

The dramatic world of *Antony and Cleopatra*

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Introduction

The conversation, or dialogue, found in a novel and the speech of a play are both spoken orally, or supposed to be done so by the characters appearing in them, but the two are quite different in their quality from each other. Yukio Mishima, a novelist and dramatist, has written an interesting essay ⁽¹⁾ about the literary style of a play, examining the difference between them. Admitting that there are many prose works of art written in an intermediate form between the novel and the play, he mentions the crucial points which distinguish the speech of a play from the conversation in a novel; the absence of explanation for the speech of a play except for the speech itself, and the close relationship between the speech and the construction of a play as a whole. He concludes that the style of a novel is *walking*, while the style of a play is *dancing*.

What he says is not an original idea but a matter of course to every reader of a play whether he may be conscious of it or not. In reading a play we are given nothing but speeches, from which we get every necessary information to continue reading of it. In this point a play put on the stage is very different from the one which is read as a written work of art. On the stage the speeches are given to the audience through an actor. It means that the original speeches get the aural effect through his manner of speaking; pace, pitch, tone, quality of his voice, etc. Another is the visual one through his manner of acting; gesture, movement, properties, costume, and so on. These are of course so evanescent that no one could always produce exactly the same

effect on the audience. We must bear in mind that the study of dramatic effect of a play on the audience is in nature to be a guesswork. Nevertheless it is worth studying from the scholastic point of view.

My interest is in dramaturgy, which distinguishes the speech of a play from the conversation of a novel and leads us to think of the dramatic effect of the speech on the audience. In this paper I would like to try, in the light of the above-mentioned interest of mine, an analysis of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Antony and Cleopatra is beyond the previous tragic world of Shakespeare, though it has not yet reached the world of what is called *romances* which is attained by him in the last stage of his art. This work is characteristic in the way of depicting the characters and their situations, in the light of which I would like to write about the four matters; soliloquy and aside, comment, action, and poetry, and analyze the functions performed and the effects produced by each of them to make the dramatic world of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

1. Soliloquy and Aside

As the abundance of soliloquy and aside contributes to a great degree toward characterization of such heroes as Hamlet and Macbeth, so lack of them distinguishes both Antony and Cleopatra from these tragic heroes and makes a characteristic dramatic world of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In respect to their minds, neither Antony nor Cleopatra is fully presented. Cleopatra appears as even a mysterious character whose mind is never to be measured. The conflict torturing Antony between the 'honor' of a soldier in Rome and the 'love' of Cleopatra in Egypt, which from the tragic point of view should be one of the most important matters to explore, is left untouched. The rhythm of oscillation between one and the other in his mind seems to make greater importance than the probing

of the depths of his mind. Antony is written as if he behaved without any mental anguish.

S. L. Bethell remarks on Cleopatra as follows :

In Cleopatra he (Shakespeare) presents the mystery of woman, the mystery of sensuality, and exploration of the hidden energies of life.....(2)

Where does this impression of the mystery of her existence come from? Bethell interprets her symbolically and poetically objecting to the psychological approach to the character of Cleopatra. The depths of her mind is never probed even at the crucial moments and some of her deeds are left in riddles. Besides the variety of her appearance is presented from all angles.

She appears before us as a character whom everything becomes; 'to chide, to laugh, to weep; whose every passion fully strives to make itself, in thee, fair and admir'd!' (I. i. 49-50) Antony in her imagination varies incessantly when he is not with her; 'Where.....he is now: Stands he, or sits he? Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?' (I. v. 19-20) Games proposed to play by her to her ladies change one after another :

Give me some music ;

.....

Let it alone; let's to billiards:

.....

I'll none now :

Give me mine angle; we'll to the river : (II. v. 1, 3, 9-10)

Part of her variety is made by her purposely to retain the affection of Antony as revealed through the dialogue between Cleopatra and Charmian :

Cleo. Where is he?

Char. I did not see him since.

Cleo. See where he is, who's with him, what he does :

I did not send you. If you find him sad,

Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report

That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return.

Char. Madam, methinks if you did love him dearly,
You do not hold the method, to enforce
The like from him.

Cleo. What should I do, I do not?

Char. In each thing give him way, cross him in nothing.

Cleo. Thou teachest like a fool: the way to lose him. (I. iii. 1-12)

But Shakespeare is careful enough to make us ready for her 'idleness' (I. ii. 93) towards Antony in the next farewell scene.

Ant. She is cunning past man's thought.

