Shakespeare and the Cleopatra/Caesar Intertext: Sequel, Conflation, Remake

Sarah Hatchuel

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Contents

Is William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* a sequel to the earlier *Julius Caesar*?[1] This question raises issues of authorship (was *Antony and Cleopatra* conceived by Shakespeare as a sequel to his formerly written *Julius Caesar*?) and of reception (did the early modern audiences consider it to be a sequel?). But it also raises the issue of the construction of dramatic sequels: how does a playtext ultimately become the follow-up of another text? This volume explores how dramatic works written before and after Shakespeare's time have encouraged us to view Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as strongly interconnected plays, encouraging their sequelization in the theatre and paving the way towards the filmic conflations of the twentieth century.

The "sequel" issue is made all the more problematic in an intertextual world where the name of the author no longer marks an untrespassable territory and where every text has somehow become a sequel to all the other texts, fragmenting, distorting, rearranging, recontextualising or interrogating them. According to Roland Barthes, the concept of the author is anything but natural and unquestionable, since a text is a collocation of inter-texts, "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."[2] Within this perspective, creation becomes a reorganization of elements already voiced, read, written or filmed. In "The Bounded Text," Julia Kristeva has also argued that authors do not create their texts from their own original minds only, but assemble them from pre-existent texts. For Kristeva, a text may be defined as "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a

[1] Some critics such as Helge Nowak advocate for the use of "text" and "pretext" to describe the sequel phenomenon, in order to avoid any derogatory judgement upon the text considered as a sequel compared to the "original" text. I will, however, use the term "sequel" for clarity, but without any value judgement upon the work in consideration.

[2] Roland Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 146.

given text."[3] Texts communicate their meanings to readers, while entering into a dialogue with other texts. But they can also communicate this sum of other texts to the readers. The reader's role is notably emphasized by Michel Riffaterre when he defines intertextuality as "the reader's perception of relationships between a text and other texts that preceded or followed it."[4] The perception of an intertext here appears as a *reading effect* and depends on the reader's own memory of other texts—texts which may have been read in an order that does not correspond at all to the chronological order of composition. Whereas in traditional source study intertextual dialogues are considered to work from the past to the present (as scholars usually look for literary influences in older works), it can be argued that they also work from the present to the past. A reader may shed light on a text by using texts that were written before but also *after* it, as a lens through which it may be reconsidered and seen to be connected to its successors. Riffaterre's definition of intertextuality will be useful for the following study since it implies an anachronistic and retrospective dimension that can challenge a purely historical and linear view of literature, and encourage us to go back and forth in terms of compositional time to analyze narrative links and networks. Plays that were written after Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* may have led readers, spectators, directors, actors and/or reviewers to consider these plays differently, with major consequences on the way they have been presented on stage and on screen.

Though this volume will use the notion of intertextuality in Barthes and Kristeva's broader meaning (and not in Gérard Genette's restricted sense of "the actual presence of one text within another"[5]), it will be my contention that the phenomenon of "sequelization" – i.e. the construction of a sequel, whether conceptualized as such by the creator or construed by

[3] Julia Kristeva, "The Bounded Text" in *Desire in Language : a semiotic approach to literature and art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 36.
[4] Michel Riffaterre, *La Production du texte* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 9. My translation.
[5] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: literature in the second degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doublinski (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska, 1997), 1-2.

others after the fact – may still be identified as a relatively formal and structural process. How can a text become inherently dependent upon a previous text (or texts), in our minds? Though the sequel (in literature as well as on film) seems to be ubiquitous and, therefore, unavoidable as a subject of research, a very limited number of books have been written theoretically on the aesthetic phenomenon that it represents, especially when we compare it to the fair amount of scholarship on intertextuality and adaptation, and even on film remake. Three books have been theoretical milestones on the subject: *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel* (edited by Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg in 1998), *Film Sequels: Theory and Practice from Hollywood to Bollywood* (written by Carolyn Jess-Cooke in 2009) and *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel* (edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis in 2010). These volumes have paved the way for a theory of the sequel, which comes forward as an "autonomous discourse on industrial, textual and cultural practices of reproduction and repetition,"[6] variation and retroactivity. However, these volumes explore works of art that were considered as sequels from the start (either by their author or by reviewers and audiences), not with artistic works that were *constructed* as sequels through the course of time. In the following study, I will try to disclose the intertextual and cultural processes which are at work for a playtext to be *recognized* as a sequel not only in Shakespeare's day, but also in the following centuries.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides the following definition for the term "sequel": "a set of literary compositions having certain features in common, published successively or intended to be read in sequence; a set of radio or television programmes concerned with the same theme or having the same range of characters and broadcast in sequence." The sequel, sharing with the term "sequence" the Latin root *sequi*, i.e. "to follow," "to come after," reveals how it is intrisincally linked to temporality. A sequel is fundamentally a chronological

[6] Carolyn Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels: Theory and Practice from Hollywood to Bollywood* (Edinburgh: Edingburgh University Press, 2009), 9.

extension of a narrative, and is thus inherently dependent upon at least one previous text. The recurrence of this narrative form in western narratives (that can be traced back to oral narratives such as Homer's *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*) has generally been a sign of the confinement and hierarchalization of the intertextual; sequels have usually established a strong hierarchy between texts, between the authoritarian "original" work and its succeeding, less respected off-shoots. Sequels are often less respected because they generally disappoint. Reviewers and scholars have tended to condemn the sequel, especially in cinema, as "a rip-off, a fundamentally inferior exercise […] designed to milk a previous production for all its worth."[7] The sequel has been, indeed, described as a product which tries to extend the life and commercial potential of a given production and that, in Umberto Eco's words, "recycle[s] the characters of a previously successful story in order to exploit them, by telling what happened to them after the end of their first adventure".[8] The sequel has thus been envisaged primarily as performing economic functions such as serving as a vehicle for a popular star or character. To account partially for this disparaging approach to sequels, Jess-Cooke has argued that "the sequel conjures a previous viewing experience, and it is precisely this imposition of spectatorial memory, or this kind of enforced retro-interpretation and continuation, that appears to underline the sense of dissatisfaction that the sequel often creates."[9] The sequel may thus give the impression to trespass upon the memory of the "original," prescribing a new text to replace this memory. This superimposition of a "secondary" film/text onto the memory of a previous film/text is made all the more difficult since the "originality" and "primacy" of this first film/text has been asserted. The idea of the sequel can thus strengthen the conservative assumptions that time and space are natural concepts that cannot be questioned.

[7] Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels*, 1.
[8] Umberto Eco, "Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics," *Daedalus* 114.4 (Fall 1985), 167.
[9] Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels*, vii.

Nevertheless, as a type of transcoding that involves repetition and change at the same time, the sequel may contribute to questioning the notions of textual "originality." Umberto Eco's essay "Innovation and Repetition" delineates five types of serial repetition in postmodern mass media: the retake (or sequel), remake, series, saga, and intertextual dialogue.[10] This taxonomy does not go without some overlapping since these categories are all marked by hybridity. The "prequel" (a term defined by the *OED* as "a book, film, etc., narrating events which precede those of an already existing work") is, for instance, often mistaken for the sequel. As Jess-Cook has remarked, "although the prequel is concerned with the origins of a narrative or character […] it is usually released after an original production […], thus generating assumptions that it is a sequel."[11] Some features of the sequel are also very similar to those of the "remake," which the OED defines as "a remaking of a film or of a script, usually with the roles played by different actors; an adaptation of the theme of a film." Budra and Schellenberg give a description of the sequel which could very well apply to the remake, as it involves "an audience's desire to re-experience in some way a memorable story, an author's response to that desire, and the inevitably changed conditions which make it impossible to achieve a precise repetition of the experience."[12] The sequel is here envisaged as the response to an earlier work, a re-interpretation and re-appropriation of an "original," which will ask the audience to reread and rewrite their own memories of the text. Just like a remake, a sequel is considered as involving repetition in variation, with its commercial success often depending on striking the right balance between the two. But, contrary to the remake, as Jess-Cooke and Verevis argue, the sequel "does not *prioritize* the repetition of an original, but rather advances an exploration of alternatives, differences, and reenactments that are discretely charged with the various ways in which we may reread, remember, or return to

[10] Eco, "Innovation and Repetition," 166-73.
[11] Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels*, 4.
[12] Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg, "Introduction," *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 5.

a source."[13] Wherease remakes and adaptations offer the same possibilities of retrospective reading, they use the first text to create other contexts and updated interpretations, but usually do not change the original ending. The sequel, however, radically alters the ending of the first text "by continuing the narrative towards a possibly less satisfactory conclusion."[14]

What unites the sequel and the remake is the idea of "repetition in variation," with the degree of "repetition" and the nature of the "variation" eventually determining the label that will be applied to the work at the time of production or reception. The sequel, by essence, is deeply intertextual and, as such, should be prone to disclose the processes at work in the construction of a story since, as Jess-Cooke and Verevis have analysed, it functions "not only as a secondary film venture but […] as a deconstructive framework within which such sweeping generalizations and fundamentally problematic terms such as 'originality' and 'intertextuality' can be unpacked and repositioned in […] new contexts".[15] The sequel can thus be envisaged as a site within which the experience of an "original" work may be at once extended and revisited. If the sequel can deconstruct, through confrontation, the "original" and the "secondary" story, it can also deconstruct the concept of *history*, especially since, as Jess-Cooke notes, "the sequel taps into a particular cultural urgency to memorialize, interact with and perhaps alter the past,"[16] encouraging us to reflect upon "the gulf of time that has separated one event from another. The sequel further urges comparisons between each temporal juncture, as if the future/present is both a natural progression from and return to the past".[17] The notion of sequel may thus oscillate between a teleological vision of literature and history that denies complexity, and a challenging form of postmodern intertextuality that may question the construction and apprehension of the past. Just like adaptations or remakes,

[13] Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, "Introduction," in *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, ed. Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 5. My emphasis.
[14] *Ibid.*, 9.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels*, 9.
[17] *Ibid.*, 19.

sequels may unsettle a purely hierarchical vision of texts and challenge the idea that "what comes next" is necessarily substandard to "what came first," giving Linda Hutcheon more arguments to claim that "[o]ne lesson is that to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative."[18] Multiple versions of the same tale or of its extension would simply co-exist laterally rather than vertically. The specific case of sequels can, indeed, be envisaged through the broader prism of stories that adapt themselves to their new environment – a process explored by Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation*. Hutcheon compares stories that are being repeated and extended in different contexts, with the genes of living organisms, which mutate and manage to acclimatize to other cultures. The most adapted – and most extended – stories are those which precisely adapt themselves most effectively to the various environments, succeeding in surviving a process of "cultural selection" and being reproduced or prolonged in remakes or sequels in which they will appear both recognizable and transformed.[19] What Hutcheon sees in adaptation – a way to extend the life of the first text and not to destroy it – can be applied to sequels as well:

> An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never had had otherwise.[20]

Texts that are not necessarily written as sequels or prequels at the time of their composition, but recognized as such through time, are symptomatic of these stories that have managed to survive, either by attaching themselves to more famous narrative plots or by forming enticing long sagas which draw attention through their sheer length and their various twists and variations within repetition. A sequel celebrates a moment which symbolically obliterates and regenerates at the same time in the "change-renewal" that it sets in motion – a concept elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin in his study of medieval carnival. The mock crowning and

[18] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-century Art Forms* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), xiii.
[19] See Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 32.
[20] *Ibid.*, 76.

subsequent decrowning of the carnival king generates, according to Bakhtin, "the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal. Carnival is the festival of all-annihilating and all-renewing time."[21] Similar to carnival, a sequel reveals the relativity of textual hierarchy while reinforcing the canonical status of the expanded text. It celebrates the first text while offering an extension that may wipe out, question, reorganize, upset or bend its diegetic world.

In the course of this study, I will explore how the construction of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel has reflected the kind of aesthetic and ideological tension that is at work in any "change-renewal," but with particular intensity, since this sequelization has been "enforced" and thus becomes an interesting site for ideological negotiations, generating spaces at once for conservatism and dissidence.[22] With the joint presentation of texts that were not necessarily meant to form a series, ideological faultlines and breaking points may appear through the very attempt to smooth out the discrepancies into a coherent whole, enabling, therefore, a dissident reading of the new sequelized text. This dissident reading, as advocated by Alan Sinfield, aims at drawing attention to the general project of ideology to "effac[e] contradiction and conflict,"[23] and to construct plausible discourses, and, more specifically, at pointing how the Shakespeare plays have been "continuously reinterpreted in attempts to coopt the bard for this or that worldview" in order to take advantage of his "powerful cultural token" and "authority."[24] The "enforced" sequelization of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* creates a situation which may put the dominant ideological discourses under pressure, as they strive to re-establish plausibility

[21] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 124

[22] Alan Sinfield argues for the term "dissident" rather than "subversive," since "the latter may seem to imply achievement—that something *was subverted*—and hence (since mostly the government did not fall, patriarchy did not crumble) that containment must have occurred." Dissidence then implies "refusal of an aspect of the dominant, without prejudging an outcome," while positing "a field necessarily open to continuing contest." See Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 49.

[23] Sinfield, 9.

[24] Sinfield, 11.

in the face of disturbance and help the new sequelized text into coherence (notably through the construction of consistent characters).

In the first chapter, I will examine how, while Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* chronologically prolongs *Julius Caesar*, it also rewrites and questions it, thus giving theater directors opportunities to emphasize unsettling discrepancies rather than logical connections. *Antony and Cleopatra* problematizes the logic of narrative expansion through alterations that are at odds with the earlier play. Intertextual links between *Antony* and *Caesar* thus bring instability to both plays, throwing doubt on what the characters deliver but also on staged events. Non-Shakespearean dramas written before and after the two plays have, however, constructed unproblematic links between the two stories, thus encouraging smooth continuity rather than clashing incongruities. Since the connections have been made less challenging, the intertexual network has progressively blunted Shakespeare's jarring effects and presented *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s logical sequel.

The second chapter will analyse what happens narratively and ideologically when Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are performed together on stage and on film, and presented as interdependent. From the moment Antony became the prominent character of *Julius Caesar* (at the very end of the nineteenth century), it was possible to stage *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s consistent follow-up, playing out the story to its very end with Antony as the returning hero. However, if the presentation of the two plays within one theatrical season was encouraged by Antony's change in status, it has not necessarily ensued that the plays were produced in perfect continuity. This chapter will try to answer the following questions: which links do directors emphasize between the two plays? Is Antony turned into a heroic figure that unites the two plays or is his leading status debunked? What are the ideological and economic stakes of playing *Antony* as *Caesar*'s sequel? The context of serialization tends to blur the differences between the two Shakespearean plays,

emphasize the chronological order and elevate the status of Antony, thus generally propagating an imperialist, or at least teleological, ideology. Since sequelization often turns Antony into the pivotal link between the two plays, it works on the construction of a character who, whether absolutely spotless or eminently cunning, becomes a heroic figure with a realistic and coherent psyche from one play to the next. Of all the productions recorded and reviewed in Britain and the United States, *Antony and Cleopatra* has been performed as *Julius Caesar*'s logical sequel only seven times until the end of the twentieth century: in 1898 (directed by Frank Benson in Stratford-upon-Avon), in 1912 (again by Frank Benson in Stratford-upon-Avon), in 1963 (for the BBC, as part of a televised Roman cycle entitled *The Spread of the Eagle*), in 1966-7 (directed by John Neville at the Nottingham Playhouse), twice in 1972 (directed by Trevor Nunn in Stratford-upon-Avon, and directed by Michael Kahn in Stratford, Connecticut) and in 1996-7 (by Corin and Vanessa Redgrave in Houston and London).[25] In more recent years, the trend has been gaining momentum in the United Kingdom and in the United States, and has even "spread" to non-English-speaking countries. Andrew Hilton, director of Bristol's dynamic and influential "Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory," directed joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as part of the company's 2009 season, and the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington D.C. staged the two plays in repertory in April-July 2008, directed respectively by David Muse and Michael Khan. Meanwhile, Belgian director Ivo van Hove staged *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as a six-hour, interactive show at the 2008 Avignon Theater

[25] The Theatre Archive of the Shakespeare Centre (The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon) actually records that *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have been played by the Royal Shakespeare Company eight times during the same year (in 1898, 1912, 1972, 1979, 1983, 1992, 2002 and 2006). However, in the years 1979, 1983, 1992, 2002 and 2006, the Royal Shakespeare Company did not present *Antony* as *Caesar*'s sequel. Links were not acknowledged in programs or in reviews; one play could be performed in Stratford, while the other was staged in London (this was the case in 1979, 1983, 1992, 2002); or *Antony* could open several months before *Caesar* (this took place in 2006). Though the plays were performed during the same year, the notion of sequel was totally absent. I, therefore, excluded these productions from this study.

Festival, inviting comparisons with American TV series.[26] On an aesthetic point of view, televisual seriality may have started to influence theater performances and the way plays are presented as long-form shows. On a more ideological point of view, Richard Madelaine has considered that the "the grouped staging of Shakespeare's Roman plays" may be reflecting "periods of political transition in which ideologies are questioned and patterns of international relations radically altered."[27] This newly fashionable theater practice of constructing sequels out of Shakespeare's autonomous Roman tragedies certainly calls for an investigation of its historical roots, ideological consequences and political repercussions. This chapter will notably explore the consequences of constructing "Roman theater series" on the character of Cleopatra. What does the Egyptian queen become in a sequence of plays that becomes male-oriented through the very focus on Antony as returning hero? Through the prism of Carol Rutter's reflections in her volume *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage*,[28] I will claim that performances of *Antony and Cleoaptra* as sequels, especially when "natural" links with *Julius Caesar* are constructed, are very much likely to represent Cleopatra as appropriated by the West and denied any racial and political edge.

In the third chapter, I will explore the large intertext of plays – from the Renaissance onwards – that have dealt with the love affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, antedating the period dramatized in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* and modifying our vision of the two plays. What Shakespeare only implies about Cleopatra's past, many plays have developed extensively, creating links between the Antony/Cleopatra story and the Caesar/Cleopatra story. By revealing what Shakespeare has chosen to hide, the other dramatic texts have generated a common ground for the two plays and have encouraged the

[26] See *Télérama*'s review (14 July 2008): <http://www.telerama.fr/scenes/tragedies-modernes-quand-ivo-van-hove-revisite-william-shakespeare,31434.php#xtor=RSS-23>.
[27] Richard Madelaine, ed., *Shakespeare in Production: Antony and Cleopatra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90.
[28] Carol Chillington Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London: Routledge, 2001).

sequelization and conflation of three plots—the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra, the events leading to Caesar's murder and the love story between Antony and Cleopatra. The consequence is to challenge the Shakespearean plays (as their subtexts are openly disclosed) while bringing them closer together. The challenging effect is thus qualified, as the intertext has eventually served to create a romantic saga around the figure of Cleopatra out of the two Shakespearean plays.

In the fourth chapter, I will analyse what happens when the two plays are not only played in sequence, but conflated in filmic rewritings that link the destinies of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar and Cleopatra. I will try to understand the motivations and consequences of such conflations, by especially analysing the shift in focus regarding the pivotal character, from Antony to Cleopatra. While the productions that stage the two plays in sequence have favoured the figure of Antony, the conflations such as J. Gordon Edwards' 1917, Cecil B. DeMille's 1934 and Joseph Mankiewicz's 1963 films of *Cleopatra* have emphasize that of the Egyptian queen, creating an ambiguous icon of femininity that this study will attempt to decipher. The films certainly take part in the elevation of the "Cleopatra" icon within a patriarchal world, asserting the combination of public authority and an active female sexuality. But, at the same time, through the stigmatization of the Oriental woman (notably when she visits Julius Caesar in Rome), the films have attempted to destabilize the idea of female power. Neither totally subversive nor containing in their ideologies, the *Cleopatra* films appear as sites where female power is continually re-negotiated according to the different cultural environments.

The fifth chapter will concentrate on the various film remakes (and parodies) of the Cleopatra story and will attempt to uncover their ideological stances. By repeating the same story but with a difference, the remake plays on a tension between the familiar and the new, "pre-selling" a narrative to the public. Contrary to the sequel, the remake has a more

complicated task. It does not prolong a film but competes with it, and is based on the intuition that the viewers will still be interested in the story and will be ready to see an "updated" version of it. At the same time an industrial category, a textual category and a critical category, the remake always problematizes the notion of originality. In the case of the Cleopatra story, the classical narrative involving her affair with Caesar, then with Antony, has often been twisted, offering other versions of the story and history, especially in European films which have at once challenged the American representations and revealed more openly their ideological agendas. The *Cleopatra* remakes and parodies pay tribute to the pre-existing plays and films, call them into question, reveal what they hide, and constantly reactivate and revisit the cultural issues at stake.

1. Revisiting *Julius Caesar*:

Antony and Cleopatra as Logical Extension or Challenging Rewriting?

Mary Ann Gillies argues that, in the sequel of a literary work, "there need to be clear links to the originary text in terms of character, storyline, and the world created by the author. The sequel need not have all three elements, but it usually contains at least two of them."[29] A sequel reveals how readers want to continue to inhabit the intricate social, political and ideological networks that a work of fiction has generated—a world that may actually become more charismatic than any of the characters in the story. Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* may appear as the sequel to the earlier *Julius Caesar* as it prolongs and recalls its narrative through the return of the same characters and numerous references to the events that took place in the former play. *Antony and Cleopatra* shares the setting of Rome with *Julius Caesar*, and follows the destinies of the Triumvirs: both plays feature Marcus Antonius, Octavius Caesar and Lepidus as the Triumvirs who ruled over the Roman world after the death of Julius Caesar. *Julius Caesar* dramatizes historical events that happened from 44 B.C. to 42 B.C. – the feast of Lupercalia in February 44 B.C. (where Caesar refused the crown offered by Antony), the murder of Caesar committed by a group of senators in March 44 B.C., and the battle of Philippi in October 42 B.C., during which Antony and Octavius Caesar defeated co-conspirators Brutus and Cassius. *Antony and Cleopatra* takes up the story just a few years later and has a much longer span, dramatizing events from 40 B.C. (when Antony decided to leave Egypt and its enchanting queen to return to Rome and marry Octavia, Octavius' sister) to 30 B.C. (when Antony, having been defeated by Octavius at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. commits suicide in Alexandria, followed by Cleopatra a few weeks later). Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* thus seems to prolong *Julius Caesar* and respond to a

[29] Mary Ann Gillies, "The Literary Agent and the Sequel," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, ed. Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 134.

desire from the audience to see Antony's story continued. As *Julius Caesar* ends with dead Brutus being praised by Antony ("This was the noblest Roman of them all," 5.5.68) and by Octavius ("According to his virtue let us use him,/ With all respect," 5.5.76), the final speeches are given to the two men who will become the main protagonists of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Their forthcoming fight for supremacy is heralded by their competing eulogies and by their symbolic (and literal) quest for the last word, which, revealingly, is given to Octavius. The end of *Julius Caesar* can hardly be described as a "cliff-hanger" which would make the audience avid to know what happens in the next installment, since neither Antony nor Octavius appears in a very precarious dilemma or difficult situation, or facing a shocking revelation; nevertheless, the spectators or readers are left wondering how the competition between the two men will unfold, and how power will be divided and handled. For the spectators or readers who experience *Antony and Cleopatra* shortly after *Caesar*, the play opens on Demetrius and Philo, friends to Antony, who act as Choruses commenting upon the action in *medias res*. As they tell how Antony has come to be bewitched by the Egyptian queen's "tawny front" (1.1.6) and has reneged his war feats of the previous play ("Those his goodly eyes/ That o'er the files and musters of the war/ Have glow'd like plated Mars," 1.1.2-4), Demetrius and Philo may be envisaged as equivalents of the modern "previously on" sequences that start each episode of a TV series. Similarly to a "recap" scene, the start of the play reminds the viewers of key narrative elements from the protagonist's previous adventures and anchors the new narrative in the diegetic past, against which the new twists will be assessed. *Antony and Cleopatra* may be easily read as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel in that it is a chronological extension of its dramatic plot with recognizable characters from one play to the next as well as the construction of the same specific world.

However, *Antony and Cleopatra* seems concomitantly to problematize this very logic of narrative extension through rewritings that clash with the earlier play. Intertextual links

between *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar*, far from connecting the two scripts in candid ways, bring impermanence and irresolution to both texts, raising doubts on what is said and what is shown and encouraging dissident reading. The idea of *Antony and Cleopatra* as a less challenging sequel seems to have been constructed outside Shakespeare's texts. Various play-scripts, written before and after Shakespeare, have created unequivocal narrative links between the events that Shakespeare dramatizes in *Antony and Cleopatra* and in *Julius Caesar*. It is my contention, in this chapter, that these intertexual references may have contributed to blur Shakespeare's disruptive effects and erect *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s straightforward sequel.

Challenging the sequel

Shakespearean scholars have regularly stressed the links between the two plays. In his introduction to *Antony and Cleopatra*, George Kittredge writes: "Though *Antony and Cleopatra* was written about seven years after *Julius Cæsar,* the connection between the two dramas is very close," notably through the use of the "ancient Greek doctrine of Ate (infatuation)."[30] More recently, Andrew Gurr refers to "*Julius Caesar* and its sequel" as the sharpest political dramas ever written by Shakespeare:

> The first play set Brutus' reservations about the common loss of liberty if a tyrant took the crown against the callous profiteering of the monarchists Antony and Octavius, before the sequel, *Antony and Cleopatra*, traced the effects of the struggle for power between individual tyrants.[31]

If some critics see historical continuity between the two plays, others identify their connection in the emphasis on Rome. For Robert S. Miola, all the Roman plays share a sense of Rome as place and symbol. Miola claims that the city "serves not only as a setting for action, but also as central protagonist. Embodying the heroic traditions of the past, Rome shapes its

[30] See George Kittredge's introduction in the New Kittredge edition of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Sarah Hatchuel (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2008), viii.
[31] Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Company, 1594-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 175.

inhabitants, who often live or die according to its dictates," that is to say public service, constancy, fortitude, honor, the ideal of order and the respect owed to family, country and gods.[32] Vivian Thomas supports this vision and extends it: "What Shakespeare does, in each of the Roman plays, is to give us a vision of a society which is so impregnated by its value system that characters do not merely interact with each other but with the history, goals and aspirations of Rome."[33] If Rome stands as a place and a body of values unifying all the Roman plays, some parallelisms also seem to be revealed when the plots of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are played out in sequence. Charles Lewsen, while reviewing Trevor Nunn's 1972 RSC joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, commented that, though "the enterprise cannot so convincingly constitute an overall production as can the two English history cycles," it is interesting "to note the unhappy resemblance between the brief reconciliation of Antony and Octavius and that of Cassius and Brutus in the tent; and to experience Octavius obsequies over Antony as a shadow of the epitaph spoken over Brutus."[34] In her notes on *Antony and Cleopatra* published after she directed the play, Vanessa Redgrave also asserts that "there is a sure connection between Cassius' suicide in *Julius Caesar*, and Antony's 'suicidal' error in accepting the young Caesar's challenge to fight at sea."[35] In his introduction to the Oxford edition of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Michael Neill goes as far as to claim that the play "even seems to advertise its relationship with *Julius Caesar* by several times remembering that play's climactic actions—notably in Anthony's repeated invocations of his heroic role at Philippi, and Pompey's nostalgic portrait of the

[32] Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 17.
[33] Vivian Thomas, *Shakespeare's Roman Worlds* (London, New York: Routledge, 1989), 12.
[34] Charles Lewsen, "Antony and Cleopatra, Stratford-on-Avon", *Times*, August 16, 1972. Stratford Theatre Record at the Shakespeare Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon, 118.
[35] Vanessa Redgrave, *Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 28.

conspirators."[36] According to Neill, *Julius Caesar* should be listed among the primary sources for the subsequent *Antony and Cleopatra* since *Antony* "constitutes a kind of sequel to it."[37]

However, nothing proves that Shakespeare originally wrote *Antony* as *Caesar*'s sequel, although Alexander Leggatt reminds us, in an article about the reappearance of Falstaff in many Shakespearean plays, that "Elizabethan theatre was a commercial enterprise that survived by giving the public what it wanted. This meant that as in the movie business, success bred sequels, as the author, having created a demand, had to keep feeding it."[38] But *Julius Caesar* cannot be undoubtedly considered as a charismatic text from which *Antony and Cleopatra* may have stemmed. Neither *Julius Caesar* nor *Antony and Cleopatra* appeared in print in Shakespeare's time before their inclusion in the *First Folio* in 1623. In the table of contents of the *Folio*, the two plays are listed within the Tragedies, but do not appear side by side. While the Histories are listed according to their place in historical chronology (with the Second Part of a play such as *Henry IV* always following the First part in the list),[39] the Tragedies display an order based on a loose chronology of composition. *Anthony and Cleopater* thus appears well after *The Life and death of Julius Caesar*. In between the two plays, we can read the following titles: *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello, the Moore of Venice*. In the presentation of the *Folio*, the readers are far from being encouraged to consider the two plays as the two parts of the same drama. On the contrary, they are rather led to believe that the two works are fully autonomous.

It is assumed that Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* in 1599 and *Antony and Cleopatra* around 1606-7. Although the plays share the same sources (since they are inspired by Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*), they come from two dissimilar periods in

[36] Michael Neill, ed. "Introduction," *Anthony and Cleopatra* by William Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7-8.
[37] *Ibid.*, 7.
[38] Alexander Leggatt, "Killing the Hero: Tamburlaine and Falstaff," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 53.
[39] *The Life and Death of King John./ The Life & death of Richard the second./ The First part of King Henry the fourth./ The Second part of K. Henry the fourth./ The Life of King Henry the Fift./ The First part of King Henry the Sixt./ The Second part of King Hen. the Sixt./ The Third part of King Henry the Sixt. The Life and Death of Richard the Third/ The Life of King Henry the Eight.*

Shakespeare's writing. Between 1599 and 1606, England's political situation had changed, with the accession to the throne of James I after Elizabeth I's death, and the theater world had also evolved: if *Julius Caesar* was first performed by the Chamberlain's Men at the Globe theatre, *Antony and Cleopatra* was played by the King's Men and may have been more suited to the Blackfriars, with its multiple changes in locations heralding the fantastical and rambling world of the Romances.[40] Maurice Charney wrote in 1959: "These plays show the working of Shakespeare's imagination in two different moods: in *Julius Caesar* he seems to be deliberately limiting his imaginative resources, while in *Antony and Cleopatra* he appears to be trying to extend them."[41] In 1875, Edward Dowden already believed that "The transition from the *Julius Caesar* of Shakespere to his *Antony and Cleopatra* produces in us the change of pulse and temper experienced in passing from a gallery of antique sculpture to a room splendid with the colours of Titian and Paul Veronese."[42] The relation between the two plays would be marked by points of contrast rather than points of resemblance. If *Julius Caesar* works centripetally using a limited vocabulary, limited imagery (blood, fire and storm) and a limited number of scenes, *Antony and Cleopatra* operates in the centrifugal mode. While the character of Octavius Caesar has stayed in the Roman world and still delivers the same objective and controlled speeches of order and power as he did in *Julius Caesar*, the character of Antony has evolved and entered feminine Egypt, the expansive realm of Cleopatra in which language is more complex, erotic and suggestive.

In this tension between narrative extension and formal differences, *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to embody the paradoxes of the sequel. On the one hand, it claims that time has passed and a new era has succeeded to the old, not only in its diegetic world, but also in

[40] See Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of "Antony and Cleopatra,"* ed. and completed by Mary Rosenberg (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 49.
[41] Maurice Charney, "Shakespeare's Style in *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*," *ELH* 26.3 (September 1959): 356.
[42] See Edward Dowden's essay in *Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra*, Casebook Series, ed. John Russell Brown (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1968), 38.

its reflection of the cultural moment it is inserted in; on the other hand, it asserts that time stands still, as the diegetic pattern tends to repeat itself or appears to echo the earlier text. This paradox reflects the contradiction lying at the core of the audience's desire for sequels. Terry Castle notes:

> Unconsciously [they] persist in demanding the impossible: that the sequel be different, but also *exactly the same*. Their secret mad hope is to find in the sequel a paradoxical kind of textual doubling—a repetition that does not look like one, the old story in a new and unexpected guise. They wish to read the "unforgettable" text once more, yet as if they had forgotten it.[43]

Just as the public hopes for difference and similarity at the same time, writing a sequel gives the playwright the opportunity not only to create a follow-up to the first play, but also to revisit the prior text through metatheatrical allusions and "ghosting" effects. Many passages of *Antony and Cleopatra* take back the readers or spectators to events dramatized in *Julius Caesar*. When Sextus Pompey meets the triumvirs, his first reaction is to conjure figures from the previous play:

> […] I do not know
> Wherefore my father should revengers want,
> Having a son and friends, since Julius Caesar,
> Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
> There saw you labouring for him. What was't
> That mov'd pale Cassius to conspire? and what
> Made the all-honor'd honest Roman, Brutus,
> With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
> To drench the Capitol, but that they would
> Have one man but a man? And that is it
> Hath made me rig my navy, at whose burden
> The anger'd ocean foams; with which I meant
> To scourge th' ingratitude that despiteful Rome
> Cast on my noble father. (*ANT*, 2.6.11-23)

In this short, analeptic passage, the major episodes of *Julius Caesar* flash before the audience's eyes – Brutus and Cassius conspiring against Caesar because they thought he fancied himself as a god; the conspiracy ending in the bloody assassination inside the Capitol;

[43] Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 133.

the ghost of Julius Caesar coming to haunt Brutus on the eve of the fight; the battle of Philippi where Octavius and Antony "labour[ed]" for Caesar by defeating Cassius and Brutus, thus avenging his murder. Evoking Caesar's spirit ("Julius Cæsar,/ Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted") is highly reflexive, since Caesar is said to have haunted Brutus just as the play *Julius Caesar* comes to haunt *Antony and Cleopatra* through Sextus Pompey's speech. Caesar is a "revenant" in the etymological sense, both coming back from the dead and returning as a signifier to visit subsequent texts.

The fact that this analeptic passage should be spoken by Sextus Pompey is also significant. Sextus Pompey's "noble father" (Pompey the Great) was defeated by Julius Caesar at Pharsalus in 48 B.C. Sextus embodies the transmission of a name (Pompey) through direct lineage—a name recalling Julius Caesar's arch enemy. While readers/spectators could have expected Antony or Octavius, as respectively the partisan and the heir of Caesar, to recall the former play of *Julius Caesar*, the process of remembrance is triggered by Caesar's enemy's son. The conjuring of the events dramatized in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is thus made through indirection and opposition. Through this speech, *Antony and Cleopatra* asserts its complex relation with *Julius Caesar*. Mirroring this passage, the whole narrative is extended, from one play to the next, in the mode of contrast and conflict rather than of consistency and respect.

A network of resonating references is constructed between the two plays through the very idea of the back-and-forth move: *Antony and Cleopatra* echoes *Julius Caesar* which echoes *Antony*, reflexively through the theme of oscillation or fickleness. Through his reference to the "ingratitude that despiteful Rome/ Cast on [his] noble father," Sextus Pompey repeats with a variation what Antony tells Enobarbus at the start of *Antony and Cleopatra*; Pompey the Great's glory and magnificence are said to have been "thrown upon" his son by the "slippery people:"

> […] Sextus Pompeius
> Hath given the dare to Caesar and commands
> The empire of the sea. Our slippery people,
> Whose love is never link'd to the deserver
> Till his deserts are past, begin to throw
> Pompey the Great and all his dignities
> Upon his son; who, high in name and power,
> Higher than both in blood and life, stands up
> For the main soldier. (*ANT*, 1.2.161-9)

Pompey's son replaces his father as the opponent to the power in place, igniting the fear that the crowd's giddiness might overthrow the new Caesar to reinstate a new Pompey. Antony's speech at the beginning of *Antony and Cleopatra* sends us back to the first scene of *Julius Caesar*, which refers to this rapid shift in feelings for Pompey the Great among the people of Rome. At the start of *Julius Caesar*, citizens assemble to greet Julius Caesar's return after his triumph over Pompey's sons, Gnaeus and Sextus, who had led a revolt in Spain. Marullus, a tribune, is shocked by the people's enthusiasm at Caesar's victory and reminds them of their former love for Pompey:

> O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!
> Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
> Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements, […]
> To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome. […]
> And do you now strew flowers in his way
> That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
> Be gone!
> Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
> Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
> That needs must light on this ingratitude. (*JC*, 1.1.33-52)

The line on the "triumph over Pompey's blood" conflates the idea of butchery with that of lineage; in doing so, it echoes the historical events, as Pompey's son, Gnaeus, was killed by Julius Caesar's army at the battle at Munda (though the other son, Sextus, escaped to become the leader of the Mediterranean pirates). Rome's "ingratitude" appears as a running topic throughout the two plays, but this theme that is shared connotes volatility and change. Continuity between the two plays is thus presented in the very mode fluctuation. This

permanence in change also appears on the onomastic level. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the very name "Caesar" is used profusely, as in *Julius Caesar*. The name imports the ghost of a former character while designating another protagonist—Octavius, who took up the name of his great-uncle. The use of the "Caesar" signifier shows how the ghost of Julius still haunts *Antony and Cleopatra* while emphasizing the difference between the two plays through the shift in the signified.

Antony and Cleopatra makes *Julius Caesar* "unforgettable," to use Terry Castle's expression again, through its numerous references to it, but the very logic of dramatic extension is challenged. Considering *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel is made even more problematic through narrative revisions that question the earlier play. One major instance takes place in Act 3 Scene 11 when Antony, after being defeated at the battle of Actium, tries to debunk Octavius Caesar by recalling how cowardly Octavius behaved during the battle of Philippi:

> Yes, my lord, yes! He at Philippi kept
> His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck
> The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I
> That the mad Brutus ended. He alone
> Dealt on lieutenantry and no practice had
> In the brave squares of war. (*ANT*, 3.11.35-40)

Here Antony remembers how he managed to hit Cassius and finish off Brutus. However, since the end of *Julius Caesar* clearly shows that Brutus and Cassius took their own life and were not "ended" (nor "struck") by Antony, this speech generates perplexing discrepancy leeway between the two plays. As *Julius Caesar* explicitly discloses on the stage that Antony did not do what he claims he did, spectators or readers are invited to challenge the rest of his words as well. But, at the same time, this speech may shed doubt on the actions performed in *Julius Caesar*. What *did* happen during the battle of Philippi? Was Octavius a coward, or is Antony a braggart? Was *Julius Caesar* delivering the "truth," or is *Antony and Cleopatra*'s

rewriting more authentic? The intertextual links between the two plays produce complex dialectics between story and history, between the real and the imaginary, and between what has being played on stage and what is then being reported by the characters. Even when *Antony and Cleopatra* is in accordance with *Julius Caesar* on the witnessed events, the interpretation of what really took place differs from one play to the other. Nowhere does this appear more plainly than in the following discussion between Agrippa and Enobarbus in 3.2:

> AGRIPPA [*aside to Enobarbus*] Why, Enobarbus,
> When Antony found Julius Caesar dead,
> He cried almost to roaring; and he wept
> When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.
> ENOBARBUS [*aside to Agrippa*] That year indeed he was troubled with a rheum.
> What willingly he did confound he wail'd,
> Believe 't, till I wept too. (*ANT*, 3.2.54-60)

Agrippa first creates the vision of a generous and emotional Antony who wept for Caesar and for Brutus (an actor playing Antony in *Julius Caesar* may take his cue from these lines to inform his performance). But Enobarbus quickly deconstructs this interpretation by explaining this display of benevolence as an example of role-playing or onion-eyed feeling—Antony was not weeping out of real emotions but because he had a bad cold—a runny nose and watery eyes. Antony's tears may have been crocodile tears, as he himself suggests earlier on in the play: "And the tears of it [the crocodile] are wet" (2.7.40). The genuineness of his weeping for Caesar in the former play is thus challenged, reminding the audience of the manipulative qualities he displays in his speeches at the Forum or during the Proscription scene. The use of the verb "confound" (in "What willingly he did confound he wail'd") allows Enobarbus' words to convey multiple meanings, the most obvious being that Antony wept for the people he deliberately defeated and destroyed (as editors have regularly underlined);[44] but it also carries the idea that Antony is "confounded" as a fraud and hypocrite, while generating

[44] See, for instance, Michael Neill's edition of *The Tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 224, and David Bevington's edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 167.

"confusion" for the readers or spectators. Was Antony sincere, or deceitful, in *Julius Caesar*? Is Enobarbus distorting the facts or not? Enobarbus' words, rewriting past events as they do, may bewilder—"confound"—the readers or spectators, force them to reassess Antony's behavior in the former play and open up opportunities for challenging readings.[45]

Intertextual links between *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar* bring instability and undecidability to both texts, casting distrust on what each character reports but also on what was performed. In this regard, *Antony and Cleopatra* may be related to the postmodern sequel which, according to Michael Zeitlin, consists in "any narrative which extends, revises, or redoubles the already-written, doing so, however, as much to complicate and undermine as to reaffirm and reify the principles of narrative continuity, causality and tradition."[46] Postmodern sequels, therefore, tend less to prolong and respect than to alter and defy the precursor texts. Beyond a "sequel" to *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* might be read as a metatext[47] on it, offering a "remake" of, or "retake" on, the events and confrontationally rewriting, in a narrative form, what had been revealed as a show on stage in the former drama. However, logical narrative connections have been generated between the two plays but, paradoxically, outside of them—in playtexts written before and after Shakespeare's scripts.

Paving the way for the sequel

Before and after Shakespeare, various playwrights have created links between the events that Shakespeare depicts in *Antony and Cleopatra* and in *Julius Caesar*. Since the connections are more straightforward, these intertexual references (in plays dating from 1592 to 1778)

[45] A search in the Oxford English Dictionary shows that the verb "confound" already conveyed all these various meanings in Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare's preference for this term rather than the less polysemic "destroy" or "defeat", is, therefore, significant.
[46] Michael Zeitlin, "Donald Barthelme and the Postmodern Sequel," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 161.
[47] See Gérard Genette's definition of metatextuality: "It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it." in *Palimpsests: literature in the second degree*, 4.

may have contributed to blur Shakespeare's challenging effects and construct *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s unproblematic extension.

