

An Appreciation of "Antony and Cleopatra" Mainly from the Standpoint of Its Three Principal Themes

By Mutsuo NAKAMURA

Assistant Professor of English, the Faculty of Textile science and Technology, Shinshu University

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1

As I surveyed the criticisms of *Antony and Cleopatra* in "A Historical Study on the Criticism of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*", there have been many approaches to the play, and various interpretations and criticisms have been written on it. Generally speaking, the criticism shows a tendency to see deeply into the play and recognize its greatness, as time elapsed. But even the most excellent criticisms cannot always make clear the meaning of the play and be satisfactory, for it comprehends and makes much of only one or a few aspects of the play, which has many aspects as if it were a living organism. The psychological criticism often causes us to mistake the fictional characters of the play-world for real persons in the actual world and to fail to notice the allegorical elements of the characters. The historical criticism often helps us forget what the play means to us in the present age in stressing what it meant to the Elizabethans. The aesthetical criticism often makes us overlook that imagery is only the raw materials of the imagination which composes the play and also that its translation even in prose of a foreign language appeals to the foreigners who do not know the English language and poetry. The multi-conscious criticism often allows us to ignore that the play moves such foreign people as the Japanese audience who have no multi-consciousness as a Christian tradition and live in a society that has a moral vision quite different from that of English theatre. We, especially other people than Europeans, therefore, must find the reason why the play impresses very deeply everyone of every time and place.

To appreciate the greatness of the play, it goes without saying that the play must be comprehended rightly and properly. For that purpose it is, first of all, necessary for us to grasp clearly the themes of the play and to understand what it represents as a whole. Harold S. Wilson says that the play presents the story of empire crossed with the story of love: the high political destiny of empires and the love of a great commander and a great queen, and that the conflict of world empires

and human love is the theme of the play. L. J. Mills regards as the three principal themes of the play the East (Egypt) versus the West (Rome), the strife in the triumvirate, and love and tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra. But as many critics say, the East represents love and the West the political strife. This classification of the themes of the play is a little confused, while Wilson's classification is too simple. I, therefore, must say that the essential themes of the play are the business of state, love, and Antony's wavering between the two. These themes cover not only all the actions of the characters of the play, but also all the activities of mankind. If biologically all the multifarious and complicated activities of man can be comprehended under two categories, the maintenance and development of the individual body and continuance of the species, literarily they can be involved in two categories of business and love. The maintenance and development can be most perfectly fulfilled by man's business in a well ordered and peaceful world which the business of state sets before it as its first ideal, while the continuance of the species can be first carried out by love. The ideal business of man is the business of state according to Elizabethan thought. But almost all the ordinary people waver between their business and love. Thus these three themes involve nearly all the activities of human beings. The play, therefore, has sympathy with everybody. Here we can find one of the reasons why this great tragedy gives a universal and deep impression to every one of every time and place. From the standpoint of the above-mentioned three themes I shall survey and appreciate the play.

2

The theme of the business of state is variously called by critics and scholars; political affairs, a great cause, the theme of empire, business, war, politics and policy, the political world, power drama, worldly power, the imperial theme, the world great business, the world of empire, honour, a life-vision, etc. It is a theme about the Roman world. Politics and policy were carried on mainly through war in such an ancient world as that of this play. Shakespeare evidently set a value on war. G. Wilson Knight says that war and love are the two Shakespearian values. The business of the Roman empire is depicted in this play in contrast with the business of the Egyptian world; the West conflicts with the East. This theme makes one pole in the play.

The play shows the political situation and its development. The three of the triumvirate, Antony, Octavius Caesar, and Lepidus, are to be reduced to one man Caesar after many struggles for the lordship of the world, though there is another struggle of Pompey as a subsidiary. This is the political aspect of the play. We must appraise this aspect properly. If we attach too much importance to it, we should regard the play as a tragedy of Antony's downfall and ruin as general and statesman owing to his unlawful and sensual love with Cleopatra or as a historical

play of the final ascension of Octavius Caesar in the struggle for the world's rulership. If we take this aspect too lightly, we should consider the play merely as a love tragedy. Essentially the political aspect is set against the love aspect throughout the play and the opposition of the two themes braces the whole body of the play.

The Roman world is the world of politics and policy, and the whole scheme is different from that of the Egyptian world; it is, so to speak, the scheme of an efficient business world. Reason, honour, duty, efficiency, and practical wisdom are valued, and honour's call and country's good are made much of because they are necessary for political order.

Octavius Caesar is the representative of the Roman world. In other words Rome is personified in the disciplined and far-seeing Octavius. So the character is not only a direct presentation of a person but the symbol, the allegorical presentation, of the Roman world. We can find a superhuman element in him.