Eno. Alack, sir, no, her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove. (I. ii. 143-9)

By using Enobarbus, who functions as a chorus or a commentator especially in the first part of the play, Shakespeare makes her more than a mere cunning person. Enobarbus describes her as Venus;

.....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.....(II. ii. 197-201)

He also describes her as a woman running along the public street:

I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street,
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth. (II. ii. 229-32)

Her external variety is sufficient enough to make us feel her 'hidden energies of life' and her 'mystery of woman.' Her closed internal mind at several occasions heightens this impression. Among her deeds there are some the real facts of which are hidden from us.

After the Battle of Actium, Thidias is sent by Octavius Caesar

to win Cleopatra from Antony. He meets Cleopatra and induces her to leave Antony :

- Thid. He knows that you embrac'd not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.
- Cleo. O!
- Thid. The scars upon your honour, therefore, he
Does pity, as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserv'd.
- Cleo. He is a god, and knows
What is most right. Mine honour was not yielded,
But conquer'd merely.
- Eno. (Aside) To be sure of that,
I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky
That we must leave thee to thy sinking for
Thy dearest quit thee. (III. xiii. 56-65)

The problem is whether or not her words speak her mind straight. The situation she is placed in here is very delicate. She must act wisely for Antony and herself as well. Nevertheless Enobarbus' aside is suggestive of her faithlessness to Antony. We also notice the uncertainty in his lines; 'To be sure of that, I will ask Antony,' which we have never met before in him, who has been always a man of insight. He judges it her betrayal and says, 'thy dearest quit thee.' However, we cannot hold what he says is right now. Enobarbus, who is himself leaving Antony, seems to begin to lose his function as an indifferent commentator. The last line talks about himself as well as about his mistress. Antony gets angry to see Cleopatra allowing Thidias to kiss her hand. When they are left alone, Cleopatra tries to calm him down :

- Ant. To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes
With one that ties his points?
- Cleo. Not know me yet?
- Ant. Cold-hearted toward me?
- Cleo. Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so

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!

Ant.

I am satisfied. (III. xiii. 156-67)

Neither vindication, excuse, apology, which implies her guiltiness, nor positive proof for her innocence is found in the long speech of Cleopatra. Antony's line, 'I am satisfied,' ends the affair. Cleopatra, who isn't assigned any single word in aside or soliloquy, begins to appear as a mysterious creature before us.

At the last battle, though at first Antony is superior in power to Octavius, he is after all beaten completely. It is caused, Antony says, by Cleopatra.

All is lost :

This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me : (IV. xii. 9-10)

What has happened in the battle field is never revealed to us except by what he says. Antony's anger is so fearful that Cleopatra locks herself in the monument and gives him a false news of her death. Diomedes who is sent by Cleopatra to see how the news is taken by Antony tells :

.....when she saw—
 Which never shall be found—you did suspect
 She had dispos'd with Caesar, and.....(IV. xiv. 121-3)

Diomedes means that Cleopatra is not to blame for the defeat and he uses the meaningful word, 'suspect.' Neither dying Antony nor Cleopatra refers to the fact after all. We are here again left suspended on her deed.

The most puzzling is the Seleucus scene. Seleucus, Cleopatra's treasurer, betrays (?) his mistress and reveals to Octavius that she has retained to herself 'enough to purchase what you (Cleopatra) have made known.' (V. ii. 147) For what purpose does she play false about the list? Does she really want to live

and is betrayed by her treasurer? Or does she play with Seleucus to foil Octavius' intention to lead her in triumph as suggested by North in his *Plutarch's Lives*⁽³⁾? Or does she play such a falsehood for falsehood's sake? We are given here a slightest hint to know her mind. When Octavius leaves her monument, Cleopatra speaks to her ladies as if she were talking to herself.

He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not
Be noble to myself: (V. ii. 190-1)

Nevertheless these lines only suggest that she seems to have given a play with her treasurer before Octavius. Shakespeare holds his tongue on it and the fact is left unknown to us.

After the death of Antony the mind of Cleopatra who thinks of her own death also remains ambiguous. The motivations of her death are to die after her lover and to avoid being led in triumph by Octavius. She speaks about the two matters alternately, but how they grow in her mind is not described at all. Her conflict between 'safety' and 'honor' is not explored at all, either. Those which should be given either soliloquy or aside from the nature of the cases are bare and the facts of them are left in riddles. However, it never makes a defect of the play, but contributes toward the characterization of Cleopatra as a mysterious being.