This is notably the case of the play *Antonius*. Translated into English by Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke (from the 1578 French play *Marc Antoine* by Robert Garnier), performed in 1590 and published in 1592, *Antonius* is a highly concentrated drama in the Senecan tradition. It covers the period from Antony's defeat at Actium to Cleopatra's death. Despite its contracted dramatic time span, *Antonius* often alludes to the past each time Antony nostalgically recalls his glorious deeds. For instance, Antony paints an unflattering portrait of Octavius Caesar during the battle of Philippi:

> When Cassius and Brutus ill betide
> Marcht against us, by us twise put to flight,
> But by my sole conduct: for all the time
> Caesar heart-sicke with feare and feaver laie.
> Who knowes it not? and how by every one
> Fame of the fact was giv'n to me alone. (Pembroke's *Antonius*, 3.94-99)[48]

This boasting of one's military prowess and this debunking of Octavius anticipate Antony's derogatory remarks in *Antony and Cleopatra* (4.11), but contrary to what happens in Shakespeare's play, this reminder does not revise the events dramatized in *Julius Caesar*: Antony does not recall having killed Cassius and Brutus – just having fought more bravely than Octavius Caesar. The passage thus attests the urge to link the love tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra to the conspiracy against Julius Caesar and the subsequent battle at Philippi, but without any questioning of these former events.[49] Antony's question "Who knows it not?,"

[48] Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, *Antonius, A Tragedie written also in French by Ro. Garnier* (London: William Ponsonby, 1592).

[49] The same can be said of the original passage in Robert Garnier's 1578 French play:

> Lorsque Cassie et Brute infortunés sortirent
> Contre nos légions, qui deux fois les défirent
> Sous ma conduite seule, ayant Octave au cœur,
> Tandis qu'on combattait, et la fièvre, et la peur.
> Un chacun le sait bien, et que toute la gloire
> On donnait à moi seul d'une telle victoire. (*Marc Antoine*, 3.956-61)

beyond its literal meaning of "Who ignores that I fought Cassius and Brutus without Octavius' help?," highlights the fact that Antony, Cassius and Brutus have become floating, spectral figures whose lives are common knowledge and can be recycled in other works of fiction. These characters, which have been regularly conjured in dramatic works based on the Caesar/Antony/Cleopatra plot, have reinforced the connections between Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar*, notably through the smoothing out of the textual challenges raised by the Shakespearean versions. For instance, in John Dryden's *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, a 1678 rewriting of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* which respects the classical unities of time (one day), place (Alexandria) and action (with every scene leading to the lovers' tragic suicide),[50] Antony is urged by Ventidius to try and fight for his honor, and immediately reacts by telling, yet again, his past feats at Philippi:

> […] Once again
> That noble eagerness of fight has seized me;
> That eagerness with which I darted upward
> To Cassius' camp. In vain the steepy hill
> Opposed my way; in vain a war of spears
> Sung round my head, and planted on my shield.
> I won the trenches, while my foremost men
> Lagged on the plain below. (Dryden's *All for Love*, 1.439-446)[51]

Dryden's *All for Love*, through Antony's nostalgic recalling of his past glories to stir himself to new combat, links two moments belonging to two different works—Antony fighting against Brutus and Cassius in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and Antony fighting against Octavius in the fourth act of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. This conflation certainly produces a kind of semiotic noise that blurs dramatic space and time, but it also flattens out the discrepancies between the two Shakespearean plays: Antony is presented as the same man

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Robert Garnier, "Marc Antoine," in *La Tragédie à l'époque d'Henry III*, deuxième série, vol. 1, ed. Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, Lisa Wollfe, Marian Meijer, Charles Mazouer, Mario Bensi (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999).

[50] See Hazelton Spencer, *Shakespeare Improved* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1963), 211-21.
[51] David M. Vieth, ed., *All for Love* by John Dryden (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972).

he used to be at Philippi, drawing his "eagerness" to go and fight once more from his "eagerness" of the past. This assertion of Antony as a consistent character comes with a glorification of the indestructible, solitary war hero, who can avoid death, as well as conquer the enemy's camp without any help. The words that insist on height, superiority and masculinity ("darted upwards", "steepy hill") gives Antony the ascendancy over his soldiers "lagg[ing] on the plain below", but also authority in the re-telling of the battle. If Antony "won the trenches", he also wins the war of discourses on what really happened: he does not contradict other versions of the facts (either staged in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* or reported elsewhere in Dryden's *All for Love*) and appears, therefore, as the sole "maker" of the past. As another symptom of Antony's martial, as well as discursive, domination, Brutus has been omitted from Antony's description of his former feats, leaving Cassius as the only worthy opponent.

In a play contemporary to Dryden's, Charles Sedley's 1677 *Antony and Cleopatra* (the action of which starts shortly after the battle of Actium), Octavia—Octavius' sister and wife to Antony—defends her husband against Octavius' wrath by evoking the glorious deeds he achieved in the past, in yet another recollection of Antony's actions in *Julius Caesar*:

> Ingrateful Rome! but most ingrateful you!
> Can you forget whom Cassius overthrew? […]
> Who the first Caesar made, revenged his death,
> And fixt that empire, which he did bequeath,
> On you almost unknown. (Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 4.1.54-60)[52]

Antony is presented as the man who destroyed the conspirators and who "made" the two Caesars—Julius as well as Octavius. The passage omits again to mention Brutus, suppressing him from the text as he was from the course of events. As Octavia states Antony's political role in the form of questions, the readers/spectators become involved in the process of remembrance. "Can you forget whom Cassius overthrew?" is reflexively addressed to them,

[52] Charles Sedley, *Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Richard Tonson, 1677).

raising the issue of their abilities to recall historical events as well as former representations of those events. This interrogative structure is also used in Henry Brooke's 1778 *Antony and Cleopatra* (the structure of which follows Shakespeare's play very closely). As Enobarbus curses both Antony and Octavius Caesar for the dire consequences of their destructive ambition, his thoughts fly back to the murder of Julius Caesar: through a rhetorical question to himself, the devastating rivalry between Antony and Octavius is reassessed in the context of Roman history:

> Perdition on 'em both!
> Caesar and Antony!
> How this great vessel of the world does reel,
> Beneath such rulers!—Was it then for these,
> That the great Tully spoke, that Cato bled,
> And our last Brutus struck? (Brooke's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1.4; p. 339)[53]

As an exterior eye—almost as a Chorus—Enorbarbus invites us to remember historical characters that appear in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Besides the famous figure of Brutus who stabbed Caesar, Enobarbus evokes Marcus Tullius Cicero, often called Tully, who shows up in Act 1 and whose death by proscription is announced by Messala in 4.3;[54] as well as Marcus Porcius Cato who fought with Pompey against Julius Caesar, finally preferring to commit suicide rather than be captured, and who is conjured up in the play by his daughter Portia in her speech in 2.2, as she tries to convince her husband to confide his secret in her.[55] Enobarbus' question creates small *vignettes* which briefly come to life, generating intertextual

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[53] Henry Brooke, "*Antony and Cleopatra*" in *Poems And Plays in 4 volumes* (London: John Sewell, 1789).

[54] See Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Act 4, scene 3 :

MESSALA That by proscription and bills of outlawry,
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus,
Have put to death an hundred senators.
BRUTUS Therein our letters do not well agree;
Mine speak of seventy senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.
CASSIUS Cicero one!
MESSALA Cicero is dead. (4.3.173-9)

[55] See Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Act 2 scene 1 :

PORTIA I grant I am a woman; but withal
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so father'd and so husbanded? (2.1.294-7)

links with preceding texts, but without conveying any competing views of history. Nostalgia prevails over reassessment. In the non-Shakespearean plays based on the Antony/Cleopatra plot, even when former political agendas and manipulations are unveiled, narrative continuity with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is never endangered. In Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, for instance, Antony admits to Canidius that his partnership with Octavius Caesar was only motivated by mere political aims, and blames himself for triggering off events that led to Octavius' supremacy:

> Caesar and I you know were never friends,
> And only hung together for our ends. […]
> Brutus and Cassius felt the deadly sting;
> And all to make Octavius more than King.
> So blindly did I act, so little see. (Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 3.2.33-9)

In his alarm of having helped Octavius to rise and rule above men, Sedley's Antony echoes Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, in which Brutus fears that Caesar might become a godlike, tyrannical sovereign ("What means this shouting? I do fear the people/ Choose Caesar for their king," 1.2.79-80). This direct parallel with the former play is reinforced by the recalling of his "fake" friendship with Octavius, which is also dramatized in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, especially in Act 5 scene 1, as the two men quarrel over the best way to fight Brutus' army at Philippi:

ANTONY	Octavius, lead your battle softly on
	Upon the left hand of the even field.
OCTAVIUS	Upon the right hand I. Keep thou the left.
ANTONY	Why do you cross me in this exigent?
OCTAVIUS	I do not cross you; but I will do so. (*JC*, 5.1.16-20)

In North's Plutarch, it is actually Brutus who asks Cassius to let him lead the army's right wing, but Shakespeare shifts the event and applies it to Antony and Octavius, thus highlighting the rivalry and affected friendship between the two men, perhaps with the forthcoming *Antony and Cleopatra* in mind. The word "hand," used as it is to designate the

army's wing, points to the idea of a friendship that cannot but be obstructed. The historical reference has been "crossed" to lay even more emphasis on Octavius' "crossing" attitude and to display the alliance as doomed from the start. As Sedley's 1677 *Antony and Cleopatra* recalls the competition between Antony and Octavius, it echoes a Shakespearean dramatic construction which it has contributed to extend and perpetuate in an unproblematic derivation. Through the character's memories that match with the events in the Shakespeare play, Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra* creates an Antony which seems to spring from *Julius Caesar* with the same psyche. Events depicted by Shakespeare in his *Julius Caesar* keep contaminating other playwrights' narratives around Antony and Cleopatra, but in more straightforward ways than in Shakespeare's own *Antony and Cleopatra*, as if the playwrights had felt the need to construct the logical sequel that Shakespeare did *not* write.

If figures from *Julius Caesar*, such as Brutus, Cassius, Cato or Cicero, are recalled in the characters' speeches, they sometimes appear in the flesh, generating an even stronger effect of reminiscence. In Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the ghosting effect is literally embodied by Lucilius. A soldier in Brutus' army in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, who pretends to be Brutus in order to save his master during the battle of Philippi (Act 5 scene 4), Licilius happens to re-enter the stage in Sedley's play, to answer Antony's questions:

ANTONY What art thou?
LUCILIUS A Roman.
ANTONY No more?
LUCILIUS In Brutus Camp some small command I bore:
Subdu'd by arms, since by your kindness won,
I am resolv'd your utmost fate to run. […]
If my late service grieve you, take my head. […]
ANTONY Lucilius?
LUCILIUS The same my int'rest command,
Antonius shall both rule my heart and hand.
(Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 3.2.321-33)

While Lucilius is nowhere to be found in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Sedley uses this character from *Julius Caesar* to constructs a nostalgic moment, which explicitly presents

his play as a sequel to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, reviving and recycling its characters, and playing with the spectators' recognition through Antony's own metatheatrical acknowledgment. Lucilius' effortless conversion from being Brutus' follower to Antony's ("since by your kindness won"), epitomizes the smooth continuity between *Julius Caesar* and Sedley's script, which capitalizes on the aura of the Shakespearean text.[56]

The Countess of Pembroke's 1592 *Antonius* also lays the emphasis on Antony's relationship with Lucilius, who has become Antony's "sole comfort" (3.1). Through Antony's words, Lucilius' status as a dramatic hyphen is revealed: "There was it, my Lucil, you Brutus sav'de,/ And for your Brutus Antonie you found," 3.102-3. The character of Lucilius is used to mark the passage from one narrative (around Brutus) to the next (around Antony)—the structure of the sentence, which joins the two names together ("Brutus Antonie"), being a formal sign of it.[57] Lucilius also highlights the sharing and transfer of a signifier—the name of "Caesar"—from Julius to Octavius; in a speech addressed to Antony, he uses the name to signify in turn "Octavius Caesar" and "Julius Caesar":

> Caesar, as heire unto his Fathers state:
> So will his Fathers goodnes imitate,
> To you warde: whome he know's allied in bloud,
> Allied in mariage, ruling equallie
> Th'Empire with him, and with him making warre
> Have purg'd the earth of Caesar's murtherers.
> You into portions parted have the world
> Even like coheir's their heritages parte. (Pembroke's *Antonius*, 3.139-46)

Lucilius expresses the thought that Octavius may act like his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, and continue to rule peacefully with his ally Antony over the divided portions of the Roman world. The signifier "Caesar" is repeated relevantly in a speech that deals precisely with

[56] It is to be noted that, even in eighteen-century rewritings of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the character of Lucilius has been kept. *The Tragedy of Julius Ceasar with the death of Brutus and Cassius*, written in 1719 by William D'Avenant and John Dryden, shows Lucilius trying to convince Brutus to escape rather than kill himself.

[57] In this construction of Lucilius as a dramatic hyphen between the two plays, Pembroke respected the syntax of Garnier's original passage:

> Et fut là, mon Lucile, où Brute vous sauvâtes,
> Et que pour votre Brute Antoine vous trouvâtes. (*Marc Antoine*, 3.964-5)

imitation and legacy, but it takes on two different meanings. Octavius' legitimacy to rule as the new "Caesar" along with Antony is linked to his inheritance of the grand name of the former "Caesar" and to his successful revenge over "Caesar's murtherers."[58]

A similar handover of authority is highlighted in Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (probably performed for the first time in 1626, and printed in 1639). The play opens when Antony, now married to Octavia, has come back to Egypt, enjoying banquets before the battle of Actium interrupts the course of his pleasures. After the fight, one of Octavius' captains praises his master in front of the other soldiers:

> Appoint your General, the noble Caesar
> Great Julius heir, not to his name alone
> But spirit and fortunes, which have both appear'd
> In this so great and final a defeat
> Given to Antonius. (May's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 3.9-13)[59]

In this context, the name "Caesar" becomes more than a mere title to its bearer. It seems to embody in itself power and command, promising victory and good fortune, as Julius Caesar is turned into an imposing father figure and role model for both Octavius and Antony. Thomas May's play revels in the idea of transmission, from Julius Caesar to Octavius Caesar; and this political lineage comes along with a textual one: the play not only inherits the "name[s] alone," but also attempts at protecting the "spirit" of the former Shakespearean play by banishing any inconsistency with it.

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[58] In the original passage in Garnier's French play, the signifier "Caesar" is repeated in exactly the same way, first meaning "Octavius Caesar," then "Julius Caesar." However, the verb "contr'imiter," contrary to the English "imitate," puts the stress on the idea of contradiction, thus emphasizing the variation in the repetition.

> César, comme héritier des grandeurs de son père,
> Voudra contr'imiter sa douceur débonnaire
> Envers vous qu'il connaît extrait de même sang,
> Qui êtes son beau frère et tenez pareil rang
> En l'empire romain, qui, compagnon de guerre,
> Des meurtriers de César avez purgé la terre.
> Vous avez partagé ce monde en portions,
> Comme font héritiers de leurs successions. (*Marc Antoine*, 3.1000-7)

[59] Thomas May, *The Tragedie of Cleopatra* (London: Thomas Walkly, 1639).

If Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* rewrites *Julius Caesar*, partly questioning it, generating the impression of multiple realities (thus shattering the belief in a single unified reality unfolding in orderly sequence—with a beginning, a middle and an end), the many intertexual references in works preceding or following Shakespeare's plays have contributed to construct strong echoes between the story of "Julius Caesar" and that of "Antony and Cleopatra." Whether it be through characters' memories that appear in accordance with the earlier play, through questions that involve the readers/spectators in the very process of unchallenging recollection, or through the transmission of signifiers that stresses the ideas of smooth political and textual legacies, these echoes have all contributed to erasing the Shakespearean discrepancies, rather than nurturing and reproducing them. The construction of these connections may have encouraged theater directors to stage the two plays in sequence from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, and insist on the unproblematic sides of the narrative extension. The following chapter will examine what happens in performance when Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is directed as *Julius Caesar*'s logical, unchallenging development. What are, on the stage as well as on the screen, the consequences of expunging the narrative discrepancies and factual revisions from one play to the next?

2. "Play it Again, Antony!":

Performing *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel

Stage sequels and the ghosting of roles

Alexander Leggatt has written that "the simplest rule of sequel-writing is, play it again: more bombast, more jokes, more car-chases, more explosions. But nothing is ever quite the same the second time around."[60] The follow-up of a narrative also tend to foreground changing relationships between the characters – the shifting of alliances and motives. In the case of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, what "sequelized" productions play again in variation is Antony's relationship with the other two triumvirs, Octavius and Lepidus. Far from remaining united after revenging Caesar's death, they have drawn apart, with Antony moving from the male sphere of Rome to the female sphere of Egypt and its enticing queen. The productions are constructed as a series in their playing with an ensemble of central characters whose respective prominence varies from one episode to another. Octavius Caesar, for instance, moves from a minor role in *Julius Caesar* to a major one in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The productions may operate as if they were parts of an "episodic series" (in which the storyworld and storyworld are consistent, but whose episodes stand on their own, requiring little need for consistent sequential viewing to follow the story), or go as far as present themselves as an "episodic serial," in which narrative arcs are generated through performance.[61] This chapter will examine the dramatic and ideological implications of performing *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel, as well as

[60] Alexander Leggatt, "Killing the Hero: Tamburlaine and Falstaff," 56.
[61] See Jason Mittel's analysis of the way television stories are told, in *Television and American Culture* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 228-32. Mittel distinguishes between the *episodic series* (in which the episodes can be experienced independently), the *serial narrative* (which features continuing storylines accross multiple episodes and require continuous viewing to comprehend the narrative) and the *episodic serial* (which is a mixture of the serial and episodic forms, using narrative arcs that run accross episodes that can still be experienced on their own).

explore what happens to the political status of the Egyptian queen when the two texts are constructed into an interdependent structure.

With her 2001 seminal study *Enter the Body,* Carol Rutter has unveiled the racism of contemporary theatrical casting which denies Cleopatra's blackness, while stage productions acknowledge it through their Orientalist *mises-en-scènes* and use of black actors as supporting parts and extras. As she remarks that in British mainstream theaters, Cleopatra has, without fail, been played by white actors – either female or male (such as Mark Rylance at the London Globe in 1999), Rutter is shocked by the cultural hijack of the role and stands up for the resurgence and explicit acknowledgment of Cleopatra's blackness:

> I want to argue that Shakespeare wrote a black narrative at the centre of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a narrative marked by racial self-reference as explicit as Othello's. I "am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black," says the Egyptian, and the Moor, "I am black."[62]

Rutter claims that this blackness gives political power to Cleopatra and her people, since the Egyptians cannot be annexed to the Roman Empire without blackening the Roman race, and therefore cannot be totally subjugated: because "Rome cannot absorb Egypt into its imperial system and remain itself", "[Egypt's] blackness is unassimilable and, thus, not conquerable."[63] However, it is the contention of this chapter that the construction of sequels, especially when it stresses logical continuities across the plays, is likely to propagate an imperialist or at least teleological ideology in which Cleopatra is appropriated by the West and denied her political edge of being black. She thus loses her ability to "darken" and, therefore, erase Roman whiteness even if she were to be dominated.

The combination of the two texts into an interdependent structure has not only ideological, but also economic implications, since the directors and producers secure an

[62] Rutter, 88; 62.
[63] Rutter, *Enter the Body*, 101.

audience for two plays or films instead of one. The performance of the two plays in sequence generates an effect which Michael Zeitlin explains in an article on the postmodern sequel:

> As one takes up the sequel, gathering up familiar causes and characters in order to unite them with their promised ends, one experiences narrative as nostalgic even as it anticipates its own inevitable progress towards a conclusion. [At the end of a sequel,] one generally looks back upon a single, self-sufficient fictional world, the borders between two discrete though contiguous books having been virtually dissolved.[64]

Zeitlin discusses novels, but his remarks can be easily applied to dramatic texts and performances. Since the sequel presents a story that is simultaneously new and familiar, it takes its readers or spectators on a sentimental journey back to a pre-text they are invited to feel nostalgic about, within a process that encourages a conservative stabilization of the underlying ideology—one that, in this case, generally tries to contain the Egyptian queen within a patriarchal system of domination. The sequelization of the two Shakespearean plays elevates Antony (and not Cleopatra) to be the pivotal link between the two plays, and works on the construction of a character who, whether absolutely spotless or eminently cunning, becomes a hero with a realistic psyche which remains coherent throughout the two plays. Sequelization thus tends to rely on the belief that Shakespeare mastered his characters, creating a consistent personality for them and knowing exactly how each of them would react faced with any situation. Presenting *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel comes with a psychologization of the characters that tends to bring logical naturalism, while erasing unsettling discrepancies from scene to scene. Narrative events from one play to the next are performed according to a logic of "cause and effect," so that the spectators can assume that the events presented are connected to one another in "a chain of causality," part of their pleasure relying in "the act of tying together seemingly disconnected narrative threads."[65] Continuities from one play to the next are mainly generated through casting: the same actors

[64] Michael Zeitlin, "Donald Barthelme and the Postmodern Sequel," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, ed. Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 160.
[65] Mittel, 216-7.

are hired to play the same parts in the two plays. In his reflection on the intertextuality of performance, Marvin Carlson emphasises the importance of the audience's experience with an actor in previous roles. Even if actors have not reached star status, they will, in the course of their careers, be seen by the public in many different roles. Carlson writes:

> The memory of their previous performances […] will inevitably remain as a part of the theatrical institution, and will affect future casting, publicity, and collective memory, future experiences of audiences in the theatre. […] The process of recalling previous roles while watching the creation of new ones is particularly encouraged by the rather odd practice of providing in theatre programmes actors' biographies listing previous roles. […] Further 'ghosting' of previous roles in our reception of later ones is institutionally encouraged, not only by programme practice, but by marketing and publicity. […] Even when actors are not associated in the public (and media) mind with a certain specific role or a certain stock type, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, once their career is under way, for them to avoid an aura of expectations based on past roles.[66]

This "ghosting" of roles is closely connected to the concept of a series, whether on stage or on screen, since spectators expect to see the actors in the same roles again and producers expect to market the show more easily as a result. Using casting to encourage an audience to perceive *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel plays explicitly on the ghosting effect in ways that control and channel the spectators' intertextual visions. Instead of blurring the audience's perception of an actor with the echoes of other (previously performed) roles, giving the two Roman plays in succession with the same actors brings stability and coherence to the parts, allowing the spectators to indulge in reassuring feelings of *déjà-vu*. Antony is played in the second play so as to recall Antony in the first, and Antony is played in the first play in a manner that anticipates the second. The echoes will work both ways, reaffirming the impression of logical, permanent and reliable characters from one play to the next. This allows for easier financial returns, since it pleasurably reunites spectators with familiar characters. Continuous and coherent casting is thus at the core of sequelization.

[66] Marvin Carlson, "Invisible Presences: Performance Intertextuality," *Theatre Research International* 19.2 (1994), 112-13.

It is, first, legitimate to wonder whether *Antony and Cleopatra* was presented as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel at the time of its first performances. Did Shakespeare's theater company emphasize a logical narrative extension by, for instance, casting the same actors from one play to another? If Shakespearean scholars agree that the Antony from *Antony and Cleopatra* was played by Richard Burbage, they still argue about the identity of the actor who played Antony in *Julius Caesar*. Andrew Gurr suggests that Richard Burbage was not cast as Antony, but as Brutus.[67] He takes his cue from a metatheatrical reference in *Hamlet* where the prince has the following exchange with Polonius:

> Hamlet My lord, you played once i'th' university, you say?
> Polonius That I did, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
> Hamlet And what did you enact?
> Polonius I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.
> Hamlet It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. (3.2.91-99)[68]

If we gather from Polonius's lines that the actor playing him also played the character of Julius Caesar a year or two earlier on the Globe's stage, Hamlet's murder of Polonius in Gertrude's closet could have generated a complete metatheatrical re-enactment of Brutus killing Caesar only if the actor playing Hamlet had also played Brutus. Since we know that Burbage undoubtedly played Hamlet, he may have indeed played Brutus as well. If this was the case, then no acting reminder was created between *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. This position was also taken by Martin Holmes thirty years ago:

> Burbage's part in the earlier play was assuredly Brutus. [In *Julius Caesar*,] Antony the demagogue, stirring up Rome to mutiny in one of the most famous pieces of declamation Shakespeare ever wrote, calls for a flamboyance and a quality of vocal resonance that were not in Burbage's capacity.[69]

The Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*, grown old and meditative, is thought to have been a part much more suited to Burbage's range of acting than the Antony in *Julius Caesar*.

[67] See Gurr, 15-16.
[68] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by G.R. Hibbard (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[69] Martin Holmes, *Shakespeare and Burbage* (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), 187-8.

However, another viewpoint is suggested by John Southworth: "Though Brutus is generally recognized as the first of Shakespeare's heroes […], I believe the part would have gone to one of the younger men (perhaps Condell), and Burbage's skills reserved for the more extrovert Antony."[70] Burbage's position as what would now be called the "star actor" of the company paradoxically makes his role in the earlier *Julius Caesar* hard to identify, since Brutus, Antony and Cassius all compete for the sympathy of the audience within an ensemble drama where no true hero stands out. Burbage's part in *Julius Caesar* seems to depend on the critic's subjective opinion as to the leading character in the play. Nevertheless, Gurr's metatheatrical argument seems convincing enough to assume that the two Antonys were not played by the same actor. There are, therefore, no reasons to believe that, in Shakespeare's time, *Antony and Cleopatra* was presented as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel.

It seems that continuous casting did not become a practice before the very end of the nineteenth century.[71] The most powerful and logical link between the two plays could only be created when actors-managers began to see Antony, instead of Brutus, as the hero of *Julius Caesar*. As soon as this shift in viewpoint took place, *Antony and Cleopatra* started to be considered as a potential sequel to *Julius Caesar*. From this moment onwards, actors-managers (and later, directors) could even consider staging both plays during the same season, as two parts of the same overarching drama.

***Julius Caesar*'s hero: From Brutus to Antony**

The transition from Brutus to Antony as the prominent figure of *Julius Caesar* was progressive and, naturally, not devoid of ideological and political implications. After the Restoration in 1660, actors-managers typically kept the role of Brutus for themselves. Thomas

[70] John Southworth, *Shakespeare the Player: a Life in the Theatre* (London: Sutton Publishing, 2002), 150-1.
[71] This could be inferred by comparing the stage histories of the two plays notably in John Ripley's *'Julius Caesar' on stage in England & America 1599-1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and Margaret Lamb's '*Antony and Cleopatra' on the English Stage* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980).

Betterton brought dignity, majesty, reserve and gravitas to the part.[72] From 1684 to 1707, he established a tradition in which Brutus was portrayed as a meditative philosopher (opposed to a fiery and passionate Cassius), yet capable of heroic action to save the Republic from tyranny. In the eighteenth century, the Dryden-Davenant rewriting of the play still highlighted Brutus's heroic, generous and martyr-like qualities.[73] Brutus (played by Barton Booth) thus dominated the stage, carrying the play and all its dramatic moments. The mob in the Forum scene was still very small and its exclamations drastically cut to speed up action. Antony did not yet share either Brutus's dignity or his charisma. These choices encouraged a patriotic vision of the play, with Caesar as the tyrant suppressing all freedoms and Brutus as the righteous hero prepared to restore liberty at any cost. A similar vision prevailed in America, where *Julius Caesar* appealed to the revolutionary fervour of the 1770s. Between 1770 and 1802, in New York, Charleston and Philadelphia, the American Company presented Brutus as a true patriot struggling for liberty and emphasised the necessity of Caesar's death to restore the rights of the citizens.[74] This interpretation reached its peak with John Philip Kemble who played Brutus in London from 1812 to 1817 as a blameless, sincere and stoic idealist. Kemble cut the text drastically, eliminating minor characters to focus mainly on the conspirators, and especially on Brutus's dilemma and tragic course, in order to give the play more unity. However, the part of Antony, which Charles Kemble chose to play himself as a young and noble athlete, started to be enhanced. Antony's calculating opportunism was accordingly transformed into an earnest desire for justice and revenge after the death of his benefactor.[75]

In 1900, actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree successfully revived *Julius Caesar* in London[76]—the play had not been played there for more than thirty years. He staged the play as a spectacular and realistic event with two hundred and fifty extras for the crowd scenes.

[72] See Ripley, 20-2.
[73] *Ibid.*, 26-7.
[74] *Ibid.*, 100-2.
[75] *Ibid.*, 50-73.
[76] *Ibid.*, 147-75.

Tree was very much influenced by the visually striking London staging of the Meiningen Court Company's German production in 1881. The Meiningen production did not privilege one role over the other but, for once, viewed the play as an ensemble drama. The Forum scene, with its powerful crowd, highlighted Antony's demagoguery and his interaction with the mob. This staging changed the course of the play's performance history, as it persuaded Beerbohm Tree that Antony, and not Brutus, was the real hero of *Julius Caesar*. Tree believed that Antony conveyed the whole glamour and strength of the play and might appeal to the audience much more than the delicate Brutus. Significantly, Tree chose the role of Antony for himself instead of playing Brutus or Cassius. In order to impose this new vision and present Antony in a favourable light, Tree did not hesitate to cut the text in a radical way—the Proscription scene was, for example, totally suppressed and, after the climax of the Forum scene, the rest of the play was drastically edited (notably the Quarrel scene) to rush to the end and return to Antony. The play was pared down to only three acts, which respectively introduced Antony (until Caesar's death), showed him devising his plot (in the extremely impressive sequence of the Forum) and revelled in his final triumph (during the battle). In the assassination scene, the hastiness with which they murdered Caesar emphasised the conspirators' sadistic brutality and savagery. Antony was now presented as the heroic champion and avenger of a great man. The fact that Caesar was convincingly played with high dignity and humanity only added strength to this interpretation.

This unambiguously favourable vision of Antony was not to last long. In 1919, William Bridges-Adams directed *Julius Caesar* in Stratford-upon-Avon almost unabridged (though the "Cinna the Poet" scene was still missing) and on a bare stage, devoid of extravagant effects.[77] With the Proscription scene restored, the part of Antony evolved considerably: the noble athlete suddenly became also a callous opportunist making debatable and equivocal decisions.

[77] *Ibid.*, 197-200.

This desire to present Antony as a Machiavellian politician through a full-text presentation went on during the twentieth century. However, Antony's status as the major, outstanding figure in the play did not change. It even found its extension in the new medium of cinema when the playtext was used as a screenplay from the start of the twentieth century onwards.

Frank Benson's 1898 and 1912 joint productions: Consuming the Orient

Frank Benson's production of *Antony and Cleopatra* (Stratford-upon-Avon, April 1898) was conceived and received as the explicit continuation of his production of *Julius Caesar*, which had opened earlier in the same week. A reviewer was prompt to notice that "the tragedy forms to some extent a sequel to *Julius Caesar*, in that the fortunes of Mark Antony are continued upon his being joined in the Roman triumvirate with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus."[78] This guiding of reception was notably encouraged by scholarly events and Benson's casting as Antony in both plays. To mark the opening of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a lecture on the play was organised. The *Birmingham Daily Post* stated that "a very interesting and scholarly address [upon the play] was given by the Rev. E. W. Lummis of West Bromwich. […] A brief sketch was first given of the play of 'Julius Caesar' and the early history of Mark Antony was traced."[79] The lecture also contextualized Cleopatra's former interests by referring to Pompey as the "master of the world" she once loved and to Caesar as the man who soon replaced him in her heart. In 1898, *Antony and Cleopatra* was thus presented as the sequel of two stories: spectators were to follow the fate of Antony after his becoming a triumvir, and that of Cleopatra from the moment Antony had taken Caesar's place as her lover. On stage, Benson played the older Antony with a "noble mien, an athletic build and classic features,"[80] with "gallant bearing […], bravery, recklessness and prodigality."[81]

[78] *Birmingham Daily Post*, Friday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record (Shakespeare Centre Library).
[79] *Birmingham Daily Post*, Tuesday, April 19th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[80] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Friday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[81] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Saturday, April 16th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.

Antony was not performed as a failed man, but as a grand hero almost to the end. Publicity pictures for the 1898 production[82] show Benson photographed as Antony, in profile, looking boldly and heroically ahead, and wearing the winner's laurel crown.

Continuity with *Julius Caesar*'s Antony was preferred to sharp contrast. Frank Benson's emphasis on the character's psychological coherence from one play to the next was perfectly perceived by reviewers: "He [Mr Benson] never forgot that he was playing the same Antony whose masterly eloquence we have heard over the dead body of Caesar, who shared the soldiers' fortunes at Philippi, and fought against famine."[83] The agenda behind the presentation of the two plays in sequence was, therefore, to provide the audience with an epic, elating feeling of aggrandizement rather than a sense of downfall. The two plays, performed together, became an imperialistic saga depicting the wonders and the grandeur of Rome, which the actor-director attempted to reconstruct as authentically as possible—Egyptologists were even consulted for the hieroglypics and processions of Egyptian gods that covered the walls.[84] The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* enthusiastically noted "the fidelity and vividness with which Mr Benson has conveyed the spirit of days of the Triumvirate. It is like seeing Plutarch acted. The conventions and usage of Roman society are faithfully copied. We get an idea of the luxury of patrician life and the discipline of camp."[85] In this staging of the plays as one long, continuous story, a heroic past was constructed, a past that reflected on the present of Britain's conquering imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century. However, no reviews openly acknowledged Britain's occupation of Egypt (which had started sixteen years before) or perceived Benson's productions as a comment on British colonial enterprise. In this context of political denial, the audience saw "Plutarch acted" as if the production had bypassed Shakespeare to take it back directly to ancient Rome, presenting this distant past without

[82] Available in the Stratford-upon-Avon theatre archive at the Shakespeare Centre.
[83] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Saturday, April 16th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[84] See *Birmingham Daily Post*, Friday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[85] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Friday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.

seeming to mediate, precisely because England's imperialistic present was thought to be so much like it. Barbara Hodgdon argues that "[j]ust as photographic images *taken* (an operative term) outside Europe and exhibited within its boundaries functioned as symbolic markers of colonial possession," the spectacular tableaux of the prefilmic stage could be envisaged as "another symptom of the need to conceive of and grasp the rest of the world as though it were an exhibition for Western pleasure and use."[86] This imperialistic Western vision appropriated (and consumed) the East, allowing the spectators to gaze at unveiled female bodies in a "safe" way, since they were presented in "a distant yet compelling culture".[87] In this context of Orientalist consumerism, which paved the way for the subsequent filmic endeavours around the Cleopatra story, downfall did not come from masculine Rome but from feminine Egypt. Antony was a true, Roman hero, but his doom was sealed by his meeting Cleopatra, who represented the tempting, idle and malevolent Other. This vision had been notably encouraged by the success of the 1889 English novel by H. Rider Haggard (otherwise famous for his novel *King Solomon's Mines* published in 1885) entitled *Cleopatra: Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis*. Set in the Ptolemaic era of Ancient Egyptian history, Rider Haggard's *Cleopatra* draws heavily upon the concepts of adventure and exoticism. In an ancient Egyptian tomb, three papyrus scrolls are discovered containing the secret history of Cleopatra. The story is narrated from the point of view of Harmachis – physician, priest of Isis, and rightful heir to Egypt's throne – and is written in biblical style. Harmachis eventually betrays everything holy for the love of Cleopatra, but is eventually betrayed by the queen. Cleopatra is portrayed as a powerful and extraordinary woman, but also as a decadent imposter and deceiver, a cunning thief and an efficient poisoner. Though Cleopatra gives its name to the title of the novel, she is not telling her own story. Revealingly, everything is

[86]. Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, 88.
[87] Antonia Lant, "The Curse of the Pharaoh, or How Cinema Contracted Egyptomania," *October* 59 (Winter 1992), 109.

framed by the male narrator Harmachis. The novel was adapted to the stage in 1890 in the United States,[88] and later, though uncredited, inspired the script of the 1917 film *Cleopatra* directed by J. Gordon Edwards, with Theda Bara starring as the Egyptian queen. By the end of the nineteenth century, Cleopatra had become the personification of vice itself, the breaker of every social convention and taboo. At the same time attractive, callous and bestial, Cleopatra seemed to offer Europeans, who lived in an increasingly regulated society, an escape into moral and social irresponsibility and fierce pleasure. A reviewer of Benson's production noted how Antony is "given over to voluptuous pleasure, enslaved by his passion for Cleopatra […] which is fast ruining his finer nature."[89] Another reviewer regretted that the end of the play should display Antony as such an "effeminate, dissipated, and luxurious creature" after having reminded us of the character "as the orator, the magnificent triumvir, and the heroic soldier."[90] Antony was thus seen as the same man he had been in *Julius Caesar*, and the fault for his demise lay exclusively in Cleopatra's lasciviousness and her lavish, depraved environment. The reviews noted the "splendid sets" and lauded "the skill of the painter, M. Lemaistre"[91]—the hall in Cleopatra's palace (with its golden throne), Pompey's galley, as well as the exterior and interior of the Monument, were all represented on stage, realism reaching its peak in a tableau that showed the sea fight between the Roman and Egyptian fleets. In these pictorial, exotic settings, Cleopatra and her waiting women were performed (and perceived) in an Orientalist tradition that Edward Said's 1978 *Orientalism* has taught us to identify as associating the Orient "otherness" with luxury, debauchery, infantilism, irrationality and laziness: "The strains of Oriental music are heard, incense floats in thee clouds, young girls strew flowers and slaves and eunuch prostrate themselves in

[88] The play was performed in Louisville in September 1890 (under the name of *Harmachio*) and at the Windsor Theatre in New York in March 1891 (under the name of *Cleopatra*).
[89] *Worcester Daily Times*, Saturday, April 16th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[90] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Saturday, April 16th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[91] *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, April 22nd, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.

adoration before Cleopatra".[92] The decadence of the Egyptian women was stressed in phrases that suggested savagery and fierceness ("the barbaric splendour of Egypt"). Cleopatra's sensuality was perceived as threatening and completely opposed to English codes ("She coaxes, she wheedles, she upbraids, she cajoles with the self-abandonment of a woman touched with the fire of a consuming love. In a word, she makes a most difficult character, and one most foreign to English ideas").[93] Hodgdon's remarks on Herbert Beerbohm Tree's 1906 stage production of *Antony and Cleopatra* can be applied easily to Benson's: "the vulgar modern spectacle as well as the 'noise'—the music that haunts Antony, even in Rome—are associated with Cleopatra" and dissociated from the high-culture sphere of men.[94] Such a dissociation was all the more strikingly effected in the context of Benson's sequelization, since the spectators had already seen Antony and Octavius portrayed in *Julius Caesar*'s exclusively Roman environment. The reviews of *Antony and Cleopatra* thus contributed to pushing the play "into the space of a feminized mass culture of dreams and delusions where it can be disavowed as not English and its heroine demonized".[95] The praises prompted by the spectacular reconstructions and exotic tableaux often coincided with moral judgements condemning the Egyptian women's promiscuousness and "Otherness". Cleopatra was viewed as a sinner, who could only be redeemed through her submission to a husband-like Antony ("Great as her faults are […] Cleopatra's devotion to Antony leads many people to forgive her errors").[96] Even the actress playing Cleopatra was not spared by the critics. The reviewers generally contrasted her lack of intensity and beauty with Frank Benson's classic features and energy as Mark Antony. Not only did the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* reviewer find that "her rendition fails in power and versatility",[97] but the reviewer for the *Birmingham Daily Post*

[92] *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Saturday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record
[93] *Ibid.*
[94] Hodgdon, 87.
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, April 22nd, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[97] *Ibid*.

complained: "It has been the custom to regard Cleopatra as a woman of remarkable physique, and, judged by this standard, it is to be feared that Mrs. Benson in the character will fall short of their expectations".[98] Cleopatra was played by Constance Featherstonhaugh, but in the reviews she was referred to as Mrs Benson (she had married Frank Benson in 1886). Through the casting, settings and reviews, spectators were thus encouraged to view Cleopatra as displaying the sensual show of the exotic woman, but also as a "wife" submitted to Antony from the start. The actress's marital status and lack of authority in her performance contributed to establishing Benson's Antony as the powerful, heroic male, confident in his physique, strength and vocal delivery.

Benson presented the two plays in succession again in April 1912 in Stratford-upon-Avon, in a lavish, extravagant style that borrowed once more from the Orientalist style and displayed women in exotic dancing shows ("What a charming spectacle was that in which dancing figures, prettily costumed, flitted across the stage, throwing themselves into all kinds of graceful attitudes")[99]. Dorothy Green, who played Cleopatra, was praised for her success "in the more sensuous passages," but was not seen as a figure of stage authority ("Dorothy Green's Cleopatra was scarcely an overpowering piece of acting").[100] Benson's joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* of 1912 again conveyed male supremacy and moral superiority, while relegating the shameful, sensuous connotations to Cleopatra's sphere. The reviews reveal how the audience was incited to view *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel through the continuous casting of the two prominent figures of the triumvirate, Antony (again played by Benson) and Octavius Caesar (John Howell). The shift in genres, from Tragedy to History, generally used in the reviews' descriptions ("This glorious *historical* play [*Antony and Cleopatra*], which may be regarded

[98] *Birmingham Daily Post*, Friday, April 15th, 1898. Stratford Theatre Record.
[99] *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, April 26th, 1912. Stratford Theatre Record.
[100] *Ibid.*

as a continuation of 'Julius Caesar' was […] witnessed by a full house")[101] participated in this view of the two plays as naturally following each other, like the different parts of *Henry IV* or *Henry VI* (although there, too, the texts are not quite as contiguous as their titles and modern staging history suggest).

The perception of Antony, however, contrasted with the reviews of the 1898 productions. Instead of noting that the character from the second play was played in the same way he was in the first, reviewers observed that Frank Benson played Antony in *Julius Caesar* in *anticipation* of Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*, by "conveying the idea of being a masker and a reveller" and by delivering his oration in the Forum "with power and passion."[102] The passionate, carousing Antony of the second play had somehow contaminated the serious and glorious politician of the first play. Nonetheless, psychological coherence was still maintained across the two plays. The productions' Octavius also contributed to the sense of intertextual coherence. His status as a conquering hero seems to have been emphasised, as is evident from the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* review, which explains: "[In *Julius Caesar*,] Shakespeare shows us the precocious pupil of the late Julius already opposing Mark Antony at Philippi, and, what is more, getting his own way."[103] The sequel effect was constructed through the reviewers' own anticipation of the next play in the "series." Appraisal for the production of *Julius Caesar* ended, for instance, with "To-morrow (Tuesday), 'Antony and Cleopatra' will be given," thus creating the sense of a story to be continued. The sequel effect tended, in fact, to reinforce its own existence: the actor-manager's intentions, which were evident in reminders in the designs or in the roles' continuous characterisation, were reported by the theater reviewers, which in turn generated expectations among the spectators who attended *Antony* as the second half of a two-part show.

[101] *Ibid.* Our emphasis.
[102] *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Monday, April 22nd, 1912. Stratford Theatre Record.
[103] *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, Friday, April 26th, 1912. Stratford Theatre Record.