Octavius Caesar is a pure Machiavellian. He fixes his eyes on his aim to rule the world alone. He sacrifices everything for it and uses everything as a means to realize it. He makes war with Antony's wife Fulvia and his brother, and defeats them. Then Sextus Pompeius, son of Pompey the Great, bids defiance to him and commands the empire of the sea. People's minds begin to be estranged from him and to be drawn to Pompeius. He has been in deep distress. He requests Antony's aids. He considers Antony's aids as one of Antony's duties because Antony is one of the triumvirs and has responsibilities for the crisis of the Roman empire. Caesar blames Antony for his negligence of duty, because he has remained in Egypt and lives a voluptuous life there with Cleopatra. Caesar has such a cunning quality as to divide responsibilities with others and yet make a monopoly of profits. But against expectation Antony comes back suddenly to Rome from Egypt. Caesar reconciles himself with Antony in spite of his complaint against Antony. He, moreover, gives his beloved sister Octavia to Antony as his wife. Then the triumvirs confer with Pompey and conclude a treaty of peace with him. After a while Caesar and Lepidus break the treaty and make war upon Pompey and defeat him. Having made use of Lepidus in the war against Pompey, Caesar possesses exclusively the profits, deposes Lepidus from the triumvirate, accuses him of letters which he wrote formerly to Pompey, and at length kills him under the pretext that he has grown cruel and abused his high authority, which is an absolute lie. Then maintaining that Antony has ill-treated his sister Octavia and insisting other plausible pretexts, Caesar next makes war against Antony and defeats him. At last he wins the absolute rulership of the Roman empire. Then he tries to bring Cleopatra to Rome as an eternal ornament of his triumph. But his attempt is baffled by her suicide.

Thus Caesar is an excellent and shrewd politician. He defeats his rivals suc-

cessively one after another and never makes more than one enemy at a time. He is a man who has plenty of judgment and not much 'blood'. Such a man always wins victory in life. He is cold and has a certain calculating meanness. He often appears to have no motive beyond avarice, acquisition, and triumph pride. He has a low opinion of the people,

It hath been taught us from the primal state
That he which is was wish'd, until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to, and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion. (I. IV. 41-47)

But he has practical reason and worldly wisdom, and dexterously rules the people.

Caesar enunciates the Stoic philosophy. It is closely related with the notion of restrictive morality. His life shows the austerities of the Roman life. He is never tempted into any reckless action. When his sister comes back from Antony, he says to her,

Cheer your heart;
Be you not troubled with time, which drives
O'er your content these strong necessities,
But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way. (III. VI. 81-85)

According to Antony's words, at Philippi

he alone
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had
In the brave squares of war. (III. XI. 38-40)

When he was challenged a single combat by Antony, he said calmly,

let old reffian know,
I have many other ways to die; meantime
Laugh at his Challenge. (IV. I. 4-6)

Though he is a Machiavellian politician and a stoical man, he is far from being villainous. On the contrary he is often described as an ideal statesman and soldier. He makes much of moral life and social order. As F. M. Dickey says, Caesar probably was regarded as an ideal prince by the Elizabethan audience. He is often presented as a minister of divine justice. He shows noble sympathy of a great soldier and statesman for his antagonist Antony. When he hears of his suicide, he laments his death.

The gods rebuke me, but it is a tidings
To wash the eyes of kings. (V. I. 27-28)

O Antony,

I have follow'd thee to this, but we do launch
 Diseases in our bodies. I must perforce
 Have shown to thee such a declining day,
 Or look on thine: we could not stall together,
 In the whole world. But yet let me lament
 With tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts,
 That thou my brother, my competitor,
 In top of all design; my mate in empire,
 Friend and companion in the front of war,
 The arm of mine own body, the heart
 Where mine his thoughts did kindle; — that our stars
 Unreconcilable, should divide
 Our equalness to this. (V. I. 35-48)

His motives of actions are not merely such ignoble desires as avarice for his self-interest or worldly power, but also such noble and ideal desires as the longing for universal peace.

The time of universal peace is near:
 Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nook'd world
 Shall bear the olive freely. (IV. VI. 4-6)

Thus he says to Enobarbus and Dolabella in the last battle by land.

Octavius Caesar is thus both a mean politician and an ideal statesman. He fluctuates between these two kinds of politician. In other words he ranges from a mean politician to an ideal statesman. He is all politicians rather than a single politician. In this respect he becomes a symbol of universal meaning and content of the politician. He does not only oscillate between the ignoble politician and the noble, but also develops. At last he can utter the most beautiful words ever spoken of her, gazing down at dead Cleopatra,

but she looks like sleep,
 As she would catch another Antony

In her strong toil of grace. (V. II. 344-346)

These words show that the poet within him is kindled.

Caesar never defies Fortune; he is always obedient to it. He reconciles himself to it. As his follower Thidias says, "Wisdom and fortune combating together, / If that the former dare but what it can, / No chance may shake it." (III. XIII. 79-81), he always avails himself of his fortune by his practical reason and worldly wisdom. According to Cleopatra's words, he is 'the full-fortun'd Caesar' (IV. XV. 24) and,

Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave,
 A minister of her will. (V. II. 3-4)

He, therefore, seems to be worldly power itself, or a part of the structure of

things. He is a kind of impersonal embodiment of a cold and universal force as well as man. He is the Man of Destiny.

In short Octavius Caesar is not so interesting when seen simply as a human being, but he falls into Shakespeare's studies of the politician and at the same time the symbol and embodiment of the Roman world, which makes the background and sharply contrasts with the love world of Egypt.