Antony's mind is at least probed as the mind of Cleopatra. Lear, when he is treated bitterly by one of his undutiful daughters, asks:

Who is it that can tell me who I am? (*King Lear*, I. iv. 250)

Fool, what we call Lear's other self, answers:

Lear's shadow. (*Ibid.* 251)

Troilus, who witnesses the sight of Cressida's betrayal, mutters in despair:

This is, and is not, Cressida! (*Troilus and Cressida*, V. ii. 145)

This kind of experience is once-for-all to the speakers and from this time their understanding of life changes greatly. It is quite different about Antony, who has little conflict and always oscillates until his death. The words, 'Antony will be himself' (I. i. 42) in Cleopatra's lines and 'when he is not Antony' (57) in Philo's in the opening scene anticipate how far Antony is from this kind of experience. Here we find Shakespeare's attitude toward the protagonists describing them externally rather than internally. Both the oscillation of Antony and the mystery of Cleopatra seem to arise from here.

Antony oscillates between Rome and Egypt. In Egypt when he is with Cleopatra, he refuses to meet a messenger from Octavius in Rome. To him 'Kingdoms are clay' (I. i. 35) and 'Here (Egypt) is' his 'space.' (34) But soon he changes his mind abruptly as Cleopatra says; 'He was disposed to mirth; but on the sudden A Roman thought has struck him' (I. ii. 79-80) and feels the love of Cleopatra as 'fetters.' (113) Antony's soliloquy at the news of his wife's death is much different from that of Macbeth in the same situation. The former shows the oscillation of its speaker; 'the present pleasure, By revolution lowering, does become The opposite of itself:' (I. ii. 121-3) and the latter suggests the kind of experience pointed out above and the new understanding of life; 'She should have died hereafter; There would have been a time for such a word. To-morrow, and to-morrow and to-morrow, Creeps in this petty pace from day to day To the last syllable of recorded time,.....' (V. v. 17ff.)

In Rome he not only makes peace with Octavius but also gets married with his sister Octavia. He says to Octavia; '.....My Octavia, Read not my blemishes in the world's report: I have not kept my square; but that to come shall all be done by the rule.....' (II. iii. 4ff.) In the same scene when he meets Soothsayer he speaks to himself:

.....I will to Egypt :
 And though I make this marriage for my peace,
 I' the east my pleasure lies. (II. iii. 37-9)

The victim of Antony's oscillation is Octavia who is won and discarded by him, with her heart parted between her husband and her brother who afflict each other. Antony leaves Rome for Egypt, leaving Octavia behind, to meet Cleopatra. Now he is settled in Egypt, but his oscillation still continues, and occurs on several occasions in some different ways.

He fleets from the enemies after Cleopatra in the middle of the Battle of Actium, which causes the first defeat of his. He is in despair and is beside himself with shame. His anger with Cleopatra who has made the start of his flight, however, doesn't last long. Upon seeing tears in her eyes, he recovers himself. One of her tears rates all that is won and lost, he says, and a kiss repays him.

Again in the Thidias scene he shows the same response. When Cleopatra says to him, 'Not know me yet?' (III. xiii. 157) and to his words; 'Cold-hearted toward me?' (158) she presses hard by saying, '.....if I be so,.....' he is satisfied (I am satisfied (167)) with great ease. In accordance with his oscillation the concept of 'Antony will be himself,' 'when he is not Antony' found in the opening scene appears here again. Being irritated at his men hesitating to obey his order to whip Thidias, Antony shouts:

.....Have you no ears? I am Antony yet. (III. xiii. 92)

The line tells us how Antony fails to reflect upon and understand himself as he is and his present situations. He is in vain clinging to his prestige which is now lost. He mutters to himself, 'What's her name, Since she was Cleopatra?' (III. xiii. 98-9) These words also have little significance, for the fact of the matter on this occasion is not so plain as Cressida's case, accordingly Antony's experience is not so crucial as Troilus'. Cleopatra says when

Antony is satisfied :

.....since my lord
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra. (III. xiii. 186)

Antony has not changed at all.

His oscillation makes himself look like something strange in the eyes of Cleopatra.

Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,
The other way's a Mars. (II. v. 117-8)

After the fatal defeat, Antony speaks to Eros as if he felt his death approaching :

Ant. Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

Eros. Ay, noble lord.

Ant. Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapour sometime, like a bear, or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs,
They are black vesper's pageants.

Eros. Ay, my lord.

Ant. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.

Eros. It does, my lord.

Ant. My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body: here I am Antony,
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave. (IV. xiv. 1-14)

It seems to be the last state of mind reached by Antony whose mind has oscillated to and fro. It is significant that Antony does not soliloquize but speaks to Eros here. He has hardly developed into quite a new character, though he has come to look on his own oscillation as the speech shows.

The oscillation of Antony is reflected in occurrences outside himself; the changeable fortunes in war (IV. xii. 6-9) and the subtle vacillation in Octavia's mind depicted in the farewell scene to

Octavius. (III. ii. 47ff.) The most interesting is the strange music heard by soldiers the night before the final battle.