While Benson staged *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in the theater, the first silent films of these plays were also being produced. Striking, during these early days of cinema, is the fact that screen adaptations of *Antony and Cleopatra* were always released a few months after adaptations of *Julius Caesar*, in an attempt to capitalize on the fame and emotional appeal of the first film to secure the success of the second. In 1908, American director J. Stuart Blackton directed a film of *Julius Caesar* with Maurice Costello as Antony, which was very soon followed by his adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* (in which Costello reprised his role as Antony). In 1911, Frank Benson himself filmed *Julius Caesar* and starred as Antony. His film was immediately followed by Charles L. Gaskill's 1912 adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* (which followed a script by Victorien Sardou that had first been performed in France in 1890, with Sarah Bernhardt as Cleopatra).[104] *Antony and Cleopatra* worked as a film sequel to *Julius Caesar* in order to keep audience coming back to cinema theatres to experience the continuation of the story, and "generally make cinema-going a habit".[105] Benson's stage productions thus took part in a trend that, whether in the theater or in the cinema, presented *Antony and Cleopatra* as a "natural" successor to *Julius Caesar*, capitalizing upon the audience's knowledge and recollection of the first installment.

The BBC 1963 *Spread of the Eagle*: Appropriating Roman grandeur

A captive audience is also what television longs for when it produces and broadcasts a series. 1963 was the year of *The Spread of the Eagle* on the BBC, a series which used Shakespeare's text and turned three plays, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* into nine black-and-white episodes of fifty minutes, broadcast on a weekly basis. This drive to broadcast the Roman plays as a saga may have been spurred by the release, in

[104] Before inspiring the screenplay of Gaskill's 1912 film, Victorien Sardou's French play *Cléopâtre* was translated into English and first performed in the United States at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, with Fanny Davenport as Cleopatra..
[105] Jess-Cooke, *Film Sequels*, 9.

the same year, of Joseph L. Mankiewicz's Roman epic *Cleopatra*, which departed from tradition in not using Shakespeare's text but conflating the plots of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* into one single story, while retaining strong Shakespearean overtones.

In the BBC's *Spread of the Eagle* series, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were played in sequence for the first time since Benson's stage productions at the turn of the twentieth century. Directed by Peter Dews, *The Spread of the Eagle* followed another TV miniseries, the fifteen-part *The Age of Kings* (BBC, 1960), which had dramatized Shakespeare's history plays. The massive TV audience far outnumbered the numbers of spectators who had attended the Roman plays in the history of British theater, which had Laurence Kitchin comment in the 1965 *Shakespeare Survey* that "around [the scholars and critics of Shakespeare] is building up the pressure of a public, including scholars of the future, which draws its assumptions about Shakespeare from what happens on the screen."[106] If the serial version of the history plays attracted an average viewing audience of three million, its successor based on the Roman plays gathered four million viewers, not including audiences in the USA and elsewhere, so that director Peter Dews was described as "the most influential interpreter of Shakespeare in the English-speaking world."[107] The three Roman plays were presented in order of real-life historical events (and not in the order of their compositions), and were presented in nine installments (through May and June 1963), giving the impression that the plays had been conceived by Shakespeare himself as a mini-series. However, the producers were also conscious that the three plays provided fewer opportunities for continuity than *The Age of Kings*, since the history plays cover less than a century while the Roman plays span five, with no obvious links between *Coriolanus*, the events of which take place around 490 B.C., and the two other tragedies. This lack of continuity was compensated for through strong visual connections. Thus, for example, Rome's Forum was filmed under

[106] See Laurence Kitchin, "Shakespeare on the Screen," *Shakespeare Survey* 18 (1965), 70.
[107] *Ibid.*

construction in *Coriolanus* and completed during *Julius Caesar*. The same actors also played the triumvirs in *Julius Caesar* and in *Antony and Cleopatra*.[108]

Broadcast at a time when the British Empire was nearing its end through the colonial disengagement in Africa, the series used the national literary canon to appropriate the grandeur of the Roman Empire, while conveying a sense of epic scale through the sequelization of three plays. The stress was on the monumental, and the very title of the series evoked both imperialism and conquest through the eagle imagery. Director Peter Dews had stated that his aim was "to show great men in great places,"[109] insisting, just as Benson had done, on a heroic and positive vision of the Roman Empire. Millions of TV spectators were led to feel compassion for a dignified and honourable Antony through the sheer amount of screen time allotted to him and the way they followed his progressive downfall from one episode to the next. Creating a saga out of Shakespeare's plays helped the process of identification and generated empathy for the hero who, though fallen, still represented noble and heroic values. It guided audiences' responses and secured their regular viewing of the show for the duration of nine weeks. In this repetition, the producers took full advantage of the sequel's inherent potential for conservative stabilisation and consolidation of both aesthetics and ideology: the values of heroism and imperialism were reaffirmed across storylines, blurring the boundaries between the plays.[110]

The 1972 Roman series: Cleopatra lost in maleness

1972 was a beacon year in the sequelization of Shakespeare's Roman plays. On the British stage, Trevor Nunn directed a Roman cycle for the Royal Shakespeare Company

[108] Keith Michell played Antony, Brian Oulton played Lepidus and David William played Octavius Caesar.
[109] See the article on *The Spread of the Eagle* on the Screenonline (British Film Institute) website. Consulted on January 30th, 2007 at the address <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/466545/index.html>.
[110] Just three years after Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* and the BBC *Spread of the Eagle*, John Neville and Michael Rudman will follow the trend by directing joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1966-7 at the Nottingham Playhouse company, with Terence Knapp as Octavius, John Turner as Antony and Barbara Jefford as Cleopatra. See *Plays and Players* 14 (1966), 3.

(including *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus*), while on the American stage Michael Khan directed joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in Stratford (Connecticut). On the big screen, Charlton Heston's film of *Antony and Cleopatra* was released, with echoes of Heston's part as Antony in Stuart Burge's earlier 1970 *Julius Caesar*. These stage and film ventures arose in a period marked by the dire consequences of national imperialisms and political ambitions—the intensifying Troubles in Ireland leading to the Bloody Sunday carnage in January 1972, and, in the USA, mounting political disenchantment in the wake of the Watergate scandal in June as well as increasing numbers of demonstrations against the interminable war in Vietnam. The 1972 joint productions may be viewed as a denunciation of war politics, but also as a longing for some restoration of order and harmony, stressing, as they did, logical continuities and values of national heroism. The productions also reflected the growing fascination with Egyptian treasures: the astonishing Tutankhamun exhibition had opened in March 1972 at the British Museum in London, exciting curiosity for the Egyptian empire but also recalling Britain's own imperialism: Howard Carter had discovered and plundered Tutankhamun tomb fifty years before, in the year when Egypt ceased to be under British protectorate.

Recalling the 1963 television venture of *The Spread of the Eagle*, the Royal Shakespeare Company presented all the Roman plays in sequence, again not in the order of their composition by Shakespeare but in that of their place in history. *Coriolanus* came first in the season, soon followed by *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and, last, *Titus Andronicus*. For the stagings of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the actors playing the triumvirs reprised their parts in the second play. In both plays, Richard Johnson was Antony; Corin Redgrave, Octavius Caesar; and Raymond Westwell, Lepidus. This gave Octavius the opportunity to prove cold and powerful from *Julius Caesar* onwards, while Antony could

show how he matured (his black beard in *Julius Caesar* became grizzled in *Antony and Cleopatra*).

Jean Fuzier, Jean-Marie Maguin and François Maguin, in their review of the productions for *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, considered that the fact that actors carried on their own parts into the next play "underlined the continuity of history from the death of Caesar to the quarrels amongst his successors" but also guaranteed that Antony "won our sympathies" from the start and "was to hold us fascinated to his last words in *Antony and Cleopatra*."[111] Again, the consequences of sequelization can be felt in the creation of a sense of continuity, as if history was progressing in a linear and logical way from *Julius Caesar* to *Antony and Cleopatra*, but also in the building-up of positive emotions towards an Antony presented as noble, honest and trustworthy. This Antony even wept sincerely by the corpse of Caesar, before giving a passionate, earnest speech to the Roman people assembled in the Forum. In the 1972 *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Robert Speaight noticed how this vision of a sincere and generous Antony was carried on into *Antony and Cleopatra*: "This Antony had a careless grandeur and irresistible largesse; you realized that he was beaten by Octavius because Octavius was a political animal and Antony was not—or was not any longer."[112] The second play, therefore, played on a contrast between a consummate politician and a simple man (an "*homme moyen sensual*" in Speaight's own expression) who had lost all Machiavellian ability.[113]

When looking at the various press reviews of the two productions (available at the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon), what is striking today is to see how much the characters' psychological evolution from one play to the next was the major concern of the reviewers, as if psychological role coherence across the plays was the standard according to

[111] Jean Fuzier, Jean-Marie Maguin and François Maguin. « The Romans at Stratford: A Survey of the 1972 RSC Productions of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus Andronicus*," *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 3 (Avril 1973), 42.
[112] Robert Speaight, "Shakespeare in Britain—The Stratford Season," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23.4 (Fall 1972), 386.
[113] *Ibid.*

which the success of the Roman series could be assessed. For the *Times*, "it was interesting [...] to see Richard Johnson's golden rabble-rouser from *Julius Caesar* decline into decadent middle age."[114] The *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, on the other hand, failed to see this natural development: "If we saw in [Johnson's] Antony in 'Julius Caesar' a great and noble spirit combined with a courageous and subtle politician, we saw last night an illogical development of the same man."[115] Octavius, too, was the focus of the reviewers. For the *Financial Times*, "As Octavius, Corin Redgrave has not advanced far beyond the portrait he gave us in Julius Caesar."[116] But the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* disagreed: "Corin Redgrave's Octavius whom we also glimpsed in 'Julius Caesar' is an extension of the strutting peacock we saw at that time. But Octavius has also grown older—even if Antony still refers to him as a boy—and the cold, political brain is subtly intimated by Mr Redgrave."[117] In every case, reviewers seemed to believe that Shakespeare originally wrote an Antony and an Octavius who, though they age, maintain a certain level of psychological coherence from one play to the next.

Paradoxically, reviewers thus assessed the Roman cycle by standards that the concept of a series itself had led to create. It was precisely because the two plays were conceived as part of a consistent chronicle that spectators were encouraged (maybe even entitled) to expect psychological continuity. If this continuity failed to be noticed, expectations were frustrated and the productions were criticized. Through his choice of mounting the Roman plays as a cycle, Trevor Nunn, who had been appointed artistic director of the RSC four years before—a position he held until 1986—was somehow bound to insist on the characters' personal history and to favour a psychological and individualising approach. To an audience that demanded logical evolution, and was vital to the financial viability of a whole RSC cycle, deconstructing

[114] Charles Lewsen, "Antony and Cleopatra, Stratford-on-Avon," *Times*, 16 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 118.
[115] David Isaacs, "Antony makes it Johnson's year at Stratford," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 16 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 117.
[116] B.A. Young, "Antony and Cleopatra," *Financial Times*, 16 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 117.
[117] David Isaacs, "Antony makes it Johnson's year at Stratford," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 30 May 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 14.

or destabilizing coherence would have gone against the spirit of a series that tried to justify its very existence through links that were already tenuous. In an economic context that required a certain return on investment, especially in view of the RSC's need to finance the building of a brand new stage in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, it became impossible to focus on the various discrepancies that arise when *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are compared. Since the two plays are closer to each other than any of the other Roman plays, they were used to justify the whole four-play "saga" (a word that came back in many press reviews of the cycle),[118] in productions that emphasised consistency rather than discontinuity from one play to the next. Even the stage blocking helped to generate ideas of symmetry and parallelism between the two plays. The positions of the actors on the stage were extremely similar in the Proscription scene of *Julius Caesar* (4.1) and in the scene marking the reconciliation between Antony and Octavius in *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.2): a triangular layout was privileged, with Lepidus consistently placed between Antony and Octavius to mark his symbolic status as middle man between the two dominant men. The same dramatic configuration (which implied the same political tensions and power struggles) could thus be witnessed by the spectators in both plays.

The ending of *Julius Caesar* was also used as an opportunity to generate links. Peter Thomson, who reviewed all the series for *Shakespeare Survey*, remarked how the finale of Nunn's *Julius Caesar* emphasised the antagonism between the two future rivals, Antony and Octavius: "It was, perhaps, as a contrast to Octavius' formality that Antony sat by Brutus' corpse to speak his elegy. The opposition was physically vivid. A swarthy, black-bearded, black-haired Antony in uneasy alliance with a blond, pink-skinned, clean-shaven Octavius. We were intended to look for a sequel."[119] Press reviewers actually identified suspense as the

[118] See, for instance, "Cleopatra Beguiles Stratford Audience," *Gloucester Echo*, 16 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 120

[119] Peter Thomson, "No Rome of Safety: The Royal Shakespeare Season 1972 Reviewed," *Shakespeare Survey* 26 (1973), 146.

best feature of the *Julius Caesar* production. For David Isaac, "the most promising aspect of this production [...] is in terms of the next 'Roman' production, *Antony and Cleopatra*. Already in *Julius Caesar*, there is a hint of the uneasy relationship between Johnson's Antony and Corin Redgrave's Octavius."[120] Nunn's Roman cycle was thus based on the standard rule of TV serials: the quality of an episode as a whole does not matter so long as its ending works like a cliff-hanger and makes the spectators want to watch the next one.

To put the stress on stability and logical evolution, Nunn relied not only on acting continuity but also on the creation of a political journey that, according to him, unites the Roman plays. In an interview for *Plays and Players*, Nunn mentioned that the plays presented for him the "different explorations of the requirements of a system of good government."[121] In that reflection on politics, he denied that he was trying to imply that Shakespeare had written the Roman plays as a coherent whole. However, he suggested that "it's interesting for an audience to be able to see Shakespeare return on four separate occasions in his writing lifetime, to a society which clearly fascinated him. […] Unquestionably, two plays do go together, even though each is complete in itself—*Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* where Shakespeare deliberately refers to Brutus and Cassius, quite unnecessarily."[122] The links that Nunn perceived between *Julus Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* somehow became the justification to stage the four Roman plays during a single theatrical season.

Peter Thompson noted that Nunn's agenda was to show the growth from small tribe (*Coriolanus*), to Republic (*Julius Caesar*), to Empire (*Antony and Cleopatra*), and to a decadence that is the prelude to Gothic conquest (*Titus Andronicus*), an endeavour which, for Thompson, is nothing but an "interpretative distortion."[123] In 2005, however, Barbara L.

[120] David Isaacs, "RSC's noblest Roman so far," *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 16 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 117.
[121] Margaret Tierney, "Trevor Nunn and Christopher Morley talk to Margaret Tierney," *Plays and Players* 19.12.228 (September 1972), 26.
[122] *Ibid*.
[123] Thompson, 141.

Parker's article "From Monarchy to Tyranny" has adopted Nunn's viewpoint. Although she does not use Nunn's tetralogy as an illustration, Parker proposes to consider the works "in historical rather than compositional sequence," which leads her to see them as collectively detailing "a constitutional decline closely resembling that defined in Plato's *Republic*."[124] The four Roman plays are believed to dramatize the movements from oligarchy to democracy (in *Coriolanus*), from democracy to tyranny (in *Julius Caesar*), from tyranny to imperial supremacy over the world (in *Antony and Cleopatra*) and, finally, from imperialism to a decadent, headless state (in *Titus Andronicus*). Parker's stance can be found in Nunn's cycle, which was constructed as a highly political one, with chaos leading to order leading back to chaos; the idea of cyclical continuity was put forward through these natural changes in regimes. But paradoxically, what was meant to please audiences by providing logical links also twisted the plays and affected their effectiveness as individual dramas. In fact, the attempt to show the growth and flourishing of a civilisation before its degeneration was at the root of what was perceived to be the slow rhythm of *Antony and Cleopatra*. In the *Spectator*'s review of *Antony*, the "grand design" of the Roman cycle was thought to generate boredom, since the spectators were "lengthily distracted from the relationship of the two central figures—which is, after all, where the important drama resides, in the desperate intensity of their personal tragedy rather than in the bold sweep of history."[125] To justify sequelization, Nunn felt compelled to linger more than usual on the political scenes involving Antony, Lepidus and Octavius, so as to build up connections with the previous play and create the

[124] Barbara L. Parker, "From Monarchy to Tyranny: *Julius Caesar* Among Shakespeare's Roman Works," in *Julius Caesar, New Critical Essays*, ed. Horst Zander (New York, London: Routledge, 2005), 111. Hugh M. Richmond has even suggested that "in a strictly chronological sense *Cymbeline* proves to be the unexpected climax of a historical Roman trilogy, covering the rise and decline of Octavius Caesar, which includes *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*." See Hugh M. Richmond, "The Resurrection of an Expired Form: Henry VIII as Sequel to Richard III," *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* (*Shakespeare's English Histories: a quest for form*) 133 (1996), 209. See also Richmond, "Shakespeare's Roman Trilogy: the Climax in Cymbeline," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 5 (April 1972), 129-39.

[125] Kenneth Hurren, "Two on the Nile," *Spectator*, 19 August 1972. Stratford Theatre Record, 123.

feeling of a true saga. As a consequence, his relationship with Cleopatra was no longer felt by some reviewers to be the central point in the drama.

Possibly in order to compensate for Cleopatra's lack of centrality in this whole Roman cycle, the Egyptian queen was played by Janet Suzman (who was married to Trevor Nunn at the time) as anything but a docile character. Suzman stressed the queen's impulsive voluptuousness and great strength. She constructed a free, histrionic, buoyant, witty and gender-bending character whom the reviewers were prompt to associate with the feminist movements of the time ("Janet Suzman has given her a touch of masculinity: she is an Egyptian Elizabeth I")[126]. However, this "tempestuous, gypsy tomboy" made reviewers perceive the play more as the taming of a sexually-wild "shrew" who "flung herself around on the place cushions in carefree and distinctly un-regal attitudes",[127] and less as the drama of a politically strong woman. Though Suzman's view of the character was definitely a political one (the actress having stated her "contention that Cleopatra is more queen than lover" and that "her dynastic claim is intrinsic to her"),[128] the reviewers were not convinced. Suzman's Cleopatra had to wait until the production's finale to be considered as a powerful queen ("Only in her dying did the Suzman Cleopatra display the regal qualities that one is perhaps entitled to expect from Cleopatra").[129] On the rare occasions her strength was acknowledged, it was viewed as a defect preventing the audience from identifying with her ("Miss Suzman is, if anything, too strong a personality to arouse pity as well as admiration").[130] It was as though Nunn's male-centred, Roman saga contributed to twisting the political perception of the Egyptian queen as a character that neither threatened the Romans politically nor deeply stirred our sensibilities. In the title of the *Daily Express*' review, head-lined as "Suzman's Cleo

[126] B.A. Young, "Antony and Cleopatra," *The Financial Times*, August 16th, 1972. Stratford Theatre Record.
[127] *Gloucester Citizen*, August 16th, 1972. Stratford Theatre Record.
[128] *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Barry Gaines, theatre commentary by Janet Suzman (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 2001), 117.
[129] *Ibid*.
[130] Peter Lewis, 'Marvellous… but I miss the magic', *Theatre Records*, Series A: vol. 83, 119.

Conquers All," what Cleopatra conquered, in the reviewer's opinion, was certainly not political power, but the heart of a man, as she brought a "capricious sensuality to the part that would make any officer and gentleman happy to throw his career to the winds"[131]. The sexual edge to Suzman's performance, and the moments of gender-bending it implied, were blunted by the guiding of audience expectations: Cleopatra was sexually wild only in an enticing, challenging way for the men around her. Her sensuality was not viewed in dangerous terms, but was framed by male political dealings, just as the play itself was framed by male-driven shows—*Julius Caesar* and *Titus Andronicus*.

If Nunn's production blunted the political stakes of Cleopatra's sexuality, the question of race was also broached equivocally. In Shakespeare's play, Carol Rutter claims, Cleopatra appears as the dark threat to the Roman males who try to protect their whiteness from being tainted by miscegenation and foreign influences; but, through her unexplored and mysterious "darkness", she also symbolises the object that will make the Romans prove masculine and sexually conquering.[132] The Egyptian world of Nunn's production was filled with attendants, musicians and messengers that were tawny or black, except for Cleopatra, who was played by a white actress.[133] This "dark" surrounding created a racially threatening Egypt, but the Egyptian queen herself was denied the racial embodiment of a political threat. Casting a white Cleopatra, but qualifying her whiteness through heavy body make-up (which may have emphasised her white skin even more, instead of concealing it), and by framing her with black attendants, made the character oscillate constantly between races, reflecting as well as maintaining the male anxieties that drive the Romans simultaneously towards and away from her.

Suzman's whiteness was also qualified by her non-European origins. Born in South Africa to a Jewish family renowned for their anti-apartheid activism, and having only moved

[131] *Daily Express*, August 16th, 1972. Stratford Theatre Record.
[132] For a discussion of these masculine tensions, see Rutter's reading of Richard Dyer's *White*, 67.
[133] *Ibid.*, 59.

to London at the age of 20, Suzman brought with her strong echoes of "otherness", as well as the idea of racial separation. This "otherness" were certainly perceived, but more in sexual than racial terms. One reviewer saw it as the promise of an added, exotic thrill ("it did seem likely that Janet Suzman, the South African actress employed in the role by the RSC, would be able to break through the barrier of innate gentility that has separated so many of our girls from the essence of the character")… only to emphasise the actress' failure at creating it ("Miss Suzman does not quite make it").[134] Female "otherness" and "African-ness" was thus associated with both wildness and disappointment. Clearly opposing the cold sternness of Rome to the Egyptian exotic warmth and sensuality, the production settings and props were inspired by the Tutankhamun lavish exhibition,[135] while inviting comparisons with film epics shot in the Orientalist tradition ("The full MGM spectacle is deployed on the cleverly designed stage")[136]—comparisons which again fell short of acknowledging the racial implications. The production program had attempted to create the expectations of a Cleopatra as "powerfully racially Other"[137] ("hated in Rome, and feared as the queen of the East"), whose conflict with Rome was "the ultimate contest […] between West and East".[138] However, in spite of this guiding light and the unprecedented number of black actors occupying the space of the RSC stage, the reviews of the 1972 production failed to recognize any discourse about race. It was as though denying the part of Cleopatra to a black actress and having black actors only play supporting roles or extras had only reinforced racial stereotypes and made it impossible for any progressive standpoint to arise from the performance.[139] As Nunn's Roman cycle drowned Antony's affair with an Egyptian woman into the bigger picture of the political hostilities between white men, crucial issues of race were also evaded.

[134] Kenneth Hurren, 'Two on the Nile', *Spectator*, August 19th, 1972. Stratford Theatre Record.
[135] For an analysis of the Tutankhamun's influence on Nunn's production, see Rutter, 78-9.
[136] Peter Lewis, 'Marvellous… but I miss the magic', *Theatre Records*, Series A: vol. 83, p. 119.
[137] Rutter, 80.
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] For a thorough exploration of the racial issues in Nunn's 1972 production, see Rutter, 80-1.

1972 saw another set of productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in sequence, this time on the other side of the Atlantic, in Stratford, Connecticut. Spectators were invited to view the two plays as interdependent by using the same actors to play the characters common to both plays, as well as the same basic set (described by Graham D. Harley as "a fairly steep ramp backed by four high walls which shifted into various combinations").[140] But in this case, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were staged without being framed by *Coriolanus* and *Titus*. There was, therefore, no need to find as many coherent links between the two productions to justify a whole cycle of Roman plays. Director Michael Khan was freer than Trevor Nunn to emphasise the unsettling ironies that can arise when the two plays are performed together.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Khan did not linger on the political scenes in Rome as Nunn had done in order to generate as many reminders as possible. This choice had an impact on the conception of Antony, who no longer appeared as the pivotal link between the plays or as a noble, almost spotless hero. Graham D. Harley notes that "the effect of seeing the two plays together was to diminish rather than aggrandize Antony's character […]. It emphasized just how little he does in the early and late parts of *Julius Caesar*, how much he changes from the neophyte politico in that play to the power-sated bossman we see in *A&C*, and just how ridiculous is his incompetent attempt at suicide."[141] What Harley does not acknowledge is that it is not so much the fact of "seeing the two plays together" which is the cause of this downsizing of Antony. Benson's and Nunn's productions, as well as BBC's *The Spread of the Eagle*, had showed that sequelization could certainly uphold the heroic status of Antony. What was typical of Khan's productions was the fact that parallel actions were staged with an ironic twist from one play to the next. For instance, Antony's attempt at suicide became all

[140] Graham D. Harley, "The 1972 Season at Stratford, Connecticut," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23.4 (Fall 1972), 395.
[141] *Ibid.*

the more ridiculous since it was staged in exactly the same area where Brutus and Cassius had so rapidly and efficiently managed to kill themselves.

The same unromantic interpretation prevailed in every stage action, even at Antony's final death. Harley commented that "when a huge Roman banner descended in front of Cleopatra's monument to hide his dead body, it seemed the final ignominy: all that magnificent human potential blotted out by a blank national emblem".[142] Khan thus used the two plays in sequence to stress the vanity of the characters and the futility of their existence: seeing Antony's oratorical and political abilities in *Julius Caesar* only served to insist on feelings of hopelessness and waste in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Nevertheless, this debunking of Antony did not imply the elevation of Cleopatra, apparently because of the actress' poor acting skills and inability to portray the Egyptian queen. Salome Jens was not spared by Harley's review: "[n]ot very much of anything", "stale", "outclassed by the part", she was even denied the ability "to speak at all", before being compared, in her "make-up and coiffure" to Elizabeth Taylor (according to Harley, "the last person to be imitated in this part").[143] While the unromantic stance on the play could have given rise to a more politically-aware performance of the queen, the production (or the reception of it) avoided to give this possibility a voice (almost literally, as the actress was said to be "breathing [the lines] *sotto voce* or 'swallowing them").[144] Instead, what was privileged was a re-visitation of the myth created by another actress (Taylor), in which this Cleopatra seemed to lose any specific identity or authority.

Screen links: Charlton Heston's Antony in the 1970 *Julius Caesar* and the 1972 *Antony and Cleopatra*

[142] *Ibid.*, 396.
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] *Ibid.*

The 1972 double drive to produce the plays in sequence on stage found powerful echoes in the filmic endeavours at the start of the seventies, which saw the consecutive release of Stuart Burge's 1970 *Julius Caesar* and Charlton Heston's 1972 *Antony and Cleopatra*. Both films use Shakespeare's text and feature the same actor (Charlton Heston) as Antony. During the shooting of Burge's *Julius Caesar*, Heston started to imagine himself in the part of Antony again, but this time in a film of *Antony and Cleopatra* which he wanted to control and direct very soon after *Julius Caesar*.[145] To create links between Burge's *Caesar* and his own subsequent film, Heston suggested ideas of *mise-en-scène* that were to find their way into the final film. In his autobiography, he gives an insight into his influence on the portrayal of the proscription scene in Burge's *Caesar*:

> I'd persuaded them that the scene after Caesar's murder where Antony and Octavius tick off a list of which of his assassins must be killed should be set in a Roman bath. It played with chilling detachment, the two men lounging naked and sweating, wreathed in steam, checking off names on a hit list while nubile slave girls filled their wine cups. A meeting of Mafia capos, really, with Antony as godfather.[146]

In a 1970 article detailing the shooting of Burge's *Caesar*, Shamini Tiruchelvam notes how this directorial decision is connected with Heston's performance of Antony as already belonging to the next film he had in mind:

> No more for Heston the heart-riven innocent he played for Antony in 1950 [in David Bradley's independent film]. Here is beginning the sensual opportunist of *Antony and Cleopatra*. So Heston plans a voluptuous nude bath-scene to be played with Richard Chamberlain (Octavius), David Dodimead (Lepidus) and slave girl, in which they decide to keep the implications heterosexual.[147]

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[145] See Bruce Crowther, *Charlton Heston, the Epic Presence* (London: Columbus Books, 1986), 123. Heston had been very disappointed by some of the actors in Burge's *Julius Caesar* and by the costume designer. See also Heston's autobiography, *In the Arena* (London: Harpers & Collins, 1995), 420, 428: "Do another Shakespeare, but a harder, much better play than Caesar. Why not film *Antony and Cleopatra*? I'd been hooked on the play since high school, seen it, acted in it; I'd worked on it even longer than on Caesar, where Antony's also a driving force."

[146] Charlton Heston, *In the Arena, the Autobiography* (London: Harpers & Collins, 1995), 421-2.

[147] Shamini Tiruchelvam, "Encounter on the Field of Philippi," *Daily Telegraph Magazine* 277, 6 February 1970, 20.

Heston already plays in *Julius Caesar* the kind of lascivious, carnal and epicurean Antony he imagines for his film of *Antony and Cleopatra*. In his own film, Heston invites us to discover Antony in the arms of Cleopatra: "We open focus very tightly on a woman's hand holding a makeup pot, dipping a small brush into it as we pull back to reveal Cleopatra about to paint the lips of the Emperor Antony sweating in postcoital and half-drunken slumber."[148]

This Cleopatra (played by Hildegard Neil) evokes "otherness" in the same way as Janet Suzman had on stage—both actresses were born in South Africa (coincidently in the same year, 1939). Heston explains how Neil was chosen for the part: "I liked one of the tests very much: a South African actress, Hildegard Neil, whom I'd seen a month or so earlier as Lady Macbeth. She had the right kind of beauty, with a classical face and a contralto voice. The camera liked her, I'd found her directable in the scenes we did".[149] The choice of Neil by Heston reveals the search for a normative form of female beauty, which has to be "classical" and, therefore, white—a position which reflects Lucy Hughes-Hallet's claim that Cleopatra has been whitewashed for centuries, and depicted by western artists "as a beauty of their own times and places".[150] But Heston's discovery of Neil also betrays a "darker," more dangerous edge—conveyed by the South African origins, the association with Lady Macbeth, and the "masculine" deep vocal range. Cleopatra has to be "other" but still tameable and "directable" by Heston, as both Antony and the film director, all the more so since this Antony brings the glorious echoes of his political and military victories from the earlier film of *Julius Caesar*.

Heston's attempt to create a coherent vision of his character from the first film onwards was probably done to persuade the producers of Burge's *Julius Caesar* to back up his project of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Heston's autobiography reveals how investors first considered Heston's venture to film *Antony* in a favourable light because they considered that a sequel

[148] Heston, 441.
[149] *Ibid.*, 441.
[150] Lucy Hughes-Hallet, *Cleopatra: Queen, Lover, Legend* (London: Pimlico, 2006), 254.

was less risky and more profitable, before withdrawing from the project as soon as Burge's *Caesar* did not reach its expected public:

> In London, I got very good reactions to my *Antony* script. Peter Snell was high on it, and Commonwealth United, who'd financed *Caesar*, were willing to plunge in again on *Antony and Cleopatra*.'[151] [But] when *Julius Caesar*, which opened quite promisingly, proved to have no legs, Warners and Universal lost interest.[152]

Heston had, therefore, to raise money independently and only managed to obtain distributors in Spain and in Japan, with a limited release in the United Kingdom.[153] Although it was not largely distributed, the film gained fame for featuring Heston as its star and recycling spectacular images from William Wyler's 1959 *Ben Hur* to depict the battle of Actium in a realistic and epic way.[154] Heston's film was presented in various festivals and created a strong echo with Stuart Burge's *Julius Caesar* released two years before with Heston as Antony. This echo may well have further influenced theater directors to tackle the two plays in successive productions, encouraging them to cast the same actors in the same roles. The strong economic reasons to try to systematically exploit the "ghosting" effect explain why the film producers of Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1963) first tried to hire Marlon Brando (instead of Richard Burton) to play Mark Antony, since he had played the part ten years before in Mankiewicz's cinematic adaptation of *Julius Caesar* (1953). This proved impossible since Brando was shooting Lewis Milestone's 1962 *Mutiny on the Bounty*,[155] but this attempt shows that the producers thought that Brando would have brought legitimacy, continuity and, most of all, familiarity to the part.

The 1996-7 Houston's Alley Theater joint productions: Boldness contained?

[151] *Ibid.*, 432.
[152] *Ibid.*, 435.
[153] See Heston, 445.
[154] See Heston, 449: "MGM […] had agreed as a personal favor to let me buy a few hundred feet of outtakes of the war galleys in action in *Ben Hur* to enhance our footage for the battle of Actium."
[155] Pascal Mérigeau, *Mankiewicz* (Paris: Denoël, 1993), 243.

Even when grouped productions wish to insist on ironies and discrepancies, it is rare for them not resort to continuous casting. The 1996-7 successive productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, put on in collaboration with Houston's Alley Theater (Texas) and London's Moving Theatre Company, were no exception to the "rule". Corin Redgrave directed *Julius Caesar*, and his sister, Vanessa Redgrave, directed *Antony and Cleopatra*. David Harewood played Antony in both plays, while Vanessa Redgrave acted as Portia in *Julius Caesar* before becoming Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The two productions presented the two plays as a single story sharing the same seventeenth-century look costumes and the same set, on which a large painted banner proclaimed "Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem." The following poem by Sir Walter Raleigh was used to end both productions:

> What is our life? a play of passion,
> Our mirth the music of division;
> Our mothers' wombs the tiring-houses be
> Where we are dressed for this short comedy;
> Heaven the judicious, sharp spectator is
> That sits and marks still who does act amiss;
> Our graves that hide us from the searching sun
> Are like drawn curtains when the play is done:
> Thus march we, playing, to our latest rest,
> Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.[156]

The performances thus emphasised humour and play-acting and saw both playtexts as comical metadramas. On an upstage wall, revolutionary-like graffiti read *Non timeo sed timiditatem* ("I am timid about nothing but becoming timid"). In *Julius Caesar*, this slogan encouraged the citizens to rebel against tyranny, and in *Antony and Cleopatra* it highlighted the mere theatricality of the characters. According to Michael Greenwald, both plays were in fact merged in their disclosure of the human beings behind the "mythic giants," "especially without the royal robes, crowns, sceptres and preconceptions with which we adorn them."[157]

[156] Paul A. Parrish, *Celebration: Introduction to Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1977), 341.
[157] Michael L. Greenwald, "'An Enterprise of Great Pitch and Moment': *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Alley Theatre, 1996," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.1 (Spring 1997), 87.

The *mises-en-scène* thus created explicit parallelisms: Julius Caesar was presented in his underwear at home with Calphurnia before leaving for the Senate; on Octavius's orders, Cleopatra was stripped of her royal attire, right down to her corset and underwear. The two productions also emphasized the role of Chorus-like characters offering a distanced view of the events. In *Julius Caesar*, a scholar, who could be interpreted as symbolizing reason, concluded the first half of the play by mumbling Latin phrases in front of the huge library which had dominated the upper portion of the stage during the first three acts of the production. The books and bookcases were then burnt by the revolutionary mob spurred to action by Antony's Forum speech, and replaced by walls covered in graffiti. This reference to the destruction of culture and knowledge through political machinations appeared again at the very beginning of *Antony and Cleopatra*. In a tableau that preceded the performance proper, bunches of leaves from the books were scattered all over the floor. The wind blew the leaves away, as if in oblivion, and an old blind man started inspecting the ruins. This man had played the Soothsayer in *Julius Caesar* and contributed to linking the two plays together by staying on the stage throughout the whole play of *Antony and Cleopatra* as an ominous, external chorus. At the end of the play, he (instead of the Clown) brought the snake to Cleopatra, thus creating a nostalgic reminder of Caesar's doom at the moment when Cleopatra is about to end her life.

Vanessa Redgrave's *Antony and Cleopatra*, when seen in conjunction with Corin Redgrave's *Julius Caesar*, was a curious mix of coherent continuity and ironic deconstruction. On the one hand, psychological continuity was definitely maintained from one play to the other. In her running commentary of the play published by Faber & Faber in 2002, Vanessa Redgrave implicitly betrays her attachment to the naturalistic characterisation advocated by Stanislavski:

> It is vital that the director of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the actor who performs the role of Antony, should study the Antony who mourns the assassinated Caesar, vows

> vengeance against his murderers and, through his speeches, rouses the Roman populace to rebel against the assassins. For the Antony who defeats Caesar's assassins at the Battle of Philippi in September 42 B.C. is only some years younger than the Antony at the side of the Queen of Egypt.[158]

Here, Redgrave conflates and amalgamates Shakespeare's own construction of a character with the real, historical Antony. Because there is such a thin time gap between the events dramatized in the two plays, she invites actors to look for clues about how to play the part in the former play, as if it guaranteed historical accuracy and psychological coherence. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that Redgrave's commentary on the play very often resorts to historical contextualisation in order to explain passages in the play. Turning to history books seems to be the key to her exploration of the characters' motivations and reactions: even though she is using Shakespeare's words, the "truth" of the characters can be found elsewhere, in "historical" accounts rather than any play or Ur-play. Her vision of Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* is based both on a natural flow from *Julius Caesar* and on a provocative position:

> Is Antony in love with Cleopatra? This is the question she asks him, and asks herself constantly. The text in my view reveals a man who is fascinated, impressed, knows how to flatter a queen, and is not in love.[159]

If this decision to direct Antony as a character who has not totally given way to Cleopatra's temptations goes against the tradition of the role, Redgrave's Antony remains nevertheless in line with the character the spectators saw portrayed in the earlier *Julius Caesar* directed by Corin Redgrave—a manipulative, demagogic and histrionic politician. His Forum speech went against the masterful oration shouted to the crowd traditionally seen on stage. Instead, it was turned into a "calculating argument buzzed in the ears of individual plebes, more like something Iago would utter."[160] This vision of an Antony who is both crafty and hypocritical

[158] Vanessa Redgrave, *Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 3.
[159] *Ibid.*, 7.
[160] Greenwald, 88.

is confirmed when Vanessa Redgrave comments on Antony's witty and flattering responses to the Queen in the first scene of the play:

> We glimpse the same Antony whose words turned an assembly of Roman citizens from support for Brutus into a lynch mob howling for his blood. Antony is a politician through and through and Cleopatra knows this.[161]

Antony's capacity for deception is carried on from one play to the next and is used to interpret whole scenes in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Even when Antony flees after Cleopatra's ship at Actium, Redgrave interprets his motivation as anything but loving devotion:

> [I]t is not Cleopatra's "magic", nor Antony's love for her, that drives him to hoist sail and fly. It is his own superstitious fear of Octavius Caesar that overcomes him. […] This turns quickly and inevitably into blaming the woman, Cleopatra, for her cowardice and, from there, to believing in her treachery.[162] (p. 27)

Antony is turned into a male chauvinist whose incentive for seducing Cleopatra is the wealth of Egypt, and the possibility of taxing the country to finance wars for total command of the Roman world. Though this unromantic vision may seem another interpretative distortion, its value is to put the stress on the way *Antony and Cleopatra* rewrites (and twists) events that took place in *Julius Caesar*. In her notes on the play, Redgrave focuses on some of Enobarbus's words to Agrippa, a passage which has already received attention in Chapter 1 of this volume:

> AGRIPPA [*aside to Enobarbus*] Why, Enobarbus,
> When Antony found Julius Caesar dead,
> He cried almost to roaring; and he wept
> When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.
> ENOBARBUS [*aside to Agrippa*] That year indeed he was troubled with a rheum.
> What willingly he did confound he wail'd,
> Believe 't, till I wept too. (*ANT*, 3.2.54-60)

[161] Redgrave, 9.
[162] *Ibid.*, 27.

From this passage, Redgrave infers that Antony is always play-acting and that his emotions are always faked.[163] She even explains his failure to commit suicide as a consequence of his heavy drinking: "he has become such an alcoholic that he cannot kill himself."[164] In the Redgraves' productions, Antony was turned into the ultimate anti-hero, and sequelization became a way of revealing how play-acting is the only permanent feature of human beings.

One may wonder, as with Khan's Stratford (Connecticut) production, whether sequelization, used as it was to stress Antony's limitations, was exploited to give Cleopatra a political advantage or, at least, raise more radical issues of gender and race. Cleopatra, in Redgrave's own words, was certainly played as a "match" to "the politician, the legendary general".[165] Overtones of the Queen's matching political strengths could be found in her very manly attire: it was identical to Antony's for their first entrance together (white shirt and black trousers) and, before Actium, "she strode majestically onstage in full masculine habit".[166] Enorbarbus' 2.2 barge speech describing a Venus-like, gold-clad Cleopatra with "delicate cheeks", was played ironically, "subtly parodying Agrippa's (and our?) preconceptions about Egypt's queen […]—particularly as we compared what was being said with what we had already seen of Redgrave's purposeful, masculine Cleopatra".[167] Only twice during the production did Cleopatra wear feminine garments—a white Elizabethan-looking gown—as she asked Mardian about Antony's whereabouts and as she received the news of Antony's marriage with Octavia. On both occasions, she looked as "the theatrical incarnation of Elizabeth Regina"[168]—female political power at its peak.

However, Cleopatra's regal power was undermined by the racial policies of the joint productions. In a striking and highly meaningful reversal that parallels Patrick Stewart's

[163] See *ibid.*, 14.
[164] *Ibid.*, 35.
[165] *Ibid.*, 13.
[166] Greenwald, 87.
[167] *Ibid.*, 89.
[168] *Ibid.*, 87.

"photonegative" *Othello* with a predominantly African American cast in Jude Kelly's 1997 production at the Shakespeare Theater,[169] most of the Romans (including Antony, Octavius, Octavia, Cassius, Enobarbus, Agrippa) were played by black actors, while Cleopatra the Egyptian was performed as a porcelain-skinned woman.[170] An arresting contrast was thus created between a white Cleopatra (whose paleness was even reinforced by the wearing of a bright red wig) and the Roman Republic, which was, in Redgrave's words, "peopled by 'Latins' from Africa, the Balkans, the Caribbean, Asia and Europe". Redgrave's aim was to enhance Cleopatra's political status by showing "that even Egypt was part of the Roman Republic, and that Antony and Cleopatra fought to win supreme power over that Republic".[171] This unconventional casting, that gave dark colors to the conquering Europeans, was certainly meant to be thought-provoking (especially when the productions were performed in Houston, Texas) and was received as such: "When Cassius […] declared in 1.2 that he "was born free as Caesar," the line assumed added import spoken by a man of African heritage".[172] But this bold move of having the white, powerful Romans played by black actors was counterbalanced by Redgrave's directorial choice of casting herself—a white woman—as the Egyptian queen. Five years after Yvonne Brewster's staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* for the Talawa Company, in which Dona Croll became the first black actress to play the Egyptian queen on the British stage, this could no longer be considered a "neutral" casting decision. Even if, in the Talawa production, Croll did not play opposite a white Antony (since all the roles were played by black actors), she contributed to creating a new image of Cleopatra—one that started, in Rutter's words, to "make whiteness strange" for the role.[173] From 1991 onwards, it

[169] See Denise Albanese's account of the production in "Black and White, and Dread All Over: The Shakespeare Theater's 'Photonegative' *Othello* and the Body of Desdemona," in Dympna Callaghan, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 226-47.
[170] See *ibid.*, 88.
[171] Redgrave, 46.
[172] Greenwald, 88.
[173] Rutter, 86.

has been impossible to cast Cleopatra as white without implying that blackness is somehow denied a body and a voice.