3

As the foreground of the play is treated the theme of love. This theme is variously called by critics and scholars ; the world of love affairs, love, pleasure, the East, the world of love or passion, the business of love, a love-vision, Egypt, woman, human love, love drama. etc. It is a theme about the Egyptian world, where Eastern magnificence, voluptuous temperament, languor, luxury, sensuousness, mystery, and ardours prevail. As I said before, the values of War or Empire and Love are ever twin supreme values in Shakespeare and the great spiritual heritages of West and East. Love is the other pole of the play. As the world of Rome (the business of state) is personified in Octavius Caesar, so Cleopatra incarnates the Egyptian world (love). The two worlds of West and East oppose each other and are counterpoised. After Antony's death they come into direct conflict in the fifth act of the play. This conflict reveals Shakespeare's judgment about the two values of War and Love.

In order to comprehend the love theme, we have only to understand the character of Cleopatra properly. Some critics say that Cleopatra is the incarnation of voluptuous passions, a mixture of hoyden and strumpet, a type of woman found in the courtesan of common life, or both a courtesan of genius and a great queen. Their interpretations of Cleopatra's character perhaps may have many reasons, but they are all wrong. Cleopatra was described simply as the evil genius of Antony in Plutarch's *Lives* from which the material of the play was derived by Shakespeare. But Shakespeare's Cleopatra is different from Plutarch's Cleopatra, because Shakespeare was not such a Stoic as Plutarch and did not depict her so detestably as Plutarch. Shakespeare's Cleopatra says of herself, "Of us that trade in love". (II. V. 2) Critics and scholars often misinterpret these words and say that she is a courtesan. But the words do not mean that she is a courtesan. The word 'trade' retained senses nearer that of its source, 'tread', in the Elizabethan age, and the meaning of her speech is 'She has dealings in love' or 'her sole dealing is in love'; more clearly expressed, the words mean that love is her very life. Indeed she is a woman who must have love and had Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey, and Antony as her lovers, but she is satisfied with one at a time, and she finds her ideal lover in Antony. (I. V) She is never a faithless creature that changes a lover for a calculated advantage, and it is wrong to suspect that she betrayed Antony to Octa-

vius Caesar. Antony uses many abusive words at her when he suspects her, 'you kite', 'a boggler', 'foul Egyptian', 'triple-turn'd whore', 'my charm', 'false soul of Egypt', 'the greatest spot of all the sex', 'grave charm', 'a right gipsy', 'spell', 'the witch', 'vile lady' 'a morsel, cold upon Dead Caesar's trencher', 'a fragment of Gnaeus Pompey's', etc., but these abusive words do not show that she is a courtesan, because these names are called by Antony when he is in a wild rage, suspecting that she has betrayed him. We must not have moral considerations in mind when criticizing Cleopatra. She lives in the world of love. The self-slaughter must not be condemned as an atrocious sin from the Christian moral point of view. It must be considered rather as a noble and beautiful act to enter the Elysium as the lovers' suicide or *hara-kiri* in old Japanese literature.

Her love has an unlawful and sensual aspect, though we cannot regard the aspect as the whole of her love. She is the ideal of sensual attractiveness. According to the moral judgment the moral obliquity of Antony and Cleopatra seems to be abominable. If we should assume such love (sexual passions) to be the immediate subject of the play, and should read it merely as a love drama, we should surely come to a conclusion that the play shows that Cleopatra, sexual, instinctive, fascinating, treacherous, cunning, and charming, lured Antony with her grace whom she loved to a ruin which involved herself in his fate, or to a conclusion that the play presents a divinization of mortal pleasure in sexual and unlawful love followed by the remorseless Nemesis of eternal law. Such views are apparently too narrow and biased. Shakespeare does not treat such love as the sole and exclusive factor in existence in the play. In order to make this sexual element of Cleopatra's love blameless, some moralistic critics insist that the sexual relationship is treated so as not to produce the impression that it is the solitary and imperious factor in life. They say that the kaleidoscopic changes of Cleopatra's mood, whose heart is aflame with sensual desires, are skillfully counterpoised with Roman military movements, or that her sexual charms and fascination are brought to our aesthetic appreciation by the narration described in excellent poetry rather than by her actions on stage. But when we read the play, we shall find that their assertions are not always true. From beginning to end such love is only too prominent an element of the play.

In this play sex is an important factor, but it is not obscene, even though it may be voluptuous. It has a deeper meaning in the play. It expands itself into mother love. Love is the essential factor which 'continuates' race or society, and this is carried out by sex. She desires to 'continue' her race by love; she wishes to make herself eternal by sex. She says,

Eternity was in our lips, and eyes,

Bliss in our brow's bent; none our parts so poor,

But was a race of heaven, they are so still. (I. III. 35-37)

Every part of her body is of heavenly origin, and she must bequeath it to her children and make it eternal by love. When Antony see that Cleopatra lets Caesar's messenger Thidias kiss her hand, he says to her in a rage,

Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,

Forborne the getting of a lawful race,

And by a gem of woman, to be abus'd

By one that looks on feeders ? (III. XIII. 106-109)

From these words which Shakespeare makes Antony speak against the historical fact that Antony begot his children by Octavia, we can understand that sex is treated as an essential element of love and as a means to produce progenies, for the words show that Antony does not love Octavia who is beautiful, wise, and modest (II. II. 241-243) on account of his love for Cleopatra. In this play sexual love is closely linked with maternal affections. When she is in earnest and reveals her real mind, she speaks of her children. After the defeat of Actium she requests Caesar to give 'the crown of the Ptolemies for her heirs'. (III. XII. 19) In the above-mentioned scene of Antony's anger she says as follows:

Ah, dear, if it be so,

From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,

And poison it in the source, and the first stone

Dissolve my life; the next Caesarion smite

Till by degrees the memory of my womb,

Together with my brave Egyptians all,

By the discandying of this pelleted storm,

Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile

Have buried them for prey ! (III. XIII. 159-167)

She also feels maternal affections for all Egyptians. Her sexual love extends into mother love and becomes a means to realize the 'continuation' of her self and nation. When she says to Thidias,

Say to great Caesar this in deputation:

I kiss his conquering hand: tell him, I am prompt

To lay my crown at's feet, and there to kneel:

Tell him, from his all-obeying breath I hear

The doom of Egypt. (III. XIII. 74-78)

it is, therefore, obvious that she is cunningly only flattering Caesar in order to 'dodge and palter in the shifts of lowness' (III. XI. 62-63), because she does not mention her children. In her love Antony is the first object, next her children, and then her subjects. After Antony's death she has lost her first object in her life and this world is to her no better than a sty. (IV. XV. 59-62) Why then does she survive him ? It is for her children and Egyptians in spite of her decision to die. (IV. XV. 21-29), (IV. XV. 80-83), (V. II. 38-62) and (V. II. 70). She says,

if he please
 To give me conquer'd Egypt for my son,
 He gives me so much of mine own, as I
 will kneel to him with thanks. (V. II. 18-21)

When she knows that Caesar has no intention to give her son Egypt (V. II. 123-132), she comes to have no need to live on in this world. The interpretation that the interlude with her treasurer Seleucus is a deception to conceal her intention to die is right, because by keeping back some of her treasures for her children she could throw the gullible Caesar off the track of her intention. Her desire for 'the continuation' of race is not fulfilled and the last scene of her death is very impressively tragic and pathetic.

It is well done, and fitting for a princess

Descended of so many royal kings. (V. II. 325-326)

Even though she finds the new world Elysium, she has lost her hope for 'continuation' of her race.

Her love is also a real passion of a woman who knows how much greater is the intoxication of loving than of being loved. A soothsayer says of her attendants Charmian and Iras that they would be yet fairer than they were and be more loving than beloved. (I. II. 16, I. II. 22) So is the case with Cleopatra. According to Enobarbus who plays a role of chorus in the play, her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love. (I. II. 144-149). Her love is purest. When love is purest and positive, it tends to have cunning past man's thought and coquetry. (cf. I. III. 3-10) She has such qualities and everything becomes her, to chide, to laugh, to weep: every passion fully strives to make itself, in her, fair and admired. (cf. I. I. 48-51) As her love is purest and positive (full of vitality),

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety: other women cloy

The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry

Where most she satisfies. For vilest things

Become themselves in her, that the holy priests

Bless her when she is riggish. (II. II. 235-240)

She sometimes becomes base, hysterical, and cruel. She strikes down the messenger who reports to her that Antony is married to Octavia, and hales him up and down. She even draws a knife and tries to kill him. But soon afterwards she repents her behaviour and says,

These hands do lack nobility, that they strike

A meaner than myself; since I myself

Have given myself the cause. (II. V. 82-84)

She is proud and makes much of dignity, but she has weakness, too. She insists on taking part in the sea battle at Actium. Her love has a martial element. But

in the height of fighting she is frightened away from it.

The fascination of such love as above-mentioned is most excellently expressed in the description of Cleopatra's first meeting with Antony on the river of Cydnus.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne
 Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
 Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
 The wind were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
 The water which they beat to follow faster,
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
 It beggar'd all description: she did lie
 In her pavilion —cloth of gold, of tissue—
 O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
 the fancy outwork nature. On each side her,
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
 With diverse-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
 And what they undid did. (II. II. 191-204)
 Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
 So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
 And made their bends adornings. At the helm
 A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
 Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
 That yarely frame the office. From the barge
 A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
 Of the adjacent wharfs (II. II. 205-213)

Antony was at once fascinated by her sensuous beauty.

Our courteous Antony,
 Whom ne'er the word of "No" woman heard speak,
 Being barber'd ten times o'er goes to the feast;
 And for his ordinary, pays his heart,
 For what his eyes eat only. (II. II. 222-226)

This is the paragon of her sensuous and earthly love expressed in her bodily beauty.

Cleopatra's love is also spiritual love. When Antony has died, her love is heightened from sensuous love to the rarefied heights of intense spiritual contemplation. She comes to realize that under all the trappings of royal dignity there are only human beings; she is such an ordinary woman or a lass as a milkmaid. (cf. IV. XV. 73-78) Surviving Antony and conflicting with Caesar are a sort of purgatory for her. By dint of her love for Antony, her children, and her subjects,

she develops. Her earthly love is purified and heightened, and she finds eternal love. Though her love was composed of four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, she now becomes fire and air, and rejects earth and water,

Husband, I come:

Now to that name, my courage prove my title!

I am fire, and air; my other elements

I give to baser life. (V. II. 286-289)

She puts on her best attires like a queen and leaves this world for Cydnus to meet Mark Antony. (cf. II. II. 226-228) When she dies, her sensuous love is purified into spiritual love and mother affections. (cf. V. II. 293-295) The serpent of old Nile (cf. I. V. 25) embraces her baby (asp of Nile) at her breast (cf. V. II. 307-309) and goes to meet her eternal husband Antony. At her last she possesses real royalty.