Sec. Sold. Peace, what noise?
 First Sold. List, list!
 Sec. Sold. Hark!
 First Sold. Music i' the air.
 Third Sold. Under the earth.
 First Sold. It signs well, does it not?
 Third Sold. No.
 First Sold. Peace, I say:
 What should this mean?
 Sec. Sold. 'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd,
 Now leaves him.
 First Sold. Walk, let's see if other watchmen
 Do hear what we do. (IV. iii. 11-6)

What does this strange music mean? If it is 'music in the air,' it is music of the sphere, and if it is 'music under the earth,' it is evil music. The former means a good omen and the latter an evil one. The music is heard just before the decisive battle is fought, where Antony is to be beaten by Octavius and those who hear it are his soldiers, then it may be natural to regard it as an evil sign of the fall of Antony as a soldier, and yet it is also possible to take it as a good omen for the love of Antony and Cleopatra. There is nothing that implies more than a strange music there. We can never know whether it comes from the air or under the ground. Shakespeare just presents it neither more nor less than a strange music.

We could say that *Antony and Cleopatra* is a play that has an ample possibility for the various productions on the stage. A different interpretation of Cleopatra, for example, would produce a different drama of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The interpretation of 'Speak the truth, Seleucus' (V. ii. 143) as a cue for the treasurer to play with Cleopatra for foiling Octavius⁽⁴⁾ is interesting indeed, but without which it could be interesting enough to see the sight. *Antony and Cleopatra* presents itself as 'pageants' 'as water is in

water,' (IV. xiv. 8, 11) which makes us feel life is all the more mysterious.

II. Comment

Comment in a play often serves as an important means for creating the dramatic world.

These three plays; *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* are full of such comments as criticize the folly of the protagonists.

Timon of Athens is most abundant in comments among these plays. The whole play is filled with criticism both on the prodigality of Timon and the ingratitude of his friends. They are conspicuous enough to make the texture of the play.

Coriolanus is also filled with criticism on the 'arrogance' of the protagonist. In his lines his hatred of the common people is apparently perceived, but his 'arrogance' gets more complexity because of his integrity than the prodigality of Timon. The power of the common people is expressed through their comments on Coriolanus, which make one of the factors to promote the plot of the play.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* the comment on the love of protagonists keeps a subtle balance with the substance of its object.

The drama opens with comment on Antony by Philo, one of his followers :

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure :
.....(I. i. 1ff.)

Antony, who once has been compared to Mars, is now a 'strumpet's fool.' Here they come! Observe them attentively. What we see, however, are not such mean lovers as the words of Philo let us expect.

Cleo. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
Ant. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

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

Ant. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

(I. i. 14-7)

The space of their love strikes us with its magnificence. It is not on the same level with Philo's concept of their love. The world of their love leads to 'new heaven, new earth,' and it transcends Philo's capacity of apprehension. Their spacious love can be neither measured nor 'reckoned.' The comment of Philo does not blemish the protagonists at all.

The comments on the protagonists are constant among Romans, though they vary by degrees mutually. The comment in the opening scene made by Philo with no personality is objective and functional in comparison with other Romans'.

Octavius tells Lepidus about Antony:

You shall find there

A man who is the abstract of all faults

That all men follow. (I. iv. 7-9)

What Octavius says reveals himself as a cool-headed rational person as much as 'voluptuous' Antony. Lepidus replies to it:

I must not think there are

Evils enow to darken all his goodness:

His faults, in him, seem as the spots of heaven,

More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary,

Rather than purchas'd; what he cannot change,

Than what he chooses. (I. iv. 10-5)

It also implies the subtle situation in which Lepidus is placed as a triumvir between far greater two (Lepidus flatters both, Of both is flatter'd; but he neither loves, Nor either cares for him. (II. i. 14-6)) as much as the depths of Antony's existence.

Pompey, who has challenged Octavius to battle, addresses Cleopatra while Antony is on his way to Rome to help Octavius:

.....: but all the charms of love,

Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!

Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both,
 Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
 Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks
 Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
 That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour,
 Even till a Lethe'd dulness— (II. i. 20-7)

We can perceive here the earnest desire of Pompey who admits Antony's 'soldiership' as 'twice the other twain' (II. i. 34) that Antony should not leave Egypt to fight with him. A little later he receives the news that Antony has left Egypt for Rome. He speaks in alarm that the 'amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm For such a petty war' and boasts that their 'stirring Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.' It is noticeable that his surprise and boast let him choose the words about Antony and Cleopatra.

The words, 'his lust' (III. vi. 61) 'a whore' (III. vi. 67) found in Octavius' lines and the word, 'a trull' (III. vi. 95) in Maecenas' at the arrival of Octavia in Rome are taken as expressions for their anger to Antony who has treated Octavia badly and for the consolation of poor Octavia.