Against this background, Redgrave's decision to cast herself in the role in 1996-7 may be read as an unequivocal denial, all the more so since she left the supporting roles of her servants to ethnic minority actors: "My Antony and Enobarbus were black, my Octavius Caesar and Octavia were black; my Charmian was Vietnamese, and my Iras was played by a refugee actress from Sarajevo".[174] In a discourse that conflated a white Cleopatra with a white director claiming the "Others" as objects of her own ("my Charmian"), Redgrave paradoxically deprived Egypt of a powerful political queen through a doubly regressive move—first, the Egyptian queen was denied blackness and, therefore, the decisive power to "darken" the white Roman race even if her and her people were conquered; second, since, here, the Romans were those to be given blackness(es), they were also paradoxically given the power to erase Cleopatra's "porcelain" race from the earth. In the end, the ironies that were stressed from one play to the next through sequelization could be perceived to downgrade and ridicule a black Antony, without bringing real power to the female protagonist. What looked like a progressive production through its uncommon casting also had its radical stance paradoxically toned down by it.

The 1999 Globe productions: Stressing discontinuity

In the London Globe Theatre's 1999 productions—with an all-male cast, which necessarily gave the role of the Egyptian queen to a male actor (Mark Rylance), the "sequel" effect was avoided since the performances of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* did not stress continuity at all, but rather complete dissimilarity. For Lois Potter, who reviewed the plays for *Shakespeare Quarterly*, "[t]he contrast between *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and*

[174] Redgrave, 46.

Cleopatra has rarely been so clear as in the two Globe productions. Quite simply the earlier play constantly addresses itself to the audience, while the later one does not."[175] The metatheatrical aspects of *Julius Caesar* were brought to the fore as much as possible by director Mark Rylance: in the opening scene, the tribune's lines referring to the "idle citizens" were addressed to the spectators themselves; the Soothsayer, as well as Artemidorus, emerged from the audience (dressed in jeans, T-shirts and baseball caps), and Brutus's and Antony's speeches were played to the crowd of attendees. The spectators were encouraged to feel the effects of political propaganda: "The casting of the audience as the crowd worked best when we were all persuaded to shout 'Read the will!': the sense of being manipulated was perfectly appropriate."[176] By contrast, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, very few lines were played directly to the audience. Instead of being involved in the drama, the spectators were rather encouraged to act as external witnesses to what unfolded before them. Mark Lewis Jones (Antony) and Toby Cockerell (Octavius) played their characters in *Julius Caesar* without trying to construct coherent links across the two plays. In the next play, Antony (now played by Paul Shelley) was no longer the autonomous and manipulative subject he had been in *Caesar*. From subject, he rather became a generous "creature of instinct" and a love-object—that of Cleopatra and Enobarbus.[177]

With its all-male cast playing at being Elizabethans playing Romans, the production sought to recover a certain form of acting "authenticity". It concentrated on Cleopatra and Rylance's original and comical cross-dressed performance of the role. Gender was questioned and revealed as a cultural construction. Rylance's physical assaults towards the messenger were all the more threatening for being performed by a man, and his rapid transitions between fainting and deciding not to bother in the end, were all the more derisive. At the end of the production, Cleopatra appeared dejected, without her wig, having shaved her head and slashed

[175] Lois Potter, "Roman Actors and Egyptian Transvestites," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50.4 (Winter 1999), 512.
[176] *Ibid*.
[177] *Ibid.*, 514.

her face—a return to the bareness of the character which revealed the male actor under the conventions of femininity, while it also signposted the production's reliance on Plutarch's account of Cleopatra's death.

Although this disclosure of gender codes could be seen as thought-provoking, it also involved the assigning of a female "dark" role to a white male of the "Globe-al" establishment, notably through the pretext of Elizabethan "authentic" acting. This "claiming" of Cleopatra, according to Rutter, thus threatened the "chances of recovering her blackness, of reversing the cultural hijack of the role".[178] Having Cleopatra played by a male actor may have given the role more physical power and ascendancy while deconstructing the conventions of gender, but it also denied Cleopatra her ultimate racial and political advantage.

Considering this casting decision within the broader context of the two productions which, this time, created no logical continuities between the two plays, it is all the more astounding that a man should be cast as Cleopatra: it is as if a female actor was doomed, as the Egyptian queen, to be enclosed by the recurrent male heroes of *Julius Caesar*—with only a male actor deserving to enjoy a heroic status as Cleopatra, unthreatened by the cumbersome "sequel" effect created by the echoes of the male, reprised roles.

However, it is unquestionably in its choice of constructing no links whatsoever with *Julius Caesar*, that the Globe production proved the most groundbreaking. The *mise-en-scène* largely concentrated on the events taking place in Egypt, ignoring the scenes set in Rome that featured a rather colorless Octavius. The contrast between the Roman and Egyptian views of the world was thus reduced to a minimum. This *Antony and Cleopatra* did not remind the audience of the shift from Rome to Egypt that the move from *Caesar* to *Antony* usually implies. By being able to insist so seemingly naturally on the differences between the two playtexts, the 1999 joint productions at the Globe revealed how the combined staged or

[178] Rutter, 88.

televised productions that appeared in 1898, 1912, 1963, 1972 and 1993 had been very specific moments in the theatrical history of the two plays.

Ivo van Hove's 2008 six-hour *Roman Tragedies*: Erasing Egypt in the media-dominated, globalized world of a "theater series"

In 2008, Ivo van Hove – artistic leader of the company Toneelgroep Amsterdam – directed *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as a six-hour, Dutch-translated, interactive show[179] under the name "Romeinse Tragedies" ("Roman Tragedies"), which started to tour the world (the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Canada, Britain, the United States…) and was notably presented in the official selection of the 2008 Avignon Theater Festival (France). The international acclaim and impact has been so huge that the production has clearly marked the way the Roman plays are received as well as analyzed in terms of their relevance to our postmodern world. For the first time, three Roman plays were played side by side within the same production. Even the former "joint productions" had been played separately, though within the same theater season. Ivo van Hove argued that the three plays performed as a triptych was the best vehicle to disclose the show of politics and the complex political processes without resorting to caricature. He justified the use of the chronological order, rather than the compositional order, to reflect on the effect of history's evolution since democracy's tricky beginnings: "We start out with a sort of two-party system in *Coriolanus* and arrive at a globalized world in *Antony and Cleopatra*,"[180] once more recalling Trevor Nunn's 1972 agenda and Barbara L. Parker's recent claim that the four Roman plays dramatize the transition from oligarchy to democracy (*Coriolanus*), from democracy to despotism (*Julius Caesar*), and from despotism to absolute imperialism (*Antony and*

[179] Trailers and excerpts of Ivo Van Hove's production can be accessed on Youtube at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbzAnmhDbmY> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIi1rbc2dsA&feature=related>.
[180] See the company's official website, <http://www.toneelgroepamsterdam.nl/default.asp?path=sxcdf3rt>.

Cleopatra).[181] This sense of witnessing a historical and ideological evolution was evoked from the show's opening, as the soundtrack included Bob Dylan's self-conscious protest song "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1964). This musical piece – that is considered to have captured the spirit of social and political upheaval of the 1960s, calling out the "people," "writers and critics," "senators, congressmen," "mothers and fathers" to face change, and encouraging the new generation to question political strategies – epitomized the whole show, uniting the three plays through the themes of cyclical change and Fortune's wheel which are evoked in the lyrics ("For the wheel's still in spin/ And there's no tellin' who that it's naming.'/ For the loser now will be later to win […] The order is rapidly fadin'/ And the first one now will later be last"). At the end of the production, a series of written questions appeared on a huge screen – questions asked both by the artists and the internet-café users during the show: "Is it always praiseworthy to fight to the death for a belief?"; "How far one can go in the love of one's country?"; "Does freedom exist?"; "Can politics change people's minds?"; "Are the masses blind?". They were meant to encourage the audience's critical reflection and distance, and marked the fact that the show did not provide easy answers or hasty judgments, but raised multifaceted issues.

The production used surtitles and did not feature any interval (apart from short breaks for scene changes), which prompted some reviewers to brand it a Shakespearean "marathon."[182] In a vast, modernly furbished hall that could belong to an airport, a conference center, the United Nations, an international hotel, a press center or a TV set hosting talk-shows, the emphasis was on the politicians, their speeches and their debates, placing the historical events in a media-dominated and globalized world. To cut the three scripts down to six hours, the war scenes were removed and replaced by BBC-styled anchormen reporting on

[181] Barbara L. Parker, "From Monarchy to Tyranny: *Julius Caesar* Among Shakespeare's Roman Works," in *Julius Caesar, New Critical Essays*, ed. Horst Zander (New York, London: Routledge, 2005), 111-126.
[182] See, for instance, Lyn Gardner's review in *The Guardian*, 21 November 2009, accessible online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/nov/21/roman-tragedies-lyn-gardner-review>

the battles, with screen footage of troop movements and tanks moving through bombed streets – thus literally transforming warfare into virtual events that spectators only experience on mediating screens. The scenes involving the crowds of people were also suppressed; this was a Rome from which the people were excluded, and yet were used to justify the very need for leadership. The masses were only inserted in a metatheatrical way, by allowing the audience to walk among the political arena on stage, while actors were free to invade the auditorium. If the battles were cut, the killings were also staged without any spectacular actions: no blood was spilled, and the murderers simply closed in on their victim, who was then carried to a central platform where audience members were instructed not to go and which symbolized death. Every time a character died (through murder or suicide), he or she was moved to that central space, laid down on a trolley, while a high-angle snapshot of the corpse was taken and projected onto the screens. The grand, epic history of Rome eventually came down to the pile of dead bodies that packed the empty space, and to the paradoxical voyeuristic display of "clean" corpses. The eliminations were thus openly presented as unemotional, business-like acts that came as direct consequences of the political speeches.

The stage was packed with television screens broadcasting real-life news channels such as CNN, clocks displaying different times, computers, microphones and telephones. Some of the screens broadcasted relevant newsreels throughout the play, accompanying war campaigns with footage of the Afghan or Iraq wars, or the feast of Lupercal at the start of *Julius Caesar* with images of the 2008 Summer Olympics, presenting history as a cycle of events eternally repeating themselves. Stage action was generally filmed by fixed or handheld cameras, and edited live for the TV monitors and for a huge screen installed above the stage, which offered specific close-ups intensifying the drama. For instance, during his Forum speech, Mark Antony produced the snapshot of Caesar's body (instead of the actual corpse) and, with a red pen, started to mark the spots where the conspirators had stricken. As the camera focused on

the photo and showed it live on the big screen, the spectators could witness Antony ragingly scrawling on Caesar's image and covering it with gory red ink, as a powerful evocation of the violence of the murder that was not shown explicitly on stage.[183]

"Paparazzi"-like camera men and women were constantly crossing the stage, as they tried to find the best possible angles to film the politicians' speeches, debates and fights, even invading the statesmen's privacy in their apartments or in the make-up rooms. The filming also meant that spectators could take control over the artistic experience, as they could see the action from different vantage points and choose what they wished to watch at a given moment – either the live action or the images mediated by the cameras. This combination of high mediatization with speeches by politicians somehow put the spectators in the situation of people gathered around TV sets in real-life bars and pubs, watching a public crisis or a crucial national event take place. Although the TV screens turned the audience into individual viewers with their own visual trajectory of the performance, it also united them in a moment very reminiscent of, in reviewer Andrew Haydon's words, "watching 9/11 coverage in bars, or those American election night viewing parties, or Barack Obama's inaugural speech. The sort of moments that have such evident public impact that people feel compelled to watch them together, as if for reassurance."[184] This human bond was emphasized as the spectators were invited to walk around the auditorium and onto the stage, thus questioning the usual code of spectatorship as well as the traditional frontiers between stage and backstage, the actors' space and the spectators' space.[185] The set included areas featuring sofas, tables, coffee bars, a buffet, an internet cafe and a newspaper stands, among which both cast and public could spend some time. These original spaces, which mixed fiction and real life,

[183] See Olivier Pansieri's review for *Les Trois Coups*, 19 July 2008, <www.lestroiscoups.com/article-21353633.html>
[184] Andrew Haydon, 22 Novembre 2009, <http://postcardsgods.blogspot.com/2009_11_01_archive.html>.
[185] See Florence March, "Les Tragédies romaines: pour un théâtre sans frontières," *Les Cahiers de La Licorne, Les Cahiers Shakespeare en devenir, L'Oeil du spectateur* (2009), <http://licorne.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/document4276.php>. Accessed 3 March 2010.

offered a variety of alternative actions to simply watching the production. Spectators were actively encouraged by a voice-over to check their e-mail, to read the newspapers, or sit down with a snack or a drink, thus making for a very different theatre experience. If the space of fiction was invaded by life and its daily routines, theater also invaded life outside the auditorium: as Enobarbus chose to leave Antony's army, he left the theater and was followed by a camerawoman in the streets, the images of his desperate wanderings being shown on the big screen inside.

Underneath the huge screen, a CNN-like red ticker tape flashed information on events in the production (with the chronology of ancient Rome, dates of battles and deaths, roles of various officials…) and, during the brief scene changes, displayed real-life news items adapted to the country in which the production was performed. In the United Kingdom, news items included "Obama asks for patience on economy" or "Brown meets Cumbria flood victims,"[186] and in France, "Sarkozy reasserts his support to the army," "Poland will not hinder the ratifying of the Lisbon treaty."[187] It thus presented the dealings of ancient Rome as modern-day events, further linking the past to the present. It also informed the spectators of the deaths to come, generating countdowns such as "5 minutes until the death of Julius Caesar," marking, as Peter Kirwan noticed, "the inevitability of history".[188] The countdown could also anticipate a protagonist's death three hours before the actual event. For instance, just after the murder of Caesar, Mark Antony's death was announced as due to happen in 160 minutes, thus burying the shock of Caesar's elimination under a fresh stream of news flashes. When it came down to Brutus' turn to die, the snapshot of his body on the screen was subtitled "Brutus 85-42 BC," an epitaph reminiscent of the TV series *Six Feet Under* in which

[186] See <http://www.shakespeare-revue.com/play.php?pid=30&action=review&rid=397>, accessed 6 March 2010.
[187] My translation from French ("Sarkozy réaffirme son soutien à l'armée," "la Pologne ne fera pas obstacle à la ratification du traité de Lisbonne"). See March, <http://licorne.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/document4276.php>
[188] See Peter Kirwan's academic theatre review blog, *The Bardathon*, 21 November 2009, <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/pkirwan/tag/antony/>

the passing away of characters always comes with a reminder of their dates of birth and death, before fading to a supernatural white screen evoking the freeing of the soul. But more explicit references to TV series were to found all through the production, which contributed to present the Roman plays as narratively interdependent.

The "ticking clock" effect, the "Big-brother" voice-overs, the multiple screens, the state-of-the-art technologies, the saturation of upcoming news and the hyper-mediatization on the stage spurred French reviewers at the Avignon festival to compare the production with the American TV series *24* (Fox, 2001-).[189] A common feature appeared through "split-screen" effects on stage as well as on screen. In *Julius Caesar*, several scenes were played simultaneously rather than successively. As the dialogue between Brutus and his wife Portia took place, Caesar was also arguing with his wife Calpurnia regarding his leaving for the Senate; the scenes featuring the concerned wives were thus performed side-by-side, turning the play into "a television soap opera," in Josée Nuyts-Giornal's words.[190] Later in the show, the scenes happening in the opposed military headquarters were performed more or less concomitantly to dramatize the fight over Caesar's moral and political heritage; thus presenting the war preparations as a cacophony of diverging strategic views. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, another joint staging of two scenes had Cleopatra and her women making fun of Octavia on the left side of the stage, whereas Antony talked with Octavia on the right side. To broadcast these simultaneous stage actions, the huge screen was divided into two or four slots, showing each scene in close-ups and recalling the aesthetics of the *24* TV series with its hallmark split screen that allows the viewers to follow several storylines at the same time. However, just as in *24*, Ivo van Hove's screen must not necessarily be seen as "split," but rather, as Monica Michlin argues, as "a *web* of images, *connected* rather than *separated* by the

[189] See, for instance, Pascal Bély, 16 July 2008, <http://www.festivalier.net/article-21283849-6.html>, and Vincent Josse, 13 July 2008, <http://sites.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/blog/b/comments.php?id=11&post=1218>.
[190] Josée Nuyts-Giornal, "Avignon Festival, Summer 2008: *Tragédies romaines: Coriolan, Jules César, Antoine et Cléopâtre*, directed by Ivo van Hove," *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 74 (Autumn 2008), 79.

'lines' that crisscross the TV screen".[191] It thus can be seen as either a window out onto subplots, or as a net within which both the characters and the public are caught. With this device, the audience is being taught how to read the stage (and the screen) all over again. While the split screen is a reflection of TV network control rooms, it can also be linked to other traditions of multiple frames, from the medieval polyptych to comic books, reflexively commenting on the need for distance and perspective. As the camera zooms in and out of the concomitant stage actions, it creates a series of narrative close-ups which embody a tension between a "glimpse-culture" and the need for a heightened attention span, as Deborah Jermyn has claimed:

> It has been argued that the multiple-image screen, familiar to us too now from computer screens, digital television, websites and video games, speaks of our inability to maintain a focused gaze or lengthy attention span in the multimedia age. Indeed, these technologies have been conceptualized as belonging to a wider "glimpse-culture" […] [T]he split-screen does quite the reverse. Instead, it invites the viewers to embrace the act of editing for themselves.[192]

Though it points to the increased control over our viewing experience, the multiple screen also dramatizes the political framing – this time in the conspiracy-related meaning of the word – at work in the Roman plays. This is to be connected with the production's discourse on monitoring and surveillance, a theme which can also be found in *24*. As Michael Allen comments, "the split-screen aesthetic of *24* can be seen to simply be echoing the media-rich, technological world of the show itself, in which everyone is making use of multiple window imaging systems to keep track of everyone else".[193] Because the split screen allows a production to "connect different spaces, places, and characters in the same frame, at the same time," it not only plays on the sense of simultaneity, but also on the assumed liveness of

[191] Monica Michlin, "Narrative and Ideological Entrapment in *24*: Plotting, Framing, and the Ambivalent Viewer," *Les Pièges des nouvelles séries télévisées américaines*, ed. Sarah Hatchuel and Monica Michlin, *GRAAT On-Line* 6 (décembre 2009), p. 128 (<www.graat.fr/backissuepiegesseriestv.htm>).
[192] Deborah Jermyn, "Reasons to Split Up: Interactivity, Realism, and the Multiple-Image Screen in *24*," in *Reading '24': TV Against the Clock*, ed. Steven Peacock (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 51.
[193] Michael Allen, "Divided Interests: Split-Screen Aesthetics in *24*," in *Reading '24': TV Against the Clock*, ed. Steven Peacock (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 31.

television broadcast—as if "all these events [were] […] happening *now*,"[194] almost reproducing the twenty-four hour rolling news reportage. It is, therefore, no wonder that the aesthetics of the split-screen was to be found in a six-hour, uninterrupted production that stressed the power of the media.

Staging the three Roman plays as a six-hour marathon certainly bore similarities to viewing a 24/7 news channel, or watching many episodes of a TV series in a row, as the DVD releases now allow. If the transition from *Coriolanus* to *Julius Caesar* happened without any break, the move from *Julius Caesar* to *Antony and Cleopatra* did involve a pause, although, as a reviewer noted, "from a narrative point of view the two plays are more strongly connected than *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*".[195] The break may be explained pragmatically as a way to turn the stage setting from the public arena to a more intimate space (a living room filled with sofas and plants – the tone being shifted from the political to the personal), with the audience invited for the first time to stay in the auditorium and see the show as a united group. But the scene change at this point is not necessarily paradoxical: it can play with people's expectations even more precisely because the two scripts are connected. The interruption may be used to intensify the drama especially since it can act as a form of "cliff-hanger" between two narratively close plays.

The actors reprised their roles from *Julius Caesar* to *Antony and Cleopatra*, stressing the continuity between the stories: Hans Kesting played Antony; Hadewych Minis, Octavius Caesar; and Fred Goessens, Lepidus. But these reprisals were rarely remarked on by reviewers, as if this taking up of roles were naturally expected from such nonstop presentation. The serial effect was traditionally reported through a focus on Mark Antony and on his personal journey from one play to the next, the six-hour continuous staging allowing for an even more intense narrative arc. Andrew Haydon reviewed: "Mark Antony has of

[194] Steven Peacock, "*24*: Status and Style, » in *Reading '24': TV Against the Clock*, ed. Steven Peacock (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 26-27.
[195] See <www.shakespeare-revue.com/play.php?pid=30&action=review&rid=397>, accessed 6 March 2010.

course been introduced to us in Julius Caesar, and it's enormously satisfying to the see the two plays run back-to-back, not least because it allows us to see the absolute contrast between his brilliant statesmanship in Rome and the tragic effects of his ruination in Egypt."[196] This "enormous satisfaction" felt by the reviewer seems to result directly from the absence of an imposed gap between the storylines: the spectators were somehow allowed to break the rules and get round the original separation of the plays, just as DVD viewers can have the satisfaction of watching their favorite TV series without the weekly breaks imposed by broadcasting.

From one play to the next, he rivalry between Antony and Octavius shone out not only through their sitting apart on different sofas, but also through their respective images being projected on separate TV screens, while the feeble Lepidus was shown between them, central but speechless and soon to fade away. To complicate the traditional competition between the triumvirs, Octavius was played, rather confusingly, by a woman as a sleek, cold and puritanical character who welcomed events with fatalism and distance. This casting choice had three major consequences. It first twisted Octavius' relation to Antony, bringing overtones of jealousy to it, and turning Octavius into an explicit sexual rival to Cleopatra. As a consequence, the figure of Octavius was somehow merged with that of his/her sister Octavia (played by Karina Smulders): physically, they looked similar and, upon giving away Octavia to be Antony's wife, Octavius kissed her passionately, hinting at an incestuous, Sapphic relationship between the two. Finally, the spectators were forced to think twice when references were made to a powerful woman, which could either be Cleopatra or Octavius, depending on the context. Having Octavius, as well as Cassius, played by women was part of Ivo van Hove's intention to anchor the story in our contemporary world and acknowledge, as well as mirror, the fact that women now have high political responsibilities and run a certain

[196] Andrew Haydon, 22 Novembre 2009, <http://postcardsgods.blogspot.com/2009_11_01_archive.html>.

number of governments.[197] But, paradoxically, feminizing Rome and giving power to a female Octavius diluted Cleopatra's own female authority, making it less exceptional and, therefore, less threatening for Rome. If Rome is ruled by a woman, just as Egypt is, the opposition between a masculine western world and a feminine eastern world is blurred, and Cleopatra's edge becomes blunted. The end of the production also questioned the status of Octavius, as he/she oscillated between the powerful ruler and the lonely woman: Octavius finished up shown on the TV sets as a frozen outcast, gazing in on the love of Antony and Cleopatra, united in death – "the first bodies to lie entwined rather than in twisted pain," as Timothy Ramsden noticed.[198] Feminizing the character of Octavius thus took part in an ideology that isolates the ruling woman and asserts that she cannot have power and love at the same time, even hinting at the fact that she may not have any feelings at all.

If actors were dressed in grey or black suits, using the executive dress codes of world political summits for *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*; the costumes changed for *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which joggers and pajamas replaced formal suits, in a much more relaxed atmosphere. Slouched half naked in a sofa, Antony indolently whiled away time by playing videogames or watching old Roman epics on TV, as a wink to the film adaptations of the story. The transitions from Rome to Egypt took the form of loud rock music suddenly erupting, Cleopatra and her women dancing like teenagers to the loud rock of Red Hot Chili Peppers. The costumes, leisure activities, music, and even drinks (Josef de Vos remarked, in *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, that "[d]rinking champagne marked the way of life in Egypt. Even at the very end a bottle was uncorked"[199]) implied that Egypt was not represented as "Other," but as a more sensual, casual and stress-free extension of the western world.

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[197] See Ivo van Hove's interview by Jean-François Perrier in February 2008, <http://www.toneelgroepamsterdam.nl/default.asp?path=sxcdf3rt>

[198] Timothy Ramsden, "Epic in scope and ambition," *Reviews Gate*, 21 November 2009, <www.reviewsgate.com/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4834>

[199] Josef de Vos, "The Sweep of History: Ivo Van Hove's Roman Tragedies," *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 75 (Spring 2009 Spring), 57.

Cleopatra was played skillfully by Chris Nietvelt as a very determined and passionate red-haired woman, but some reviews remarked on her "lacking proper emotional intelligence, screaming when she doesn't get her way".[200] Her astute changeability and playful jealousy came with "a certain vulgarity," as "she even licked Enobarbus" and "exaggerated so much in her fierce outbursts of upbraiding that [it] detracted from the tragic stature she was to attain at the end."[201] If the representation of Egypt avoided the Orientalist stereotypes, it erased any trace of confrontation with a strong foreign culture, as if Cleopatra's country had already been conquered by Rome and assimilated into the Empire, its resistance merely showing through its carefree, reveling and sexually uninhibited lifestyle. Revealingly, no review stressed Egypt's otherness (except for its licentiousness and Cleopatra's Flemish accent, "as if to suggest that she was a creature from a region south of the play's linguistic area"),[202] nor its potential threat to the globalized system. With a white Cleopatra endorsing the codes of the West – she dressed in silvery or black elegant dresses, and wore high heels – the questioning of imperialism was left to the real-life newsreels which showed images of the war in Iraq. Paradoxically, western invasions of foreign countries were challenged by the usually-complicit media rather than by the staging of the scenes set in Egypt.

Ivo van Hove's "Roman Tragedies" certainly contributed to endorse the idea that *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* compose one single, coherent story, to be played out in serial form, in the same way as Roman history had been dramatized in the two-season TV series *Rome*, a HBO-BBC production which was first broadcasted in the United States, then in Great Britain, before being aired worldwide between 2005 and 2007, and which may have influenced van Hove's "back-to-back" presentation of the Roman plays. In such a serialized show, the male narrative arc of Mark Antony is made even more pivotal, in a highly

[200] See Roderick Random's review blog, 22 November 2009, <http://roderick-random.blogspot.com/2009/11/theatre-review-roman-tragedies-by.html>, accessed 5 March 2010.
[201] de Vos, 58.
[202] See Nuyts-Giornal, 80.

globalized and mediatized world which seems to have already swallowed any form of Otherness.

The 2008 "Shakespeare Theatre Company" productions: Validating sequelization

From 26 April to 6 July 2008, *Julius Caesar* (directed by David Muse) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (by Michael Kahn, who had already directed the two plays jointly in 1972 in Stratford, Connecticut) were presented in what was called a "Roman Repertory" at Sidney Harman Hall (Washington, D.C) – a venue which offers a very flexible stage space.[203] The plays were produced by the Shakespeare Theatre Company, a company founded in 1985 to provide classical theater to the capital city. Although the plays did not share the same director, the actors Andrew Long (Mark Antony, later in the run played by Kurt Rhoads), Aubrey K. Deeker (Octavius) and Ted van Griethuysen (Lepidus) played their respective parts in both productions. Even the two Soothsayers were played by Kryztov Lindquist as one single character in both plays. His role was made more prominent to turn him into a sort of "supernatural master of ceremonies,"[204] able to perform ritualized readings of the future. The same end-stage configuration[205] and the same costumes (togas and robes) were also used for the two plays. *Antony and Cleopatra* was chosen as the opening production, even though *Julius Caesar* precedes it in the chronological order of history and composition. However, from April 27th onwards, the audience could attend the productions in historical succession; the plays were performed on alternating nights, and could even be seen one after the other in the same day, at matinee and evening shows.

[203] See the company's website, <www.shakespearetheatre.org>.
[204] Hannibal Hamlin, "Review of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (directed by David Muse for the Shakespeare Theater Company) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (directed by Michael Kahn for the Shakespeare Theater Company) at Sidney Harman Hall, Washington, DC, April-July 2008," *Shakespeare* 4.4 (December 2008), 442.
[205] An end stage consists in a thrust stage extended wall to wall, like a thrust stage with audience on just one side, the front. But, unlike the procescenium stage, it does not feature a "picture frame" around the front of the playing area, and has no extension off-stage in the form of wings.

Director Michael Kahn reported that he and David Muse had chosen "the Roman Repertory productions based on their thematic similarities" and wished to "see which characters function similarly in both plays in relation to the power structure or their profession."[206] David Muse was even more explicit in his approach of the productions as the two halves of the same story: "In our minds, it's like we're doing parts one and two. *Julius Caesar* is a play about an enormous failure—a geopolitical, world historical failure. Here is a group of men who are hoping to engage in an act that saves their Republic, and instead they wind up paving the way for the most powerful emperor the world has ever known."[207] The murder of Julius Caesar in the first play is envisaged as the event that triggers the rise of Octavius (later known as Augustus) in the second play. This strategy implied, beyond having the major roles reprised, the construction of thematic links between the two plays. One of them was blood. Blood appeared on the runners' faces during the Lupercal festivities, on Caesar's corpse, on the Senate floor, on the conspirators' swords, trickled through in *Antony and Cleopatra* on Cleopatra's breast, and was conjured by the red light that illuminated Caesar's ghost and sometimes the Egyptian queen. Other thematic links were constructed through the doubling of roles, creating ghosting effects between the productions. If the ghost of Julius Caesar continued to haunt his own play after the assassination, appearing not only on the eve of the battle of Philippi but also during it (for example, he clutched the hand of the soldier who held the sword upon which Brutus impaled himself; and, in the final moment of the play, he gave the crown to a hesitant Octavius), ghosts from the earlier play came back to haunt *Antony and Cleopatra*. Since the same actor (Dan Kremer) played Julius Caesar in the first play and Enobarbus in the second one, Enobarbus' betrayal of Antony seemed all the more unkind after Antony's support for Caesar, which was still fresh in the memory of the

[206] Michael Kahn, "Director's Notes: Michael Kahn on *Antony and Cleopatra*," *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*, 16 April 2008, <http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/plays/articles.aspx?&id=652>.
[207] David Muse, "Director's Notes: David Muse on *Julius Caesar*," *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*. 15 April 2008, <http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/plays/articles.aspx?&id=646>.

spectators who had attended both shows. In a similar way, the doubling of Portia/Iras and Calphurnia/Charmian highlighted the unfailing support provided by the female characters, but also their powerlessness at changing the course of events. The ghost of Caesar even invaded the end of *Antony and Cleopatra*: as Cleopatra was dying on her throne, he drifted above the stage, sending the audience back to the finale of *Julius Caesar* and recalling how the murder of Caesar triggered this whole chain of events.

Reminders were also created through visual motifs to convey the idea of an endless historical repetition. As the triumphant Octavius delivered his final speech at the end of *Antony and Cleopatra*, black banners were unfurled on which the new leader's face stood out in white. The banners were strongly reminiscent of those displaying Julius Caesar's face during the first scene of the first play. For M. G. Aune, who reviewed both performances for *EMLS*, the message was "impossible to miss. History repeats itself and no ruler is so powerful that he or she cannot be brought down."[208] If these links helped to generate aesthetic consistency between the two productions, psychological links were constructed for the common characters, to provide enhanced effects of realism. For instance, Antony was played in *Julius Caesar* heralding what he would be like in *Antony and Cleopatra* – as an indulging and vibrant man – yet often inebriated. The mise-en-scène stressed out the moments in *Julius Caesar* when Antony is said and shown to be a lover of sports, music, plays, women, and wine. Antony was played as fiery from the start of *Julius Caesar* onwards, appearing muscular and untamed for the Lupercal race, dressed in animal skins that contrasted with the formal togas worn by the other Romans. As Caesar remarked "See! Antony, that revels long a-nights,/ Is notwithstanding up" (2.2.116-17), he was referring to a definitely hung-over Antony, still staggering along with the laurel crown he had won during the Lupercal race the day before. This condition explained why he got disoriented and disappeared from the Senate

[208] M. G. Aune. "Review of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, presented by the Shakespeare Theatre Company at Sidney Harman Hall, Washington, D.C.," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 14.2 / Special Issue 17 (September 2008), <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/14-2/revaune.html>.

before the conspirators started stabbing Caesar. Antony's reveling personality in his own play thus flowed back into the production of *Julius Caesar*, turning the character into a fortunate fellow capable of seizing the right moment, rather than a smart and skilled leader.

Since the acknowledged intention of the two directors was to "see which characters function similarly in both plays," it is no wonder that the two productions relied so much on character. But instead of a genuine investigation of which characters would behave similarly in such a connected configuration, the joint productions gave way to a narrative and psychological construction in which the common protagonists were played as if Shakespeare had conceived them with a coherent personality across the plays. This emphasis on the characters' consistency was welcomed by some reviewers, who saw in the productions a way to reconcile the two diverging facets of Antony, the cool and calculating man from *Julius Caesar* and the politically and militarily incompetent one from *Antony and Cleopatra*: "watching the plays on consecutive nights […], the continuities in Shakespeare's writing of Antony became clear."[209] The sequelization was thus envisaged as a *revelation* of Shakespeare's "true" composition, instead of a narrative and ideological *construction*.

This strategy was felt by others as an escape from the political agenda of the plays. Although both directorial notes had mentioned the politics of the plays, and how appropriate it was to address them in such a location as Washington D.C., it was felt that "neither production seemed to engage current politics directly," especially since the 2008 American presidential elections could have given the directors multiple opportunities to build links between reality and fiction, *à la* Ivo van Hove. The focus was on individual coherence rather than on political complexities.[210]

The different worlds of Rome and Egypt were expressed through variations in setting and clothes. *Antony and Cleopatra* changed slightly the stage layout by having the sets of

[209] Hamlin, 441.
[210] See Aune, <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/14-2/revaune.html>.

doors constantly open: the sense of space and freedom was, therefore, greater. While Rome was martially cold, displaying hard benches and black banners and playing percussive, atonal music, Egypt was voluptuous, with warm colors, drapes, cushions, incense, and flute music. If the Romans wore long togas of flowing white cloth, Cleopatra (Suzanne Bertish) and her attendants displayed silk robes in rich hues of red and brown, as well as gold jewelry. The production managed to express differences between the two cultures without resorting to exotic clichés. The Egyptian queen was played as a theatrical coquette aware of what her words and gestures achieved on people, but her theatricality was once more framed by the attempt to generate a unified personality with psychological coherence: "Some people say she's a different character in every scene," Suzanne Bertish stated in her notes on the play, "and the challenge is to tie all these characters that burst out of her into one person."[211] Her performance was generally well received: "Bertish's Cleopatra was superb […], full of passion and sexual allure as well as wit, playfulness and intelligence,"[212] "Bertish is exquisite as Cleopatra. Sexy and teasing, she is giving Washington audiences the opportunity to see a great role performed brilliantly;"[213] "she makes herself irresistible by virtue of will and authority."[214] It is as if, within the frame of a sequelized show featuring a returning male hero with a psyche made coherent, the actress playing Cleopatra could now be safely praised. The acceptance and habit of performing the plays as interrelated, as well as the smoothing out of discrepancies within a male-dominated saga, have progressively created a site in which the powerful, foreign female character has become less threatening and challenging, therefore more deserving of laudatory remarks. But even if this hypothesis is true, it remains that we

[211] Quoted by Akiva Fox, "Her Infinite Variety, Suzanne Bertish Takes on Cleopatra," *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*. 15 April 2008, <www.shakespearetheatre.org/plays/articles.aspx?&id=649>.
[212] Hamlin, 442.
[213] Tom Avila, "Toga Party: The Shakespeare's Roman Repertory sets the action in the intended time and place and is all the better for it," *Metro Weekly*, 15 May 2008, <www.metroweekly.com/arts_entertainment/stage.php?ak=3451>.
[214] Peter Marks, "*Antony*: Kahn Gets to The Heart of It," *The Washington Post*, 12 May 2008, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/11/AR2008051102283.html>.

have entered an era in which female power cannot be dismissed easily, although it has to be constantly re-negotiated.

In this production, Cleopatra formed, with Antony, a couple of two mature people who knew that what they were experiencing could well be their last love and accepted to suffer the consequences of their irresponsibilities. Their age contrasted with that of Octavius (Aubrey K. Deeker) who seemed to grow younger from one play to the other and attracted mixed responses, from those that saw him as a whimpish character posing an "empty and unimpressive threat"[215] to those that acknowledged him as a "devious, calculating, and ruthless tyrant"[216] with an "almost villainously superior air"[217] and "a mind constantly at work […] always focusing several steps ahead."[218] But reviews concurred in noting how Octavius helped to create continuity between the two productions: "One sees in retrospect that the groundwork for the intense enmity between Octavius and Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* has been laid, astutely, in *Julius Caesar*, in the exchange of a few contemptuous sidelong glances between Deeker and Long."[219] The end of *Julius Caesar* was perceived as a cliff-hanger leaving the audience wonder how the relationships between the Triumvirs will evolve. The directorial addition which consisted in having the ghost of Caesar tempting Octavius with the crown just before Antony suddenly returned on stage to join Octavius, anticipated, in Hamlin's words, "the disintegration of the triumvirate and Octavius's rise towards imperial power in *Antony and Cleopatra*."[220] The perception of continuity and consistency went hand in hand with approval and praise: what the reviewers always agreed upon was the achievement and relevance of the joint presentation. *The Shakespeare Newsletter* even encouraged future directors to take it as a model: "Its success suggests that more theatre

[215] Avila, <www.metroweekly.com/arts_entertainment/stage.php?ak=3451>.
[216] Deborah Montuori, "Shakespeare Theatre Company's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27.1 (Mar 2009), 135.
[217] Marks, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/11/AR2008051102283.html>.
[218] Hamlin, 442.
[219] *Ibid.*
[220] Hamlin, 445.

companies should consider presenting the two plays in just this fashion."[221] *The Washington Post* was impressed by what the joint presentation was able to bring out from the individual shows ("The pairing of the plays makes a lot of dramatic sense"), noticing how "*Antony and Cleopatra* picks up on the story of Mark Antony […], the general who triumphed over Brutus and Cassius in *Julius Caesar* and now, several years later, is on an extended Egyptian holiday in the arms of Cleopatra." The single cast used for both plays was seen as a device helping "to solidify the continuity," with cinematic vocabulary progressively invading the theater reviews: "Lepidus […] and Octavius […], which are slightly bigger than bit parts in *Julius Caesar*, graduate to the rank of major in *Antony and Cleopatra*".[222] The sequelization of the two plays produced a new filmic prism through which the productions were experienced and assessed. Hannibal Hamlin, in *Shakespeare*, acknowledged that staging the two plays together seemed "more strategic in terms of marketing than artistic considerations" but is quick to agree with this choice by conjuring Shakespeare himself: "Yet Shakespeare, as a professional man of the theatre, would have understood the practical necessity of marketing, and in fact the pairing works surprisingly well in practice."[223] Again, sequelization was justified through the construction of a past that would have approved of it, with the use of the Shakespeare figure giving it authority and legitimacy.

Instead of considering the plays as theater dramas and individual works, the reviews focused on the elements that validated the joint presentations, without noting any narrative incongruities between the two texts, as if they were the consistent parts of a film series. Revealingly, the notes to the theater program, written by scholar Paul A. Cantor, compared the productions with the *Star Wars* films:

> It's an epic saga of noble heroes fighting to uphold their ancestral honor, of corruption in the body politic, of conspiracy in the Senate, of a venerable Republic turning into an

[221] Ellen Macleod Mahon and J.W.M., "Roman repertory at Washington's Shakespeare Theatre (*Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar* played back to back)." *Shakespeare Newsletter* 58.1 (March 2008), 22.
[222] Marks, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/11/AR2008051102283.html>.
[223] Hamlin, 440.

> Empire. No, I'm not talking about George Lucas' *Star Wars* but about William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.[224]

This description of the plays as if they were film franchises takes part in a universalistic and ahistorical vision of Shakespeare's plays, which abolishes the temporal and ideological differences that separate the twentieth century from the early modern period, as if the representation of Rome was eternally confronted with identical problems. The references to the popular culture given in the program notes found their ways in the titles of some reviews ("Shakespeare Theatre's *Antony and Cleopatra:* A Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away…"[225]), as well as in the description of Bertish's Cleopatra receiving the news of Antony's wedding to Octavia: a reviewer saw her as going "into the kind of tailspin of incredulity we have come to associate with telegenic desperate housewives of the modern day."[226] Program notes by Akiva Fox also stressed how Suzanne Bertish's experience as having played in the HBO television series *Rome* made her feel "very comfortable in the world of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*."[227] Bertish had, indeed, acted in fourteen episodes of the HBO series as the character of Eleni (the servant of Brutus' mother, Servilia) before embarking on this theater journey, but the emphasis on this fact added to the blurring between the stage productions and a TV series, further validating the concept of sequelization. The chalk-written graffiti that were used in *Julius Caesar* to offer visual correlates to Cassius' comparision of the names "Brutus" and "Caesar" (1.2.142-7) were not commented in relation to the exact same device in Stuart Burge's 1970 film of *Julius Caesar*, but again to the *Rome* series, which features "animated antique graffiti in its opening credits."[228]

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[224] Paul A. Cantor, "A Tale of Two Antonys," *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*, 15 April 2008, <www.shakespearetheatre.org/plays/articles.aspx?&id=643>.
[225] Chris Klimek, "Shakespeare Theatre's *Antony and Cleopatra:* A Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away…," 23 May 2008, <http://dcist.com/2008/05/23/fool_for_love_t.php>.
[226] Marks, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/11/AR2008051102283.html>.
[227] See Fox, <www.shakespearetheatre.org/plays/articles.aspx?&id=649>.
[228] Hamlin, 443.

