeth çağı, o dönemin geleneksel düşüncelerinin toplumsal yansımalarının daha yoğun olduğu tarihi bir devirdir. Antonius ve Kleopatra İskenderiye ve Roma'da geçer. Oyunun geçtiği bu uzak diyarlar hayali karakterlerle tarihte var olmuş siyasi kişilerin edebi eserdeki politik izdüşümlerini az da olsa gölgelemek içindir. İtalya ve Mısır izleyiciyi açıkça, birebir göreülecek bir takım siyasi atıflara yabancılaştırmak için seçilmiş iki ülkedir. Bu makale Shakespeare'in *Antonius ve Kleopatra* adlı oyununda Roma'nın ve Batılı anlayışın Mısır'la ve

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Doğulu anlayışıyla karşı karşıya getirilişini ve bu iki karşı görüşün birbirini nasıl algıladıklarını, karşılıklı etkileşimlerinin nasıl olduğunu incelemeyi amaçlar. Oyundaki Doğu ve Batı tasvirlerinin incelenmesinin yanı sıra bu makale kozmopolitlik, hareketlilik ve melezlik gibi kavramlarla oyuna dahil edilen politik atıfları da incelemeyi amaçlar.

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Introduction

William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is one of the last tragedies the bard is known to have produced in 1606, and first published in the Folio, in 1623. The time of the play is 44 B.C. and the venue consists of two places, Egypt, and the Roman Empire, which makes the play geographically a far-reaching one. The plotline includes the national and personal history of Mark Antony, Cleopatra, and Octavius Caesar, involving the cultural differences, distinct social norms, as well as military and social hierarchy. Shakespeare wrote the play as a follow-up of one of his earliest plays about the Roman Empire, *Julius Caesar* (1568-69) and the play presents the events in ancient Rome, shortly after the assassination of Julius Caesar. Shakespeare employs a blend of tragic, poetic, imposing, cynical, and depraved tones to illustrate the tempestuous love affair of Antony and Cleopatra, and the conflicts that stem from it. The title characters assume the role of ardent lovers and rulers and the relationship between them covers the political allusions. Accordingly, the play reflects the state of political turmoil even though it appears to be primarily about the romance between the Roman general Mark Antony and the Egyptian Queen, Cleopatra. Joseph Alulis claims that "Shakespeare uses the story of two lovers to dramatize the tragedy of politics" (190), as the play is set when the Roman rule is divided between Octavius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Lepidus, labelled as the triumvirate. The government is constantly under threat, issued by Pompey's attacks against the triumvirate, and thus conflicts between Antony and Caesar, the two commanding agents of the triumvirate deteriorate and intensify the unrest in Rome. The play is known to be written in 1606, after the political instability in Shakespeare's time, when Queen Elizabeth I, the last heir of the Tudor family died, and the country sought a new monarch. Consequently, the need for a ruler and eventually the presence of a new ruler, King James I, representing the transition between the Tudor and the Jacobean reigns offers an alternative reading of the play from a political viewpoint, a situation that echoes the case in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Exploring the portrayal of an able and potent ruler and his achievements in the play by comparing the two significant leaders, namely Caesar and Antony, and Cleopatra is possible. Caesar is represented as a more successful leader than Antony, and like Caesar, Cleopatra is a salient and strong character who is in pursuit of power. Cleopatra's stratagem to seize power depends on her femininity. She makes ample use of her charm, beauty, and passion to seduce Antony, and therefore develops her power. "In her relationship with Antony," Anthony Miller suggests, "Cleopatra exhibits a mastery of the way erotic wiles may project personal power" (56). Cleopatra figures out Antony's weak point and plays it against him to capture the leadership role and power in their relationship. She successfully develops and exercises her power upon Antony. Her political power is infused through her attending the sea battle with Antony. Cleopatra retreats at a crucial time during the battle and Antony follows her, which causes Antony's defeat in the third act of the play. Cleopatra's fleet abandons Antony and his fleet in the battle and betrays him. Cleopatra and Egypt share the common features of beauty, exoticism, danger, irresistible charm, variability, and unpredictability. In the final act, when she makes her people tell Antony that she is dead, Antony kills himself in response. In fact, while Caesar gives great importance to political power and gains power through manipulations and strategies, Antony oscillates between political and personal power because Egypt and Cleopatra captivate him. Cleopatra uses temptation to foster personal power over Antony and disassociates him from his Roman environment. Shannon Ritchie emphasises that "Cleopatra attempts to influence and gain control over men through by enticing them with her sexuality" (47). The title of the play suggests a play about external relationships between Antony and Cleopatra. Yet, its content is as much about power relations within Rome as external ones, namely power relations in Egypt. *Antony and Cleopatra* is a play that presents an intricate and complex set of dynamic power relations based on dualities which get resolved with Caesar's victory at the end of the play. The origins of the dualities in power relations are based on each character's decisions and actions. In other words, although the title presents a duality between Rome and Egypt, the duality of power relations within the rulers of Rome is also one of the main concerns of the play. Regarding the power struggles between Egypt and Rome, the text presents to the audience what they are already familiar with and what they expect. A division between native and foreign as well as the power struggles within Rome (such as the opposition between Antony and Caesar) present the audience a part of history that is often not mentioned as much as rivalries between two different empires or civilisations. It is very important to understand Antony, Caesar and Cleopatra to get a fuller vision of power relations presented in the play, within and out of Rome.