The amount of comment on the protagonists and their love is less than those in *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus* and better assimilated into speakers' personalities and their situations. Although they can not be taken literally, they are where they should be and cast shadows on the characters of Antony and Cleopatra making clear the two contrasting worlds, Egypt and Rome.

Comments on events by a quasi-choric character are more objective and functional as Philo's on Antony quoted above. Its chief use is to tell the audience what to think. They sometimes report what has happened off the stage and serve the dramatic economy, in other cases they prophesy what is to happen and let us make ready for it.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* a quasi-choric character is Enobarbus. While the marriage of Antony and Octavia is being arranged, he

already suggests what it is to bring about by saying, ‘..... when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again: you shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do.’ (II. ii. 104–5) The triumvirs being out, Enobarbus tells the Roman fellows about Egyptian life especially about Cleopatra. He knows Cleopatra’s charms so well that he foretells Antony will never leave Cleopatra. In the next scene we hear Antony say, ‘I will to Egypt.’ (II. iii. 37) Although Antony adds that ‘I make this marriage for my peace,’ (38) he has not yet realized what his decision is to produce. Enobarbus tells us clearly not only what the marriage of Antony and Octavia means but also what it is to bring about.

Eno.But you shall find the
band that seems to tie their friendship
together will be the very strangler of
their amity :

.....

He will to his Egyptian dish
again: then shall the sighs of Octavia
blow the fire up in Caesar; (II. vi. 117–9, 123–4)

Several scenes later events are realized exactly as Enobarbus has told. Octavia is discarded by Antony, which brings about a war between Octavius and Antony.

The Battle of Actium is acted off the stage and the result of it as Enobarbus has foretold in aside (If we should serve with horse and mares together, The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear A soldier and his horse. (III. vii. 7–10)) is told us by Enobarbus first, then by Scarus.

Eno. Naught, naught, all naught, I can behold no longer :
The Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,
With all their sixty fly, and turn the rudder :
To see’t, mine eyes are blasted. (III. x. 1–3)

We are reported what has happened in the battle field and we know how it is received by Enobarbus through his manner of speaking. He never speaks as Scarus does, ‘The greater cante

of the world is lost With very ignorance, we have kiss'd away Kingdoms, and provinces,' (III. x. 6-7) '..... Yon ribaundred nag of Egypt,' (10) as a mere mechanical commentator. Scarus' comment has the same tone as Philo's in the opening scene, while Enobarbus' shows too much how he feels to be a functional speech. He gradually emerges before us as a tragic figure who meditates how to live from hereabout and comes to lose the function as an objective commentator. At the end of this scene he soliloquizes:

I'll yet follow
The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason
Sits in the wind against me. (III. x. 35-7)

His mind is parted between the reason which whispers to him to leave Antony and the love of Antony which orders him still to follow him. His speeches have become too personal for us to take straight. Three scenes later we hear Cleopatra ask him, 'What shall we do, Enobarbus?' (III. xiii. 1) He replies:

Think, and die. (III. xiii. 2)

This line anticipates the forthcoming future of the speaker himself rather than it is meant as a piece of advice given to Cleopatra. He does think and die soon after he has left Antony. His aside in Thidias scene, 'To be sure of that, I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky, That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for thy dearest quit thee' (III. xiii. 62-5) is not so much a functional speech which tells us what to expect of the character spoken to as rather a personal speech which suggests how the speaker's own future would be. Enobarbus' lines as the functional comment have become even unnecessary, too. What he says in aside on the challenge of single fight (III. xiii. 29-37), for example, is repeated in dialogue between Antony and himself (IV. ii. 1-4) as well as in Octavius' lines (IV. i. 2-6).

It is interesting that the objective comment either on the love of Antony and Cleopatra or on events almost disappears hereafter,

with one exception made by Scarus on the final battle by sea (IV. xii. 4–8). In the first half part of the play (till act III. scene x) those comments function as effective means to make distinct the two contrasting worlds, to tell us what to think on the events or to serve the dramatic economy. We are already informed enough to understand everything properly for ourselves, so in the latter part they, which are now dispensable, give place to great actions.

III. Action

Some actions are shown on the stage before us, while others are not and just reported by one or more of the characters of the play, and the balance of these two different types of actions determines to some extent the quality of a play.

Actions shown on the stage of course reveal the characters more substantially than comments on their actions off the stage. Too much comment and lack of actions to support what the comment says would make a very different kind of play from *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The description of Cleopatra as a woman hopping ‘forty paces through the public street’ (II. iii. 230) or the comment on her passions by Enobarbus (I. ii. 150–6) are substantiated in especially the messenger beating scene (II. v.). Her substance as a character in the first half part of the play is greatly gained through this event on the stage.