The television series of the 2000s, their complex narrative arcs and aesthetics, as well as the viewers' habits of seeing long, uninterrupted plots over months (and even years) may account for the new ways of producing and experiencing *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as interrelated stories. Since the middle of the 90s, a new wave of American TV series have, indeed, been rivalling feature films in originality, questioning both the norms of the genre and social order(s), as well as contributing to the evolution of aesthetic patterns. Whether *24* (2001-), *Big Love* (2006-), *Carnivale* (2003-4), *Damages* (2007-), *Desperate Housewives* (2004-), *Grey's Anatomy* (2005-), *Lost* (2004-10), *Nip/Tuck* (2003-10), *Prison Break* (2005-9), *Queer as Folk* (2000-5), *Rome* (2005-6), *Sex & the City* (1998-2004), *The L Word* (2004-9), *The Tudors* (2007-), or *The West Wing* (1999-2006)…—these series of the 2000s have all rejected the format of independent and autonomous episodes and abandoned the bland repetition of formulaic narrative, the playing out of a "narrative scheme that remains constant,"[229] that was typical of the television series in the 70s and 80s (such as *Charlie's Angels*, *Columbo*, *Magnum P.I.*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Starsky and Hutch*). The TV series of the 2000s are closer to *serials*, to be understood fully only if the spectators follow every single episode. The serial's agenda includes renewal, return and divergence, in contrast to the former TV series based on repetition and sameness. The audience is regularly led to follow false leads, to be deciphered as such during the show, which plays constantly with the viewers' expectations and knowledge of the narrative codes. To attract spectators from one episode to the next, from one season to the next, to retain them even during the commercial breaks (when the series are broadcasted on the general networks instead of cable channels), narrative processes based on cliff-hangers and puzzle solving have been exploited. Staging, watching and reviewing joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in the 2000s can hardly be envisaged outside the context of these prolonged television "sequels" and

[229] Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 86.

their conclusions forever postponed. The 2008 joint presentations by the "Shakespeare Theatre Company" may be considered, in this respect, as cases in point. But this tendency reached a greater peak with the 2009 "Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory" productions.

The 2009 "Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory" productions: Stressing otherness in a joint/disjointed narrative arc

The dynamic and critically-acclaimed Bristol-based theatre company "Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory" (SATTF) has produced, since its creation in 1999, two plays each year, one after the other in the season, in an in-the-round loft theater, featuring a largely local cast supported by drama students. But their tenth anniversary season marked their first attempt at linking the two yearly productions into a consistent whole, with a cross-cast ensemble. In 2008, Andrew Hilton, director of the company, described their upcoming 2009 joint productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as "portray[ing] an all-consuming love destroyed by the new Imperial order that followed [the] fatal act" of the tyrannicide in *Caesar*.[230] Both plays were, indeed, performed in 2009, focusing on the opposing storylines of the two Triumvirs – the rise/fall of Mark Antony and the rise of Octavius Caesar. But the plays were staged neither back-to-back nor during the same period of time, so that the spectators could not watch the two shows without having to wait for a few days or weeks. *Julius Caesar* was performed from February 12th to March 21st, 2009, while *Antony and Cleopatra* started a few days after the end of the *Caesar*'s run, on March 26th, and was presented until May 2nd.

These productions generated specific expectations through their very serial presentation, as Part One and Part Two of a single epic plot that spanned two generations and dramatized the race for the control of the Empire. In her review for a Bristol independent magazine,

[230] See the company's website at <http://www.sattf.org.uk/>, accessed 23 September 2008.

Laura Snoad immediately laid the terms of the contract between the theater company and their spectators: "Shakespeare At The Tobacco Factory have chosen to stage two of Shakespeare's most masterful histories, using the same expert cast for both *Julius Caesar* and the closest thing the bard ever wrote to its sequel, *Antony and Cleopatra*."[231] The notion of "sequel" in the case of the two Roman plays is here questioned as *Antony* is seen as only "the closest thing" to *Caesar*'s follow-up, but this comment still constructs programmatically a tight narrative connection between the plays, particularly through their common cast.

Just as in the 2008 "Shakespeare Theatre Company" productions, the Soothsayer (Jonathan Nibbs) was performed as a figure common to the two plays. He became a hunched figure who, after having warned Caesar to beware of the Ides of March, came back in the second installment to let Charmian know her destiny or to tell Antony that Octavius' fortune shall rise higher. He thus continuously delivered his predictions in the desperate hope of being listened to eventually. However, despite his will and skills, he was not able to influence the course of events. For Peter Kirwan, the Soothsayer was "ultimately no more than the audience personified, trapped and inactive while history drew to its inevitable conclusions."[232]

"[P]laying *Caesar* as the first half of a bigger story," as Kirwan commented, "worked marvellously in the production's favour," the intimate atmosphere of conspiracy in *Caesar* soon to be turned into the public, military confrontations of *Antony*. If taken individually, the productions were seen as strong and clear, taken together they worked in the mode of a "saga" that was considered more efficient than the sum of its parts, turning the two plays as the "relentless struggle for power that slowly consumed all of its players".[233] Again, very similarly to the reception of the 2008 "Shakespeare Theatre Company" production, the end of

[231] Laura Snoad, *Suityourself magazine* (Bristol), <www.suityourselfmagazine.co.uk/theatre-review-–-antony-and-cleopatra/>
[232] Peter Kirwan, "*Julius Caesar / Antony and Cleopatra*, directed by Andrew Hilton for Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory," *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 76 (Autumn 2009), 47.
[233] *Ibid.*

Julius Caesar was envisaged as a true cliff-hanger creating suspense between the two productions:

> [Octavius] marched off stage with a final summons to Antony to 'let's away/ To part the glories of this happy day'. [But] Antony stood quietly on stage, before motioning to his followers and marching off in the opposite direction. We were left aching for the next installment of their feud. […] To be continued, indeed."[234]

Rebecca Yearling similarly considered the end of *Caesar* as a personal strife between the Triumvirs, and again constructed it as an announcement of the next play: "Antony's slight irritation at Octavius' taking command in the play's final moments […] set the tone for the impending power struggles of *Antony and Cleopatra*."[235] But the productions, which were both joint and "disjointed," created frustration among spectators. Kirwan admitted that his "only disappointment" was that "it wasn't possible to watch the two productions in rep with each other, as it would have drawn out the links more clearly and potentially to richer effect,"[236] revealing how spectators now expect to follow intricate narrative arcs spanning over several installments. Kirman hammers home this message in another review published in *Les Cahiers Elisabéthains*: "the opportunity to view the two back to back would have been extremely interesting, and may have made the links all the clearer."[237] This desire for watching the plays as if they were the narratively-linked episodes of a TV series – a desire which was fulfilled by Ivo van Hove's six-hour *Roman Tragedies* – is also disclosed through references to film sequels or television fiction within the productions' reviews: "Taken together, this sprawling epic evoked modern crime epics from *The Godfather* to *The Wire*, particularly in scenes such as the Triumvirate sitting down together in a circle to negotiate

[234] See Peter Kirwan's theatre review blog, 19 February 2009, <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/pkirwan/entry/julius_caesar_sattf/>
[235] Rebecca Yearling, "Review of William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar (directed by Andrew Hilton) at the Tobacco Factory, Bristol, 17 March 2009," *Shakespeare* 5.3 (September 2009), 317.
[236] See Kirwan's review blog, 2 April 2009, <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/pkirwan/entry/antony_cleopatra_sattf/>
[237] Peter Kirwan, *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 76, 45.

territory".[238] This sentence is symptomatic of the prism of references through which the theatre productions are now received – a prism which is, in its turn, shaping the productions themselves. If the three parts of *The Godfather* (directed by Francis Ford Coppola in 1972, 1974 and 1990) symbolize the gangster epic, family politics and the Mafia stories – also evoking the efficiency achieved by sequels to attract a large audience for each installment – *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008) calls to mind the new American TV series of the 2000s whose narrative (and reflexive) arcs stride over several years. Each season of *The Wire* (which consists of 10 to 13 episodes forming a single story) concentrates on social, political and economic aspects of the city of Baltimore, such as drug dealing, the city government, the school system, and the news media. Since crucial events regularly take place off-screen, the TV spectators are required to follow the conversations closely if they want to keep up with the numerous characters' identities and actions (the series' slogan on the DVD covers is actually "Listen carefully"). The comparison of the Tobacco Factory joint productions with *The Wire* is justified by the audience's similar need of keeping track when watching *Julius Caesar*'s civil divisions or *Antony and Cleopatra*'s kaleidoscopic number of scenes, locations and characters, while the blatant absence of battles on the stage always calls for a careful listening of the reports to follow the military progressions. The end of the 2000s undoubtedly marks the start of the TV series as a highly influent art form, in both the reception and staging of plays, especially when the productions are presented as sequels of one another.

The mafia-like maneuverings that conjured comparisons with *The Godfather* and *The Wire* were stressed by using, in both productions, the same in-the-round intimate setting, with minimal furnishings; olive green and black costumes set the action of *Julius Caesar* in a 17th-century Jacobean London, evoking Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder plot, while *Antony and Cleopatra* defined itself as a sequel by moving forward a generation, with costumes

[238] See <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/pkirwan/entry/antony_cleopatra_sattf/>

suggesting the Caroline era, at the eve of the English Civil War. Many moments in *Antony* echoed the former *Caesar* in a series of suspenseful candlelit gatherings, whispered conversations and covert political manipulations. In *Julius Caesar,* the Proscription scene saw Antony order the execution orders so casually that it openly revealed the amoral and unscrupulous nature of the parleys: as in gangster films, human life could be negotiated like any other commodity. The first meeting of the Triumvirs in *Antony and Cleopatra* was also performed as a meeting of gangsters, with their "bodyguards" standing behind them, regularly nodding their assent and making their threatening presences unavoidable. Antony (Alun Raglan) kept his scruffy, warm and malicious air from one play to the next. Contrasting with Octavius' pristine supporters, he could instantly be spotted as an insubordinate element in this formal world, confidently wearing his shirt unbuttoned and keeping his hair disheveled. His rivalry with Octavius was made obvious from the Proscription scene onwards, as he made fun of Octavius' "youth" and looked around the stage, overtly bored, when Octavius spoke. However, Octavius Caesar (Byron Mondahl) was played, against the text and history, as a man almost as old as Antony – a character *à la* Tony Soprano, a bit heavy and almost bald. Octavius was a sordid politician eventually managing to get to the top of the game, an arrogant political leader rather than a soldier, who barely hid his contempt for Lepidus (Paul Brendan) and his hostility towards Antony under his respect of previous agreements. As his power grew, the production revealed his hypocrisy, having him publicly weep over Antony's sword and touch the fresh blood on it, before rubbing it from his hands with revulsion as he left the stage. The production took advantage of the combined plays to make Octavius' obsession with the ghost of the dead Caesar more blatant: his journey from one play to the next did not allow him to forget. When Pompey referred to Cleopatra having been brought to Caesar in a carpet, Octavius reeled away, as if he could not bear any mention of Caesar without feeling weak and sick. On the contrary, Antony's lack of concern with the memory of

Caesar was emphasized through the joint production. Almost a peripheral figure in the first installment, Antony developed as a more complex character while following a trajectory he had begun to take in the second half of *Julius Caesar*, callously using the momentous murder of Caesar as an opportunity to gain power. While Octavius, who had stayed in masculine Rome, embodied remembrance for the father figure, Antony, by the start of the second play, had been hypnotized by Egypt's pleasures, which had made him forget the past even more.

Cleopatra, played by Lucy Black, ruled with expert regal assurance over a female-dominated sanctuary filled with bright colors and comfortably stuffed chairs, contrasting with the sternness of Rome and its hard seats. Egypt was a world in which political strategies were decided out of passion and instinct rather than reason. The production took advantage of Lucy Black's small body to stage amusing moments. In Antony and Cleopatra's first scene together, they cavorted on a *chaise longue* before an imposing Alun Raglan engulfed the tiny Black in his dressing gown. But Cleopatra's size was not a sign of weakness. Impulsive, passionate, changeable and capable of great humor, the Egyptian queen could also become dangerously violent when displeased or angered. In contrast to Raglan who played Antony, Lucy Black had also been with the company from its creation, which was seen in the reviews as giving her an advantage in the relationship; she was even called a "SATTF veteran," merging the idea of acting experience with that of belligerence.[239] For the second time in the joint productions' history, after the 2008 "Shakespeare Theatre Company" performances, the reviews could hardly find any fault with the Egyptian queen's performance, perhaps confirming a trend in which praising Cleopatra has now been made safe through the repetitions of a male-driven sequelization, but all the same presenting the productions as sites of negotiation in which the scales have tipped towards a fuller recognition of female power.

[239] See Jeremy Brien's review for *The Stage*, 2 April, < www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/24006/antony-and-cleopatra >, and Laura Snoad, *Suityourself magazine*, <www.suityourselfmagazine.co.uk/theatre-review-–-antony-and-cleopatra/>.

Lucy Black was said to be "mesmerizing,"[240] "feisty […], twinkling, […] giving a performance which goes to the histrionic heart of Cleopatra's character,"[241] "captur[ing] the pride, rage and insecurity of this larger than life character with immense skill,"[242] "superb […], charismatic […], wholly the woman who has long known absolute power […], her voice is clear, emphatic and tonally varied."[243] The difficult acting combination between the woman of passion and the woman of power – a problem summed up by Laura Snoad as "portraying Lady Thatcher as a Romantic lead" – was considered successfully achieved, and regularly praised as one of the assets of the production. Cleopatra succeeded in being regal, erotic and histrionic at the same time in an environment where no trace of Orientalist exoticism could be found, which was remarked on by the popular press, notably by the *Daily Mail* – "There's not a hint of the Nile, […] forget about palm trees and eunuchs bearing grapes"[244] – and *Metro* – "There is nothing ostensibly exotic about the Egyptian queen – clearly director Andrew Hilton's focus is on her psychological 'otherness'."[245] The popular press thus warned the potential viewers not to expect the "traditional" Orientalist trend of representation, while still emphasizing Cleopatra's unsettling distinctiveness. The feminist stance of the production was firmly set by granting all the women at the Egyptian court unusual power. Charmian and Iras were seen as channeling Cleopatra's impulsiveness and vigor, and contributing to appease her extreme, fluctuating moods. Without her female aids, Cleopatra seemed vulnerable and unsettled. Charmian and Iras were thus, in turn, friends, servants and assistants, obeying her, but also, in some ways, sharing her authority and supremacy. The Egyptian court was

[240] *Ibid.*
[241] Robert Gore-Langton, *The Daily Mail*, 2 April 2009, <www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/reviews/article-1166835/Antony-And-Cleopatra-Cleopatra-Shes-just-big-hearted-local-lass.html>.
[242] Laura Snoad, *Suityourself magazine*, <www.suityourselfmagazine.co.uk/theatre-review-–-antony-and-cleopatra/>
[243] Jeremy Kingston, *The Times*, 7 April 2009, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/stage/theatre/article6046135.ece>
[244] Robert Gore-Langton, <www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/reviews/article-1166835/Antony-And-Cleopatra-Cleopatra-Shes-just-big-hearted-local-lass.html>.
[245] Anna Britten, "Antony and Cleopatra is to die for," *Metro*, 3 April 2009, <www.metro.co.uk/metrolife/609315-antony-and-cleopatra-is-to-die-for>

definitely under female rule, contrasting with the male leadership of Rome. What is striking in this production is that, although Cleopatra was played by a white actress, the power conferred to her by her (racial and gender) otherness was apparent on stage, in the women's shared regal expertise – as well as off stage, through the actress' very name. Uncannily, the name "Black" was attached to Cleopatra in a paratextual way, revealing the production's quasi-subconscious to present a Black Egyptian queen and proclaim her strength.

If Orientalist exoticism was not used in the representation of Egypt or its queen, the denunciation of imperialism was perceived by the reviewers precisely through the joint presentations of the two plays: "[Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory's] first essay of the two Roman plays […] show, with an uncanny foresight for 21st century events in Iraq, what can happen when brutal regime change is not accompanied by a plan of control once the tyrant is dead."[246] *Antony and Cleopatra* is envisaged as dramatizing the aftermath of *Julius Caesar*, and connected to the political and military tragedy in Iraq in the 2000s after the debunking of Saddam Hussein. Our knowledge of contemporary geopolitics seems to act as yet another prism conditioning the viewing of *Antony* as *Caesar*'s sequel – as if, to a constructed logic of history, necessarily corresponded a constructed logic of literary works, to be presented in a given order. The joint presentation of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* regularly seems to assert that there is a specific path always followed by history, and that this path is echoed by the order in which the plays are normally staged.

The ideology of sequels

Whether it puts the stress on continuity or disjunction (whether unsettling or not), the performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel, through its use of similar sets and its emphasis on chronological and narrative orders, tends to give the impression that

[246] Jeremy Brien's review for *The Stage*, 19 February, <www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/23537/julius-caesar>

space and time are natural, unquestionable concepts. They tend to function very much like the American television series in the 2000s, which have been based on narratological and ideological innovations but have also regularly fallen into renewed traps of predictable storylines and stereotypes. The radical questioning of the social mores may be, in part, neutralized (or naturalized) by the insertion of the story into a formulaic development made of cliff-hangers and narrative arcs that often work on full-circle closure and psychological coherence. The ideological/social critique has to negotiate constantly with the repetition of standard serial features, so that the imbalance generated by the unsettling of the established order and conventional values is not fully compensated by a new kind of equilibrium, i.e. the expected formal patterns of the series.[247]

Logical narrative extension, whether on stage, in film sequels or in TV series, implicitly simplifies and freezes the notions of space and time. It denies the fact that, as Fredric Jameson has observed, space and time are "the consequence and projected afterimages of a certain state or structure of production and appropriation, of the social organization of productivity."[248] Instead of temporality and spatiality taking the free, dislocated forms of a dynamic chaos that challenges the predefined ideas of causality and determinism, this linear time that is constructed as always going forward serves a system inclined to align the notion of time with History, Progress and Civilization, while linking space to the concepts of conservative stasis and reassuring nostalgia through mere reproduction. The sequelization of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* appears to follow this trend of "progress" and "nostalgia," and may stem from a partially reactionary desire for a return to political and economic stability at times of upheaval, or for a restoration (or celebration) of the national representation through the appropriation of Roman imagery and epic history cycle. Paul Budra and Betty A.

[247] See Anne Urbanowki, "De la subversion d'un genre au genre de la subversion: Lynette Scavo est-elle si différente d'Amanda King?," *Les Pièges des nouvelles séries télévisées américaines*, ed. Sarah Hatchuel and Monica Michlin, *GRAAT On-Line* 6 (décembre 2009), 278-91 (<www.graat.fr/backissuepiegesseriestv.htm>).
[248] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 367.

Schellenberg wonder whether "the phenomenon of [...] desire for repetition-with-variation" is "acute at certain historical junctures" and whether the creation of a sequel is "possible only under certain (repeating) cultural conditions."[249] It is certainly revealing that the grouped stagings of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* appeared at times when cinematic/televised versions also emphasized the serial aspect, as if the different media echoed one another at specific moments of culture and history.

The tendency of directors and spectators alike to view Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s logical succession is also a consequence of the unusually large intertext of plays from the early modern period onwards which not only conflated the two plots, but constructed an "Ur-plot" of Julius Caesar's encounter with Cleopatra. While calling into question the "natural" orders of history, determinist chronology and textual hierarchy, the intertextual network of early modern plays of the lives of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Cleopatra paradoxically encouraged the teleological and romantic sequelization of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Likewise, twentieth-century films have created connections between Shakespeare's two plays by increasingly representing them as stemming from the same dramatic Ur-plot—the affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra. What can be witnessed is the progressive generation of a saga, through the creation of what we can retrospectively identify as prequels, sequels and remakes.

[249] Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg, "Introduction," *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 17.

3. “Triple-turn’d whore!”:

Cleopatra in an Intertextual Triangle of Desire

The Secret Subtext of Mimetic Desire: Shakespeare’s minimal allusions to Cleopatra’s past affairs

Numerous plays based on the lives of Caesar and Cleopatra refer to events that antedate the historical period dramatized in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. They send the readers and/or spectators back to a ghost play that Shakespeare did not write but which has progressively taken shape in works written not only before, but also after, him. This rich intertext of plays creates a bottomless hierarchy of texts, erasing the very notion of source, primacy and originality. The Caesar/Cleopatra intertext radically revises the traditional sense of a linear, determinist temporality that considers that the past can influence the present but not the reverse. However, this chapter will try to show that this intertext has also largely contributed to create narrative, temporal and “natural” links between Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, encouraging their sequelization and conflation in filmic works such as Joseph Mankiewicz’s 1963 *Cleopatra*.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare alludes on several occasions to Cleopatra’s love affair with Julius Caesar at a time when she was in her early twenties and trying to obtain the throne of Egypt, while he had come to Alexandria in chase of the fleeing Pompey after the battle of Pharsalus (48 B.C.). However, Shakespeare’s allusions are far more elusive and indirect than those which can be found in other plays based on the same storyline. André Green, in a short essay entitled “Le rêve de Cléopâtre,” suggests that Cleopatra sees in Antony the ghost of Julius Caesar. But, according to him, this fact remains hidden and unsaid in

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as well as *Antony and Cleopatra*, and represents the very secret of the two plays. This is how Green envisions the concealed subtext of both dramatic works:

> By succeeding to Julius Caesar in Cleopatra's bed, Mark Antony takes his place and imagines himself as the one who will be able to achieve what Caesar had started so well. Cleopatra, in her love for Mark Antony, sees in him the shadow of Caesar that will allow her to make her interrupted dream come true. Antony longs to give Cleopatra what Caesar could not give her and turns Julius Caesar into this Ideal Ego. They love each other not only for what they are, but also for the fantasy they embody.[250]

In Green's view, Antony desires Cleopatra because she was desired by Caesar. Antony is less in love with the Egyptian queen than with the idea of being a new Caesar through the possession of her body. Green's hypothesis is very close to René Girard's theory of mimetic desire. According to Girard, subjects will always choose some other person as a model—and it is the model that will guide the desire for a specific object.[251] In this theory, desire is not spurred spontaneously in the subject's mind but generated by the model's own desire. A kind of mystification is involved since the subject rarely realizes that s/he wants not the object but to be the mediator/model; s/he only secondarily desires the object, and just because the mediator seems to want it. Far from being autonomous, Antony's desire for Cleopatra is viewed as being provoked by the desire of Caesar—the model—for this same object. The relationship between Antony and Cleopatra is, therefore, far from being direct, but *triangular*.

What Shakespeare only implies in a few indirect allusions, a large intertext of dramatic works has developed, extended and detailed, creating strong and logical links between the "Antony/Cleopatra" story, on the one hand, and the "Caesar/Cleopatra" story on the other. By disclosing what Green calls the "secret" of Shakespeare's two plays, by explicitly constructing connections between them through mimetic desire, the other dramatic texts

[250] André Green, "Le rêve de Cléopâtre," *Magazine littéraire* 421 (2003), 64. My translation from the French: "En succédant à Jules César dans le lit de Cléopâtre, Marc Antoine prend sa place et s'imagine comme celui qui pourra terminer ce qu'il avait si bien commence. Cléopâtre, au cœur de son amour pour Marc Antoine, voit en lui l'ombre de César qui lui permettra d'accomplir son rêve interrompu. De son côté, Antoine brûle d'offrir à Cléopâtre ce que César n'a pu lui donner et fait de Jules César son Idéal du Moi. Chacun d'eux aime l'autre, non pas seulement pour ce qu'il est mais aussi pour le fantasme qu'il incarne à ses yeux."

[251] See René Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

create the very conditions for sequelization and conflation. The intertext of plays achieves this unmasking of Shakespeare's hidden subtext by putting the stress on specific narrative elements:

1) the character of Caesarion—the physical link between Caesar and Cleopatra—is made more prominent;

2) Cleopatra's attempts at seducing the second Caesar (Octavius) are shown more explicitly, drawing parallels with her seduction of the first Caesar;

3) comparisons between Cleopatra's different lovers infuse the various plays;

4) and the actual meeting of Caesar and Cleopatra is dramatized in "prequels" that sometimes challenge Shakespeare's views on the historical events.

The intertext of dramatic works thus generates a hypertextual, kaleidoscopic Ur-play at the root of both Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The effect is to undermine the two Shakespearean plays (by explicitly revealing what they hide) while bringing them closer together. Paradoxically, the unsettling effect is thwarted since it eventually serves to create a romantic saga out of the two Shakespearean plays.

Emphasizing Caesarion: Samuel Daniel's 1593 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* and Walter Savage Landor's 1856 *Antony and Octavius*

In Shakespeare's *Antony*, when Octavius angrily reports that Antony and Cleopatra displayed themselves as the Pharaohs of Egypt, he briefly mentions Caesarion, the child that Cleopatra is supposed to have had with Julius Caesar after their affair together:

> I' th' market place on a tribunal silver'd
> Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
> Were publicly enthron'd. At the feet sat
> Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
> And all the unlawful issue that their lust
> Since then hath made between them. (*ANT*, 3.6.1-8)

In one mere line, Octavius gives vent to his resentment for "Caesarion, whom they call [his] father's son," who could thus threaten Octavius' inheritance of Julius' powerful name and legitimacy to rule. But many plays structured around the Antony/Cleopatra plot allude to the offspring of Caesar and Cleopatra much more often than Shakespeare did. Shakespeare's relative silence around Caesarion, but also around the illegitimate children that Antony had with Cleopatra, may be the symptom, to quote Francesca T. Royster, of "a larger discomfort with the sexual reproduction of racially other children that haunts his works."[252] In the non-Shakespearean plays based on the same plot, the character of Caesarion becomes more prominent: it contributes to making the spectators/readers more intensely aware of a story common to both Julius Caesar and Cleopatra – to making them more conscious of a "Caesar/Cleopatra" prequel to the "Antony/Cleopatra" story.

Even in Shakespeare's time, the figure of Caesarion had already been made more important than the brief mention he receives in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (first performed in 1593-4) opens just after the death of Antony and dramatizes the last days of Cleopatra as she bargains for her life and honor with Octavius Caesar. Daniel wrote *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* just a couple of years after the Countess of Pembroke's *Antonius*, having been asked by the Countess herself to compose another play on the subject. In his dedication of the play "to the right honourable, the Lady Mary, Countess of Pembroke," Daniel gracefully links his writing to a "labour which she did impose/ Whose influence did predominate my Muse" (1-2),[253] and presents his work as a desire to give a match to Pembroke's *Antonius*: "[Pembroke's] well grac'd *Antony* (who all alone having remained long)/ Requir'd his *Cleopatra*'s company" (14-16). As Pascale Aebischer has cogently analysed, "[t]he two plays are thus themselves turned into the lovers they are

[252] Francesca T. Royster, *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 52

[253] Samuel Daniel, "The Tragedie of Cleopatra," in *The Complete Works In Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, Vol. 3, ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963).

concerned with, with Daniel's tragedy showing 'wifely submission'[254] to Pembroke's."[255] But the chiasmus in the plays' respective authors and titles – a female author writing on Antony, a male author subsequently writing on Cleopatra – contributes to blurring the "submission" of one play to the other, or of one protagonist to the other, and interrogates the gender roles and "authority," both inside and outside the plays. As Daniel's play starts, Antony is already dead and cannot give his version of the story, and Cleopatra occupies the dramatic space. In the 1607 edition, she actually opens the play with a speech in which she hopes to be able to save her son Caesarion from the predatory hands of Octavius. Caesarion, therefore, appears from the start as one of the primary concerns of the play:

> Come Rodon, here, convey from out this coast
> This precious gem, the chiefest I have left,
> The jewel of my soul I value most,
> My dear Caesario: Save him, save my theft,
> Guide him to India, lead him far from hence. […]
> He, may give limits to the boundless pride
> Of fierce Octavius, and abate his might,
> Great Julius' offspring, he may come to guide
> The empire of the world, as by his right.
>
> (Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 1.1.1-16)[256]

Caesarion is turned into a precious jewel, an item subject to Cleopatra's "theft", a term which presents Cleopatra's son as taken twice from Rome – the Egyptian queen stole it from Julius Caesar after their affair years ago, and now tries to make him escape Octavius Caesar. Symbolically the name of Octavius, in this speech, is not followed by that of "Caesar," a signifier which is transferred onto Julius's child, marking his Roman origin as well as his destiny (so Cleopatra wishes) to lead the Empire as the legitimate ruler in the blood lineage – being "Julius' offspring" – a status that Octavius Caesar cannot claim, having only been

[254] Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 132.
[255] Pascale Aebischer, "Cleopatra in the closet: Sexuality, Race and Royalty in Jodelle, Garnier, Pembroke and Daniel," unpublished paper. I am very grateful to Pascale Aebischer for giving me the opportunity to read her paper before publication.
[256] Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* in *Selections from the Poetical Works of Samuel Daniel*, ed. John Morris (Bath: Charles Clark, 1855).

adopted as Julius Caesar's heir. The threat posed by the multiplication of Caesar's name is broached later in Samuel Daniel's play, in a discussion between two philosophers:

ARIUS And sure I cannot see how this can lie
With great Augustus safety and renown,
T'extinguish thus the race of Antony
And Cleopatra, to confirm his own.
PHILOSTRATUS Why must their issue be extinguished?
ARIUS It must: Antillus is already dead.
PHILOSTRATUS And what Caesario sprung of Caesars blood?
ARIUS Plurality of Caesars are not good.
(Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 3.1.101-8)

Even if Antillus—the son that Cleopatra had with Antony—is already dead, Octavius cannot tolerate to leave the most dangerous heir at large, as the mere duplication of Caesar's name might blur the message of supreme authority it should convey. What Shakespeare does not treat—the wish of a mother to protect her child and her royal lineage, as well as Octavius' strong desire to eliminate a potential rival—Daniel turns into a major element of the plot: the character of Rodon, who is appointed by Cleopatra to bring Caesarion to safety, is eventually bribed, and he hands over the child to Octavius' camp.

The events involving the fate of Caesarion are also dramatized extensively in William Savage Landor's 1856 *Antony and Octavius: Scenes for the Study*. Walter Savage Landor's *Antony and Octavius* is composed of twelve consecutive poems in dialogue, starting just before the battle of Actium and ending with Octavius reporting his complete victory to his sister, Octavia. In its preface, Landor's play discloses its Shakespearean ascendancy while asserting its lower achievement:

> Few have obtained the privilege of entering Shakespeare's garden […] Let us never venture where he is walking […] Enough is it for us to ramble and loiter in the narrower paths below, and to look up at the various images which, in the prodigality of his wealth, he has placed in every quarter. Before you, reader, are some scattered leaves gathered from under them: carefuller hands may arrange and compress them in a book of their own, and thus for a while preserve them.[257]

[257] *Ibid.*, v-vi.

Leaves are metaphorically connected to words, and herbanums to books, as if Landor was seeing himself as preserving Shakespeare's works by inventing conversations between the characters that inhabited the Shakespearean plays, which are considered far superior and daunting. But these "scattered leaves" affirm their differences. The title of Landor's piece erases the character of Cleopatra, thus presenting the play as the race for power between the two Triumvirs and placing it as a direct successor to *Julius Caesar*. The replacement, in the title, of *Cleopatra* by *Octavius* emphasizes the male focus of the drama, while symbolically marking the homoerotic tension between the two men – a tension which is usually only made clear through the arranged marriage between Antony and Octavia. In Landor's play, Caesarion becomes a speaking character, embodying the physical bond that existed between Caesar and Cleopatra, as is made explicit in the lines uttered by the young boy when he speaks of his mother and father:

> CAESARION And had you ever seen my father too!
> He was as fond of her as she of me,
> And often bent his thoughtful brow o'er mine
> To kiss what she had kist. (Landor's *Antony and Octavius*, 8.128-32)[258]

Through this confusion of pronouns ("he," "her," "she," "me"), Caesarion appears as the link between his mother and father, almost as an intermediary in their love-making – an erotic displacement from father to son. Being the object through which Julius Caesar displayed his love for the Egyptian queen, Caesarion is seen, as in Daniel's play, as a gem that Cleopatra has to protect if she is to preserve her royal dynasty. In the fourth act of Landor's play, Cleopatra believes that her son's name will act as a screen preserving his own life, and that Octavius Caesar can only be moved by the looks and voice that Caesarion has directly inherited from Julius Caesar:

> CLEOPATRA Caesarion, my first-born, my dearest one,
> Is safely shielded by his father's name:

[258] Walter Savage Landor, *Antony and Octavius: Scenes for the Study* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1856).

He loves his brothers, he may save them both,
He only can: I would fain take the advice
Of Dolabella, fain would venture him
In Caesar's camp: the father's voice and look
Must melt him, for his heart is not so hard
That he could hurt so beautiful a child;
Nay, what man's is?

CHARMIAN But trust not the two younger;
Their father will not help them in their need.

CLEOPATRA Caesarion in fit hour will plead for them.

(Landor's *Antony and Octavius*, 4.-140-50)

The difference in status between Antony's children and Julius Caesar's child is underlined, but Cleopatra is confident that Caesarion will be able save the lives of his brothers as well. Caesarion seems to be endowed not only with the name of Caesar, but also with the features and natural authority of his late father. The threat posed to Octavius is thus made even more pressing, and Caesarion's "shield" of "his father's name" will actually turn into the very cause of his death. If Landor's play first makes a distinction between the sons of Cleopatra according to their fathers, it then moves on to a blurring of paternity, as Antony reveals to Dolabella:

I never thought she would permit Caesarion
To leave her side; hardly can I myself
Bear separation from that brave young boy;
I love him as my own. (Landor's *Antony and Octavius*, 6.5-8)

Antony may adopt Caesarion as his own in a loving gesture toward his mother, but he may also claim ownership of the boy because it amounts to presenting himself as another Julius Caesar, taking the place of the father figure and role model. But if Antony wishes Caesarion to be his, the boy himself is attracted by his mirror figure, Octavius, whom he would like to follow to Rome to visit the town of his father. A scene, which cannot be found in any other drama explored for this study, shows the meeting between the two "Caesars":

CAESARION But will you really carry us to Rome
In triumph? Thro' the streets, and up the hill,
And over arches . . foolish folks say under . .

With flowers all round them? O! what joy to see
The people that once loved my father so!
OCTAVIUS We will do all that may oblige the queen.
And yet she shudders at the very thought
Of those fresh honours which delight my heart.
(Landor's *Antony and Octavius* 8.85-92)

The dramatic irony is reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Richard III* when the little princes, heirs to the English throne, jest and play with their uncle Richard, unaware of the fate that has been decided for them. For Caesarion, to be carried to Rome in triumph means to follow the footsteps of his father and is a mark of honor rather than shame. But Agrippa, Octavius' admiral, soon speaks up against a triumphal procession with Caesarion, for fear of mutiny:

[…] The mother must
Adorn the triumph, but that boy would push
Rome, universal Rome, against the steeds
That should in ignominy bear along
The image of her Julius. Think; when Antony
Show'd but his vesture, sprang there not tears, swords,
Curses? and swept they not before them all
Who shared the parricide? If such result
Sprang from the torn garment, what must from the sight
Of that fresh image which calls back again
The latest of the Gods […]
And this inheritance of mighty kings.
No such disgrace must fall on Caesar's son.
Spare but the boy, and we are friends for ever.
(Landor's *Antony and Octavius*, 8.175-191)

According to Agrippa, Caesarion, having inherited the looks and godlike sacredness of Julius Caesar, might stir the Romans to the same cataclysmic reaction they had when they saw Mark Antony display the bloody and torn toga of their Dictator. In this passage, the audience is asked to picture an imaginary event in the future (Caesarion carried in triumph through the streets of Rome), and to connect it with an event that belongs both to a historical past and to stage history (the murder of Caesar followed by Antony's oration). Landor's play turns Caesarion into a potential spectral figure in a reenactment of the ghost coming to haunt Brutus on the eve of the battle in *Julius Caesar*. What could take place is merged with what already

did – in history and on stage – while metatheatrically linking Caesarion's planned death with the murder of his father in *Julius Caesar*. When Cleopatra's son is finally knifed by Scopas, he significantly conjures up the figure of his father, who had also been stabbed:

> O father! father! where is now that face
> So gravely fond that bent o'er your Caesarion?
> And, mother! thou too gone! In all this gloom
> Where shall I find thee? Scopas! Scopas! help!
> (Landor's *Antony and Octavius*, 9.95-8)

The end of Cleopatra's son echoes that of his father in a scene that, once again, contributes to linking moments between plays. The death of Caesarion is stamped with the absence of both his father and his mother—their annihilations being respectively re-enacted and anticipated through the stabbing of their son.

In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Agrippa uses an image of productive farming to describe the former sexual union of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, when the Egyptian silt symbolically met the Roman ploughshare to eventually produce Caesarion:

> AGRIPPA Royal wench!
> She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed.
> He plough'd her, and she cropp'd. (*ANT*, 2.2.223-5)

This metaphor is also doubled with food imagery when Cleopatra herself takes us back to her past with Caesar in Act 1 scene 5, as she has been trying to while away the time:

> Broad-fronted Caesar,
> When thou wast here above the ground, I was
> A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey
> Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow. (*ANT*, 1.5.29-32)

In this mingling of sexuality and food, Cleopatra sees herself as a dish which has been handed from Pompey, through Caesar, to Antony. In an article entitled "Pompey as the Mythical Lover of Cleopatra," Waino S. Nyland claims that, though Shakespeare refers to the "great Pompey" as the lover of Cleopatra, this could not have been possible since Great Pompey

came to Egypt when Cleopatra was six or seven, and was killed immediately on Ptolemy's order when he returned to Alexandria in 48 B.C.[259] By constructing a Cleopatra who had affairs with the two most powerful men in the Roman world before she gave herself to Antony, Shakespeare insists on masculine anxiety and jealousy: Antony sees himself in a line of the many lovers that preceded him, which feeds his fear of being deserted during his last fight against Octavius:

> All is lost!
> This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me!
> My fleet hath yielded to the foe, and yonder
> They cast their caps up and carouse together
> Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore! (*ANT*, 4.12.9-13)

The expression "triple-turn'd whore" marks Cleopatra's successive shifts in political alliances and sexual unions, from her brother Ptolemy (to whom she was officially married) to Pompey, from Pompey to Julius, and from Julius to Antony. But it might also refer to Cleopatra's Roman encounters—from Pompey to Julius, from Julius to Antony, and from Antony to Octavius.

"Octavius and Cleopatra" – Seducing a Second Caesar: Samuel Daniel's 1593 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* and Thomas May's 1626 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*

If Shakespeare does not explicitly show Cleopatra trying to seduce Octavius, the other plays do—and they always do so by referring to the queen's previous affair with Julius Caesar. In Thomas May's 1626 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, Cleopatra hopes that she will be able to seduce Octavius and convince him to let her live honorably. She is certain that what worked with Julius Caesar and Antony can only succeed in winning the love of yet another Caesar:

[259] Waino S. Nyland, 'Pompey as the Mythical Lover of Cleopatra', *Modern Language Notes* 64.8 (1949), 515-16. The source for Shakespeare's play (Plutarch's *Lives*) mentions one of Pompey's sons, Gnaeus Pompey, as Cleopatra's former lover, but this supposition could also be historically groundless.

I long to hear what answer Caesar sends.
I do not know his temper, but he's young;
And why should I despair? are Cupid's fires
Extinguish'd quite? are all his arrows spent?
Or is this beauty, that can boast the conquest
Of Julius Caesar; and great Antony,
So waned now, it cannot move the temper
Of one, whom youth makes fit for Cupid's conquest?
(May's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 4.89-96)

Octavius Caesar is explicitly positioned in the line of Cleopatra's former affairs with Roman leaders. The Egyptian queen's conquests are viewed as military victories, notably through the two references to Cupid, the son of Venus and Mars, thus merging together the ideas of love and war. As Cleopatra wonders if she is still able to lure the new Caesar, the play reminds the audience of her past love for the first Caesar. This is also the case in Samuel Daniel's 1593 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, in which Cleopatra entreats Octavius to be merciful by reminding him of the way Julius Caesar dealt with her:

Thy chiefest glory is thy lenity.
Th'inheritance of mercy from him take,
Of whom thou hast thy fortune, and thy name.
Great Caesar me a queen at first did make,
And let not Caesar now confound the same.
Read here these lines which still I keep with me,
The witness of his love and favours ever,
And God forbid it should be said of thee,
That Caesar wrong'd the favoured of Caesar.
For look what I have been to Antony,
Think thou the same I might have been to thee.
(Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 3.2.69-74)

In her speech, Cleopatra recalls the fact that Julius Caesar helped her obtain the throne of Egypt, a piece of information that is never provided in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The argument used by Cleopatra – that what the first Caesar made, the next should not destroy – appeals to Octavius's desire to see himself as the direct successor of Julius Caesar. But Cleopatra does not merely allude to a political succession—she constructs an imaginary story line in which Octavius would also be replacing his great-uncle in her sheets, thus doubling

politics with sexuality. In both May's and Daniel's tragedies, Cleopatra offers the glimpse of a play which could have been called *Octavius and Cleopatra*, and which is actually in accordance with the argument of Daniel's play, starting as it does right after the death of Antony and focusing exclusively on the confrontation between Cleopatra and Octavius. The play toys with the idea that Cleopatra, having formerly seduced the first Caesar will be able to enrapture the second as well. As Dolabella says to Titus in Daniel's play:

> And now if that she could but bring a view
> Of that rare beauty she in youth possest,
> The argument wherewith she overthrew
> The wit of Julius Caesar and the rest
> Then happily Augustus might relent,[260]
> Whilst powerful love, far stronger than ambition,
> Might work in him a mind to be content
> To grant her asking in the best condition.
>
> (Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 5.1.77-84)

As Dolabella hopes that history will repeat itself, that Cleopatra will be able to use her beauty once more to her advantage with Octavius, the affair that took place almost twenty years earlier between Julius Caesar and the Egyptian queen is again recalled in the political bargaining that occurs at the end of the play. But the fact that Octavius will not "relent" and will not "grant her asking," marks the definite conclusion of Cleopatra's course. The pattern of mimetic desire that made her seduce all the great rulers of the Roman world has now ceased to repeat itself.[261] But while Daniel's tragedy focuses on the non-reproduction of desire in the character of Octavius, other plays have dealt explicitly with how Antony duplicated the desire felt by Julius Caesar. For René Girard, what the subject imitates is the desire of an "other." This "other" or mediator of desire is identified as the model and

[260] The mention of "Augustus" is here anachronistic since Octavius Caesar was to choose that name three years after Cleopatra's death.