In fact, Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar do not reveal completely opposite characteristics. They are strong, clever, and powerful Roman leaders; however, Caesar is depicted as more rational, sensible, and responsible, compared to Antony's indifference. When Antony is in Egypt, it is obvious that he acts under the influence of his feelings, not with his logic. This is because he is attracted by Egypt and its culture since Egypt is a

country where pleasure dominates. In Rome, it is expected that he should ignore his feelings if he wants to rule the country. Antony says, “then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth” (1.1.17). He sees love as a new venue to discover because love is all about emotions and in Rome it is admitted as an obstacle for exerting power. Caesar’s primary concern is his country while Antony’s passion for Cleopatra fascinates, dominates, and directs his life. In her article “Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra,” Mary Thomas Crane says, “Egyptian understanding of humanity’s relation to the earth is based partly on the Aristotelian system of elements and humors that was, by 1606, nearing the end of its dominance” (2). Crane comments on the Egyptians way of making a connection between feelings and nature, highlighting their perceptions about nature. She then adds “Romans, on the other hand, seem to have left behind that system and its porous interrelationships between subject and nature, replacing it with a subjectivity separated from and overlooking the natural world and imagining itself as able to control it” (2). Hence, Caesar complains about Antony’s sedentariness as his speech reveals:

This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy
More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or
Vouchsafed to think he had partners. You shall find there
A man who is the’ abstract of all faults
That all men follow. (1.4.4-9)

Antony spends his time enjoying what Egypt has to offer instead of being engaged in Rome’s affairs. His words, “Stirred by Cleopatra. / Now for the love of Love and her soft Hours, / Let’s not confound the time with conference harsh” (1.1.45-47) reveal his desire not to occupy himself with the situation in Rome and his total disinterest in the political matter there. Jonathan Gil Harris states that “Rome has been characterized as a male world, presided over by the austere Caesar, and Egypt as a female domain, embodied by a Cleopatra who is seen to be as abundant, leaky, and changeable as the Nile” (408). Analysis of Harris indicates that Cleopatra’s reign makes Egypt passionate, emotional while Rome is stern and stiff, ruled by the triumvirate. The contrast between Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar makes it easier to see the differences between the East and the West. It is also helpful when it comes to determining the defining features of Rome or what constitutes a Roman statesman. The Roman virtue “gravitas” is one of the essential features of a Roman political figure. It refers to the ability of being serious about the matters at hand. Caesar alludes to the lack of gravitas in Mark Antony by saying:

If he filled
His vacancy with his voluptuousness,
Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones
Call on him for’t. But to confound such time
That drums him from his sport and speaks as loud
As his own state and ours, ’tis to be chid. (1.4.25-30)

Caesar's criticism is pointed towards Mark Antony's affinity for avoiding and neglecting his duty and devoting his time to aimless leisure and fun. As an ideal statesman, he should have gravitas and not waste his time in "voluptuousness." Another Roman virtue that a prominent general like Mark Antony should have is "virtus", that is to say, manliness and bravery. Caesar criticises Mark Antony, alluding to his incompetence at being what an ideal Roman general must be like. By pointing out the flaws of Mark Antony, Caesar makes it clear that the older member of the triumvirate is no longer a useful man and a competent leader of Rome. He has become indulgent, idle and almost sluggish, he has also fallen under the influence of a woman. These characteristics are not acceptable in the eyes of Caesar who has the Roman mindset. When he criticises Mark Antony, he voices Rome's criticism of Mark Antony for straying too far away from where he is supposed to be. According to Robert P. Kalmey "it is a persistent commonplace in modern criticism to place Octavius in the role of an ideal prince who stands as the moral superior of the dissolute Antony, and who therefore deserves to accede to the governance of Rome because of his political rectitude and moral superiority." (275) Caesar is morally superior because, unlike Mark Antony, he has gravitas and virtus. Being a foil to Mark Antony is not Octavius Caesar's sole function in the play. As an ideal Roman, it is possible to infer what a Roman is like through analyzing his personality as depicted in the play by Shakespeare. Caesar helps us to see what makes the West the West and how the West sees the East. Octavius says:

I must be laughed at,
If or for nothing or a little, I
Should say myself offended, and with you
Chiefly i'th'world; more laughed at, that I should
Once name you derogately, when to sound your name
It not concerned me. (2.2.34-39)

His tone is deprecating and degrading. He expresses his contempt at the suggestion that he should be offended by something so trivial as Mark Antony himself. Now that Antony has been influenced by the East, Caesar considers him as not his equal but a mere triviality.

As an older and more experienced general than Caesar who has attributes of a proper leader, Antony is the representation of a false ruler and depicts an image of "the failure of political judgement" (Alulis 191). Even when Antony's wife Octavia dies and when he decides to go to Rome after his long period of idleness and waywardness in Egypt, he expresses his submission to Cleopatra:

Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know
The purposes I bear, which are, or cease,
As you shall give th'advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier-servant, making peace or war
As thou affects. (1.3.66-70)

Antony's speech suggests that he is going to make an important political decision of either to make peace or war according to Cleopatra's wish. In contrast, Caesar is busy with his responsibilities about Rome's welfare. He defeats the traitors such as Pompey, eventually, and diminishes Lepidus' power by accusing him of helping the traitors. While Antony abates his power and strong will, Caesar is engaged with political matters to enhance his power and advance his people. As the tension heightens between them, Antony decides to fight against Caesar at sea even though people around him, including his close friend Enobarbus, warns him not to as he is weak and remains incapable at sea. Despite the suggestions of Enobarbus that he should fight against Caesar on land, he refuses to acknowledge the advantage of the power he possesses on land and decides to fight at sea:

Most worthy sir, you therein throw away
The absolute soldiership you have by land;
Distract your army, which doth most consist
Of war-marked footmen; leave unexecuted
Your own renownéd knowledge; quite forgo
The way which promises assurance, and
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard
From firm security. (3.7.41-48)

Not considering the suggestions and acting headstrong, Antony is defeated which causes the death of many strong men and Enobarbus' decision to transfer and take on Caesar's side and this leaves him weak. The text represents Caesar as an ambitious and logical leader compared to Antony who is depicted as an emotional leader with poor judgement.