In contrast to the Battle of Actium the final battle is much shown on the stage, which presents Antony as a brilliant soldier as depicted in comments (I. i. 2–4 / I. iv. 55–71). He fights as ‘a workman in’ ‘the royal occupation’ on the first day of the battle and returns in triumph ‘smiling from the world’s great snare uncaught.’ (IV. viii. 17–8)

The banquet on Pompey’s galley is pointed out its importance as character revelation by Farnham.⁽⁵⁾ It is shown on the stage

and we witness the sight ourselves. The contrast between the character of Antony and that of Octavius is revealed through their attitudes to the revelry.

Caes. I could well forbear't.
It's monstrous labour when I wash my brain
And it grow fouler.
Ant. Be a child o' the time.
Caes. Possess it, I'll make answer :
But I had rather fast from all, four days,
Than drink so much in one. (II. vii. 97-101)

Antony is a real 'child of the time' and acts quite freely here. He talks about the Egyptian life to the company. He even makes fun of drunken Lepidus.

Lep. What manner o' thing is your crocodile?
Ant. It is shap'd, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it hath
breadth: it is just so high as it is, and moves with it own
organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and the elements
once out of it, it transmigrates.
Lep. What colour is it of?
Ant. Of it own colour too.
Lep. 'Tis a strange serpent.
Ant. 'Tis so, and the tears of it are wet. (II. vii. 40-8)

This scene also reveals the relations among the company and suggests their political futures. 'Antony dominates the revelry, but Octavius dominates the gathering,'⁽⁶⁾ Farnham remarks. Of them all only Antony rivals Octavius. Antony is attractive indeed, but Octavius, who wants to possess the time, will beat him. Lepidus is not presented to have any personality. He is drunk and is taken away from the party just as taken away from the state of triumvir before long. Pompey is dangerous to the triumvirs and at the same time too coward. He 'seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offer'd' (II. vii. 82) and can never rival Octavius.

Lepidus is scarcely characterized, while the subtle situation in which he is placed between the rest two is commented several times, one of which given by Enobarbus and Agrippa attracts our

attention :

- Agr. 'Tis a noble Lepidus.
 Eno. A very fine one: O, how he loves Caesar!
 Agr. Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony!
 Eno. Caesar! Why, he's the Jupiter of men.
 Agr. What's Antony? The god of Jupiter.
 Eno. Spake you of Caesar? How, the nonpareil?
 Agr. O Antony, O thou Arabian bird!
 Eno. Would you praise Caesar, say 'Caesar,' go no further.
 Agr. Indeed he plied them both with excellent praises.
 Eno. But he loves Caesar best, yet he loves Antony:
 Hoo! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards, poets, cannot
 Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number, hoo,
 His love to Antony. But as for Caesar,
 Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.
- Agr. Both he loves.
 Eno. They are his shards, and he their beetle, so: (III. ii. 6-20)

They ridicule Lepidus by exaggeratingly mimicking his way of talking and behaviour. This comment *acted* on the stage is by far more effective on the audience than the ordinary comments. The down fall of Lepidus is not shown on the stage and is reported by Eros (III. v. 1-15), the issue of which we can accept naturally on account of the effective means of action on the stage.

The death of Enobarbus is shown on the stage, too. He is one and only character who is constantly assigned soliloquies and asides to disclose his mind, through which we know better his mind than any other character's in the play. We don't find his death very unnatural, which has resulted from his betrayal to his master of such a kind of person as Enobarbus, and yet the death shown on the stage is still shocking. He 'thinks' and 'dies' ironically as he has talked to Cleopatra (III. xiii. 2). His anguish at death is unique in the play and the death may be presented as the foil to those of Antony and Cleopatra.

The death of Antony is also shown on the stage and it is quite different from Enobarbus'. The latter is purely tragic and human, while the former is never tragic, though it is also human

in a little different way. Antony tells Eros when he gets the news of the death of Cleopatra :

Unarm, Eros, the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep. (IV. xiv. 35-6)

Death is a relief from life and is accepted like a peaceful sleep. What he thinks when he is about to die is the life after death, which we can never expect any one of Shakespearean tragic heroes :

I come, my queen :—Eros!—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 haunt be ours. (IV. xiv. 50-4)

He asks Eros to kill him, but Eros, who loves his master so much, kills himself with the very sword to stab Antony. The scene reveals Antony's loving nature on the human level as well as the loyalty of Eros. After Eros Antony wishes to die a soldier-like death, but fails. Wounded and helpless, he asks his men to kill him, but they run away leaving him alive, and what is worse, he finds what has brought him in such a miserable distress is a lie given by Cleopatra. Brought to Cleopatra in her monument, Antony never blames but encourages her instead and dies in her arms. He dies clumsily and yet nobly. His humanity has been expressed in several scenes ; in the banquet scene on Pompey's galley (II. vii.), in the farewell scene between Antony and his men the night before the last battle (IV. ii.), and in the scene where he orders his men to send Enobarbus his treasure when he hears the news that Enobarbus, who has been the nearest man of his, has gone to Octavius (IV. v.) through his actions, and in his death scene it is most typically shown.