Cleopatra's love has two extreme aspects, the crude and the ideal. It ranges from the former to the latter. She fluctuates between the two aspects, and it is represented as a developing action. It develops towards refinement. Her love cannot be regarded merely as paradoxical nobility. Her love contains all womankind's love rather than a single woman's love. She is not merely a dramatic projection of actual persons, such as the 'dark lady' of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* or Queen Elizabeth, but a grand poetic symbol of both earthly love (Flesh) and angelic love. She is not a mere human person living in the world of earthly love but a being living in a region of ideal love far above the reach of moral code. As Michael Lloyd points out in his essay 'Cleopatra as Isis', we can perceive in her also the symbolic meaning of Isis, Ceres, Venus, Juno, Bellona, and Hecate.

4

As I have hitherto described, the two themes of the play, the business of state and love, are about the Roman world and the Egyptian world. They represent Shakespeare's two supreme values War and Love respectively. These worlds are depicted with the vast images of the world, the firmament, and the ocean. They are expressed as colossal worlds, and are paralleled and counterpoised, though the world of love is heavily weighted in the latter parts of the play. Antony wavers between the two worlds as an ordinary man oscillates between the two worlds of business and love in his microcosm. But before we survey the theme of Antony's wavering, let me first observe his character.

He has a great and large mind which ranges from the light and angelic down to the dark and brutal. He fluctuates between these two extremes of mind.

He is by nature open, generous, expansive, unreserved, straightforward, and courteous. He is quite free from envy, capable of great magnanimity and even of entire devotion, and full of kind and generous feelings. In short he can be a great lover by nature. Moreover he is exceedingly dignified, but can admit faults and

accept advice and reproof. He has blunt though sympathetic plainness which attracts his followers. He has justice, fortitude, and patience in sustaining wrong. He can be content with the hardship of adventure. He has divine wrath and can do splendid actions. He has the noblest and highest spirit and a huge power as a soldier or as a statesman, even though he lacks continence, sobriety, and political sapience. In short he has the nature to be a great soldier and statesman.

He is a sensualist and fond of lusty enjoyment. He feasts his senses with richness of life. He revels in abundant and rejoicing appetites; he flings himself into mirth and revelry. He enjoys being a great man; in him power is chiefly a means to pleasure. Though he has a huge power as a soldier and statesman, he contemns fruits of power, because he has no love of rule for ruler's sake.

He has the temper of untiring and inexhaustible liberality. He has amiability, placability, and amity. His voice is like the music of spheres for beauty and range. (cf. V. II. 83-84) Not only he is attracted and governed by woman, but also he has qualities to be ardently loved by woman.

In short Antony is a man of great capacity who is able to conquer the world with his sword and to win all hearts by geniality and self-oblivious magnanimity. And at the same time he is a sensualist and a lover of pleasure. The joy of life culminates for him in the love of women, and he finds his Absolute in Cleopatra because she satisfies and glorifies his whole being, and he becomes love's martyr. He has also imagination, the temper of artist. In this play he is presented and pictured on a colossal scale in everything—in stature, force of character, generosity, affections, passions, magnificence, and grandeur. This colossal figure of Antony matches well with the tremendous size and power of the Roman empire (war and statecraft) and the dignity of the persons involved on one hand, and with the commensurable or rather superior greatness of the love of Cleopatra on the other hand.

But there is a kind of similarity between Antony and the average man, even though Antony is a figure of more than human proportions. As Antony wavers between the two worlds of the business of state and love, so the average man wavers between his business and love, and sometimes he is capable of deep human feelings by his love and imagination even though in much smaller scale. In this respect everyone can have sympathy with Antony.

The beginning of the play, especially the first scene of the first act, can be interpreted as Shakespeare's both implicit and explicit introduction to the play. In this scene the viewpoints of both the worlds of Rome and Egypt are so cunningly juxtaposed that they seem to be not successive but simultaneous. Philo says from the Roman point of view that the love of Antony and Cleopatra is the dotage of the great general.

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,

That o'er the files and musters of the war
 Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
 The office and devotion of their view
 Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,
 Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
 The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
 And is become the bellows and the fan
 To cool a gipsy's lust. (I. I. 1-10)

and you shall see in him

The triple pillar of the world transform'd
 Into a strumpet's fool. (I. I. 11-13)

The love is condemned as a grave error of judgment, extreme folly, dishonour, and abomination in a ruler and general, and Cleopatra is called a tawny front, a gipsy, and a strumpet. In opposition to this the Egyptian viewpoint of love is expressed through the words and actions of Antony and Cleopatra.

Cleo. I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

Ant. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth. (I. I. 16-17)

Ant. Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
 Of the rang'd empire fall ! Here is my space,
 Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
 Feeds beast as man: when such a mutual pair, [*Embracing.*
 And such a twain can do 't, in which I bind,
 On pain of punishment, the world to weet
 We stand up peerless. (I. I. 33-40)

This foretells Antony's finding in their love the infinite and pursuing it into the jaws of death. There come messengers from Rome and other places. But Antony lends scarcely any ears to the news. But Cleopatra is afraid that Antony will get away from the world of love. Demetrius hopes that Antony's mind will return back to the world of Rome. (cf. I. I. 61-62) The first scene illustrates swinging ambivalence and the interpenetration of Rome and Egypt. This scene is an anticipation of the main theme of Antony's wavering between the two worlds.