Christopher Wortham argues that "the dominance of the court at this time, especially for someone writing under its direct patronage, is reflected in Shakespeare's work, particularly between the years 1603 and 1607, when *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* were written - all plays reflecting Stuart ideology" (2). Indeed, Shakespeare praises the new monarch since like Queen Elizabeth I, King James I encouraged theatrical activities when he came to the throne, and therefore helped flourish plays and performances during his reign. Moreover, since King James has recently taken the throne when Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* was staged, he might have wanted to have an image of a great ruler represented on stage, similar to Augustus Caesar who has transformed the Roman Republic into a Roman Empire and had a successful rule at that time. Affected by political dominance, Shakespeare's plays might have intended to satisfy the expectations of the present ruler. The representation of Caesar in the play seems to echo King James in terms of the transformation of the governance in the country and the promise of a favourable rule after political instability. Wortham reveals Graham Perry records where King James "is hailed as new Augustus" (14). Moreover, he suggests that King James claims himself as "King of Great Britain, France and Ireland," (16) which also reveals Augustus' imperial perspective.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, political implications are observed though the play features the tragedy of two lovers. The play is set in the presence of political turbulence

in Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar and the country is ruled by three leaders. Antony is emotional and his poor judgement reveals how a leader should not be as opposed to Caesar who surrenders to his logic, not acting impulsive or driven by his feelings eventually remains the only ruler of Rome that establishes the Roman Empire. As Kalmey states,

as a triumvir Octavius is revealed in Elizabethan histories of Rome as a pernicious demagogue; as a crowned emperor, he is presented as an ideal prince-like the reigning Tudor monarch. In both cases the Elizabethan historians emphasize moral lessons to be observed by their readers: early in his rise to power, Octavius exemplifies the horrors attendant on the demagogic subversion of the commonweal; later, as emperor, Octavius exemplifies the great Tudor image of the ideal prince, an analogue of Queen Elizabeth. (279)

One of the title characters, Cleopatra represents Egypt and the East, and Caesar is the representation of Rome and the West. Antony, the other title character, is a blend of the two norms. He leaves his Roman background for his love of the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra and has been immensely influenced by her, pandered to the customs and traditions of the East. The contrast between Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar and Cleopatra makes it vibrant to see the differences between the East and the West. This article intends to discuss the representations of power relations exposed by the three main characters of the play Antony, Cleopatra, and Caesar who stand for the Eastern and Western norms. Antony and Caesar are Roman generals and Cleopatra is an Egyptian Queen, who govern their people, driven by their passion and impetuosity; and the article discusses their unique characteristics with regards to the concepts of mobility, cosmopolitanism, and hybridity.

The Negative Impact of Mobility in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare includes the concept of mobility which incorporates Mediterranean, Greek, and Roman sites. The consequences of mobility result in tragic ways in the plays and the relationship between individuals and nations declines because of the intercultural exchanges. As an Egyptian female ruler Cleopatra and as a commander of Rome Antony have great responsibilities toward their nations. There is a passionate love story in *Antony and Cleopatra* which is directly related to the leaders' intentions and attitudes towards their duties. Antony and Cleopatra are leaders with important duties. Caesar sees an opportunity in Antony's absence and seizes the power of Rome to fight their enemies as the newly established structure of the triumvirate is ruined with Antony's indifference. Caesar sees himself as a better leader and a general than Antony who left his duties to be with Cleopatra, his lover. Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, is a ruler who did not face an opposition until the Romans came to her land. Love and fear caused her to lose track of her power and leadership, and that eventually led to her downfall, just like Antony. Their positions make the liaison between the two individuals more complicated. The consequences of their relationship not only destroy their lives but also cause destructive battles between Rome and Egypt.

Indeed, Antony loses his Roman identity because of intercultural exchanges. According to Tony Tanner, “Antony tries to make a return to this Roman world, but no matter what ‘bonds’ he enters into, no matter how much he intends to try to live ‘by the rule,’ it is, for him, finally not possible” (5). The international love affair of Antony prevents him to fulfill his duties and forces him to alter his Roman identity. The play suggests connectivity between two different cultures by the description of a love affair between a western man, Antony, and an eastern woman, Cleopatra. Their intercultural relations create mobility between the two cultures. Considering the protagonist, Antony goes through certain variances in his identity. He constantly moves between Egypt and Rome and finds himself in a duality when his love affair with Cleopatra precedes his Roman identity. In Act I, scene ii, he admits his enchantment of Egypt and the loss of Roman identity: “I must from this enchanting queen break off: / Ten thousands harms, more than the ills I know, / My idleness doth hatch” (1.2.128-30). Antony’s mobility impacts his identity. Losing his sense of belonging in Egypt causes damages to his Roman identity which integrates the features related to masculinity into rationality and politics. In Rome, characters are bound to reason rather than driven by emotion and duties are their priority. Considering Antony’s position, he assumes a new identity that includes the characteristics of Egypt and lets his emotions overrule his reasoning. That is to say, Antony adopts the emotional, sensitive and passionate nature of Egypt when he accentuates that he is under the charm of this empire. Moreover, his love affair with Cleopatra appears to be destructive for his Roman identity. In Act III, scene x, Antony follows Cleopatra’s fleet and abandons his soldiers: “I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards / To run and show their shoulders. Friends, be gone. / I have myself resolved upon a course (3.10.7-9). As a result of his misjudgement, he is defeated by Caesar and he loses his Roman warrior self in the name of his love for the Egyptian queen. In other words, Antony becomes sensitive, loose and irrational and neglects his Roman values because he is under the influence of his lover, Cleopatra. As a result, the interaction between the opposing nations of Rome and Egypt sets the tone for the lovers and causes their downfall.