[261] For Barbara Baines, though Antony stands as Octavius' model for emulation and should generate mimetic desire for Cleopatra, Octavius does not fall in love with her because Antony has also become his *desired object*. In Shakespeare's play, when Antony returns to Rome, Octavius feels victorious in his rivalry with Cleopatra for the possession of Antony. For Baines, "Octavius finds in his sister, whose name is so like his own, the perfect surrogate through which he may claim Antony." in "Girard's Doubles and *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Theory in Practice: Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), 27.

consequently the subject's rival, and the goal of mimetic desire is the appropriation of the desired object. In various plays, Julius Caesar appears as Antony's role model and Cleopatra as the object he longs to possess. Thomas May's *Tragedy of Cleopatra* revealingly starts with a discussion between three Romans, Titius, Plancus and Canidius, who are commenting on the fact that Antony was bound to fall for the woman that Julius Caesar had previously doted on:

PLANCUS That face of hers, that beauty in the bud
Not fully blown, in years of innocence […]
A wretched prisoner in her brother's Court,
Yet then I say that charming face could move
The manly temper of wise Julius Caesar. […]
When he pursu'd the flying Pompey hither,
His sword yet reeking in Pharsaliaes slaughter
At sight of her became a doting Lover:
And could we think that our Antonius
A man not master of that temperance
That Caesar had, could find a strength to guard
His soul against that beauty now set off
With so much wealth and majesty?
CANIDIUS No surely.
I did not think Antonius was an Eunuch.
Nor could I have believ'd he had been worthy
To be a successor in Caesar's power,
Unless he had succeeded him in her.
(May's *Tragedy of Cleopatra* 1.25-47)

This exchange presents a recalling of the historical context in which Cleopatra and Julius Caesar met—a Cleopatra in her early twenties, exiled from the royal palace, trying to obtain the throne back from her young brother, Ptolemy—a context which is once more absent from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Plancus bases his reflections on Cleopatra's power of seduction and on Antony's lack of character: if a warrior like Julius Caesar, with his moderation and wisdom, had fallen for a "not fully blown" Cleopatra, Antony could only be enticed by the Egyptian queen in her full bloom. But the argument of political legitimacy soon follows: for Canidius, Antony had to conquer Cleopatra if he wished to present himself as Caesar's heir. "To be a successor" of Caesar, one needs to "succeed" him as Cleopatra's

lover. Mimetic desire reveals itself in the double sense of "succeed" – to win and to follow. The two meanings are actually merged, since managing to "follow" Caesar's footsteps is to "win" (both politically and sexually). Cleopatra is presented as a trophy that the great Romans obtain when they reach a powerful position, as the same Canidius later explains:

> [...] this Egyptian Queen
> Is a state-beauty, and ordain'd by fate
> To be possest by them that rule the world.
> Great Pompey's son enjoy'd her first, and pluck'd
> Her Virgin blossom. When that Family,
> Whose ruin fill'd the World, was overthrown,
> Great Julius next came in as conqueror
> To have his share, and as he did in power,
> Succeeded him in Cleopatra's love.
> Now our Antonius takes his turn, and thinks
> That all the legions, all the swords, that came
> To make his greatness up when Julius di'd,
> Could give no greater privilege to him
> Than power to be the servant to this Queen.
> Thus whosoev'r in Rome be conqueror
> His laurel wreath is Cleopatra's love. (May's *Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 1.55-70)

In this listing of Cleopatra's famous lovers, the queen appears with the derogatory status of a prize that is passed on from one Roman ruler to the next, but also in the flattering position of the desired object that can still choose her romantic interests, overpowering them in a challenged master-slave relationship. Paradoxically, each owner becomes the "servant" of a queen who is presented as the only fixed and permanent character, witnessing the succession of transient leaders at the head of Rome. Again, what is evoked subliminally by Shakespeare in Antony's simple (but densely meaningful) cry, "Triple-turn'd whore! (4.12.13), is developed and unfolded in the non-Shakespearean plays.

Comparing lovers: Samuel Brandon's *Octavia* (1598), Elizabeth Cary's 1613 *Mariam,* Charles Sedley's 1677 *Antony and Cleopatra* and John Dryden's *1678 All for Love*

In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the references to past lovers invite a discourse which draws comparison between the love affairs, as in this dialogue between Cleopatra and her waiting woman:

CLEOPATRA Did I, Charmian,
Ever love Caesar so?
CHARMIAN O that brave Caesar!
CLEOPATRA Be chok'd with such another emphasis!
Say "the brave Antony."
CHARMIAN The valiant Caesar!
CLEOPATRA By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth
If thou with Caesar paragon again
My man of men!
CHARMIAN By your most gracious pardon,
I sing but after you.
CLEOPATRA My salad days,
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood,
To say as I said then. (*ANT*, 1.5.66-75)

Cleopatra rates her different feelings of love by asking another woman to assess her various passions. Inner feelings are appraised through exterior, theatrical gestures and words. Charmian becomes Cleopatra's reflection, as is made clear by the textual sharing in the passage, Charmian either starting or finishing her mistress's line. She imitates Cleopatra's former ways and becomes a mirrored self that Cleopatra can then discard as exterior to her own self. It is as if the queen were molting, snake-like or actor-like, acquiring a new skin each time she dismisses a former love and swears her allegiance to a new one. Cleopatra's youth and "green" sexuality are again evoked through the food metaphor in the expression "salad days." The queen of Egypt appears as a character who has been tasted by several men, having already experienced many lives and journeyed through several plays, although these "salad days" were never written by Shakespeare. What Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* alludes to in terms of Cleopatra's former love for Julius Caesar has also been expanded in the other plays built around the same storyline.

In Charles Sedley's 1677 *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra's waiting woman, Iras, is surprised to hear her mistress speak so highly of Antony after he died. She compares Cleopatra's reaction to the way she received the news of Julius Caesar's violent death in the Capitol:

IRAS When Julius Caesar in the Senate fell,
Where were these thoughts? and yet he lov'd as well.
CLEOPATRA He lov'd me not! he was ambitious he;
And but at looser times took thought of me.
Glory and empire fill'd his restless mind:
He knew not the soft pleasures of the kind.
Our joys were frighted still with fresh alarms,
And new designs still forc't him from my arms.
But my Antonius lov'd me with his soul.
No cares of empire did his flame control.
I was his friend, the partner of his mind;
Our days were joyful, and our nights were kind:
He liv'd for me, and I will die for him.
(Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.1.451-63)

As in Shakespeare's play, Cleopatra denies the importance of her former love, but contrary to Shakespeare's play, this denial is contextualized with a precise reference to a location, the Senate, which brings the readers or/and spectators directly back to the events displayed in *Julius Caesar*. The previous love story is also given more flesh, with details on Caesar's supposed political preoccupations and military priorities, which are contrasted with Antony's sole amorous concern for Cleopatra. Reasons are, therefore, provided for Cleopatra's preference for Antony, as if Sedley's play added a psychological, almost "pre-Stanislavskian," subtext to Shakespeare's work. John Dryden's 1678 *All for love* adds not only a subtext but whole interpolated scenes, in which Cleopatra belittles her former affair with Caesar. Cleopatra meets Antony's legitimate wife in a highly melodramatic moment. Octavia accuses the Egyptian queen of loose morality, while describing her husband as a prey to the Egyptian queen's seductive skills, just as Caesar was:

OCTAVIA Your bonds are easy. You have long been practised
In that lascivious art. He's not the first

For whom you spread your snares: let Caesar witness.

CLEOPATRA I loved not Caesar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love. The worst your malice can
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine. (Dryden's *All for Love*, 3.427-34)

Cleopatra once more unsettles the usual master/slave or husband/wife relationship by presenting herself as Caesar's mistress both in sentimental and political terms, but she is again quick in recanting her past love for Caesar and in boasting her greater passion for Antony – a passion whose power questions the very legitimacy of Antony's marriage with Octavia. The cutting to size of this former relationship is also a way of soothing Antony's anxiety, of proving to him that, though he comes at the end of a line of lovers, he should consider himself as Cleopatra's one and only love interest. Earlier in Dryden's play, the Egyptian queen explains to Antony that she establishes a clear distinction between sexual possession and deep feelings:

CLEOPATRA You seem grieved […] that Caesar first
Enjoyed my love. […]
Not so, my lord:
He first possessed my person, you, my love;
Caesar loved me, but I loved Antony.
If I endured him after, 'twas because
I judged it due to the first name of men,
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force. (Dryden's *All for Love*, 2.346-58)

In this passage, Cleopatra constructs Julius Caesar as a sexual conqueror who practically raped her in exchange for political protection. In the chiasmic sentence "Caesar loved me, but I loved Antony," Cleopatra appears a pivotal figure between the two men, with Antony replacing Caesar for the better. The line "He first possessed my person, you, my love," suggests that Caesar only enjoyed Cleopatra's body but not her true affection, while its ambiguous structure merges the two lovers on the grammatical level – "my person"

coinciding with "you, my love." Antony is, therefore, on a subtextual level, also "possessed" by Julius Caesar – haunted by him as a role model. In Dryden's play, contrary to Shakespeare's, Antony is actually allowed to provide his own point of view on Caesar: he sees him as a thief of true affection, having interposed himself between two true lovers, but also as a mature man who enjoyed, much too soon, the body of a young girl:

> ANTONY When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
> Ere Caesar saw your eyes. […]
> Caesar stepped in, and, with a greedy hand
> Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red.
> Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord,
> And was, beside, too great for me to rival,
> But, I deserved you first, though he enjoyed you. […]
> I loved you still, and took your weak excuses,
> Took you into my bosom, stained by Caesar.
> (Dryden's *All for Love*, 2.262-76)

The speech reveals the paradoxes of mimetic desire. Antony admits that he fell in love with the object desired by his "lord," his model and mentor, but also a "rival" who left his blot on Cleopatra's body. In a perverse reversal, the fault falls back on the "stained" woman, who should be only too happy to be loved "still" and accepted again. As opposed to Shakespeare's play, Dryden's *All for Love* thus evokes the very beginnings of Antony's and Caesar's love for the queen of Egypt.

Although Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* does mention Cleopatra's first encounter with Caesar during his visit to Egypt in 48 B.C. (inspired by a passage in Plutarch's "The Life of Julius Caesar" from *Parallel Lives*),[262] Shakespeare's hint remains very brief and cryptic. It takes place in Act 2 scene 6, when Enobarbus tries to prevent Sextus Pompey from revealing

[262] "She only taking Apollodorus Sicilian of all her friends, took a little boat, and went away with him in it in the night, and came and landed hard by the foot of the castle. Then having. no other mean to come into the court without being known, she laid herself down upon a mattress or flock bed which Apollodorus her friend tied and bound up together like a bundle with a great leather thong, and so took her up on his back, and brought her thus hampered in this fardel unto Caesar, in at the castle gate. This was the first occasion (as it is reported) that made Caesar to love her : but afterwards, when he saw her sweet conversation and pleasant entertainment, he fell then in further likmg with her, and did reconcile her again unto her brother the king, with condition, that they two jointly should reign together." Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Julius Caesar* (London: George Gill, 1907), 51, 2040.

the details of the way Cleopatra, wrapped in a carpet, was brought by Apollodorus to Julius Caesar's room in the royal palace:

POMPEY	But, first or last, your fine Egyptian cookery
	Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar
	Grew fat with feasting there. […]
	And I have heard Apollodorus carried—
ENOBARBUS	No more of that! He did so.
POMPEY	What, I pray you?
ENOBARBUS	A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress. (*ANT*, 2.6.64-71)

Enobarbus may interrupt Pompey as he knows that this kind of talk might upset Antony who is present during the conversation, but he is also the one who finally discloses the crucial piece of information. Between erasure and revelation, this passage is symptomatic of Shakespeare's dramatic strategy regarding Cleopatra's former affair with Caesar. Everything is said and not said at the same time: Enorbarbus' exclamation "No more of that!" is soon followed by his own exposure of the past situation; but this situation remains partly mysterious: "a certain queen" clearly points to Cleopatra, but does not name her; "to Caesar in a mattress" says too much or too little, but conveys the idea of Cleopatra having, that night, become Caesar's "mistress" through the choice of the sound-related word "mattress" over "flock-bed, "sack," or "packet," terms that can be found in other plays). The passage thus generates glimpses of another possible play around the "Caesar and Cleopatra" plot, while precisely revealing that it will hide this former episode.

But Shakespeare's tension between revelation and secrecy contrasts with other dramatic works of the period, which disclose Cleopatra's affair with Julius Caesar, although they are not directly focused on the Cleopatra/Antony story. These works include Samuel Brandon's *The Tragicomedy of the Virtuous Octavia* (1598) and Lady Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam, the fair queen of Jewry* (written between 1602 and 1604, and published in 1613) – two plays focusing on heroic feminine virtue and epitomizing the ordeals of the beleaguered legitimate wife, either because of a philandering husband (in the case of Octavia) or a

tyrannical and jealous one (in the case of Mariam, married to Herod the Great). In its Argument, Samuel Brandon's *Octavia* asserts its status as a tale parallel to the love story of Antony and Cleopatra, of which it appears to fill in the gaps:

> Mark Antony, to confirm an inviolable league of amity, between Caesar and himself, took to wife Octavia, the sister of Caesar. Antony and Caesar falling at debate, met at Tarentum with their armies, and had been the cause of much bloodshed: but that they were appeased, by the wisdom of Octavia. Not long after, Antony going to make war with the Parthians, and coming into Syria, the place renewed the memory, and the memory revived the long intermitted love, he once bare to Cleopatra the Queen of Egypt: he therefore, wholly subjecting himself to the desire of this Cleopatra, forsaketh his virtuous wife Octavia. Whereupon, her brother Caesar disdaining that she should suffer so great an indignity, maketh war upon Antony, and overcometh him, first at Actium, and then at Pelusium, to the utter ruin and destruction, both of Antony and Cleopatra. (Brandon's *Octavia*, *The Argument*)[263]

Brandon's drama shifts the point of view; instead of focusing on Cleopatra, it turns Octavia into the pivotal figure who, though rejected by Antony acts heroically and stoically, even going as far as to appease the two rival armies of her husband and brother. In this new apprehension of the plot, Cleopatra can only appear as the arch enemy, whose lack of morality contrasts with Octavia's virtue. In Act 3, as Plancus reports to Octavia's brother on Antony's and Cleopatra's coronation in Egypt, Octavius recalls the "carpet" episode when Cleopatra met Julius Caesar for the first time:

PLANCUS Scorning the baseness of us mortal men.
Clad like the Goddess Isis she did go:
Then what hard heart would not have thought her so.
CAESAR When that Apollodorus on his back,
A flock-bed did to Julius Caesar bring:
With thongs of leather trust up like a sack;
As though there had been need of such a thing,
Where was the Goddess when this came to pass?
PLANCUS She, noble she, was riding on her ass.

(Brandon's *Octavia*, 3.2.116-24)

Plancus and Octavius proceed to debunk the figure of Cleopatra. From her royal and divine status that distinguishes her from other human beings, she is turned into a common woman brought roughly to Caesar. The derogatory remark that pictures Cleopatra as "riding on her

[263] Brandon, Samuel. *The Tragicomedy of the Virtuous Octavia* (London: William Ponsonbye, 1598).

ass" is here to mark the depravity of her voracious sexuality, while further commenting on her status as goddess Isis incarnated. The link between Isis and the ass can be found in *The Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, also referred to as *The Golden Ass*, a two-century Latin novel published in England in 1566 in a translation by W. Adlington. The plot revolves around Lucius' endless curiosity and desire to practice magic. As he tries to transform into a bird with a spell, he accidentally turns into an ass. After a long journey, both literal and metaphorical, he is saved by the intervention of the goddess Isis, whom he decides to worship. The story has inspired the transformation of Bottom in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but it has been exploited by Brandon's *Octavia* to deflate the myth of Cleopatra, reflexively using a tale of metamorphoses to transform Cleopatra/Isis into a woman "enamour'd of an ass" (*MND*, 4.1.74). Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to respond to Brandon's *Octavia*, since it is now Cleopatra who transforms Octavius metaphorically into an "ass/ Unpolicied" in her dying speech (5.2.300-1). As a veil is placed on Cleopatra's first encounter with Julius Caesar, the myth of an Isis-like Cleopatra is somehow protected.

However, what Shakespeare's play hides, Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam* continues to expose. Mariam is tied to a destructively jealous husband (Herod the Great) who has killed her grandfather and brother. Oscillating between the status of victim and rebel, Mariam challenges Herod's tyrannous rules and actions, and refuses to fit herself to his expectations. Her choice to be inflexible rather than submissive works as a double act of disobedience – both political and domestic. Herod's unrequited feelings for Mariam will lead him to believe the false rumors of his wife's unfaithfulness, and eventually put her to death. Mariam embodies a certain kind of female heroism and stoicism, based on innocence, integrity and chastity. As she notably refuses to play the game of the Petrachan mistress sued by her lover[264] – a role that Herod would like her to perform – Mariam appears as an anti-Cleopatra.

[264] Nancy A Gutierrez, "Valuing Mariam: Genre Study and Feminist Analysis," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 10.2 (Autumn 1991), 240.

It is, therefore, no wonder that the Egyptian queen should appear in her speech as a figure she abhors:

> MARIAM The wanton Queen that never lov'd for love,
> False Cleopatra, wholly set on gain […]
> That face that did captive great Julius' fate,
> That very face that was Antonius' bane.
> That face that to be Egypt's pride was born,
> That face that all the world esteem'd so rare,
> Did Herod hate, despise, neglect, and scorn,
> When with the same, he Mariam did compare.
> (Cary's *Mariam*, 4.8.13-26)[265]

As Mariam recalls the fact that her husband Herod was not seduced by the Egyptian queen, she summons up both Antony and Julius Caesar as former "captives" to a Cleopatra who becomes linked, in this speech, to dishonesty, greed, immorality and ruin. The "That face" anaphora puts the stress on semblance, cosmetics and acting, from which Mariam has sought to distance herself. As playwright Elizabeth Cary unsettles the male-constructed image of feminine virtue, Mariam refuses to use her looks to gain power as Cleopatra did. In this conjuring of the classical Roman figures such as Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Cary writes a play that extends the saga sideways, but constructs a heroine who posits herself against the Egyptian queen's ethos. By doing so, Cary not only recalls the past affair with Julius Caesar, but judges it and disapproves of it. Revealingly, neither Cary's Mariam nor Brandon's Octavia feature Cleopatra as one of their speaking characters. The Egyptian queen is made mute and cannot counter the remarks on her morality and her past affairs. This alternative vision of the myth that harked on Cleopatra's relationship with Julius Caesar and emphasized her long line of lovers contributes to revealing in the open what Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* contained through allusive references at best.

Renaissance closet drama has thus generated a complex intertext that develops a story (Cleopatra's affair with Caesar) at the root of both Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony*

[265] Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam, the fair queen of Jewry*, London: Thomas Creede, 1613.

and Cleopatra. While it questions Shakespeare's vision, it has also brought the two plays closer together and influenced the way they have been envisaged, read and performed as joint stories. It could be opposed that closet drama had a marginal status which could not have had such power over performance history. This argument, that sees the genre as minor, has already been used to explain why closet drama had attracted female writers.[266] But Nancy A Gutierrez, in a 1991 feminist analysis of Cary's *Mariam*, has claimed that "closet drama is actually a form of effective mainstream cultural engagement." The spectators and readers of closet drama were definitely more limited than those of popular drama, but the genre was widespread in the aristocracy which could use the plays as vehicles "for strategic political comment." As the aristocrats controlled the government, as well as the arts through the patronage system, such important (albeit small) dramatic genre can thus hardly be defined as marginal, but embodied an "elite discourse for a coterie audience"[267] which could then have a large, indirect influence.

The Elizabethan and Jacobean closet dramas following the Senecan conventions (Samuel Daniel's 1594 *Cleopatra*, Samuel Brandon's 1598 *Octavia* and Elizabeth Cary's 1604's *Mariam*) have been joined by Caroline drama (Thomas May's 1626 *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*), by Restoration drama (Charles Sedley's 1677 *Antony and Cleopatra* and John Dryden's 1678 *All for love*) and by Victorian drama (William Savage Landor's 1856 *Antony and Octavius: Scenes for the Study*) to unmask and enrich the Shakespearean secret subtext. These dramatic works have all contributed to providing flashes of an Ur-play relating the encounter between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, but always on a *narrative* level, through the reports of characters inside the plays. However, some plays have also presented the seminal relationship between the Roman dictator and the Egyptian queen on a *dramatic* level, in the very actions of their protagonists on stage. These plays were, in fact, developed before and

[266] See Sandra K. Fischer, "Elizabeth Cary and Tyranny, Domestic and Religious," in *Silent But for the Word*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985), 225-37.
[267] Gutierrez, 238.

after Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. They include the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge* (also called *The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey*, which was probably written in the 1590s, and published in 1607), *The False One* (written by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, and first performed in the 1620s), *Caesar in Egypt* (written by Colley Cibber performed for the first time in 1724) and George Bernard Shaw's 1901 *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Through the actual enactment of the encounter between Caesar and the Egyptian queen, these plays have paved the way towards the conflation of the three plots (Cleopatra's affair with Caesar, the murder of Caesar, and Antony's passion for Cleopatra), on stage and on film.

Cleopatra meets Julius Caesar: the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge*, Fletcher and Massinger's *The False One* and Colley Cibber's *Caesar in Egypt*

The anonymous Elizabethan play *Caesar's Revenge* starts with Great Pompey's defeat at the battle of Pharsalus, moves on to a meeting between Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra in Egypt, then to the assassination of Caesar, and rounds off with the appearance of Caesar's ghost at Philippi and the deaths of Cassius and Brutus on the battlefield. As it runs its course, the play also anticipates the rivalry between Antony and Octavius, as well as Antony's fatal "dotage" on Cleopatra. Though ancient authorities record that Antony's love for Cleopatra started during an early visit to Egypt several years before Julius ever made the trip himself,[268] the anonymous playwright(s) created an imaginary encounter in which the military leader and his inferior officer travel to Egypt together and fall in love with Cleopatra at the same time, but with diverging consequences on their consciences and lives. Antony's love is the most contorted as he needs to conceal the fact that he desires his general's mistress. The crucial meeting takes place in Act 1 scene 6, and reveals how Julius Caesar, immediately

[268] See Clifford J.Ronan, "*Caesar's Revenge* and the Roman Thoughts in *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987), 174.

enraptured by the queen's powerful charm, promises that he will take the Egyptian throne from her brother Ptolemy and give it to her:

> Thy sad complaints fair Lady cannot choose
> But move a heart though made of Adamant,
> And draw to yield unto thy powerful plaint;
> I will replant thee in the Egyptian throne
> And all thy wrongs shall Caesar's valor right;
> I'll pull thy crown from the usurper's head,
> And make the conquered Ptolomy to stoop,
> And fear by force to wrong a maiden Queen. (*Caesar's Revenge*, 1.6.1-8)[269]

During their first confrontation, Caesar appears moved by Cleopatra's plight, but his swearing to help her is contaminated by a subtext that can simultaneously be read as a promise to wrong and sexually conquer the young woman. Though "to stoop" and "fear by force" are actions and feelings meant to be imposed on Ptolemy, Cleopatra's brother, it is difficult not to apply them to Cleopatra herself, especially as the speech ends with the idea of "wrong[ing] a maiden Queen" and other dramatic texts have since come to suggest that Cleopatra gave Caesar "as to a tyrant,/ What he would take by force" (Dryden's *All for Love*, 2.357-8). Cleopatra has to fear both her brother and Caesar. Even the promise "I'll pull thy crown from the usurper's head" contains in itself a threat to her domination over the realm of Egypt, starting as it does with "I'll pull thy crown." It is also possible to identify the same sexual imagery linked to farming as in Shakespeare's play: Caesar wishes to "replant" Cleopatra on the throne, anticipating Agrippa's words in *Antony and Cleopatra*, "He plough'd her, and she cropp'd" (2.2.225). In the same way, Enobarbus's praise of the queen's exceptional qualities in the famous barge speech in Shakespeare's play – "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," 2.2.232-5 – is reminiscent of Antony's thoughts in *Caesar's Revenge*:

[269] Anonymous, *Caesar's Revenge, or The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey* (London: Nathaniel Fosbrooke and John Wright, 1607).

On thy perfection let me ever gaze,
And eyes now learn to tread a lover's maze,
Here may you surfeit with delicious store,
The more you see, desire to look the more. (*Caesar's Revenge*, 1.6.101-4)

If, in *Caesar's Revenge*, Antony's comments stem from a direct, unmediated experience at confronting the Egyptian queen, thus spurring a metaphor based on the gaze, Shakespeare composes a nostalgic, analeptic speech that reports indirectly upon Cleopatra's effects on men, once more through food imagery. What *Antony and Cleopatra* narrates, *Caesar's Revenge* shows on stage: when Cleopatra leaves the stage after meeting Caesar and Antony, the anonymous play presents the two men as two bewitched lovers—the military hierarchy disappears through the leveling power of love.

CAESAR O how those lovely tyrannizing eyes,
The Graces' beauteous habitation,
Where sweet desire, darts wounding shafts of love,
Consume my heart with inward burning heat;
Not only Egypt but all Africa,
Will I subject to Cleopatra's name. […]
ANTONY I marvel not at that which fables tell,
How ravisht Hellen moved the angry Greeks,
To undertake eleven years tedious siege,
To re-obtain a beauty so divine,
When I beheld thy sweet composed face. (1.6.25-46)

At this point, *Caesar's Revenge* dramatizes the two men's competition in their feelings of love for Cleopatra, and reveals the process of mimetic desire at work. Symptomatically, Antony discloses his desiring thoughts not before Caesar, but just after him, thus following his role model's footsteps and entering into a mimicking pattern that is also a way of becoming another Caesar. Contrary to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* or the other plays based on the Antony/Cleopatra plot that have already been explored, *Caesar's Revenge* does not merely evoke the affair between Cleopatra and Julius Caesar through characters' reports, but gives it flesh in the theater, making the audience witness the competition between Caesar and Antony for Cleopatra's attention, and disclosing Julius Caesar and the Egyptian queen on

stage at the same time. In a 1987 article entitled "*Caesar's Revenge* and the Roman Thoughts in *Antony and Cleopatra*," Clifford J. Ronan claims that *Caesar's Revenge* was written some years before Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and might have influenced it.[270] *Revenge* may have actually originated in the mid-1590s and antedated even Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. It is as if *Caesar's Revenge* represented the missing link between *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, clearly showing that the two plays share a common root. However, *Revenge* cannot be considered as an ideal prequel to Shakespeare's two plays, because it includes overlaps, staging events that also appear in *Julius Caesar* (such as the plot fomented by Brutus and Cassius to kill Caesar, the Dictator's assassination, the apparition of Caesar's Ghost and the battle of Philippi). But in a striking variation compared with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Caesar's Revenge* imports Cleopatra into the events picturing the fall of Caesar. Instead of being completely ousted from the episodes following Caesar's return to Rome after his Egyptian visit and his defeat of Pompey's sons in Spain, Cleopatra invades Caesar's and Antony's thoughts as they walk the streets of Rome in triumph. In Act 3, Caesar and Antony are seen in contrasted states of mind regarding what they left behind them:

CAESAR Now have I shaked of these womanish links,
In which my captiv'd thoughts were chained a fore,
By that fair charming Circe's wounding look.
(*Caesar's Revenge*, 3.2.1-3)

ANTONY Alas these triumphs move not me at all,
But only do renew remembrance sad,
Of her triumphing and imperious looks,
Which is the Saint and Idol of my thoughts:
First was I wounded by her piercing eye,
Next prisoner tame by her captiving speech,
And now she triumphs over my conquered heart,
In Cupid's Chariot riding in her pride,
And leads me captive bound in Beauty's bonds:
Caesar's lip-love, that never touch'd his heart,
By present triumph and the absent fire,
Is now wax cold; but mine that was more deep,
Ingraven in the marble of my breast,
Nor time nor Fortune ere can raze it out.

[270] See Clifford J. Ronan. "*Caesar's Revenge* and the Roman Thoughts in *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987), 171-82.

(*Caesar's Revenge*, 3.2.99-112)

Caesar considers that he has freed himself from Cleopatra's enchanting snare, but he makes the Egyptian queen present by the mere fact of mentioning her. This presence/absence is a sign of denial and participates in bringing Cleopatra into Rome as a ghost-like figure. This spectral aspect is emphasized in Antony's lines. Still cast under the queen's spell and indifferent to the triumphal processions, Antony remains in Egypt. Caesar's military "triumphs" are turned into Cleopatra's own "triumphing" over Antony's heart. The speech thus contributes to telescoping the male world of Rome with the female world of Cleopatra's Egypt. Antony degrades Caesar's love for Cleopatra, a treatment that foreshadows the queen's own disparaging of her relationship with Caesar in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, but also in subsequent plays. In *Caesar's Revenge*, the incorporation of Cleopatra's world into the Roman events that led to Caesar's murder has contributed to creating a strong intertextual echo, encouraging audiences to see and/or read Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in relation to Julius's visit to Egypt. This may lead to cast another light on Caesar's legitimate wife, Calphurnia. The Roman leader tells Antony at the beginning of *Julius Caesar* that, during the race celebrating of the Lupercalia, he should touch Calphurnia in order to lift the curse of her barrenness and restore her fertility:

> Forget not in your speed, Antonius,
> To touch Calphurnia; for our elders say
> The barren, touched in this holy chase,
> Shake off their sterile curse. (*JC*, 1.2.6-9)

Through the prism generated by *Caesar's Revenge*, Calphurnia appears as a wronged woman, on the verge of being repudiated for being sterile and replaced by Caesar's mistress, who was able to give him a son, Caesarion.

Revenge can give another vision of *Julius Caesar* precisely because it dramatizes episodes that are present in Shakespeare's play, as well as episodes that precede it. This

overlapping of the plots thus makes *Revenge* both a prequel to *Antony and Cleopatra* and a first draft for *Julius Caesar*, uniting the two Shakespearean plays through the crossing of their storylines and characters. *The False One* by Fletcher and Massinger, probably written for the English stage in the 1620s and first published in 1647, does not offer an overlapping of plots but a clear "belated first part to *Antony and Cleopatra*,"[271] in Michael Neill's words, focusing as it does exclusively on the affair between Cleopatra and Julius Caesar as the latter visits Egypt after Great Pompey's defeat. *The False One* stresses both Cleopatra's early heroic aspirations and the theatrical allure of her sexuality. At the start of the play, she has been confined by her brother Ptolemy to prevent her from claiming her regal rights. The news of Caesar's arrival and of Pompey's defeat encourages her to find a way of introducing herself to Caesar, and she admits to Apollodorus her willingness to trade her sexuality in return for power:

> I have found out a way shall bring me to him,
> Spite of Photinus' watches; if I prosper
> (As I am confident I shall), expect
> Things greater than thy wishes; though I purchase
> His grace with loss of my virginity,
> It skills not, if it bring home majesty. (*The False One*, 1.2.106-21)

The spectators/readers are made privy to Cleopatra's intentions, as she is about to exchange virginity for majesty, a transaction that contrasts with Elizabeth I's wish to protect her throne through her proclaimed chastity. From the very start of the play, a certain form of economy is created, involving political power and sexuality—an economy which has found many echoes in the subsequent plays wherein Cleopatra debases her love for Caesar. This exchange of sexual favors for royal power blurs the frontier between domination and submission: is Cleopatra empowered by the control she has over the transaction – a control marked by the personal pronoun in "I purchase" – or is she debased by this submission to Caesar? Who

[271] Neill, "Introduction," 24.

manipulates whom? As Cleopatra is brought to Caesar inside a rug by the character of Sceva in Act 2 scene 3 ("*Enter Sceva, with a packet, Cleopatra in it*"), the encounter epitomizes the ambiguity of the situation. Cleopatra is reified, submitted to Caesar as a gift to be looked at and assessed, but she also takes advantage of the theatrical situation she has created, benefiting from the surprise of suddenly revealing herself from outside the "packet" and controlling the exact moment she offers herself to the gaze of the onlookers on the stage and in the audience. When young Cleopatra is revealed, Caesar's reaction is instantly that of wonder:

> Stand farther off, good Sceva.
> What heavenly vision? Do I wake or slumber? (*The False One*, 2.3.90-91)

Caesar's question "Do I wake or slumber?" obviously applies metatheatrically to the audience who watches a dreamlike show in which historical figures are embodied and brought back from the dead as ghost-like spirits on the stage. But Cleopatra adds a level of spectrality. Always in representation, Cleopatra keeps questioning the limits of identity, oscillating between reality and fantasy, being and acting. Her identity as queen also vacillates between a metaphorical and a factual one. As Caesar addresses Cleopatra as "queen of beauty", the trope is made literal in the space of six lines when Cleopatra wishes to be a queen indeed, with royal status and power:

> CAESAR Speak, queen of beauty, and stand up.
> CLEOPATRA I dare not,
> 'Till I have found that favour in thine eyes,
> That godlike great humanity, to help me,
> Thus, to thy knees must I grow, sacred Caesar.
> And if it be not in thy will to right me,
> And raise me like a queen from my sad ruins, […]
> Yet for thy nobleness, for virtue's sake,
> And if thou be'st a man, for despis'd beauty,
> For honourable conquest, which thou dotest on,
> Let not those cankers of this flourishing Kingdom,
> Photinus, and Achillas, the one an Eunuch,
> The other a base bondman, thus reign over me.
> Seize my inheritance, and leave my brother

Nothing of what he should be, but the title;
As thou art wonder of the world—
(*The False One*, 2.3.163-9)

As she tries to convince Caesar to help her, Cleopatra uses two strategies at the same time: she appeals both to Caesar's humanity and generosity, and to his masculinity and bellicosity. By asking him for assistance either in the name of his noble morality or his thirst for military conquest, she stages a situation in which Caesar can decide either to provide help for a woman in distress or fight against her male offenders, thereby implying that he is free to choose… to help her. Short of this, he will fail as a man. Though placed in an inferior position, Cleopatra succeeds in turning the situation around. Her paradoxical empowerment is revealed in such lines as "to thy knees must I grow." Caesar's later line "Stand up" reveals that Cleopatra has been delivering her speech begging on her knees, but her words transfer the idea of kneeling onto Caesar, while the notion of growth is connected to her own self. However, as in *Caesar's Revenge*, Caesar appears as the one who will take Cleopatra's possessions. Even if he does not let Cleopatra's enemies "reign over [her]", he is likely, and is even asked, to "seize [her] inheritance." Caesar's gifts always imply appropriation. As he replies positively to Cleopatra's appeal, Caesar is quick to assert his greatness, turning his giving in to Egyptian requests into the full display of what his power can bestow on her:

CAESAR Stand up then,
And be a queen; this hand shall give it to you,
Or choose a greater name, worthy my bounty;
A common love makes queens: choose to be worshiped,
To be divinely great, and I dare promise it.
A suitor of your sort, and blessed sweetness,
That hath adventur'd thus to see great Caesar,
Must never be denied, you have found a patron
That dare not, in his private honour, suffer
So great a blemish to the heaven of beauty:
The god of love would clap his angry wings,
And from his singing bow, let fly those arrows
Headed with burning grieves, and pining sorrows;
Should I neglect your cause would make me monstrous;
To whom, and to your service, I devote me.

(*The False One*, 2.3.181-95)

Cleopatra's "beauty" and "sweetness" are bargained against Caesar's patronage and protection. Both characters are seen exchanging their "service[s]" in circumstances far more explicit sexually than in *Caesar's Revenge*. In *The False One*, Cleopatra does not only meet Caesar, she is brought to him inside a rug as a present, and is revealed to the concupiscent gaze of her future protector. Contrary to *Revenge*, *The False One* does not stage a meeting that involves both Caesar and Mark Antony. Nevertheless, the process of mimetic desire is dramatized when Antony, during a discussion with Dolabella and Sceva, defends Caesar for doting on Cleopatra with such intensity:

DOLABELLA Nay there's no rousing him: he is bewitch'd sure,
His noble blood curdled, and cold within him;
Grown now a woman's warrior.
SCEVA And a tall one;
Studies her fortifications, and her breaches,
And how he may advance his ram to batter
The bulwark of her chastity.
ANTONY Be not too angry,
For by this light, the woman's a rare woman,
A lady of that catching youth, and beauty,
That unmatch'd sweetness— (*The False One*, 3.2.1-11)

Dolabella takes the role of Philo at the very start of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, criticizing his master's overflowing dotage on the Egyptian queen. This time, the doting master is not Antony, but Julius Caesar, transformed into a "woman's warrior." The military metaphors present Cleopatra as a besieged city and her suitor more as a rapist/conqueror than a lover. But Antony's future devotion for Cleopatra is anticipated in his admiration for the Egyptian queen and his ardent defense of Caesar. What is also featured in *The False One* is Cleopatra's theatrical personality that is referred to so often in Shakespeare's play. Sceva describes the young queen in those terms:

She will be sick, well, sullen,
Merry, coy, over-joy'd, and seem to die

> All in one half an hour, to make an ass of him. (*The False One*, 3.2.44-6)

Fletcher and Massinger were certainly influenced by Enobarbus's lines in Shakespeare's play: "I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying" (*ANT*, 1.2). By inserting a comment on young Cleopatra's personality that confirms what is said of her in her later years, Fletcher and Massinger generate a prequel that belatedly and retrospectively legitimizes Shakespeare's theatrical portrait of the Egyptian queen, who plays at dying, or acts according to the occasion to manipulate her viewers/listeners. Through the corpus of plays focusing on Cleopatra, it is as if playwrights, taking their cues from one another, attempted to build a coherent character based, in a very paradoxical way, on its ability to elude coherence.

The False One ends after Caesar has overcome all obstacles and escaped death, constructing another set of audience expectations for the character. This comes to compete with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in which everything leads to, and then departs from, Caesar's demise. Cleopatra's enemies, Photinus and Achillas, plot to rid themselves of Caesar, attack the royal palace but Julius manages to remain unscathed. But despite this victory and the death of Cleopatra's brother, King Ptolemy, Caesar's future death is foreshadowed in the closing lines of the play as he says to Cleopatra:

> Look up on Caesar, as he still appear'd
> A conqueror, and this unfortunate king
> Entomb'd with honour, we'll for Rome, where Caesar
> Will show he can give kingdoms; for the Senate,
> Thy brother dead, shall willingly decree
> The crown of Egypt, that was his, to thee. (*The False One*, 5.4.247-52)

Though Caesar asserts his political power and his status as a conqueror, his mention of Rome and the Senate cannot but remind the audience that his return to Roman life implies his future assassination. Caesar's reference to Ptolemy's death in conjunction with his allusion to the

Capitol constructs a link between the words "Senate" and "dead," and may contribute to creating a subliminal image of Caesar's body lying motionless in the future site of his murder.

But as the end of the play is reached, the mystery of the play's title remains intact. Why is the play called *The False One* – a title which fails to mention Caesar, Antony or Cleopatra, or even any kind of romantic affair? *The False One* could refer to one deceptive character within the play, which leads the reader/spectator to act as a detective and wonder, throughout the drama, whom it might be. Could it be Cleopatra, who fakes love to win Caesar to her side? Caesar himself, who is almost corrupted by Ptolemy to remain on his side? The renegade Septimus, who, after serving in Pompey's army, betrays his master and is bought to behead him? But it might be that the title refers not to a character but to the play itself. Written some fifteen years after Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Fletcher and Massinger's *The False One* may introduce itself by openly referring to Shakespeare's original and "true" work. Through its title, the play immediately claims that it will not follow Shakespeare's plot and that spectators expecting the same kind of material will only deceive themselves. This agenda clearly appears in the Prologue to the play:

> New titles, warrant not a play for new,
> The subject being old, and 'tis as true,
> Fresh, and neat matter may with ease be fram'd
> Out of their stories, that have oft been nam'd
> With glory on the stage: What borrows he
> From him that wrote old Priam's tragedy
> That writes his love to Hecuba? Sure, to tell
> Of Caesar's amorous heats, and how he fell
> In the Capitol, can never be the same.
> To the judicious: Nor will such blame
> Those that penn'd this, for barrenness, when they find
> Young Cleopatra here, and her great mind
> Express'd to the height, with us a maid, and free,
> And how he rated her virginity.
> We treat not of what boldness she did die,
> Nor of her fatal love to Antony.
> What we present and offer to your view,
> Upon their faiths, the stage yet never knew.
> Let reason then, first to your wills give laws,
> And after judge of them, and of their cause.

In its Prologue, *The False One* establishes the boundaries between old and new dramatic material, between originality and imitation, and claims that authors can write new texts on hackneyed subjects, for instance through the composition of a prequel. Fletcher and Massinger seem to establish their own defense against some early modern, copy-right-free equivalent of plagiarism by asserting that their material will show what has never been shown before (though they seem to forget the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge*…) and that it will focus on the young days of Cleopatra ("with us a maid") and on Caesar's love life ("amorous heats") before his death in the Capitol. But the play is still located within the context of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ("how he fell/ In the Capitol) and *Antony and Cleopatra* ("We treat not of what boldness she did die,/ Nor of her fatal love to Antony"). Fletcher and Massinger reveal to their spectators/readers what they will *not* see (Caesar's assassination, Cleopatra's love for Antony and her fearless suicide), while acknowledging that these episodes have already been shown and dramatized in other works. By claiming that they wrote a play that is, at the same time, connected and unrelated to the usual Roman plots, Fletcher and Massinger establish a kind of "continuity in dissociation" between the events in *The False One* and those in Shakespeare's plays of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, generating a literary and stage echo that has found its way through the two Shakespearean dramas, adding new layers of complexity to them.

Caesar in Egypt by Colley Cibber, published in 1725, very much follows the plot of *The False One*, but is more explicit in its fleshing out of the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra, and the rivalry between Caesar and Antony. Cleopatra's meeting with Caesar, though there is no hiding and no rug involved as in *The False One*, is constructed as so crucial in this play that it is anticipated from the very start. The meeting first appears as a phantasm in

Photinius' speech advising Ptolemy to execute Pompey in order to secure Caesar's gratefulness and counter Cleopatra's attempts at winning the Roman leader to her side:

> Consider your divided title, Sir,
> Your royal sister's claim, her provocations!
> Her arts! Her female spleen, and beauty!
> Dressing her wrongs in tears, and Caesar amorous!
> Her soft complainings blowing him to flames!
> Will he refuse to right so fair a suitress? (*Caesar in Egypt*, 1.229-34)

As Photinius imagines the confrontation between Caesar and Cleopatra before it takes place, the play presents the meeting scene as the repetition of a sign and the literalization of a prediction, implying its pivotal place within the drama, but also in all dramas involving the figure of Cleopatra. This conjuring of Cleopatra's seduction of Caesar is eventually the very argument that convinces Ptolemy to kill Pompey without pondering any longer:

> No more! That thought embitters all remorse.
> Were Pompey dearer to my heart than life,
> Rather than serve my sister's haughty pride,
> My rage, like thunder, in the port shou'd sink him. […]
> Conclude we then that Pompey is no more,
> And that his death buries my sister's claim. (*Caesar in Egypt*, 1.239-63)

Cleopatra's imagined meeting with Caesar triggers Ptolemy's decision to put Pompey to death. Cleopatra is thus linked to the idea of murder from the start, in a demonizing of her character, while her seminal encounter with Caesar is placed under the sign of pending calamity. When it finally takes place in Act 3, the meeting starts formally, without Cleopatra's spectacular arrival inside a rug; the stage directions just indicate "*Enter Cleopatra, who having made lowly Reverence to Caesar, he gently approaches her.*" But the conference quickly turns into a competition of wit and seduction, with the Egyptian queen explicitly appearing, in Caesar's words, as the prize for Roman leadership:

> Nor gods, nor men refuse the flame of love!
> What is ambition, if not crown'd by beauty? […]
> Can all these boasted attributes of power,
> Be, in the pride of doing well, rewarded?