Then 'on the sudden / A Roman thought hath struck him'. (I. II. 79-80) Here Antony's swaying hither and thither begins. To him a messenger reports that his wife Fulvia and his brother Lucius made war against Caesar and were defeated, and that Labienus with his Parthian force seized the wide territory of Asia while Antony has idled away his time with Cleopatra in Egypt. He recalls to his mind 'the world great business' and says,

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,

Or lose myself in dotage. (I. II. 113-114)

Another messenger comes in and reports to him Fulvia's death and other serious

matters which concern him. He makes firmer his decision to go to Rome and says to himself,

I must from this enchanting queen break off,
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch. (I. II. 125-127)

He tells his intentions to Enobarbus and says to him even thus, 'Would I had never seen her !' (I. II. 149). His mind is now completely occupied with military and political affairs, and thinks of his friends in Rome and Sextus Pompeius who begins to threaten the triumvirate. He makes Enobarbus tell his quick departure from Egypt to his subjects.

Antony next tells his intention to Cleopatra to go back to Rome. She tries earnestly to detain him and then rails at him. He gets angry with her. The important thing about Antony, by the bye, is that though he is magnanimous he gets angry when his mind is occupied with the business of state and is encroached by love. This shows that zest for political and military affairs and love are incompatible in his mind and yet he cannot give up any of them. This is the tragic collision of the two great opposing objects of life in Antony. He is a man born with the Roman capacity for action and with the Eastern passion for pleasure. At this time his love becomes baser. But Cleopatra blesses his departure. (I. III)

Caesar blames Antony's life in Egypt, especially for the reason that the triumvirate is put into a critical condition by Pompey. He recalls Antony's virtues as a soldier and longs for his quick return from Egypt. (I. IV.)

Cleopatra pines for Antony. Antony sends through a messenger to Cleopatra an oriental pearl with many kisses and makes a promise to her that he will give her many kingdoms and makes her the queen of all the East. She every day writes and sends several messengers to Antony. Thus not only Antony's mind serves two gods, love and honour, and cannot devote itself exclusively to one of them, but also Rome and Egypt powerfully attract him, so that he wavers greatly.

In Rome Antony vindicates himself from Caesar's grievances against him at a conference of the triumvirs, and Antony and Caesar at last agree to overlook their jealousies and slights of one another. In this meeting Antony shows his excellent ability as a statesman. Moreover he marries Caesar's sister Octavia for policy. Soon after this scene of the conference the famous scene of Cleopatra on the river of Cydnus is described by Enobarbus as if it showed the concealed part of Antony's mind. (II. II.)

Convinced by a soothsayer that his fortunes cannot prosper side by side with Caesar's, Antony secretly expresses his intention to go to Egypt in his monologue. Antony dispatches Ventidius on a campaign into Parthia. (II. III.)

The triumvirs negotiate with Pompey and seal their friendship. Enobarbus prophesies the inevitable result of Antony's marriage with Octavia that Antony

will go to Cleopatra again and the sighs of Octavia will prove the immediate author of the strife of Antony and Caesar. (II. VI.)

There follows a royal feast aboard one of Pompey's galleys after the negotiation. During the feast many talks about Egypt and the dance of the Egyptian Bacchanals are done as if they were to urge Antony to go to Egypt. (II. VII.)

Ventidius campaign in Parthia is successful. (III. I.) Antony, accompanied by Octavia, leaves Rome for Athens. (III. II.) But soon after he is in Athens, he hears that Caesar has waged war against Pompey disregarding the previous treaty, and has defeated him. Caesar has not given Antony an opportunity to share in the glory of victory. Not only this, but Caesar has slighted him. At Octavia's suggestion, Antony permits her to return to Rome as their reconciler and arbiter. He raises the preparation of war against Caesar. (III. IV) Meanwhile Caesar has also made a prisoner of Lepidus, removed him from the triumvirate, and killed him. Antony is very angry. (III. V.)

On the pretext of the above-mentioned situation Antony returns to Egypt according to his heart's desire. There he publicly heaps honours upon Cleopatra and makes her an absolute queen of the East, and proclaims her sons the kings of kings. She is now levying the kings of the world for war against Caesar. When Octavia arrives in Rome, Caesar easily persuades her to believe that Antony has cast her off and that the small train with which she travelled is, indeed, an added insult. (III. VI.) The rift and enmity between Antony and Caesar are complete. Antony has wavered back again to Egypt, but the struggle for the lordship of the world is enforced upon him by the inevitable result of his wavering. Thus the war of Actium begins.

Against the advice of his officers and a soldier, Antony determines to fight with Caesar by sea solely because Caesar dares him to fight a sea battle, in spite of his absolute advantage by land. Moreover he decides to take Cleopatra with him on the expedition. (III. VII.) He tries to serve the two purposes at one time: war and love. It is obvious that he will fail in both. In the height of the sea battle Cleopatra is frightened and flies. Immediately Antony follows her. Canidius and kings betray Antony and yield to Caesar with their legions and horse. (III. IX-X.)