Moreover, the combination of the different perspectives of the two nations and the intercultural exchanges between the characters cause a lot of conflicts. James Hirsh affirms that “in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Rome and Egypt are associated with conflicting values or points of view” (175). The biggest complexity is derived from the characters’ different views. Hirsh aims to clarify the possible complexities between Egypt and Rome in terms of four main views: “Rome as it is perceived from a Roman point of view; Rome as it is perceived from an Egyptian point of view; Egypt as it is perceived from a Roman point of view: and Egypt as it is perceived from an Egyptian point of view” (Hirsh 175). The characters move between the two countries, and their approaches and viewpoints conflict with each other and damage the mutual relationship between them as well as the nations. Cleopatra criticises Antony, “He was disposed to mirth, but on the sudden / A Roman thought hath struck him” (1.2.81-82). She expresses the difference between the views of Antony and her in terms of their perspectives of life. Antony’s movement from

Rome to Egypt and then back to Rome enables him to experience what the two places offer. He is originally Roman, and his way of thinking is like Romans, and the end of the play stresses that he never turns an Egyptian. In Act IV, scene xv, Eros, regardless of his age and inexperience remains loyal to Antony and teaches him the lesson of dying in an honourable way. Before killing himself, he makes his short but effective farewell speech to Antony: "My dear master, / My captain, and my emperor, let me say / Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell" (4.15.89-91). Eros respects Antony and sees him as a powerful figure. Antony follows Eros' example and dies in an honourable way, ending his life with his own hands. Likewise, Cleopatra never becomes a Roman despite the frequency of mobility in the play. Cleopatra is an Egyptian woman, and she exhibits the characteristics of the East which embodies femininity and sensitivity. At the very beginning of the play, she tells Antony, "I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd" (1.1.16). She chooses to utilise Roman terms to impress Antony. Furthermore, Cleopatra's killing herself is another example of the intromission of Roman values. Her own decision-making shows that she is in control of her condition. She chooses to plan her death which suggests the rationality and power of Roman culture. She behaves like a Roman elucidated with her suicide. According to Walter Cohen, "by choosing suicide, Cleopatra not only 'dies a death that might be associated with a Roman man', also die 'the death of a faithful Roman wife'. By 'taking the poisonous asp to her breast'," he adds, "she may become a Roman matron as well" (2625). With her suicide arrangement, she is like a woman who dies as not an Egyptian queen but a faithful wife. On the other hand, she is the cause of Mark Antony's death, therefore, she cannot ignore her exuberant Egyptian identity. After Antony's death, she feels detached from worldly pleasures and she decides to commit suicide. Cleopatra's decision to end her life is not only her wish to be forgiven for her sins but also to die honourably and not be a prisoner of Rome. In both scenarios, she adopts westernised Christian values. Dolora G. Cunningham states "she struggles to transfer her allegiance from the authority of senses to the values of permanent order and to do so she prepares herself for the death by the means of Christian repentance" (14). Antony is not a pure Roman anymore because of the cultural hybridity. Octavius Caesar realises the change in Antony's attitude because of the negative effects of mobility, and he is of the opinion that Antony has no more a Roman identity. His daily habits alter, and he is no more an honourable Roman. Antony used to be famous for his standard of morals and his heroic behaviours on the battlefield, as a Roman commander. However, after adapting to the environment of Egypt, he immensely changes. According to Caesar, he is like a woman who has not any military abilities. Caesar realises the change in Antony's attitude because of the negative effects of mobility, and he complains about it. Caesar describes Antony by saying "This common body, / Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream, Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide / To rot himself with motion" (1.4.43-46). He considers Cleopatra's control over Antony as emasculating, sees Antony's lifestyle as womanly and he states that it is a "fault" for a Roman man to live like Antony. Caesar's perspective shows that he is biased about Egypt, and he underestimates the relationship between Cleopatra

and Antony. According to Hirsh, the perception of Egypt is different from the outside: “Egypt as it is perceived from a Roman point of view” (175). It is the opposite of Cleopatra’s perspective about Antony’s way of thinking like Romans. Both parties, namely Caesar and Cleopatra, complain about Antony because Antony appears neither a Roman nor an Egyptian. Cleopatra criticises Antony,

Pray you seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell and go. When you sued staying,
Then was the time for words – no going then:
Eternity was in your lips and eyes,
Bliss in your brows bent; none our parts so poor,
But was a race of heaven. They are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turned the greatest liar. (1.3.33-38)

Antony’s mobility brings about fluidity. Cleopatra sees him as a Roman soldier, developing Egyptian trends, and Caesar sees him as the conspirator of the Roman nation. The fatal *denouement* of the play exposes the termination of the lives of the main characters. The love affair between a western man and an eastern woman ends in a tragedy. The mobility of the characters triggers the war between Rome and Egypt, and it causes their deaths, and the repercussions of Antony’s mobility harm him and his love affair with Cleopatra, as well as the two countries involved in the action.