It is in Cleopatra's speeches that Antony gradually grows superhuman after his death.

O, see, my woman,
 The crown o'the earth doth melt. My lord!
 O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
 The soldier's pole is fall'n :
(IV. xv. 62 ff.)

Being called 'the crown o'the earth,' 'the garland of the war,' and 'the soldier's pole,' Antony begins to be superhumanized. Maurice Charney excellently remarks on this speech of Cleopatra's as follows :

There is peace and effortlessness in 'melt', as if there were no barrier between life and death, and one could flow easily into the other. It is a fitting close for Antony.⁽⁷⁾

It is a fitting close, as he says, for Antony who has always oscillated in his life, and never experienced such an anguish even as Enobarbus has. His death is caused by a piece of lie given by Cleopatra and causes nothing whatsoever as the result. He only ceases to exist by death. Neither necessity nor significance is to be perceived in his death. This may be said, in other words, 'as if there were no barrier between life and death,' and 'It is a fitting close for Antony' who has always been in vacillation. In this sense the speech may reveal Antony both as human and superhuman simultaneously.

The last great action shown on the stage is the death of Cleopatra. A. C. Bradley says on the death of Cleopatra as follows :

The death of Cleopatra is greeted by the reader with admiration, even with exultation at the thought that she has foiled Octavius; and these feelings are heightened by the deaths of Charmian and Iros, heroically faithful to their mistress⁽⁸⁾

It is true that we greet her death 'with admiration even with exultation' when we see Octavius come all the way only to be told of her death, but her death scene on the stage gives us far more dramatic an impression. Cleopatra who is now determined and ready to die tells one of her ladies :

Now, Charmian!
 Show me, my woman, like a queen: go fetch
 My best attires. (V. ii. 225-7)

With a snake, the symbol of the beauty and mysterious charms of Cleopatra, at her breast like a 'baby' sucking the 'nurse asleep,' she is leaving the 'baser life' for 'new heaven, new earth' in her best robe and with her crown, attended by the faithful ladies, Charmian and Iros, the sight of which is almost that of a ritual and impressive indeed.

IV. Poetry

What makes the love of Antony and Cleopatra affirmative is the poetry. Everybody has noticed the employment of the great imagery in the play. Most of the great imagery is, in fact, used to allude to only Antony and Cleopatra, which I think may help to make the world of the protagonists affirmative and the other Romans' negative.

Names used to call Octavius are scarce-bearded Caesar (I. i. 21), a dancer (III. xi. 36), the young man (III. xi. 62), the boy Caesar (III. xiii. 17), blossoming Caesar (IV. xii. 23), novice (IV. xii. 14), the young Roman boy (IV. xii. 48), all of which are emphasizing the youth of Octavius Caesar with contempt. As for Octavia, patient Octavia (IV. xii. 38), and for Fulvia, shrill-tongued Fulvia (I. i. 32), the married woman (I. iii. 20), are used also with contempt. The words placed opposite are the bellows and the fan to cool a gipsy's lust (I. i. 9-10), a strumpet's fool (I. i. 13), salt Cleopatra (II. i. 21), witchcraft (II. i. 22), lust (II. i. 22, III. vi. 7, 61), the libertine (II. i. 23), this amorous surfeiter (II. i. 33), the ne'er-lust-wearied Antony (II. i. 38), a whore (III. vi. 67), adulterous Antony (III. vi. 93), a trull (III. vi. 95), old ruffian (IV. i. 4), for the protagonists and their love. They are opposites, if not contrast, and they are on the same human level, though in function the latter is more important. To the opponents Antony is a 'libertine,' Cleopatra is a 'whore' and

their love is 'lust,' but how far they are from their images depicted in the poetry.

Cleopatra is Venus, the goddess Isis, and Thetis, and she is also a woman running across the public street. The extremities mingle in her and make 'defect perfection':

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. 235-40)

Antony is often compared to Mars while he is alive and after death he is remembered by Cleopatra and superhumanized in the poetry.

His face was as the heavens, and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and
The little O, the earth.

.....

His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm
Crested the world: his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, (V. ii. 79 ff.)