In vain the course by martial speed is won,
If smiling Venus stands not at the goal! (*Caesar in Egypt*, 3.388-403)

If the episode of Mars subdued by the goddess of love is here evoked through the juxtaposition of "martial speed" and "smiling Venus," Caesar's speech only empowers women as far as one ability is concerned – their ability to stimulate the competition between men. Women are turned into objects of victory, mere rewards for the male warriors. As Cleopatra admits her admiration and flame for Caesar (or plays at admitting them), the Roman general hushes her up and, revealingly, has the final word of the meeting scene, even closing the third act with his (vocal and sexual) conquest of the Egyptian queen:

CLEOPATRA Spare me! Speak! For I cou'd hear thee talk for ever!
CAESAR Is this a time for words! […]
Come forth, thou fair defiance, to the field
Of love, and prove the prowess of thy beauty!
Hence, to some secret verdant bower remove,
By art or nature form'd for blissful love; […]
There shall, complete, the wreaths of Caesar be,
And crown his conquest of the world in thee! (3.446-56)

Caesar makes Cleopatra quiet by denying the usefulness of words in such a situation of reciprocal desire, but paradoxically Caesar interrupts her to speak at length, somehow fulfilling the queen's wish to "hear [him] talk for ever." Cleopatra is put to the test, forced to "prove" herself as a mistress, and appears as yet another land penetrated by Caesar after his "conquest of the world."

Throughout the play, the competition between Caesar and Antony over Cleopatra is, moreover, given more dramatic space. When Photinius tells Ptolemy that Antony has been "surpriz'd, astonish'd, and subdu'd" (2.309) by Cleopatra after their first audience together, both men start wondering whether Antony's feelings might be of any political use for the queen:

PTOLEMY If Antony shou'd love, love may befriend
Her cause to Caesar

PHOTINIUS Or may ruin it.
Think you, proud Caesar's heart will brook a rival?
Here's ground at least to give him jealousy. (*Caesar in Egypt*, 2.324-8)

Antony's love is seen as ambivalent. As Caesar's friend, he might plead in favour of his beloved queen; but precisely because he is close to Caesar, his feelings for Cleopatra might spur Caesar's resentment against their common object of desire. This ambivalence of Antony's adoration is reflected in the line "love may befriend her cause to Caesar/ Or may ruin it," which is divided and shared between the two men, with Photinius prolonging Ptolemy's sentence but twisting it in the opposite direction. Antony's ambiguous status as both a friend and a rival resurfaces when he reflects on his conference with the Egyptian queen, "I spoke for Caesar, while I sigh'd for Antony!" (3.312), or when he is asked by Caesar to speak to Cleopatra on his behalf, "How, in the friend, shall I conceal the lover?/ How, for my rival, can I plead sincere?" (4.351-3). The symmetry of the sentences emphasizes Antony's quasi-schizophrenia as his voice oscillates between his own and his master's – a master who is both a friend and a enemy.

But does the play dramatize the jealousy that Photinius expects from Caesar? Does Caesar fear the rivalry of Antony? Cibber's play is in fact prompt to show us a Caesar repressing all kinds of green-eyed feelings. As Cleopatra informs him of Antony's flame for her, he appears unruffled and trustful:

CLEOPATRA Indeed, I fear me, Caesar, he's thy rival.
For while I gave him audience, his confusion—
CAESAR Was what became the softness of his errand.
CLEOPATRA If he were guilty, you cou'd pardon—
CAESAR Pardon!
Were it his crime that Cleopatra's fair?
Shou'd I condemn him, that he thought like me?
Were not his Passion justify'd by Caesar's?
CLEOPATRA Caesar, I love you not, you're all ambition!
How can you love, so free from jealousy?
CAESAR Why shou'd I either doubt my friend, or wrong
My Cleopatra? Where I love, I trust! (*Caesar in Egypt*, 4.251-62)

Caesar in Egypt poses Caesar as the first man in the chain of lovers, who does not appear threatened by rivals and is not ruled by the desire of others. Caesar appears as a model for himself – a role model that men (especially Antony) envy and would like to imitate. As Cleopatra reveals to Antony, Caesar is only driven by his ambition and thirst for domination:

> But the lov'd idol of his soul is power!
> To that, as to his deity ador'd,
> He kneels, and thinks no vows but those are sacred! (*Caesar in Egypt*, 4.378-80)

Caesar is described as being his own master and god. In the play, Cleopatra is aware of Antony's love for her and tries to avoid a meeting in which she would be set in between the two men. As Antony asks to be received by Caesar, she prefers to leave the room before Antony enters: "Cou'd it oblige my Caesar, I might stay./ But in my sense, 'twere kinder to retire" (4.296-7). No scene features the amorous triangle on stage at the same time, but the play always hints at this reunion, tempting us with a situation that is forever in the lurk. Cleopatra's words generate the glimpses of her future affair with Antony when she admits to him: "O Antony! had Caesar not been Caesar,/ A heart like thine had taught me gentler passion" (4.375-6), which plays ironically with our knowledge of history and literature, but which also describes Caesar by using the name itself again. Caesar represents both his person and the notion of power, but it is as Caesar could only be defined by himself, standing on his own without any comparisons or metaphors being able to give an idea of who he is.

When Caesar and Antony learn that they have to confront the attack of the Egyptians defending Ptolemy's claim to the throne, the process of mimetic desire works towards rejection rather than attraction, but it is still at work: if Cleopatra was a mistake, then she should be avoided by both of them.

> ANTONY O! I foresaw this beauty wou'd be fatal!
> CAESAR Let Marcus then be warn'd by Caesar's error! (5.194-5)

Caesar explicitly tells Antony to imitate what he does. Since, eventually, he did not reject Cleopatra, the play looks toward the narratives in which Antony's desire to possess Cleopatra in his turn drives the plot.

T.S. Eliot wrote in his 1919 essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it."[272] *The False One* and *Caesar in Egypt*, as prequels to both *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, works a transformative effect upon its two precursors, which thereby become derivative and subsequent, within a reorganized hierarchy of the texts that challenges chronological and narrative orders. However, this reshuffling of the textual hierarchy has also had nostalgic and conservative effects since it has encouraged the sequelization of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The intertextual effects of *Caesar in Egypt*, *The False One* and *Caesar's Revenge* may invite readers and spectators of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to feel the ghost of Cleopatra hovering about Caesar when he complains about the sterility of his wife Calphurnia, or to flesh out Cleopatra's remembrance of her "salad days" in *Antony and Cleopatra*. As "new" plays on an "old" subject, *The False One* and *Caesar in Egypt*, in particular, have brought Shakespeare's two dramas closer together, giving them a clear common root in the form of the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra, without the overlapping episodes of *Caesar's Revenge*. The same ambivalent consequences, oscillating between literary upheaval and nostalgic conservatism, have occurred after George Bernard Shaw's writing of his play, *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901). The prequel has challenged Shakespearean authority, but it has also inspired directors to stage *Antony and Cleopatra* as the sequel of both *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar*, and led to the conflation of the three dramatic plots in the cinema.

[272] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975), 38-9.

George Bernard Shaw's 1901 *Caesar and Cleopatra*: paving the way toward conflation

Contrary to *The False One*, Shaw's title explicitly reveals the topic of the work, and plays on the similarity with Shakespeare's title of *Antony and Cleopatra*, replacing the identity of the male figure as an indication that both the time of the drama and its viewpoint will radically change. As in *The False One*, a Prologue informs spectators/readers that what they are about to experience is far removed from what they are used to. The Prologue takes the shape of Ra, the omnipotent and omniscient Sun-God, who talks as if Shaw himself were addressing his audience:

> Are you impatient with me? Do ye crave for a story of an unchaste woman? Hath the name of Cleopatra tempted ye hither? Ye foolish ones; Cleopatra is as yet but a child that is whipped by her nurse. And what I am about to shew you for the good of your souls is how Caesar, seeking Pompey in Egypt, found Cleopatra; and how he received that present of a pickled cabbage that was once the head of Pompey; and what things happened between the old Caesar and the child queen before he left Egypt and battled his way back to Rome to be slain there as Pompey was slain, by men in whom the spirit of Pompey still lived. All this ye shall see. (133)[273]

George Bernard Shaw's Prologue presents the play as an undermining of both Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* for "the good of [our] souls," in what appears as a moral, normative turnaround. Just as in *The False One*, the Prologue says what we will not see (an "unchaste" Cleopatra), while paradoxically making us imagine this "tempt[ing]" Cleopatra through the mere mention of her later version. In Shaw's essay "Better than Shakespear?" the readers/spectators are warned that "Whoever, then, expects to find Cleopatra a Circe and Caesar a hog in these pages, had better lay down my book and be spared a disappointment."[274] With the play *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw attempts to do two things at the same time—restore Caesar's image which, according to him, has been tarnished in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and disturb the playgoers' habits of enjoying torrid, enchanting as well as tragic love stories in which the "sex instinct," instead of reason and

[273] George Bernard Shaw, "Caesar and Cleopatra," in *Three Plays for Puritans*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984). The reference is the page number in the Penguin edition, 1984.
[274] Shaw, "Better than Shakespear?," in *Three Plays for Puritans*, 31.

pragmatism, governs the characters' decisions.[275] Regarding *Julius Caesar*, Shaw suggests that "it cost Shakespeare no pang to write Caesar down for the merely technical purpose of writing Brutus up."[276] Instead of pairing Antony and Cleopatra as Shakespeare did, Shaw chose to pair the Egyptian queen with Julius Caesar, and to deliberately suppress any mention of Brutus. He therefore tried to restore what he thought to be the truth – a humanized Caesar with a dazzling mind. In Desmond MacCarthy's 1913 review, *Caesar and Cleopatra* was perceived as a play "the purpose of which is to exhibit greatness of mind, not at the moments when the hero puts on his crown, but when he is coping good-humouredly with the pettiness of human nature and the inconsequent chaos of events."[277] In order to play up Caesar, Shaw plays down Cleopatra and presents her as a naïve, inexperienced, docile and malleable young girl, utterly dominated by the Roman leader, instead of the emancipated, lustful and reckless woman that she is very often portrayed to be. Louis Crompton perceived, in 1971, Shaw's Caesar as standing "for humanity in its highest development," and his Cleopatra as representing "untamed natural passion."[278] Shaw positions himself against Shakespeare's vision in his firm "antiromanticism"[279] and his refusal to introduce any kind of passion into the narrative, as he believed that Shakespeare had promoted sexual infatuation to excess. Shaw's "Puritanism" (in his own term) appears as an opposition to both the exaltation of the sexual instinct on stage and to the romantic attitude toward art in general, which can verge toward idolatry – and, in Shakespeare's case, "Bardolatry."[280] In Shaw's play, Caesar's judgment never seems clouded by lust or sentimental ideals in a purposeful denial of the potency of love and feelings. After having pacified Egypt, Caesar is seen leaving for Italy

[275] See *Three Plays for Puritans*, 16. Shaw writes also in his Preface "Why for Puritans?," "I found that the whole business of stage sensuousness […] finally disgusted me, not because I was Pharisaical, or intolerantly refined, but because I was bored," in *Three Plays for Puritans*. PAGE?
[276] Shaw, "Better than Shakespear?," 31.
[277] Desmond MacCarthy, *New Statesman*, 26 April 1913. Quoted by Gordon W. Couchman, "Here was a Caesar: Shaw's Comedy Today," *PMLA* 72.1 (March 1957), 284-5.
[278] Louis Crompton, *Shaw the Dramatist* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 65.
[279] Albert H. Silverman, "Bernard Shaw's Shakespearean Criticism," *PMLA* 72 (September 1957), 728.
[280] Shaw, "Better than Shakespeare?," PAGE?

without any regret. If Cleopatra had not come to say goodbye, he would even have forgotten to tell her "I do not think we shall meet again" (246). This portrayal heavily contrasts with Shakespeare's character of Antony who runs away from the battlefield to follow his love object, thus exchanging a political control over the world against infatuation—an intolerable bargain in Shaw's view, as it contributes to redeem the corrupt hero by love.[281] Shaw's decision to dramatize a platonic love story between an old Caesar and a young Cleopatra rather than the sexually explicit love affair between Antony and Cleopatra stems from his hatred of the romantic play which, according to him, is based on hypocrisy:

> Can any dilemma be more complete? Love is assumed to be the only theme that touches all your audience infallibly […]. And yet love is the one subject that the drawing room drama dare not present. Out of this dilemma […] has come the romantic play: that is, the play in which love is carefully kept off the stage, whilst it is alleged as the motive of all the actions presented to the audience. The result is, to me at least, an intolerable perversion of human conduct.[282]

According to Shaw, the absence of sexuality on the stage (while its consequences on the characters' motivations and actions are given more and more prominence) leads to a complete lack of realism of what is dramatized. Reaching a high level of credibility seems to be one of Shaw's aims, even when he explains his aesthetic vision of how a play should be written and directed: "[In my plays,] the action is not carried on by impossible soliloquys and asides; and my people get on and off the stage without requiring four doors to a room which in real life would have only one."[283] This attempt to reach aesthetic realism is in line with Shaw's desire to be true to his idea of historical authenticity: "Shakespeare's Caesar is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the real Julius Caesar. My Caesar is a simple return to nature and history."[284] In his quest for historical authenticity, Shaw is in line with the ideology of the theater directors-managers at the end of the nineteenth century; but while they attempted to reach authenticity

[281] See Crompton, 64-5, and Silverman, 729.
[282] Shaw, "Why for Puritans?," 17.
[283] Shaw, "Better than Shakespear?," 37.
[284] See Shaw's statement to Archibald Henderson, in Archibald Henderson, *Bernard Shaw: Playboy and Prophet* (New York, London: D. Appleton and Co., 1932), 492-3.

by turning the settings into faithful reconstructions of Ancient Egypt, Shaw did so by changing the text of the performance. The affair between Caesar and Cleopatra is desexualized and presented as a trifling, inconsequent matter, consisting only of fatherly affection and avoiding any trace of Cleopatra's sexual passion for statesmanship. Paradoxically, what is presented as a "return to […] history" obviously goes against historical facts, since Caesar invited Cleopatra to Rome, erected a statue of her as Venus and allowed her to call their son Caesarion. But Shaw's acknowledged source for his portrait of Julius Caesar was the account offered by Theodor Mommsen's 1854 chronicle, *History of Rome,* which presented Caesar in a positive and heroic light – with a quasi-mystical aura. According to R. N. Roy, Shaw took a hint from Mommsen and turned "the ambitious adventurer, Caesar, into an unworldly mystic, an exile into this world which he spurns."[285] Shaw's Caesar may be eventually too great to enjoy any worldly joys. It is commonly said that Shaw's play discloses the way Caesar taught Cleopatra how to shift from the status of a little, frightened girl to that of a fearless queen: in the first act of the play, he teaches her how to exact respect by beating her servant Ftatateeta and how to look and play her royal part decked in robes, jewels and crowns. However, on another plane, Cleopatra is teaching the spectators how to see Caesar not only as a mythic, godlike leader but as a mere human being. If one compares him with Shakespeare's own creation, the character is glorified, but also ridiculed. In Shaw's play, Caesar is both turned into an effective leader, with subtle insights into human behaviors and idealistic principles; but at the same time he is demystified through Cleopatra's remarks about his all too human nature, his baldness and his childishness.

When the play opens, Caesar, having just arrived in Egypt, is contemplating the Sphinx in the desert, addressing his reflections to the statue and boasting that both of them are "strangers to the race of men" (147). The answer he obtains is "Old gentleman… Old

[285] R.N. Roy, *George Bernard Shaw's Historical Plays* (Dehli: Macmillan Co. of India, 1976), 30.

gentleman: don't run away!" (147) from the very young Cleopatra who had taken refuge beside the Sphinx's paw to try and escape the Romans. Caesar's dreams of grandeur are thus immediately cut down to size as the limitations of his age and human nature are recalled: his boasts are instantly deflated by Cleopatra. Although he calls Cleopatra a "divine child" (147) upon their first encounter, the stage directions paradoxically infantilize him in turn when he first enters the Egyptian court and looks "*at the scene, which is new to him, with the frank curiosity of a child*" (160). This is echoed at the very end of the play in Cleopatra's words: "Oh, it is you who are a great baby: you make me seem silly because you will not behave seriously" (242). Even when Caesar wishes to think of himself as a young, dashing and romantically attractive man, the Egyptian queen deflates his illusions. John Bertolini notices that "Shaw creates a literalized metaphor for Cleopatra's relationship to Caesar when he refuses to believe he is not dreaming that she exists, and Cleopatra, in order to convince him of her reality, '*plucks a pin from her hair and jabs it repeatedly into his arm*'".[286] Cleopatra thus literally keeps bursting the bubble of pride and vanity that Caesar creates around him. She calls his reflections she has overheard "silly" and reveals to him that the Sphinx at which he was looking was not the great, original one, but a small copy – thus debunking both the myth of Ancient Egypt and Caesar's. However, when she finally discovers that the "old gentleman" is in fact Julius Caesar, the great Roman general, she swoons in awe. The play thus keeps oscillating between different images of Caesar, aggrandizing or diminishing him in turn. At some moments, Cleopatra definitely appears to rule over Caesar. In the stage directions of the first act, she is described as leading him through the Egyptian palace (153), and in the second act, she is helping Caesar put his general's outfit (181) – both a reminder and an anticipation of Act 4 scene 4 in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, when she is helping Antony put on his armor before the battle. In a telling reversal, she is the one who

[286] John A. Bertolini, "Shaw's Ironic View of Caesar," *Twentieth Century Literature* 27.4 (Winter 1981), 332.

dresses Caesar as a military leader after having been taught to put on princely robes. She removes the oak wreath from his head and starts laughing at his bald head and, as she helps him put his helmet on, says: "Oh! How nice! You look only about 50 in it!" (182) And yet these deflating comments come at a point when Caesar is militarily at his peak, since he is cunningly able to defend the Palace against the army of Ptolemy despite a very small number of soldiers.

This ambiguous portrayal continues in the third and fourth acts which both feature an event that proves Caesar's generosity and clemency, but which also points at the darker consequences of his forgiving attitude. When, stranded at Pharos, he is brought a leather bag containing papers bearing the names of all his enemies, he decides to throw it into the sea in a magnificent gesture of mercy. But the spectators later learn that the bag heavily landed on the small boat transporting Apollodorus and Cleopatra (hidden in a carpet). The young girl soon asserts: "a great sack of something fell upon me out of the sky; and then the boat sank." (202) We can only make the connection between Caesar's magnanimous gesture and its consequences in the "sinking" of Cleopatra's small craft. This metaphor suggests that grand and generous gestures have destructive effects, further questioning Caesar's supposed high-mindedness. Later, in order to escape from the Egyptian army at Pharos, Caesar jumps into the sea with Cleopatra, and swims to the shore with her on his back. This episode seems, at first, a heroic rewriting of Cassius's report in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, in which Caesar was said to have almost drowned in the river Tiber and begged Cassius for help.[287] But instead of sinking, Shaw's Caesar swims "like a Dolphin" (205) and manages to escape his

[287] Caesar said to me, 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow. So indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
But ere we could arrive the point propos'd,
Caesar cried, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!' (*JC*, 1.2.102-11)

enemies while rescuing the queen in a very romantic fashion. However, Shaw's glorification of Caesar does not last long, since Caesar himself reveals in the next act that what he got out of this heroic leap into the sea is a touch of rheumatism.

When the murder of Pothinus (Ptolemy's minion) by Cleopatra's servant, Ftatateeta, is discovered, Caesar delivers a speech against revenge, one of the most famous passages in the play: "And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honour and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand." (230) Yet even this compassionate and civilized speech is given the lie by his own acts when he learns that a new Roman army has arrived to offer its support against the Egyptians. The stage directions emphasize Caesar's sudden enthusiasm and state that "*He runs to the table; snatches a napkin; and draws a plan on it with his finger dipped in wine.*" (233) This gesture associated with the redness and bloody associations of the wine "may not be vengeance," in John Bertolini's words, "but it is bloodshed."[288] In the stage directions, the evening light becomes increasingly purple, another metaphor marking how the characters are now involved with bloody and violent acts: "*The light begins to change to the magenta purple of the Egyptian sunset*" (224-5), "*The purple deepens in the sky*' (225), '*The sky has by this time become the most vivid purple*" (231). Even Caesar is described as wearing a new tunic of purple silk, the color associated with conquests and dictatorship. His humanitarian principles seem to vanish as he takes the responsibility for the murder of Ftatateeta by Rufio, his lieutenant: "On my head it is, then; for it was well done. […] this was natural slaying: I feel no horror at it" (241). The idea of "natural slaying" seems to deny any ideological prism to Caesar's actions and thoughts. It can be related to Shaw's regular connecting of the notion of "nature" with that of "history," pointing to a belief in teleology, with history not viewed as a dynamic construction by confronting ideologies, but as a goal-oriented process whose origins

[288] Bertolini, 339.

can be uncovered. Shaw thus seems to replace the deification of literature and art ("Bardolatry") – a process he condemns – by a veneration of history as a safely fixed content to be returned to.

In the last scene of the play, Rufio warns Caesar of the risks of being murdered: "I am loath to let you go to Rome without your shield. There are too many daggers there" (239). This proleptic dramatic irony is developed in Caesar's answer: "I have always disliked the idea of dying: I had rather be killed." (240) Again, the figure of Caesar is made ambivalent. This glimpse into his death makes him a vulnerable figure; but, on the other hand, his anticipating it and even desiring to be murdered make him appear in control of his destiny until the very end. Not content with challenging Shakespeare's play by showing heroic, gentle and magnanimous (even comical) aspects of Julius Caesar, which re-establishes some kind of "truth" according to the playwright,[289] Shaw questions this greatness by disclosing the man behind the Roman general in a drama that verges on pure fantasy. In this, he is paradoxically in line with Shakespeare's text, in which Caesar admits his all too human weakness to Antony: "Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf" (1.2). Shaw creates what Gordon W. Coachman calls an "unheroic hero,"[290] a very rational being with a logical and skeptical temperament – features that are reflexively transferred to the drama itself as John Gassner's describes *Caesar and Cleopatra* as the "most completely anti-heroic play in existence that manages at the same time to be heroic."[291] Even if Caesar is sometimes ridiculed, he nevertheless steals the show from Mark Antony, whose name disappears from the title of the play. Antony only appears in a discussion between Caesar and a romantic Cleopatra longing to meet again the "beautiful young man, with strong round arms" who, in her words,

> came over the desert with many horsemen, and slew my sister's husband and gave my father back his throne. (*Wistfully*) I was only twelve then. Oh, I wish he would come again, now that I am a Queen. I would make him my husband. (174)

[289] See Shaw, "Better than Shakespear?," 36.
[290] Couchman, 274.
[291] John Gassner, *Masters of the Drama* (New York: 1954), 605.

Shaw plays with dramatic irony – with the audience's knowledge of the tragic outcome that awaits Antony and Cleopatra, which contrasts with young Cleopatra's ingenuous love, but he also plays with the difference in age between Caesar and Antony, notably in the following dialogue:

> CLEOPATRA If only I were a little older; so that he might not think me a mere kitten, as you do! But perhaps that is because YOU are old. He is many, MANY years younger than you, is he not?
> CAESAR (*as if swallowing a pill*) He is somewhat younger.
> CLEOPATRA Would he be my husband, do you think, if I asked him?
> CAESAR Very likely. (174)

In a reversal of traditional features, Shaw makes the old and level-headed man the main protagonist instead of the strong, dashing, young one, who is ousted from the stage and only appears as a ghostlike character in the speech of others. Though his name is admiringly echoed by Cleopatra ("Mark Antony, Mark Antony, Mark Antony! What a beautiful name!" [175]), this infatuation is immediately transferred onto Caesar and transformed into expressions of gratitude for the old man: "(*She throws her arms round Caesar's neck.*) Oh, how I love you for sending him to help my father!" (175). But, even though *Caesar and Cleopatra* aims at challenging Shakespeare's play, it also belatedly anticipates it by alluding to some of Cleopatra's and Antony's archetypal features as dramatized in the Shakespearean drama:

> CLEOPATRA (*tearfully*) Then I shall not be his first love.
> CAESAR Not quite the first. He is greatly admired by women.
> CLEOPATRA I wish I could be the first. But if he loves me, I will make him kill all the rest. Tell me: is he still beautiful? Do his strong round arms shine in the sun like marble?
> CAESAR He is in excellent condition—considering how much he eats and drinks.
> CLEOPATRA Oh, you must not say common, earthly things about him; for I love him. He is a god. (175)

In the space of this short passage, Shaw foreshadows not only Cleopatra's jealousy and the way she will violently receive the messenger bringing the news of Antony's marriage with Octavia, but also her propensity to deify Antony in phantasmagorical discourses. Antony's proneness to reveling is also noted. The end of *Caesar and Cleopatra* is prophetic, focusing as it does on Caesar's foretelling of his own assassination but also on the future arrival of Mark Antony, who will take Caesar's place in Egypt:

> CAESAR Come, Cleopatra: forgive me and bid me farewell; and I will send you a man, Roman from head to heel and Roman of the noblest; not old and ripe for the knife; not lean in the arms and cold in the heart; not hiding a bald head under his conqueror's laurels; not stooped with the weight of the world on his shoulders; but brisk and fresh, strong and young, hoping in the morning, fighting in the day, and reveling in the evening. Will you take such a one in exchange for Caesar?
>
> CLEOPATRA (*palpitating*). His name, his name?
>
> CAESAR Shall it be Mark Antony? (*She throws herself in his arms.*)
>
> RUFIO You are a bad hand at a bargain, mistress, if you will swap Caesar for Antony. (242-3)

Again, Antony appears as Caesar's symmetrical opposite, morally, politically as well as physically; Rufio's comment that Cleopatra will lose in the exchange can be read reflexively as Shaw judging Shakespeare's choice of dramatizing Cleopatra's love for Antony rather than her meeting with Caesar. Shaw's work, which plays fully on retrospective, facetious anticipation, may be viewed as "expecting" Shakespeare's plays as if pregnant with them. This "pregnancy" subtly emerges in the last lines of Crompton's 1971 analysis of *Caesar and Cleopatra*: "He [Caesar] goes lightheartedly to Rome and his death, as Cleopatra, childisly enraptured [with the thought of Antony], awaits the coming of her demigod—and Shakespeare's."[292] Shaw's play has challenged the Elizabethan primacy, positioning itself as coming "before" Shakespeare's, thus blurring the boundaries between primary and secondary playtexts and defying the weight of literary history.

[292] Crompton, 73.

However, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, in featuring a Cleopatra who cannot wait to swap Caesar for Antony, has also had a conservative effect on the reception of Shakespeare's plays, on their subsequent stagings in sequence and rewritings in conflated screenplays. It has contributed to generating the vision of Cleopatra's life as a romantic saga in which the main character remains the queen while the Roman leaders are seen as secondary roles gravitating around her. This vision of Cleopatra as the central character appeared in the posters to promote Gabriel Pascal's 1945 Hollywood film of *Caesar and Cleopatra* – which used Shaw's text, and featured Claude Rains and Vivien Leigh in the title roles. In the campaign for the film, Vivien Leigh became the key figure of the promotion as well as of the film, shifting the heroic focus from male to female. This new perception has influenced the way many actors and directors have approached Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, from the start of the twentieth century onwards, and right into the twenty-first century. For instance, in her notes on *Antony and Cleopatra* (published in 2002), Vanessa Redgrave begins her analysis of Cleopatra, a role she played several times in her career, with a reminder of her youth, her "salad days" when she shared the life of Julius Caesar and gave birth to a son, Caesarion.[293] Redgrave thus puts the whole plot of *Antony* in the context of Cleopatra's earlier affair with Caesar:

> Antony saw himself, knew himself, as the leader of the Caesarian faction with allegiance to Julius Caesar. […] For Antony, the goal had to be the conquest of Cleopatra, whose son had been fathered by the great Julius Caesar. […] For Cleopatra, the great triumvir Antony was the inevitable next political choice or a husband: first Pompey the Great, then Julius Caesar, then the triumvir who had defeated his assassins.[294]

In these notes constructing a subtext to inform her acting, Redgrave clearly envisions *Antony and Cleopatra* as the sequel of a play involving Cleopatra's youth and ambition, as well as Julius Caesar's private affairs and succession. Shakespeare's play, according to Redgrave,

[293] Vanessa Redgrave, *Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 39.
[294] *Ibid.*, 55.

shows Antony positioning himself as the direct successor of Julius Caesar in Cleopatra's bed. Cleopatra is desired because she had been desired by Caesar, Antony's absolute role model.

On stage, this kind of discourse on mimetic desire and on the move from one lover to the next has encouraged the presentation in succession of *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In 1951, Michael Benthall directed Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in London at the St James theatre (and then on Broadway in New York) in highly successful productions of the two *Cleopatra*s – Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*,[295] which were performed on alternating nights. Olivier played Caesar in the first play and Antony in the second, while Leigh performed the Egyptian queen in both, bringing over the cinematic echo of her performance as Shaw's Cleopatra six years before in Gabriel Pascal's film. But, by playing the same role in the two plays, she extended her performance from youth to maturity, showing the queen's journey through life, from lover to lover, from candor to artfulness. This back-to-back presentation was encouraged by the idea that Cleopatra, though different from one play to the next, remains psychologically consistent: Shakespeare's Egyptian queen would just be an older version of Shaw's. This construction of a coherent Cleopatra appears, for instance, in Crompton's analysis: if Shaw's Caesar and Shakespeare's are said to be "simply two different men, [...] their Cleopatras are recognizably the same woman."[296] Shaw's young queen seems to reveal the same whimsical attitude, effrontery, cowardice, angry fits, faculty for treachery, seductive strategies and histrionic tendencies than Shakespeare's older queen. The scholars, directors and actors' capacities to link through time the two Cleopatras may have facilitated the coupled staging of the two plays. On the occasion of the 1951 double production, the two dramatic texts were even edited together in a single volume, with photos from the Olivier/Leigh joint productions, thus

[295] Charlton Heston played Proculeius in the production of *Antony and Cleopatra*, one of his first professional roles, which gave him a privileged view of how to play the character of Antony, which he would then perform many times in his career.
[296] Crompton, 66.

encouraging the readers (and the spectators) to consider them in sequence.[297] This edition, released in 1952 by the publisher Dodd, Mead and Co. (New York), displays a double title page with the playwrights' names on the left page and the plays' titles on the right:

Bernard	CAESAR
SHAW	AND CLEOPATRA
**	**
William	ANTONY
SHAKESPEARE	AND CLEOPATRA

This symmetrical layout seems to proclaim that Shakespeare's play is the logical sequel of Shaw's, and should be edited with its "natural" companion. In this edition as well as in the Olivier/Leigh repertory production, the unsettling aspects of Shaw's retrospective prequel are thwarted since the plays are now listed in the chronological order of the events they dramatize and not in the more challenging order of composition. Instead of stressing the "prequel" aspect, this sequelization returns to the "natural" order of history—an order which is best suited to construct Cleopatra's life as a romantic saga.

Inside the 1952 edition of the two plays, the pictures of Olivier and Leigh emphasized the chiasm in the respective ages of the titular characters. While Vivien Leigh had to play a Cleopatra that aged from one play to the next, Laurence Olivier had first to portray an old man (Julius Caesar) and then move on to play a young and robust Antony. Olivier's doubling of roles revealed mimetic desire at its peak, since, in this production, Antony not only strove to be Caesar—he literally *was* Caesar. The doubling also evoked Oedipal desire, since in the second play Cleopatra was finding in her lover the very man who had given her fatherly love in the first play. In the published pictures, Vivien Leigh's make-up became more sophisticated and her expression moved from candid smiling to regal seriousness, while Olivier's hair changed from white to brown, his costume revealing much more flesh as Antony "the athlete" than as Caesar "the father figure". Though the female character was made the centre of the

[297] Bernard Shaw and William Shakespeare, *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Antony and Cleopatra* (New York: Dodd, Mead V Company, [1952]).

dramatic diptych, the fact that Leigh was 38 at the time of the shows made her performance as the young Cleopatra very problematic, leading the critics to praise Olivier's dual portrayal much more than Leigh's continuous presentation of the same role. The casting also gave the impression that Leigh's Cleopatra was already old when she met Caesar, and that Olivier could drink from the fountain of youth and be suddenly rejuvenated as the powerful male hero. Leigh brought not only the echo of her 1945 screen Cleopatra, but also the ghost of Blanche DuBois in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the cinematic adaptation of which had just been released in the United States (directed by Elia Kazan, with Vivien Leigh as Blanche and Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski). In a 1993 article entitled "Cleopatra of the Nile and Blanche DuBois of the French Quarter," Philip C. Kolin shows how *A Streetcar Named Desire* bears the imprint of *Antony and Cleopatra*.[298] Blanche shares with Cleopatra her role of scheming coquette and queen of beauty, her inner contradictions, her narcissicism, her reputation for being a whore, a temptress and deceiver of men, a siren who threatens masculine power.[299] At the end of *Streetcar*, Blanche also ritualistically dresses up in her queenly robes, making herself ready for her symbolic death at Stanley's violent hands. If *Streetcar* shows the influence of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Vivien Leigh, by playing Blanche, then Cleopatra, in the same year, re-injected Blanche into the character she stemmed from, generating a blur between the two parts. This ghosting effect also emphasized Cleopatra's tragic end and encouraged the audience to be emotionally involved in her plight.

According to Alice Venezki who reviewed the Olivier/Leigh *Antony and Cleopatra* for *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1952, the Shakespearean play was performed as a "historical

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[298] Philip C. Kolin, "Cleopatra of the Nile and Blanche DuBois of the French Quarter: *Antony and Cleopatra* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 11.1 (1993), 25-27.

[299] In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the character of Stanley almost identifies Blanche with Cleopatra in his ranting against the magical world she would like to create:

> I've been on to you from the start! Not once did you pull any wool over this boy's eyes. You come in here and sprinkle the place with powder and spray perfume and cover the light bulb with a paper lantern, and lo and behold the place has turned into Egypt and you are the Queen of the Nile! Sitting on your throne and swilling down my liquor! (Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams*, vol. 1 [New York: New Directions, 1971], 398).

romance" and took advantage of the glamorous image conveyed by the Olivier/Leigh couple.[300] The play was almost performed as if it were Dryden's *All for Love*, with the love relationship between Antony and Cleopatra being the major focus of the production.[301] For example, the messenger who left Cleopatra with a letter for Antony at the end of Act 1, re-entered in Act 2 scene 3, among Antony, Octavius and Octavia, to give Antony the scroll with Cleopatra's message. As soon as the others had left the stage, Olivier's Antony gazed at the scroll for a long time, showing the audience that he was still fondly thinking of his Egyptian love, though he had been forced into an alliance with Octavius's sister. He then delivered his line "I will to Egypt" as a desperate lover. Vivien Leigh was seen to perform Shakespeare's Cleopatra as the adult version of Shaw's sixteen-year-old heroine. This gave unity to the twin productions but it apparently made Shakespeare's queen less impressive. This older Cleopatra was, in Venezki's words, "a feline queen who ha[d] developed from a kittenish princess."[302] The final scene, set in Cleopatra's monument, revealed the same Sphinx under whose shadow she encountered Julius Caesar in Shaw's play. The setting thus produced a nostalgic reminder of her youth and "salad days." The soldiers of Octavius Caesar strolled by, just as the soldiers of Julius Caesar had done at the start of Shaw's play. They peered voyeuristically through the iron bars to see the queen, and enforced her speech about how Octavius would have her exhibited in Rome as part of his triumph.

This romantic, diptych presentation of Shaw's and Shakespeare's plays in the theater reflected a trend that the cinema had already imagined and would take even further—the shift from a focus on the male characters to a focus on the queenly female figure, as well as the construction of links between the "Caesar/Cleopatra" story and the "Antony/Cleopatra" one – leading to a sequelization or a conflation of all the dramatic plots to generate a cinematic saga

[300] Alice Venezki, "Shakespeare Conquers Broadway: The Olivier Antony and Cleopatra," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3.2 (April 1952), 122.
[301] See Richard Madelaine, ed., *Shakespeare in Production: Antony and Cleopatra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90.
[302] Venezki, 124.

of love. Whereas playing Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel draws the attention on Antony as a returning character and hero, considering *Antony and Cleopatra* as the sequel of Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* shifts the heroic status to the Egyptian queen. The new vision that Shaw's play offered at the start of the twentieth century did not have challenging consequences only; through the spur for sequelization it induced, it also paved the way to the epic conflation of plots in the *Cleopatra* films by J. Gordon Edwards (1917), Cecile B. deMille (1934) and Joseph L. Mankiewicz (1963); it gave birth to the parodic treatment of *Carry On Cleo* (1964) by film director Gerald Thomas; and even to the TV docudramas telling the lives of Caesar and Cleopatra (Uli Edel's 2003 *Julius Caesar* and Franc Roddam's 1999 *Cleopatra*). In the next chapter, I will explore how Shakespeare's plays have been rewritten to be conflated for the screen. What ideologies transpire from the films? What happens when Cleopatra is constructed as the pivotal figure in a saga?

4. 'Play it Again, Cleopatra!':

Cleopatra as the Pivotal Figure in the Conflation of Plots[303]

Conflating the plots on film

In 1905, A.C. Bradley viewed Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as a continuation of *Julius Caesar*; the second play, he felt, invites its spectators to witness how power, initially shared between three triumvirs at the end of the first play, was then seized by only one of them:

> [At the end of *Julius Caesar*,] the world is left divided among three men, his [Caesar's] friends and his heir. Here, *Antony and Cleopatra* takes up the tale; and its business, from this point of view, is to show the reduction of these three to one. That Lepidus will not be this one was clear already in *Julius Caesar*; it must be Octavius or Antony[304].

This emphasis on the enmity between Octavius and Antony is consequently seen as the focus of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Bradley's sentiment at the beginning of the twentieth century is echoed in Barbara Baines's comments at its end. She, too, reads the sequel effect in terms of mimetic desire, violence and male rivalry:

> [At the end of *Julius Caesar*,] the resulting peace is . . . clearly ephemeral; no longer united against a common adversary, Antony and Octavius will inevitably become hostile rivals . . . The violence begun on the ides of March will end only with the death of Antony and the ascendance of Octavius as *the* Roman Emperor. Antony and Cleopatra come together within the context of the rivalry between two Roman brothers who divide the world between them.[305]

Like Bradley, Baines reads *Antony and Cleopatra* as a story of competition between two Roman men rather than as the erotic encounter between a Roman man and an Egyptian woman. The love plot is almost perceived as an anecdote in a bigger picture in which political

[303] This chapter is a revised and extended version of a paper entitled "Cleopatra on Screen: Subversion or Containment?" which was published in *Shakespeare on Screen: The Roman Plays*, ed. Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin (Rouen: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre. 2009), 239-270. Reproduced with kind permission of the publisher.

[304] A.C. Bradley, "Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*" in *Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra*, Casebook Series, ed. John Russell Brown, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1968, 71.

[305] Barbara Baines, "Girard's Doubles and *Antony and Cleopatra*" in *Theory in Practice: Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Nigel Wood, Buckingham, Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1996, 25.

opposition is expressed as male rivalry and fighting. The ascendance of Octavius appears at the end of the fourth act when Antony's sword is symbolically stolen and brought to the victorious triumvir. According to Maurice Charney, "the presentation of Antony's sword to Octavius acts out the tragic transfer of power that is a central issue in the play, and the ritual stage business serves as a brusque investiture for Caesar"[306]. However, cinematic ventures that conflate the plots of the two plays and present Cleopatra as the dominating figure in the story prefer to insist on the female point of view, offering an alternative plot trajectory from that of a reduction of three men to a lone victor.

The existence of a kaleidoscopic intertext of literary and dramatic works from the Renaissance onwards, culminating with Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901), has encouraged directors and spectators to view Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in a renewed light, with *Antony and Cleopatra* becoming the sequel of both Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. This perspective, which privileges the female character over the male ones, has influenced the way actors and directors have approached *Antony and Cleopatra*. For instance, in her notes on the play, Vanessa Redgrave begins her analysis of Cleopatra with a reminder of her youth, her "salad days" when she shared the life of Julius Caesar and gave birth to a son, Caesarion[307]. Redgrave puts the whole plot of *Antony* in the context of Cleopatra's earlier affair with Caesar:

> Antony saw himself, knew himself, as the leader of the Caesarian faction with allegiance to Julius Caesar . . . For Antony, the goal had to be the conquest of Cleopatra, whose son had been fathered by the great Julius Caesar . . . For Cleopatra, the great triumvir Antony was the inevitable next political choice or a husband: first Pompey the Great, then Julius Caesar, then the triumvir who had defeated his assassins.[308]

[306] Maurice Charney, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays: the Function of Imagery in the Drama*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1961, 143.
[307] Vanessa Redgrave, *Antony and Cleopatra*, London, Faber & Faber, 2002, 39.
[308] *Ibid.*, 55.

Here, *Antony and Cleopatra* is clearly envisioned as the sequel of a play involving Cleopatra's youth and ambition, as well as Julius Caesar's private affairs and succession. Shakespeare's play, according to Redgrave, shows Antony positioning himself as the direct successor of Julius Caesar in Cleopatra's bed. Cleopatra is desired because she had been desired by Caesar, Antony's role model. Janet Suzman (who played Cleopatra in the 1972 RSC production directed by Trevor Nunn) adopts, in her own commentary of the play, a similar vision based on sequelization. She starts with a historical background which stresses that Cleopatra's "remarkable attributes . . . were irresistible to both Caesar and Antony", a comment which again alludes to mimetic desire as being Antony's chief motivation.[309] In her eight-page introduction to commentary, Suzman harps on Cleopatra's former encounter with Julius Caesar ("they had cruised along the Nile together"[310]; "Julius Caesar fathered a son with the then 21 year old Cleopatra"[311]) and on her two-year stay in Rome before Caesar's murder ("The Queen seems to have arrived in Rome in July 46 b.c. to attend the opening of the newly erected temple of Venus";[312] "In July 46 b.c., Caesar had Cleopatra visit him in Rome", "When Cleopatra came with her son to Rome to stay with Julius Caesar…".)[313] In comments such as "The decision to place [Cleopatra's] statue inside a Roman temple at that moment was obviously made by the pair of them—Caesar and Cleopatra—and was intended to have deep religious and political implications"[314], Suzman reveals the very title of Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra*, thus consciously or subconsciously placing Cleopatra's past with Caesar as a crucial background against which Shakespeare's play should be apprehended. What remains only implicit in Redgrave's and Suzman's analyses of *Antony and Cleopatra* is rendered more prominent in the filmic ventures based on the Cleopatra story.