Unmasking Cultural and Socio-Political Differences in *Antony and Cleopatra*

Antony and Cleopatra sets in Alexandria and Rome and about these foreign destinations used as the setting by Shakespeare, scholars of the early modern period agree that the setting veils the political allegory that is existent between the fictional characters and real political figures. Frederic Turner states that “*Antony and Cleopatra* attempts to show how blooming ‘structures and values are created’” (139). Turner adds that “Shakespeare’s main point for mixing Rome and Egypt was to see the authentic selves of both the cities” (139). Italy and Egypt, therefore, serve to make the audience alien to the physical sphere of the discussion and obscure the most direct of these allegories. Antony and Cleopatra’s stance in Egypt is orientalist, and their orientalist approach tempers the play’s political discussion. However, as can be seen in the examples in the following part, the orientalist approach ensues not only at the time of the play’s production but also in late twentieth-century adaptations.

Concerning the norms of Elizabethan drama, it can be claimed that judged by their portrayals, Antony and Cleopatra’s reception by characters in the play, and the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatregoers, Antony is a character that converges to the classical tragic hero, whereas Cleopatra is sketched with a distinct Elizabethan and even modern outlook. In the dialogue between Caesar, Lepidus and the Messenger about Antony’s irresponsible behaviour towards his land and people, and his excessive interest and politically paralyzing lust for Cleopatra, Caesar declares,

To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
 And keep the turn of tipping with a slave
 To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet
 With knaves that smells of sweat. Say this becomes him –
 As his composure must be rare indeed
 Whom these things cannot blemish. (1.4.18-23)

By accepting and emphasizing the rare qualities of his rival with sincerity, Octavius Caesar exposes that his character is rooted in Creon at the end of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. At the end of *Oedipus the King*, Creon recites Oedipus' worth and mourns his fate although in an earlier instance Oedipus blames him for bringing Teiresias to overthrow him. Likewise, after Antony's death, Caesar expresses his sympathy and admiration for the deceased:

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
 A pair so famous. High events as these
 Strike those that make them; and their story is
 No less in pity than his glory which
 Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall
 In solemn show attend this funeral. (5.2.357-362)

In another instance, talking of Antony, Lepidus says: "I must not think there are / Evils enough to darken all his goodness. / His faults in him, seem as the spots of heaven" (1.4.10-12). Antony is portrayed as a character whose name and reputation cannot be fully spoiled by even the most unacceptable deeds he commits. In other words, his manly honour, initiated by his Roman origins, makes him immune to the criticism that comes from other characters in the play.

On the other hand, Cleopatra is portrayed as a divergent Elizabethan character. She possesses the lecherous, ambitious, and amorous female characters of the Elizabethan stage. She becomes furious upon hearing Antony's planned departure to Rome and exhibits excessive jealousy: "O, never was there queen / So mightily betrayed!" (1.3.25-26). Enobarbus remarks about the women's psychological dependence on men: "Why then, we kill all our women? / We see how mortal an unkindness is to them. If they suffer our departure death's the word" (1.2.133-134). Upon Fulvia's death, Enobarbus tells that he considers the literal and metaphorical death of women, wives in particular, as sacrifices made to the gods, by men who have the right to these women. By referring to Antony's ongoing relationship with Cleopatra during Antony's marriage to Fulvia, and after Fulvia's death, he says; "when old robes are worn out, / there are members to make new" (1.2.163-164). Through the analogy between the women and old robes, he exhibits the patriarchal codes of his and the playwright's time. Nonetheless, Cleopatra does not commit suicide after Antony's departure, nor does she agonise because of his death but she does not yield to Caesar because she cannot bear the possibility that she can be enslaved by Caesar. Indeed, Cleopatra is a controversial character. In the first act, when the messengers arrive in search of Antony to deliver the news about Fulvia's death, Antony seems reluctant to receive them; however, Cleopatra responds to that, "Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen" (1.1.32). Her sovereign posture even subordinates

Antony as he later confesses to himself: “These strong Egyptian fetters I must break / Or lose my self in dotage” (1.2.116-117). Antony calls Cleopatra “Egypt,” ascribing her the character, will, power, and disposition of her land. When Antony takes off for Rome, Cleopatra discusses whether he missed her or not with her lady-in-waiting and notes that he is supposed to remember her with the name “my serpent of the old Nile” (1.5.25). The allusion negates, instead of affirming the conventional perception of women in the Elizabethan era as it compares Cleopatra to Satan, the beguiler, instead of Eve, the beguiled, referring to the Bible. She is portrayed as a malicious plotter through this allusion. Her refusal to accept that she exercises power over Antony further solidifies this subordination. Yet, at one point, she confesses that she manipulates Antony by saying, “I’ll seem the fool I’m not; Antony / Will be himself” (1.1.42-43).