Antony now suggests his suicide to his attendants and advises them to fly away with his treasure. Antony is exceedingly ashamed of himself. He has lost the world. But at last he forgives Cleopatra. (III. XI.) Objectively speaking, Antony's defeat at Actium is the death of honour (the end of the business of state) for him. Even though he himself is still to waver between the world of empire and the world of love, the defeat is the prelude of his entrance into the paradise of love. Henceforth he fluctuates between the baser love (or hate) and nobler love more frequently. When the world business projects its shadows upon his love or jealousy (though he has no jealousy hitherto) occupies his mind, he suspects Cleopatra and

his love becomes baser.

After the defeat Antony sends his schoolmaster as an ambassador to negotiate with Caesar. His request to live in either Egypt or Athens as a private man is rejected and Cleopatra's request for the crown of the Ptolemies for her heirs is granted on the condition that she either drives Antony out or puts him to death. Then Caesar sends Thidias to win Cleopatra from Antony by flattery and promises. (III. XII.)

Enobarbus says that only Antony is responsible for the defeat and not Cleopatra. The schoolmaster returns and conveys Caesar's words to Antony and Cleopatra. Antony's answer is a foolish challenge to personal combat with Caesar. Thidias, the ambassador from Caesar, comes to Cleopatra. Cleopatra 'dodges and palters in the shifts of lowness' and flatters Caesar and lets Thidias kiss her hand. Antony sees it and abuses her. He has Thidias whipped. He sends him back with a defiant message to Caesar. Antony cannot surmise Cleopatra's true mind and upbraids her. But soon afterwards he restores his love for her by her swearing. Thus he fluctuates from the baser love to the nobler. He regains his courage and intends to fight a desperate and furious fight to the last. (III. XIII.)

Of course Caesar laughs at Antony's challenge to personal combat and rejects it. Antony is now most earnest in his life and says,

By sea and land I'll fight: or I will live,
Or bathe my dying honour in the blood
Shall make it live again. (IV. II. 5-7)

He reveals his highest and noblest soldiership to his several servitors. But both Cleopatra and Enobarbus cannot understand the uplifting influence which emanates from his great soldiership (true war value). (IV. II)

The followers of Antony desert him one by one and go to Caesar. Hercules, Antony's guardian spirit, leaves him. (IV. III.) Even Enobarbus goes away from him, but magnanimous Antony generously sends his kind adieu and Enobarbus' treasure with a liberal gift to Enobarbus. He is overcome with self-reproach, and dies tragically. (IV. V, VI. IX.)

On the morning of the battle Cleopatra helps Antony to put his armour on and he goes forth gallantly to the battle. (IV. IV.) This is one of the most beautiful and impressive scenes of the play. In this scene love and war goes together and Antony and Cleopatra's love gleams most nobly.

Antony wins his last victory in this land battle. (IV. VII) Triumphantly he returns from the battle-field and Cleopatra meets him under the walls of Alexandria. She says,

Lord of Lords,
O infinite virtue, com'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught ? (IV. VIII. 16-18)

This is the happiest day in his life, because war and love are both fulfilled. (IV. VIII.)

But the next day the Egyptian fleet has yielded to the foe without fighting. It brings Antony disaster. He presumes that Cleopatra has been responsible for the defeat and his disgrace, and suspects that she has sold him to Caesar. He is enraged against her and makes up his mind to kill her so as to be revenged upon her. Just at that moment she appears before him, but seeing him in a great fury, she is frightened and leaves him. (IV. XII.) Antony's love fluctuates again into baser love and changes into hate.

The queen takes refuge in the monument and orders her eunuch to report to him that she has slain herself and died with his name on her lips because she has lost his love and wishes to avert his fury. (IV. XIII.)

He realizes the vicissitudes of life by losing all and tells his servant Eros those famous words about black vesper's pageants which express the evanescence of life. (IV. XIV. 2-8) This shows that he has developed to a higher level of mind. Then the eunuch comes and reports to him as he was ordered. Antony at once regains his love for the queen and makes up his mind to follow her to the Elysium,

Stay for me,

Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,

And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:

Dido, and her Aeneas, shall want troops,

And all the haunts be ours. (IV. XIV. 50-54)

He begs Eros to strike him dead. He says,

'Thou strik'st not me, 't is Caesar thou defeat'st'. (IV. XIV. 68) But the faithful follower kills himself instead of his master. Then Antony falls on his own sword to kill himself, but he fails. Just at that moment a messenger comes and says to him that Cleopatra, fearing the effect that her message might have had, has sent word that she is still alive and is in her monument. Antony asks to be taken to her. (IV. XIV.)

He is borne to her monument by the guard. She draws up him into her monument by her attendants' help. He reconciles with her. He becomes satisfied with his last and says,

Not Caesar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,

But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself. (IV. XV. 14-15)

He advises her to seek her honour and safety from Caesar and to trust none about Caesar but Proculeius. Thus his love becomes noble and self-forgetful, and sacrifices his self for her. He dies in her arms feeling satisfaction.

The miserable change now at my end

Lament nor sorrow at: but please your thoughts

In feeding them with those my former fortunes

Wherein I liv'd: the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest; and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman: a Roman, by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. (IV. XV. 51-58)

He can enter the Elysian field by dint of both love and his remembrance of his business of state, though Christian God has fixed his canon against self-slaughter.