Cleopatra who speaks in such a way is also beautified. On the human level, as expressed mostly through their actions, at best Antony is loving, generous, sometimes skillful in politics and war, and Cleopatra is charming, lovely, witty and passionate. Through the poetry they seem to be purified. And their love in the poetry leads them to eternity and immortality.

Cleopatra, who is trying to detain Antony in Egypt, appears even a wayward lass, but at the same time, she mutters as follows:

Eternity was in our lips, and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent; more our parts so poor,
But was a race of heaven: (I. iii. 35-7)

The heavenly note of this speech is striking. Heavenly as it is, it also contains several common words; lips, eyes, brows and

parts of their bodies. They are changed into almost a race of heaven through 'eternity' and 'bliss.' The love of Antony and Cleopatra is given heavenly expression to through the poetic effect of the style and turns affirmative.

What else could appease the angry Antony in the Thidias scene but the reassuring speech of Cleopatra?

Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so
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. 158-67)

There is nothing to appeal to reason in the lines. What satisfies Antony is perhaps its intensity. The effect of it is that of nature itself. There is no such vulgarity, or meanness, as Cleopatra is expected to have by her opponents. The last two lines contain ugly images, but the ugliness is also involved in the realm of nature. Cleopatra might have done ill against Antony before in the scene, but the very quality of the speech rescues her.

The accordance found in the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra may imply the triumph of the love of these protagonists.

As Antony has talked of the other world where he would meet Cleopatra, so she talks to herself:

I am again for Cydnus,
To meet Mark Antony. (V. ii. 227-8)

As Antony has died as a bridegroom;

I will be
A bridegroom in my death. (IV. xiv. 99-100)

so Cleopatra dies as his wife:

husband, I come :

Now to that name my courage prove my title. (V. ii. 286-7)

Furthermore as to Antony the death is a relief from life, so to Cleopatra. She addresses the snake :

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate
Of life at once untie: (V. ii. 303-4)

Once again as to Antony the death is a peaceful sleep, so to Cleopatra. The dying Cleopatra silences her waiting ladies :

Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep? (V. ii. 308-10)

Death is identified with both a relief from life and a calm sleep in peace with a sweet dream for Antony and Cleopatra. They are beaten by Octavius in the real world, and yet the poetry through which their dreams are expressed is impressive enough to compensate what they have lost. Cleopatra dies 'fire and air' leaving her 'other elements' 'to baser life,' which means she transcends the human barrier and enters 'the new heaven, new earth.' It is ironical indeed that 'new heaven, new earth' should be realized in such a way, but it has been realized anyway and the love of Antony and Cleopatra has gained immortality.

Conclusion

Antony and Cleopatra is a play which if one of the characteristics, for example, poetry, is stressed too much, will alter the total effect thoroughly. The total effect of the play stands on the exquisite balance of the ambiguous presentation of the protagonists, the persistent comments on them, their too human actions at times, and the poetry. The effect is just like a mysterious one that an oxymoron produces. It can be felt unmistakably, but no analysis will give a convincing explanation of its fascination.

Antony and Cleopatra has been said to be a transitional play

from the four great tragedies to the romances. The presentation of characters of the play, for example, is distinct from that of the tragedies. To the romances Professor Daniel Seltzer points out the resemblance between the soliloquy of Antony at his wife's death and that of Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*.⁽⁹⁾ I would like to suggest one thing in this play which seems to be on the way to the dramatic world of the romances. It is the dream of Antony and Cleopatra. They could realize their dream, but it was not until they were on the threshold of their tomb, while in the romances a dream is realized by living people.

— Notes —

- (1) Mishima Yukio, *Bunsho Tokuhon*, Chuokoron, Tokyo, 1949, pp. 73–97.
- (2) S. L. Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*, Staples, London, 1944, pp. 128–9.
- (3) A. Stahr pointed out the comment by North :
Cleopatra finely deceiveth Octavius Caesar as though she desired to live.
Antony and Cleopatra, Variorum Edition, ed. by H. H. Furness, pp. xiii–xiv.
- (4) M. R. Ridley, The Introduction to the Arden Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. by R. H. Case, London, 1902, p. xxxi.
- (5) Willard Farnham, *Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier*, University of California press, 1950, p. 187.
- (6) *Ibid.*
- (7) Maurice Charney, The Imagery of Antony and Cleopatra, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Casebook Series, ed. by John Russell Brown, Macmillan, London, 1968, p. 169.
- (8) A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Macmillan, London, 1904, p. 84.
- (9) Daniel Seltzer, The Actors And Staging, *A New Companion To Shakespeare Studies*, ed. by Kenneth Muir and S. Schoenbaum, Cambridge University press, 1971, pp. 51–2.

Text : *Antony and Cleopatra*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. by M. R. Ridley, Methuen, London, 1971.