In Shakespeare’s time, the theatre was more than art, and it generated an absorbing, moving, and compelling medium for its designated audience who entertained themselves, learn from the plays, and gathered during the performances that helped them socialise with people from diverse backgrounds. The discernible and ratified unconventionality of women in *Antony and Cleopatra* is audacious and varied in personification. However, the exposition of women is restrained by the constraints of the Elizabethan stage. As males played female roles, it can be claimed that Cleopatra’s deviant character has not been staged in full portrayal. It can be presumed that the childish posture of a young boy must have been disadvantageous of projecting the posture and the splendour of the Egyptian queen. According to Christine D. Billy, *Antony and Cleopatra* was not popular at the time it was first staged because the fourteen-year-old boy who played Cleopatra could not manage the queen’s part. When actresses first appeared on the English stage in 1629, twenty-three years later than *Antony and Cleopatra*’s debut, the male performer enacting Shakespeare’s portrayal of Cleopatra has been reformed. Peggy Ashcroft’s performance of Cleopatra appeared on stage in 1953, and only one of the ladies-in-waiting was black with make-up, while Cleopatra was white. In 1972, Cleopatra’s messengers were black, but still not acted out by black actors and actresses. In 1982, Helen Mirren featured Cleopatra and a black actress enacted Iras. In a later production in 1992, the black actress, Claire Benedict who was originally chosen for the role of Charmian showed up on stage as Cleopatra (Neill 55). The conventions concerning gender roles and racial biases are challenged. Before the beginning of the twentieth century, actors and actresses of African descent were not very frequent in England. Since the 1990s, black actresses performed Cleopatra more frequently.

Cosmopolitanism and Split Identities in *Antony and Cleopatra*

Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* presents a conflict between the symbiosis of cultures and the assimilation of other cultures into the primary culture. Antony represents the symbiosis, exemplified by his union with Cleopatra, as well as his willingness to adapt to the Egyptian ways of living. On the other hand, Caesar is a Roman thorough and through representing the imperial authority and the desire to subjugate and assimilate others. As

exemplified by Antony's relationship of equals with Cleopatra, the concept of cosmopolitanism associated with the connection between partners prevails in the play. However, cosmopolitanism does not always have positive connotations in the play. The direct consequence of Antony and Cleopatra's relationship of equals is their own self-destruction, both figuratively and literally. The sea battle between Antony and Caesar is a distinct controversy that signals detrimental power relations. Upon Antony's decision to take Caesar on at sea, Scarrus bemoans his decision in the following lines, "Trust not to rotten planks. Do you misdoubt / This sword, and these my wounds? Let th'Egyptians / And the Phoenicians go a-ducking - we / Have used to conquer standing on earth" (3.7.62-65). As Scarrus clarifies in his speech, fighting at sea is decidedly non-Roman, and Antony suffers for depending on Cleopatra and her ships rather than the power of his Roman legions as Caesar wins the battle due to the retreat of Cleopatra.

Antony is punished for trusting Cleopatra rather than his Roman subordinates. Caesar's victory is a triumph of his culturally monolithic imperialism over the cosmopolitanism of Antony and Cleopatra. As a Roman in Egypt, Antony adopts the Egyptian ways of living as can be observed in Caesar's admonishment of Antony for adopting their hedonism and cuisine. For Caesar, Antony's adoption of the Egyptian way of living is deplorable since he considers it feminine. As Geraldo U. de Sousa states, the "masculine" Rome stands in contrast with Egypt's "exotic, lustful, . . . feminine people" ("Boundaries" 6). His understanding of culture is built by opposing qualities such as masculine and feminine, without room for a nuance. In the mind of Caesar, these two cultures are clearly distinguished without a possibility of one mixing with the other. Therefore, the Roman culture must replace the Egyptian if the corroding effect of mobility, as exemplified by Antony, is to be avoided. Pompa Banerjee states, "In voyaging abroad to encounter the alien other, Caesar's flexibility allows him to navigate both cosmos and polis; it also protects him from travel's contamination. Unlike Antony, Caesar consumes but is not controlled by his appetite for foreign bodies and commodities" (135). Therefore, Antony only exists as a cautionary tale for Caesar to avoid, and Antony is a tragic hero whose flawed cosmopolitanism causes his downfall. In contrast to Antony's consumption of other cultures, which is self-destructive, Caesar "transforms the other by ingesting foreign bodies and incorporating them into the body of Rome, replacing the vast, strange cosmos with the familiar space of Rome" (Banerjee 136). His mobility is that of an imperialist, not a guest. His consumption of foreign bodies turns them into Romans through assimilation. He does not form relationships of equals with foreign bodies. Cleopatra addresses him not as her equal but as her "master and [her] lord!" (5.2.189). This master and subject relationship between them is imposed through military hierarchy, as opposed to the love of Antony and Cleopatra. The triumph of the imperialistic mobility of Caesar rather than the guest-like mobility of Antony is quite appropriate for the context of the play. Since the play was written during the time when the means of transportation allowed people to be aware of other cultures, and the colonisation of newly discovered lands provided more connectivity between distinct

cultures and societies, *Antony and Cleopatra* communicates anxieties over the increased relations across cultures, trying to weed out the destructive forms of cosmopolitanism in favour of the refining forms of cosmopolitanism. As Banerjee states, “competing cosmopolitanisms examine schisms in global citizenship, human rights, refugee camps, diasporic identities forged through deracination and exile, the rights of guests, and obligations for the rights of others. Collectively they also mark shifts in centers and peripheries” (120). As the idea of homeland expanded with colonisation, the people inhabiting these places but not natives of the places became a problem for the empire.