As mentioned hitherto, Antony has a foot in both worlds of love and honour (politics and policy). These two worlds are not merely paralleled and counterpoised in power and grandeur, but sharply contrasted as the conflicting alternatives presented to Antony's choice. The choice is impossible for him to make, and he wavers between them nearly to the last. This is the mystery and cruelty of human life, and the insecurity of mortal things. As I said before, he is ambitious and a great ruler of the divided world, and struggles for the lordship of the Roman world. He is also a great lover. His love ranges from lust to spiritual love. As he wavers between the business of state and love, so he fluctuates between the two kinds of love. Sometimes his love changes into hate. He oscillates also between love and hate. But on the whole he develops. When he has received the report of Cleopatra's death, his love reveals itself noblest and sees the vision of the Elysium, a world beyond good and evil where souls couch on flowers. In his death he is at his best and triumphs over his suspicion against Cleopatra through his love for her. Not only this, his love has ultimately come to have the generosity of self-forgetfulness which is true courage, magnanimity and devotion. His death is not a defeat but a kind of triumph. Though he has lost this world, he has found the new heaven and earth in his death as he said at the beginning of this play. This may be called the triumph of a transcendent humanism. Antony is a figure of more than human proportion. Even such a great man as can be called a demi-god fails in this world when he serves two purposes of business and love; much more so is the case with an ordinary man or an average politician. So his tragedy is, in a sense, also the tragedy which happens to the majority of mankind, even though their suffering is not so unbearable as his. It is because human nature has, of necessity, such contradictory values as the Roman value (business) and the Egyptian value (love). The former is restrictive or negative, while the latter is affirmative or positive. We cannot give up either of them, and yet it is impossible for us to reconcile them completely. In this respect Antony's tragedy appeals to everyone of every time and place.

The principal themes which composes this play are the business of state, love, and Antony's wavering between the two.

Caesar is the representative of the world of politics and policy. He is a kind of giant in the political world and reveals the values and virtues in the business of state. He is not only a human character but also a symbol of the political world in which war is value. He has a vast range of statesmanship. He oscillates between the crude politician and the ideal and noble statesman, and develops. He shows the limit of human life in the political world. He makes himself one pole of the play.

Cleopatra is the representative of the love world. She is also a colossal figure of love. She is not only a human character in which many projections of actual persons in the world are contained, but also a symbol of universal meaning and content of womankind and a symbol reflected from the love gods in the ancient world. Her love has a great sphere from sexual passions to spiritual love. She fluctuates between the crude love and spiritual and noble love, and develops. She shows the love value and her love goes beyond the limit of human love to the next world. She reveals the mystery of womankind as well as a woman. She makes herself the other pole of the play.

Antony is a man born with the Roman capacity for political actions for worldly power and at the same time with the Eastern passion for love. And he wavers between the two poles. He is a colossal figure, a demigod. He has an enormous capacity to live in both worlds of Rome and Egypt, and he has also magnanimity. He pursues two values—war and love, but his desire is not easily fulfilled. He wavers between the two worlds. His love is also composed of a great range of love, from lust to spiritual and sacred love. He fluctuates between baser love and nobler love, and sometimes his love changes into hate and anger. We readers must find primary interest in these wavering and fluctuation caused by conflicting impulses and emotions of Antony. He fails and is ruined in the world, but he enters the happy next world of Elysium by dint of his remembrance of his business of state and his and Cleopatra's mutual love. In his suicide he reveals his best qualities almost divine. His tragedy is very great, but it is also the tragedy of an ordinary man, because almost every man always wavers between his business and love, and fluctuates in his love.

The play is primarily the tragedy of Antony as the title of the play in the First Folio, 'THE TRAGEDIE OF ANTHONIE, AND KLEOPATRA', shows it. We must pay due attention to the comma after ANTHONIE. The death of Antony is the tragical climax of the play.

The value (or virtues) of the Roman world (war or political value) is different from that of the Egyptian world (love). These two values contradict each other, and do not reconcile themselves. These values (virtues) are juxtaposed in the play. From the standpoint of the Roman value, Antony and Cleopatra have great flaws, but from the viewpoint of the Egyptian value their flaws are their strong points.

The reverse is equally true. So we can say from one point of view that Antony and Cleopatra have paradoxical nobility. So is the case with other characters of the play.

After Antony's death the Roman world and the Egyptian world come into direct collision. It is obvious that the latter is to be easily beaten by the former in this world in spite of Cleopatra's cunning and cheat. But the Queen gains the next world by love. Her suicide is the secondary climax of the play. In her death she shows her best. The death is also the tragedy of Cleopatra. But her tragedy is not miserable despair but the most beautiful triumph over Caesar and her fortune and her entrance into the Elysium.

The play, therefore, can be regarded as Shakespeare's critique of judgment about the two values. Though Antony and Cleopatra's love (love value) is not asserted as a final value in the play, we can easily recognize that the love value of the Egyptian world is more weighted by Shakespeare than the political value (war) of the Roman world.

From the standpoint of the principal themes of the play, it is a great tragedy, even though it is different from Shakespeare's other famous great tragedies. The play is remote from us in time and place, and the heroic roles of the participants are of the great events of human history in the ancient world, but the play shows itself to be actual and essentially contemporaneous, because the conflict between business and love is found in man and woman of every time and place, who are loving, fighting, doing their business, and suffering. And reading the play, we are lifted to a world beyond good and evil and beyond the hostility of fortune, and are impressed with the everlasting pure glory.

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