In politics, dualities regarding power relations get either resolved through union and peace or through division and war. In *Antony and Cleopatra* war becomes inevitable regardless of the efforts of Lepidus because of the constantly increasing tension between Antony and Caesar. When does this opposition between Antony and Caesar start? It was there even from the beginning of the play. In Act I, scene iv, Caesar furiously talks about Antony by stating: “Let his shames quickly / Drive him to Rome. ’Tis time we twain” (1.4.73-74). Caesar’s language reflects his power and authority; especially his use of imperatives linguistically emphasises the political power that he possesses. The use of the word “twain” implies a duality that is present between Antony and Caesar. If Caesar’s language is observed closely, it is clear that he uses a lot of imperatives which makes him appear as a more powerful character. As Paul Yachnin states, “Antony and Caesar’s first meeting, for example, begins with a competitive exchange of imperatives. . . . In spite of their attempts afterwards to conclude a peace, [their] words reveal at the outset that there can be only one sovereign” (348). The duality, present even from the beginning of the play turns itself into a division with Caesar’s betrayal. In Act III, scene v, Eros talks about Caesar betraying Lepidus through the following lines: “Caesar, having made use of him in the wars ’gainst / Pompey, presently denied him rivalry, would not let / him partake in the glory of the action” (3.5.6-8). Caesar does not share the victory with Lepidus thus he violates their partnership. As a result of this action, Lepidus and Caesar are divided and this also means a division amongst the triumvirs. There has already been a division between Caesar and Antony but Lepidus as a mediator held the triumvirs together and later, he ceased to be the unifying force among the three Roman rulers. All contradictions and power struggles that begin from the very first meeting of Caesar and Antony results in Caesar’s triumph and the collapse of triumvirs, “which brings with it the beginnings of Pax Romana” (Rose 379). The role of mediators and loyal servants in the division between Caesar and Antony is one that needs close consideration. Such characters and where they stand on this issue are significant because they are the ones who give power to characters such as Antony and Caesar. *Antony and Cleopatra* is a historical play and a tragedy that recreates the Elizabethan ideas on mobility and cross-cultural encounters in a historical setting.

Therefore, the playwright’s choice to see cosmopolitanism largely as a flaw is not coincidental, nor is it a plain representation of the historical setting in which the play takes place. By fictionalizing a historical period as opposed to creating an entirely imaginary

setting and characters, Shakespeare bequeaths ideas regarding cosmopolitanism and its consequences. Historical events and figures bring the play closer to reality, and Shakespeare's understanding of the concepts of hybridity and cosmopolitanism takes on a greater meaning, as the playwright suggests the idea that cosmopolitanism is likely to be corrupted and imperialism is a triumphant force difficult to overcome.

Cultural Hybridity and Antony's Dilemma between Egyptian Values and Roman Morals

Antony is lost between the two cultures of Rome and Egypt. The transformation of Antony is through his deviation from the Roman culture associated with power, productivity, and masculinity to the Egyptian values of lavishness, idleness, and effeminacy. Antony is depicted in a state in which he continuously alternates between the two cultures in a sphere of cultural hybridity, and the cultural hybridity as depicted in *Antony and Cleopatra* harms Antony in terms of his gender roles and military and political position as will be presented below.

Cultural hybridity is a continuous process and in the play Antony continually encounters it. According to *Oxford Reference*, hybridity "[r]efers to the process of the emergence of a culture, in which its elements are being continually transformed or translated through irrepressible encounters" ("Hybridity"). Indeed, there is an ongoing interchange and transaction between the Roman and the Egyptian culture throughout the play. The exchange of the two cultures, however, diminishes the characteristics of each other as they endeavour to mingle with one another. The combination of the two cultures influences Antony and his compliance with his position as a Roman general. While Antony is supposed to act like a stubborn, rigid male figure who should adhere to Roman morals, his time spent with Cleopatra, contrasting with the Roman values of political and martial affairs, Antony digresses from his macho masculine Roman self. His conversion from Roman to Egyptian is materialised and extended to his personality traits like a change from undeterred to capricious, and from thrifty to a lavish person. Antony becomes sidetracked by the Egyptian values of lavishness and indecisiveness since he listens to Cleopatra about war affairs. The cultural hybridity of the play has an effect that downplays Antony's Roman characteristics which are associated with masculinity. Antony starts to desire, like Cleopatra and is deprived of his cerebral faculties. He emerges as a more effeminate person of Egyptian values associated with idleness and luxury. In the climactic third act of the play, before he encounters Caesar at sea he declares his wish to have a night with Cleopatra full of joy and extravagance, "come, / Let's have one other gaudy night. Call to ma. / All my sad captains, fill our bowls once more" (3.13.182-184). It is Cleopatra's birthday and the celebrations fit into Antony's miscalculated, outrageous decision of making it a fun night before his and his navy's defeat. Cleopatra is enthusiastic about Antony's wish to enjoy themselves: "It's my birthday / I had thought to've it poor; but since my lord / Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra" (3.13.185-87). Geraldo U. de Sousa states, "Antony, who has obviously repeatedly proven himself as a soldier, seems to

acquire the capricious or whimsical Egyptian quality” while arguing how Egyptian culture affects his masculinity and gender roles (“Habitat” 151). Therefore, precise definitions of Roman masculinity are distorted as Antony centres his actions and decisions around Cleopatra’s Egyptian values. Interchange of the two different cultures dissolves the male gender role to which Antony is supposed to conform, making him less of a strict representation of power and more of a sybarite.

A remarkable influence of this interchange of cultures is that Antony loses his competence in his military skills. His character is being reconstructed as a slack, inadequate drifter. His interactions with the Egyptian culture have an undermining effect on his military skills. The notion of responsibility and time-management becomes trivial for Antony: “Tonight we’ll wander through the streets, and note / The qualities of people. Come, my queen, / Last night you did desire it. (*To the Messenger*) Speak not to us” (1.2.55-57). Antony’s self-indulgence and his ingenious decisions result from his tendency to conform to Egyptian values. His indulgence is an outcome of the contact with the national speciality of Egyptian values of idleness as highlighted in the play. Cleopatra’s facetiousness and immaturity are borne upon Antony as he becomes more integrated with the Egyptian culture and its values. Hirsh comments on Antony’s permissiveness and slackness as “particularly incongruous and improper” because they lack military promptness (176). In fact, the hybridity of the Roman culture with the Egyptian values results in negative outcomes for the Romans, especially dire consequences for Antony such as his defeat against Caesar, which emerges as a stain on his various past military successes. The Roman value of unwavering resolution as a soldier at war is remarkably diluted by Egyptian recklessness. Even when Antony prepares for the battle against Caesar and gets armed, his conversation with Cleopatra focuses on wooing her: “O love, / That thou couldst see my wars today and knew’st / The royal occupation, thou shouldst see / A workman in’t” (4.4.15-18). Antony’s unspoken struggle to balance himself between the values of two different nations distracts him from focusing on his goals as a soldier, thus depicting him as an immature person of frail characteristics. Hirsh also argues, “What Rome sees as irrationality and disorderly conduct Egypt sees as exhilarating passion, spontaneity, and exuberance. What Rome sees as trivial pursuits Egypt sees as activities that make life worth living” (177). The cultural hybridity depicted in the play does not produce fruitful outcomes for Antony; rather, it turns his attention from his military duties to straying in unproductive deeds, which illustrates him as a disadvantaged soldier weighed down with fallacy.

Antony’s constant struggle between two different cultures never ends and fatally ruins him. The continuous entrapment of the cultural hybridity captures him so powerfully that he is destined to fail both as a Roman and a general who resolves to embrace Egyptian values. This, ultimately, despoils his achievements with regards to both his gender roles and military success.

Conclusion

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Egypt is characterised by the perversion of both its location and people, besides its serenity. In contrast, Rome is portrayed as a region where the politicians and politics are rationally organised. Steve Tillis states that “the semantic of the East and West dichotomy also implies a comprehensiveness between the entities of East and West; with the world divided into the entities, everything must belong to one or the other” (75). Egypt and Rome are seen through the portrayal of the characters and the power they assume. Antony’s speech merges and disguises his homeland and identity with his lover’s environment:

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay. Our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man. The nobleness of life
Is to do thus, . . .
[embracing Cleopatra] when such a twain can do’t. (1.1.35-40)

Cleopatra’s line reinforces a similar thought, “Some innocents scape not the thunderbolt. / Melt Egypt into Nile! And kindly creatures / Turn all to serpents! Call the slave again -- / Though I am mad, I will not bite him. Call” (2.5.78-81). The idea of melting within each other’s is mentioned in Antony’s another speech which reflects him no longer a Roman authority figure, “Authority melts from me” (3.13.90). Moreover, Antony implies that he is no longer part of Rome, saying to his wife, Octavia “i th’east my pleasure lies” (II, iii, 38), and claims that “The beds I th’East are soft” (2.6.51). Emily Haug states that “Antony’s influence was also felt through the legates he left in charge of his affairs when he was absent on his Eastern campaign” (411). He is not in pursuit of Roman ideals and complies with the Egyptian perception. Likewise, Cleopatra tries to keep Antony within unfixed thoughts to embrace Antony’s love and her political power and her dominance in Egypt. Their cooperation transfuses through the perception of Egypt’s natural attraction and Rome’s reason and logic.

The representation of East and West in the play is accurate when the characters’ insights are taken into consideration. The clash between the passion of Egypt and the reason of Rome creates diversity. Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* exposes that being attached to emotions is not foolishness or indecisiveness, rather an awakening and it is only wise to assimilate new cultures when a harmonious combination of the original and the new is formed. Laden with scheming, corrupting and murdering politics, Shakespeare presents in *Antony and Cleopatra* the passionate love affair between Cleopatra and Antony. Their relationship not only represents the devastating power relations, but it also represents the clashes between Egypt and Rome. The play offers an intriguing representation of the East and the West. The contrasts between the leading characters of the play, Antony, Caesar and Cleopatra create a fascinating conflict between the two cultures and their representatives. By giving Cleopatra a deep passion for Egypt and not making her simply an exotic character, Shakespeare reveals that the Eastern spirit is

captivating. He compares Western and Eastern countries including their cultural and social differences in terms of their interaction with each other regarding the human nature that is convenient to alter in any situation. Cleopatra's and Antony's momentary, yet never full adaptations to either the Roman and the Egyptian world may be pointed out as reasons for both Egypt's and Rome's hardly adopted cultures which both Cleopatra as well as Antony reflect many times. Shakespeare depicts Antony and Cleopatra as contestants and contributors of cultural hybridity that originates from mobility. They lose themselves in their devastating and passionate love affair. They forget about their responsibilities and leave their identities to become either Egyptian or Roman, undertaking their new identities through cultural hybridity. The play is filled with the consolidation of opposite cultures. Antony, Caesar and Cleopatra are notable characters who epitomise humans' open bearing to globalisation in the play. They are engaged in a continual communication with each other either through war or love. Caesar always acts thoughtfully and thinks about his next move as the Roman ruler. Yet, after Antony and Cleopatra's tragic death, he orders to bury them together to dignify and eternalise their love for each other. Caesar says: "Take up her bed /And bear her women from the monument. / She shall be buried by her Antony" (5.2.354-56). By consenting to Antony and Cleopatra's burial together Caesar seems to begin adopting a cosmopolitan attitude by unifying the members of Egyptian and Roman cultures. Mobility gives way to hybridity and therefore to cosmopolitanism. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare addresses possible challenges and outcomes of cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism by means of power relations.

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