[309] *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Barry Gaines, theatre commentary by Janet Suzman, New York, Applause Theatre Books, 2001, p. xviii.
[310] *Ibid.*, p. xix.
[311] *Ibid.*, p. xxi.
[312] *Ibid.*, p. xix.
[313] *Ibid.*, p. xxii.
[314] *Ibid.*, p. xix.

At the end of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra frees and elevates herself in her carefully staged suicide, thus shattering Octavius' project of having her displayed in Rome as a captive. At this point, according to Baines, she is "no longer the object to be possessed within the internal rivalry of Caesar and Antony"[315]. In the films, on the other hand, the heroic status of the queen elevates her from the start. The spectators follow her life from early adulthood to death and see her as the only fixed, immovable character in the story. The films show her, from the beginning, as embodying what Baines calls "im-propriety", i.e. "the lack of being proper and of being one man's exclusive property"[316]. By conflating the various plots, the films also explicitly reveal how men follow one another in Cleopatra's life in a pattern of mimetic desire, with Antony stepping up as Cleopatra's lover in the wake of Julius Caesar. However, Cleopatra's new pivotal and dominant position has been curtailed by an aesthetic that offers her body to the view in Orientalist terms.

Cleopatra and the staging of the oriental body

The *Cleopatra* films are set in the Orientalist tradition which attempts to initiate the (Western) audience to (a construction of) the Orient and, as such, claims to lead naïve gazes through the discovery of a new, exotic world. From the early days of cinema, the Orient (or, rather, the Western idea of it) has been turned into an object of *spectacle*. Egypt, in particular, has been connected with early cinematic forms (from panoramas to lantern shows). The "first feature-length, British-made panoramic river trip" was, for instance, a transparent panorama of the Nile, which was projected at the Egyptian Hall in London in 1849.[317] The Egyptian Hall had been opened in 1812 to exhibit "curiosities," which included the plunder of Egyptology, before becoming a cinema house in 1896 (when it started to show Edison films). The thriving of film images displaying the marvels of Egypt thus participated in a colonialist

[315] Baines, 33.
[316] *Ibid*., 36.
[317] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978), 206.

and imperialist enterprise whose aim was to photograph and map territories (as well as men/women) to be conquered. This imperialistic Western vision conquered the East for consumption, allowing for the display of eroticized situations in puritanical contexts, notably during the Victorian era.[318] The female oriental body became safely available since it was "channeled," as Antonia Lant has remarked, "through the imperialism of Egyptology, Roman Egypt, and ideas about the harem, the sheik, Arabian nights, and the vamp."[319] Associated with artificial role playing and with material possession (mirroring her political conquest and appropriation by the West), the figure of Cleopatra has been, from the outset,[320] articulated in these exotic, Orientalist terms. As Edward Said has shown, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."[321] Cleopatra has been presented as an exotic commodity displaying her charms in magnificently staged shows, which has served to reinforce the European and American sense of self by constructing differences with the Orient. In this context, Cleopatra's body has become the dark, Oriental land that the Romans want to invade and subdue—a body that takes part in the "construction of the East as Other and the West as (Ideal) Ego".[322] The "Cleopatra" icon has given the opportunity to display spectacles of seduction and conquest at the same time, in which the Orient, seen as female, is to be saved from her own madness, backwardness, irrationality and debauchery.

Cinema only took over what was already an established trend on the stage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[323] As early as 1759, actor-manager David Garrick undertook a policy of providing more scenery and pageantry on the London stage. He started with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* for which he attempted to find visual equivalents to

[318] See Ella Shohat, "Gender in Hollywood's Orient," *Middle East Report* 1962 (January-February 1990): 40-42.
[319] Lant, 109.
[320] Five *Cleopatra* films were made between 1908 and 1918 (1908 by J. Stuart Blackton and Charles Kent, 1910 by Ferdinand Zecca and Henri Andréani, 1912 by Charles L. Gaskill, 1913 by Enrico Guazzoni, and 1917 by J. Gordon Edwards).
[321] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979, 3.
[322] Shohat, 40.
[323] See Lamb, 72-97.

the poetic language. Garrick offered grand spectacle for the lovers' entrance (with trains of exotic extras), for the banquet scene on Pompey's galley and for Antony's return after his temporary victory. At the Covent Garden theater in 1813, John Philip Kemble mounted a production with both spectacular and antiquarian ambitions, introducing the tradition of adding as many Egyptian motifs as possible. This urge to recreate past ages as exactly as possible was typical of romantic longings as well as colonial aspirations—the representation of Rome being most appealing during England's own imperial century. The production's high points were the visual additions of the sea fight at Actium and a musical funeral procession after Cleopatra's death. The set pieces were already so large and heavy that the actors had difficulty moving about on the stage. In 1833, at the Dury Lane theater, William Macready also illustrated the Shakespearean text with astonishing scene paintings that displayed dark, romantic seascapes and sweeping cloud effects. For the battle of Actium, a diorama[324] showed the two fleets actually moving and some of Antony's ships burning. Actors-managers aimed at historical verisimilitude and authentic archaeological reconstruction. Three-dimensional sets were built to materialize Egypt and Rome as naturalistically as possible and were changed out of the audience's view to increase illusion. However, the set changes made the play drag terribly, as the numerous intervals took more and more time. The reviewers often came to the conclusion that the play was beautiful but unstageable. However, the tradition of lavish spectacle was not abandoned. Frank Benson directed extravagant productions of the play in 1898, 1900 and 1912, which all featured the now traditional visions—Cleopatra's palace, Pompey's galley, Antony's triumphal return, an amazing sea fight with Egyptian ships burning at sunset, and Cleopatra's elevated monument all painted with hieroglyphics. Originality could especially be found in the added music, inspired by Bedouin tunes, which

[324] The diorama was a set fixed to a moving wall in the background, which unwound vertically or horizontally according to the actors' movements, providing the feeling that the characters were walking or running.

was played during the various processions and the exotic ballets of Cleopatra's dancing attendants.

The highest point of the pictorial tradition and realistic illusion was eventually reached with Herbert Beerbohm Tree's 1906 production at His Majesty's Theater. It relied on impressive costumes and a massive number of extras. The performance opened and closed on a dissolving vision of the Sphinx projected on a screen while Oriental, voluptuous music was played. *Trompe-l'oeil* pictures and three-dimensional sets created the locations in Rome, Athens and Egypt, but also Cleopatra's barge drifting onstage in front of a painting of the Nile; extraordinary tableaux revealed excited crowds, marching soldiers, processions and exotic dancers. A scene was added to show the coronation of Antony and Cleopatra, in which the Egyptian queen, all dressed in silver, made her way to a high throne in a street of Alexandria, while the screaming populace acclaimed her. Though spectacularly impressive, the production was condemned for the intruding sounds made by the behind-the-scene operations and for its slow pace, as the intervals for the set changes took sometimes one third of the evening.

After World War I, the staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* came back to a simplicity that attempted to reproduce the original conditions of Elizabethan performance, while the exotic and extravagant trend continued in the cinema, a medium which could accommodate enormous, spectacular sets without marring the show through the disclosure of the behind-the-scenes, cumbersome machinery. Cinema appropriated the Orientalist pageantry and theatricality of the Cleopatra story. In 1917, Theda Bara, the silent-screen star (who became known as "The Vamp"), played Cleopatra in a film directed by J. Gordon Edwards and produced by William Fox (which would merge with Darry F. Zanuck's Twentieth Century Pictures to form the Twentieth Century Fox in 1935). Theda Bara, an anagram of "Arab Death", was publicized as the ultimate Oriental *femme fatale*, embodying all the fears linked

to the mysterious and dangerous otherness of Egypt and womanhood.[325] No prints of the film seem to have survived but we know that the film focused on its star (in extravagant dress and undress) and featured many spectacular scenes displaying magnificent costumes,[326] the elaborate reconstruction of Rome and Alexandria, and dozens of galleys burning during the battle. The first part of the film was devoted to the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra, and ended with the murder of Caesar, probably followed by the battle of Philippi. The second part moved on to the affair with Antony until the couple's suicide.[327] Many of the intertitles used Shakespeare's text, but the film was not marketed or even received as Shakespearean. It was viewed, to use Robert Hamilton Ball's words, as "an eye-filling recreation of glamorous pseudo-history".[328] The 1917 *Cleopatra* was in fact the first cinematic (and even dramatic) venture to conflate three plots into one, combining the Caesar/Cleopatra affair (as scripted by Fletcher and Massinger, or by Shaw), the assassination of Caesar in the Capitol (as scripted by Shakespeare) and the Antony/Cleopatra love story (as scripted by Shakespeare) into one single, continuous piece.

In 1934, Cecil B. DeMille again conflated the three plots. He directed Claudette Colbert as the Egyptian queen, Henry Wilcoxon as Antony and Warren William as Julius Caesar in a camp and grandiose Hollywood fantasy that once more reshaped the historical facts. The film presented Colbert as a flirtatious and scheming Cleopatra, while Caesar and especially Antony were revealed as selfish and childish men, sometimes even bringing unintentional comic aspects to their characters. DeMille skillfully mixed eroticism and sin, in a notable 'show of

[325] See Hughes-Hallet, 330-331.
[326] On costumes, Vivian Sobchack comments: "the Hollywood epic shows us that the people—most particularly, the women—living History almost always wore extravagant clothes and spent a good deal of History changing them" (25), in "'Surge and Splendour': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* 29 (Winter 1990): 24-49.
[327] See Robert Hamilton Ball, *Shakespeare on Silent Film: a Strange Eventful History*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1968, 253.
[328] *Ibid.*, 253.

skin' involving scantily clad girls performing exotic choreographies.[329] This *Cleopatra* is essentially remembered for two moments—Cleopatra resting on a great dais with silk draperies, falling rose petals, and dancing girls aboard her infamous barge; and the elaborately-staged sea battle of Actium, which notably recycles some stock footage from DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (1923). Spectacular scenes were too costly not to be re-used, but could ultimately introduce a metanarrative awareness through a recycling practice in which films fed on previous works.

The film, however, does not only recycle previous films, it also integrates a rewriting of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. When Caesar, after his visit to Egypt, returns to Rome, the film includes the soothsayer's warning to "beware the ides of March" (1.2.19), an infiltration of *Julius Caesar* into *Antony and Cleopatra*. Though the film does not show images of Antony's masterful oration in the Forum, it conveys an ironic view of it when Octavius, now jealous of Antony, derides him with "You and your 'Friends, Romans, countrymen'". In this line, Octavius is not only making fun of Antony, he is also parodying Shakespeare, the author of the words. DeMille thus seems to present the medium of cinema as a means of rewriting theater and giving fresh meanings to hackneyed lines (such as "Friends, Romans, countrymen", 3.2.70) through the construction of new contexts—here, through a focus on Cleopatra's story.

The genre of the Roman epic, which evolved in the wake of World War II, was a result of two contemporaneous pressures on North American film-making: the need to compete with the new rising medium of television and the desire to rival the Soviet Union. The aim of the Roman epic, as a result, was both aesthetic and ideological, and the spectacle it presented was hyperbolic to reveal American power. The epic film metafilmically turned into the very symbol of what it dealt with—the more the film had to evoke magnificence, pomp, greatness

[329] Erika L. Doss, "Images of American Women in the 1930s: Reginald Marsh and 'Paramount Pictures'," *Woman's Art Journal*, 1.2 (Autumn 1983-Winter 1984), 2.

and excess, the more the budget had to rise to pay for the stars' extraordinarily costly contracts and to finance state-of-the-art film techniques (such as Cinemascope), and the more the Hollywood producers appeared as Roman emperors themselves, offering spectacular entertainment to the masses in order to better channel and control them. In the fifties and early sixties, the Hollywood studios competed in their search for lavishness and extravagance, with producers spending higher and higher sums on films such as *Quo Vadis* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy, 1951), *Ben Hur* (dir. William Wyler, 1959) or *Spartacus* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1960). The audience's attention was refocused on anecdotes about the shootings and the astronomical amounts of money spent on the productions, rather than on the cinematic works themselves.[330] According to Maria Wyke, "spectators of Hollywood's widescreen epics were invited to position themselves ... as Romans luxuriating in a surrender to the splendour of film spectacle itself."[331] Film audiences were, therefore, encouraged to identify with the on-lookers inside the story; they were incited to adopt a gaze that turned the spectacles into *double* theatrical situations—into shows for two sets of voyeuristic and appraising gazes.

Mankiewicz's 1963 *Cleopatra*: Rewriting the 1953 *Julius Caesar*

The most famous—or infamous, rather—version of the Cleopatra story was filmed in 1963 by director Joseph L. Mankiewicz and has to be understood in the context of the Hollywood epic. While, in Shakespeare's play, Enobarbus evokes Cleopatra's arrival at Cydnus on her majestic barge in a speech, this verbal summary is turned, in Mankiewicz's film, into a lavish, visual sequence in which the Egyptian queen enters the harbour on her floating palace and entices Antony to join her in an orgiastic feast. In the graphic sea battle at Actium, Mankiewicz chooses to elaborate an explanation for Cleopatra's "fearful sails" (3.11.55): she sees Antony's ship in flames, believes her lover to be dead, and decides to fly

[330] See Frédéric Martin, *L'Antiquité au cinéma* (Paris: Dreamland, 2002), 10-11.
[331] Maria Wyke, *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 31-32.

from the scene. Where Shakespeare preserves ambiguity, and works through visual minimalism and suggestion, Mankiewicz's film is based on full-blown realism and the display of spectacular images, making the characters' motivations as clear as possible. The stars, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, echoing their screen romance, ignited a scandal by having a torrid affair during the shooting, although they were still both married to other people at the time. The film cost $44 million, (the present-day equivalent would be approximately $270 million). Adjusted for inflation, Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* may still be the most expensive film ever made.

Edwards's 1917, DeMille's 1934 and Mankiewicz's 1963 films are narratively similar in their combination of three plots: the affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, the murder of Caesar in the Senate, and the love story (followed by the deaths) of Mark Antony and Cleopatra. In this conflation, a shift in viewpoints is undertaken, as we move from an Antony-oriented story to a Cleopatra-driven narrative. By constructing Cleopatra as the pivotal character, the films adopt a specifically female viewpoint. This can readily be seen from the main poster advertising Mankiewicz's 1963 *Cleopatra*, which reveals the queen in the central position and in the foreground, while Caesar and Antony are positioned on either side of her and pushed into the background.

Constructing a heroine: Cleopatra served by Caesar and Antony on the poster of Mankiewicz's 1963 film

Contrary to the titles of Shakespeare's and Shaw's plays, the names of the men have been suppressed from the titles of the 1917, 1934 and 1963 films, simply leaving the name of the Egyptian queen. Spectators are invited to consider Caesar and Antony through Cleopatra's eyes. This shift in focus, from male to female, has some crucial aesthetic consequences. The 1963 *Cleopatra*, for example, appears as a double act of rewriting. Mankiewicz rewrites history and Shakespeare's scenes and texts (turning them into less ambiguous situations and everyday speech), but also offers another take on one of his previous films, his own 1953 male-oriented *Julius Caesar*. The fact that *Cleopatra* was shot in color and widescreen format and displayed numerous spectacular and lavish shots may not encourage a comparison with the earlier *Julius Caesar*, which was filmed in black-and-white, used Shakespeare's text and relied on a minimalist approach with austere, tightly focused, cinematic effects. Mankiewicz had notably insisted on using black and white film stock for *Julius Caesar* to distance his film from the vogue for Roman epics at the time, to evoke classical authority[332] and to recall the black-and-white newsreels showing the Führer at Nuremberg or Mussolini overlooking the crowd from his balcony.[333] However, as Karine Hildenbrand-Girard has convincingly demonstrated, there are many connections between the two films, and notably some structural, metafilmic junctions.[334] The two films are thought to form a story in three acts since *Cleopatra* is composed of two symmetrical parts, whose central point—the assassination of

[332] See Jean Chothia, "Julius Caesar in Interesting Times" in *Remaking Shakespeare: Performance Across Media, Genres and Cultures*, ed. Pascale Aebisher, Edward J. Esche and Nigel Wheale (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2003), 120-121.

[333] See Sam Crowl, "A World Elsewhere: The Roman Plays on Film and Television" in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image, the Plays on Film and Television*, ed. Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149. See also John Houseman's essay "Julius Caesar on Film" in his book *Entertainers and the Entertained* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1986), 83-97. Houseman was the producer of Mankiewicz's 1953 *Julius Caesar*.

[334] See Karine Hildenbrand-Girard, "Mankiewicz adaptateur de Shakespeare," *Études Anglaises*, 55.2 (2002): 185-186.

Caesar—is the subject of *Julius Caesar*. Since Mankiewicz's 1953 *Julius Caesar* shows what remains partly hidden in the 1963 *Cleopatra* film, it thus stands as both the ellipsis and the central fold of the subsequent film. But although the murder of Caesar becomes the crux of *Cleopatra*, it offers a strong shift in standpoints, from a male to a female point of view. In the 1953 *Julius Caesar*, the spectators are encouraged to watch the murder through the male gaze of Brutus, who, ashamed to watch, closes his eyes. The camera soon moves away from the murder scene in order to hide violence, focusing on Brutus instead. In an anti-voyeuristic move, he camera gaze focuses on the character that refuses to see, thus denying the spectators the actual sight of the murder and reflexively imposing on the spectators Brutus' (conscious or unconscious) decision to close his eyes.

Ten years later, Mankiewicz reshot the scene from Cleopatra's female vantage-point. The sequence shows that although she is not actually present in the Senate, Cleopatra is watching the scene from her villa in the outskirts of Rome. An Egyptian sorceress starts a fire from which the vision of the murder arises. The flames which frame the murder scene metafilmically signal the act of rewriting and re-envisioning of the Shakespearean scene, while Cleopatra's face is superimposed on the images of Caesar's death, stressing the filmic palimpsest. The two special effects (the flames and the superimposition) thus reflect the double act of rewriting, as both Shakespeare as well as the earlier film are invoked only to be supplanted by a third narrative. Contrary to Brutus, Cleopatra does not close her eyes, nor does she move away from the event. She experiences the murder of her lover in her own flesh, screaming as if she were the one being stabbed. Mankiewicz's filmic trajectory seems to move from the male feelings of guilt, fear and shame in his *Julius Caesar*, to *Cleopatra*'s female sense of love and empathy that infuses the murder with a renewed tragic quality.

Cleopatra visiting Rome: Negotiating female power

This filmic rewriting participates in the moral elevation of the "Cleopatra" icon and myth within a patriarchal world. The figure of Cleopatra (notwithstanding the name's etymological meaning of "glory of her father") has never connoted patriarchal authority, but rather the combination of public authority and an active female sexuality. Mary Hamer contends that Cleopatra's name "locates political power in a body that cannot be coded as male. In any patriarchal system, it speaks of the transgression of the law".[335] The films reinforce this view and appear as sites of negotiation for female power. In 1934, DeMille's *Cleopatra* showed the Egyptian queen as a figure of economic and sexual independence, thus offering to the American "New Women" a figure with whom to identify. Claudette Colbert, who played the enticing queen, brought the echoes of her previous roles as energetic, witty, modern women in control of their lives, while Elizabeth Taylor's 1963 performance took part in a trend that presented women as even more autonomous and sexually liberated.

The 1934 and 1963 *Cleopatra*s also presented the queen as a double of the film director within the films' diegeses. For Francesca T. Royster, Colbert becomes a kind of "surrogate for DeMille's powers of discipline and direction".[336] She is seen giving orders to her many slaves and controlling the orgiastic spectacle that she has choreographed for Antony. Cleopatra's manipulative skills as well as her distance from the pageant shows she organizes are also emphasised in Mankiewicz's 1963 film. At the end of her colossal, spectacular entrance into Rome, Cleopatra descends from her majestic throne pulled by hundreds of slaves, only to wink at Caesar and let him know that the show has been a carefully planned illusion to please the masses. Through this wink, Elisabeth Taylor metafilmically discloses the construction of this highly theatrical situation, partly deconstructing its imperialistic and Orientalist connotations. It is as if, in this film, Cleopatra was astute enough to know that she was acting in a Hollywood Epic.

[335] Mary Hamer, *Signs of Cleopatra: History, Politics, Representation*, London, Routledge, 1993, p. xix.
[336] Francesca T. Royster, *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2003, p. 86.

However, if summoning the image of Cleopatra calls the patriarchal system into question and underlines the position of women in the social order, the films have also attempted to weaken female power. Even though the *Cleopatra* films cast the Egyptian queen as central and powerful, they still remain sites of negotiation in which female power is not taken for granted, but must face strong oppositions from the dominant discourse. This discourse tends to present her within a patriarchal hierarchy in which the sensual woman has to be punished or, at least, excluded from the realm of power.

Through the use of Roman antiquity and its seeming historical "truth" (which provided the Hollywood films with cultural prestige and authority), the cinematic *Cleopatra*s have conveyed the vision of a dangerous (yet defeatable) woman, infusing this representation with an air of venerability.[337] The female character may claim political and sexual freedom, but she is led to segregation, failure and death. For Wyke, Cleopatra is "marked as doubly Other—both Egyptian and woman—and, therefore, doubly deserving of defeat by an Octavian who represent[s] the restoration of the authority of Rome, the West, and the Male principle".[338] This may be true already in Shakespeare's play of *Antony and Cleopatra*, but the film narratives, by conflating three dramatic plots—the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra, the murder of Caesar and the love story between Antony and Cleopatra—lay even more stress on this double Otherness.

This increased emphasis on Cleopatra's difference, I want to argue, is effected through the crucial inclusion of an episode that can only appear when the plots of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are merged. This episode involves the sequences in which Cleopatra joins Julius Caesar in Rome. Just as Caesar visits the Egyptian world at the beginning of each

[337] See Wyke, *The Roman Mistress*, 292. See also *Projecting the Past*, in which Wyke explains why the reconstruction of Roman history is so important in American culture: "The United States had constant recourse to an invented tradition of *romanitas* in the early years of the nation's foundation . . . Classical antiquity readily supplied America with a usable past—instant, communal history and cultural legitimacy in the eyes of Europe. America was thus created according to the model of an ideally conceived Roman republic [with] Roman republican ideals of liberty [and] civic virtue," 15.
[338] Wyke, *Projecting the Past*, 75.

Cleopatra films, the Egyptian queen visits the Roman world when Caesar is about to be killed. After Caesar narratively invaded the world of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra now penetrates the world of *Julius Caesar*. In Mankiewicz's 1963 film, this episode goes from Cleopatra's famously spectacular arrival in Rome perched upon a giant Sphinx (preceded by an incredibly long succession of exotic shows and ballets), to her forced flight from the city after Caesar's murder. Although Cleopatra is never captured by the Romans, her entrance may be viewed as the triumphal procession of the Roman victor, displaying his exotic conquest to the citizens' view. Shots of the judgemental and self-righteous Roman wives intercut the images of Cleopatra's arrival, as if the Egyptian woman were a dissolute prisoner deserving disdainful looks. The Roman citizens in Mankiewicz's version appear as doubles of the audience in the cinema, and invite the spectators to cast an ambivalent gaze before such an excessive display of orgiastic wealth. In DeMille's 1934 film, Cleopatra's opulent entrance into the city is also received with opprobrium and envious looks from the citizens present at the "show," who cannot abide her difference: Rome refuses to be ruled by a frivolous, foreign queen. In both films, the audience is reflexively encouraged to cast the same kind of gaze, both filled with admiration and revulsion, over the Egyptian intruder. Cleopatra is both elevated and downgraded in a highly theatrical and voyeuristic situation (in which the onlooking characters mirror the spectators). The double gaze that is created on the aesthetic level finds its reflection in the ideologically ambivalent presentation of the female character. This theatrical invasion of the Roman world by the Egyptian Cleopatra is seen as a form of dangerous contamination. When she enters Rome, she is filmed as a female foreigner in a place ruled by men where the woman's part is limited to that of the domesticated wife. The Egyptian Queen as Roman immigrant comes to represent the anxieties surrounding the perceived threat to national ethnic composition and moral values associated with immigrants arriving in the United States. Wike explains that emancipated women, as well as new

immigrants, "were often figured cinematically in Orientalist terms. As the collective urban Other, they were set in an exotic mise-en-scène and characterized as having a taste for sybaritic luxury or depraved sex"[339]. This *mise-en-scène* included filmic representations, as Royster observes: "The fluidity of white identity for non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants in the early twentieth century is central to our understanding of the Cleopatra icon's importance in the birth of film. With her already vexed racial history, the Cleopatra icon was well positioned to exploit such anxieties"[340]. As an oriental woman, Cleopatra appears on film as persecuted and blamed for the very social instabilities that originated in the imperialist, patriarchal, policies. In DeMille's film, as soon as Julius Caesar is murdered, the Romans threaten her with death, thus forcing her to go back to Egypt. They act as the founding Fathers or as the old Anglo-aristocracy of America, defending their values against a Cleopatra who, because she is both a foreign woman and a "modern" one, is perceived as frightening and tyrannical.

The inclusion of the "Cleopatra in Rome" episode – a sequence made possible by the conflations of plots – has thus emphasized the rejection that the queen has to face and her representation as doubly Other. This "taming of the Egyptian shrew," so to speak, has had consequences on the films' second part, when Cleopatra starts her affair with Mark Antony. In De Mille's film, Cleopatra manipulates Antony in the sake of her country's interests. But at the very moment when she is about to poison him to please Octavius, she sees that Antony is ready to fight enthusiastically against all the Roman armies to be able to cherish her and, finally, she falls in love with him. She recognises his authority, kneels before him and kisses his hands devotedly, before saying "I am no longer a queen. I am a woman". Antony thus seems to have managed to domesticate her and turned her into a submissive wife, in a restoration of the social order. DeMille's version attempts to contain Cleopatra as a New Woman by eventually presenting her affair with Antony in the conventional terms of the

[339] *Ibid.*, 95.
[340] Royster, 69.

romance. Viewed as a sinner and condemned for promiscuousness and Otherness, Cleopatra can only be redeemed through her total surrender to a husband-like Antony.

In Mankiewicz's 1963 version, the prominent narrative use of Caesar and Cleopatra's son, Caesarion, adds a tangible threat of bastardy and miscegenation to the story. When Cleopatra is in Rome, a scene shows Caesar, in a patio, playing with his son, teaching him how to rule, be magnanimous or merciful. Father and son are dressed exactly alike, both wearing the purple toga of supreme power. Miscegenation is made even more frightening since it is almost invisible. Again, as in DeMille's film, Cleopatra has to face segregation and isolation (she is secluded in one of Caesar's villas out of town). When she has to leave Rome after Caesar's assassination, she is filmed aboard a boat, wrapped in a simple shawl and carrying her son in a blanket. Far from her former display of wealth, she now conveys the image of a poor and lonely immigrant chased from the country she had chosen to live in. In Mankiewicz's film, Caesar's problematic filiation also surfaces during the murder scene. When Cleopatra, in the flames of the Pithy, sees Caesar being stabbed, she suddenly screams "My son!" This exclamation is highly ambiguous. The queen, in a trance, may actually be uttering the words of Caesar himself, surprised as he is to be killed by Brutus, a man he considered a son. "My son!" may thus be Mankiewicz's rewriting of Shakespeare's "Et tu, Brute?" (3.1), this time placed in the ventriloquist mouth of Cleopatra. But Cleopatra's cry may also mean that, with Caesar's death, her son Caesarion loses any kind of legitimacy and all hopes of ever reaching power.[341] In this film, the murder of Caesar becomes the eradication of a lineage stained by the mark of hybridity.

The submission and marginalization of the female character is to be considered within the general framework of the glamourized display of sets, costumes and bodies which has

[341] For the remarks on Cleopatra's ambiguous 'My son!', I am endebted to Karine Hildenbrand-Girard who allowed me to read her paper 'L'adaptation, vecteur et enjeu de plaisir dans le cinema de J.L. Mankiewicz' that she gave at the conference *From the blank page to the silver screen* organized at the University of Lorient (8-10 June 2006).

implicitly encouraged consumerist behaviours for Cleopatra's cosmetics, dresses and household furnishings, and which has privileged "the model of a woman who subordinates independence and autonomy," Margaret Malamud claims, "to what is most important and essential to female identity—her role as wife".[342] The Cleopatra films have participated in a Western, commercial trend in which the "Cleopatra" icon is generally produced by male stage directors or film producers, while encouraging women to consume this male-constructed figure. Barbara Hodgdon claims that female consumption of Cleopatra was already urged in 1897, when women from the aristocracy and *haute bourgeoisie* appeared at fancy dress balls as Cleopatra, sporting very costly and extravagant costumes.[343] By the beginning of the twentieth century, the "Cleopatra" icon was well "dispersed into mass culture": in 1907, one of the first fashion exhibitions, at John Wanamaker's New York department store, openly advertised "The Egyptian Tendency," publicising its inspiration from "the flowing draperies of Cleopatra" and "the graceful dress allurements of those old days that ring of Caesar, Ptolemy and Antony".[344] At the release of the 1934 De Mille film, in a context where strong economic links had developed between the cinematic industry and general commerce, American women were encouraged to equip themselves as Claudette Colbert in the role of Cleopatra, through the purchase of promoted goods—jewellery, shoes, hair curlers, "negligees, cosmetics, and Palmolive soap, whose ad ... proclaimed, 'Age cannot wither, nor custom stale, her infinite variety'".[345] The film had become a *vitrine* displaying consumer goods to be desired and then bought. Such consumerist trend reached its peak after the release of the 1963 Mankiewicz film, when female spectators were invited to consume the image of

[342] Margaret Malamud, "Swords-and-scandales: Hollywood's Rome during the Great Depression," *Arethusa* 41 (2008), 165.
[343] Hodgdon, 92.
[344] *Ibid.*, 95.
[345] *Ibid.*

Elizabeth Taylor's Cleopatra through the adoption of her dresses, hairdos, and make-up.[346] Women were told to take up the constructed filmic role of the Egyptian queen and were taught, as Hodgdon argues, "that seduction is a matter of consumption and that how a woman looks is (still) who she is."[347] But to look like Cleopatra could turn a woman into a problematic site in which racial identities have constantly been negotiated. In his book *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania*, Scott Trafton has explored the connections between the constructions of racial categories and the representations of ancient Egypt in nineteenth-century America, arguing that the American mania for Egypt was connected to anxieties over race, and race-based slavery : "As a figure of racialized controversy, [Cleopatra] would emerge over the [nineteenth] century as a figure of dangerously ambivalent and embattled racial status, her earlier dangerousness folding over and over again into her newer role as a sign of racial upheaval."[348] The body of Cleopatra became a battlefield that entered the twentieth century – and its filmic representations – with the same racial ambivalence.

"Thinking black": Racialising the myth

In Carol Rutter's analysis, a "black" narrative around the figure of Cleopatra would bring political and racial power to the Egyptian queen, but the films, on the contrary, have denied her a black skin, removing her ability to "taint" Roman whiteness if she were to be subjugated. Though her cinematic representations are rooted in exoticism, Cleopatra has always been played by white actresses, thus guaranteeing that the white middle-class female spectators identify with the heroine and consume her image. Far from a powerful black figure, Cleopatra nevertheless appears on screen as a "black" woman but in a symbolic way that

[346] See Maria Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 281.
[347] Hodgdon, p. 101.
[348] Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 186.

connects blackness to weakness and inferiority. She is regularly represented as a slave or an immigrant, whose body is always made available within exotic *mises-en-scène*. In DeMille's 1934 film, Cleopatra's Otherness as a woman is stated in Antony's own words. He tells the Egyptian queen that, in order to be less besotted with her, he should see another woman, but immediately admits that this will be impossible since she is already "another woman, a completely other woman". Cleopatra's sexual difference, in fact, is emphasised from the very start of DeMille's film. The film begins with the parting of dark stone walls, evoking the female sex; the walls open on the title "Cleopatra" but also on a vision of Cleopatra herself, tied up with chains. Femininity is thus closely related to the ideas of sadistic display and restraint. The sign of sexual difference, which pervades the whole film through images of burning hoops or open shells, turns Cleopatra into a scapegoat for the destructive civil war between Octavius and Antony. Images of Cleopatra's face are actually superimposed on images of battles, thus stressing the queen's heavy responsibility for the absence of order. For the social fabric to be restored, DeMille's film implies that the powerful woman must die. Cleopatra's suicide is performed as the battering ram of Octavius' army bursts into her chamber, thus linking the queen's death with the return of the phallic strength. The end of the film reiterates the image of the walls, but this time shows them closing, as if female desire had finally been tamed, or as if the film betrayed its wish to have female desire tamed. This attempt at containing the female character is heralded from its outset. We are introduced to Cleopatra as, kidnapped by her brother Ptolemy, she is being taken far from Alexandria into the desert, gagged, hooded and tied up, fighting desperately, but vainly, to break free. Iconographically, Cleopatra is linked, in this opening sequence, to black female slaves.

Without a black skin that could have been a sign of political strength, Cleopatra is yet coded black in scenes that present her as slavish, physically weak and "rapable." Like a black female slave, Cleopatra's body is made available to the gaze and turned into a show, while

being restrained and tortured. Her position of power is thus diminished from the start. DeMille's film has participated in constructing Cleopatra as a black whore or, at least, a traitor to the white race, capitalizing on a market of spectators revelling in racial difference, indeterminacy and liminal status. This is emphasised by the scene of Calphurnia's party, at which a young *ingénue* asks whether Cleopatra is black, a question which makes everyone laugh heartily, pleased as they are to all be "pure" white Roman citizens. Cleopatra, though as strikingly fair-skinned as she is in the films of Edwards, DeMille and Mankiewicz, is here turned into a black woman through the availability of her body and her open sexuality that feeds upon the men she meets and lures. When Antony and Enobarbus admonish Julius Caesar for having fallen in love with Cleopatra, they state their rebuke in these terms: "That woman is making an Egyptian out of you" and "[You are] an Egyptian lover". Royster cogently notes that "the delivery of the line echoes the syntax of the slur 'Nigger lover'".[349] In DeMille's version, Cassius, Brutus and Casca plot against Caesar because they cannot stand Caesar's attraction to a foreigner and cannot accept the possibility of being ruled by an Egyptian. The film thus plays with the fear of racial blending and adulteration, explaining the murder of Caesar by asserting the Roman disgust for outsiders and interracial marriages. Cleopatra, however white, is thus raced "black," while her lascivious, glamourous poses and enthralling costumes (especially one that include a long, dark cloak) furthermore make her oscillate between the *vamp* and the *vampire*. In each case, the spectators are reminded that she preys upon her lovers and is even ready to poison them.

Cleopatra's liminal status between human being and monster, between same and other, has, in the history of her representation on film, also been conveyed through her casting. In 1917, Theda Bara's Jewishness was first hidden in a story elaborated by the film studio that constructed her screen persona as exotic, Arabian and incapable of speaking a word of

[349] Royster, p. 90.

English. But this very Jewishness, through its otherness, white indeterminacy, threatening invisibility, as well as its link with vampirism in anti-Semitic mythology, was precisely what was capitalized on by Fox Studio when the film was made and promoted.[350] Cleopatra's "infinite variety" (2.2.241), her never-ending capacity to mutate, was connected to the demonizing vision of the dangerously mutable Jew. In DeMille's 1934 film, though Claudette Colbert was a brunette, she "looked and acted very much like those blonde Hollywood sex goddesses—Jean Harlow [or] Mae West ... —who tempted men with their beauty."[351] Their predatory sexuality was seen as dangerous and destructive, and their strength and success were considered evil and unnatural. In the words of Erika L. Doss, Colbert was even classified among the "prototypical Hollywood Bitch."[352]

In Mankiewicz's 1963 film, the body of Elizabeth Taylor became the symbol of every excess, from her extramarital affair with Richard Burton during the shooting, to her enormously costly contract that was blamed for the near bankruptcy of Twentieth Century Fox. The sequence in which Cleopatra, having been informed of Antony's marriage with Octavia, starts madly ripping her lover's uniforms and her own gowns, can be read metafilmically as the destruction of studio property and as a metaphor for Taylor's so-called responsibility in the financial difficulties of Fox.[353] Taylor was soon to be labelled a woman who lacked control over her health, weight and sexual life, and her affair with Burton was much publicized by the Studio in order to capitalize on a scandal that could appeal to the spectators' voyeuristic curiosity. But Taylor was not only perceived as sexually and financially wild, she was also seen as a "race traitor" through her famous conversion to Judaism following her marriage to Mike Todd in 1957, just a few years before the filming of *Cleopatra*. Though, at the start of the film, Cleopatra seems in complete control of herself,

[350] See 71-82.
[351] Doss, 2.
[352] *Ibid.*
[353] For a development of this point, see also Royster, 93-94; 104-108.

shrewdly staging her nakedness to entice Julius Caesar and playing with draperies that erotically reveal as much as they hide, her sexual freedom is still related to a body made available to the male gaze and possession, recalling Hodgdon's contention that *Antony and Cleopatra* "tells a story of imperial appetites and a rage for possession that was played out and made readable on Cleopatra's body."[354] The different cinematic presentations of Cleopatra thus oscillate between the controller and the controlled, the majestic conqueror and the unwanted immigrant, the gorgeous vamp and the threatening vampire.

Vamp or vampire: Roddam's 1999 *Cleopatra* and Edel's 2003 *Julius Caesar*

At the turn of the millennium, two films produced for television—Franc Roddam's 1999 *Cleopatra* and Uli Edel's 2003 *Julius Caesar*—have exemplified the schizoid attitude toward the Egyptian queen. Roddam's and Edel's films take part in one of the most popular forms of television at the start of the twenty-first century—the "docu-drama" or "drama-documentary," that is to say a television drama based on actual occurrences and real people. This hybrid form blurs the boundaries between fiction and authentic footage. Though it is based on historical research, documentation and evidence like a documentary, it uses the dramatic and narrative codes of fiction film to mediate and appropriate the real world, whether present, past or anticipated. This kind of show seems to claim that re-enactment and reconstruction can be as truthful and objective as reality itself. By attempting to present fiction as non-fiction, the docu-drama may verge on manipulation and can be very efficient in conveying specific ideological messages. The 1999 *Cleopatra* and 2003 *Julius Caesar* offer two distinct perspectives on the Egyptian queen since their standpoint diverge: *Cleopatra* tells the queen's life from her meeting with Caesar to her suicide with Antony, while *Julius Caesar* only presents the affair with Cleopatra as a brief episode within the life of Caesar.

[354] Hodgdon, 75.

Franc Roddam's 1999 mini-series *Cleopatra*, first released on ABC in the United States with Leonor Varela as Cleopatra, was inspired by Margaret George's 1997 novel *The Memoirs of Cleopatra*, which was written as Cleopatra's personal diary. A little more than a century after H. Rider Haggard's *Cleopatra*, which was narrated by the male priest Harmarchis, Cleopatra is allowed to tell her story in her own voice, reflecting the shift in focus from male to female that took place in the cinematic conflations. In this diary, the Egyptian queen recounts her youth, her accession to the Egyptian thanks to the intervention of Julius Caesar, whom she meets by hiding herself inside a rug, the birth of Caesarion, the practical leading of her country, her affair with Mark Antony until her confrontation with Octavius and her suicide. The thousand-page-long epic novel once more constructs a romantic saga around the figure of Cleopatra, who moves from a sincere love for Julius Caesar to a true passion for Antony. After Caesar's death, Cleopatra falls in love with Antony because he defended the cause of the old dictator, and she describes the differences between the two men – their bodies, their behaviors, their strengths and weaknesses – thus perpetuating the notion of a mimetic replacement, which contributes, once more, to filling the Shakespearean gap. The novel, and its adaptation as a serial docu-drama, have both conveyed the image of a revolutionary, socially-aware, politically-strong and independent queen, who is also a lover and a mother. This benevolent light cast on the Egyptian queen was commented upon by author Margaret George as stemming from the fact that "we no longer think that a strong, aggressive woman is necessarily evil".[355] She is seen as an accomplished woman, at once strong and generous, going into the streets to give wheat to her starving people, revelling in her love life with Caesar and able to provide her son Caesarion with protection and motherly love. When she joins Caesar in Rome, Cleopatra has to face the scornful reception of the Roman citizens, especially spiteful comments from Calpurnia and Octavian, who fear for their

[355] See Margaret George's interview by Linda Richards, *January Magazine*, <http://januarymagazine.com/profiles/george.html>, accessed 15 April 2010.

reputation, power and inheritance. However, despite these obstacles, Roddam's Cleopatra eventually comes out successful. She obtains a political victory out of a gamble: at a party given by Caesar's wife Calphurnia, she lays her son on the floor before Caesar (played by Timothy Dalton), asking him to recognize Caesarion as his own. Caesar cannot resist this summoning, since, in this version, he is already convinced of Caesarion's origin and of Cleopatra's devotion to him and their son. But the film protects the character of Cleopatra from accusations of Machiavellism by showing her reaction to Caesar's acknowledgment as one of sheer joy and tender veneration. Her victory is not that of a political woman but that of a mother. The film presents Cleopatra as the one who truly loves Caesar, as opposed to Calphurnia who betrays only calculating and affected attachment.

Uli Edel's 2003 *Julius Caesar* turns this interpretation around by 180 degrees. The film shows Cleopatra as a coarse and malicious marriage-breaker. This time, the woman who feels true love is Calphurnia, deceived by a Caesar blinded by power and lust. While Caesar (played by Jeremy Sisto) extends his stay in Egypt with Cleopatra (Samuela Sardo), campy actors in Rome play out his illegitimate affair in a stage parody in front of mirthful crowds. Calphurnia (played by Valeria Golino) has to endure this spectacle as she passes in the streets in her litter. The film insists on the genuine sadness of a rejected woman who still loves her husband passionately. When Cleopatra comes to Rome, Caesar exhibits her in front of the Senate, with their son in her arms. Since the TV audience has barely seen Cleopatra before, no identification with the Egyptian queen is prompted. On the contrary, nightmarish music and tragic slow-motion accompany the appearance of Cleopatra and baby Caesarion at Caesar's side. We are led to sympathize with Calphurnia, who is lost among the crowd of citizens and can only close her eyes in despair at such a terrible sight. Caesar, who had first been portrayed as an earnest and loving husband, has now turned cold, insensitive and power-thirsty. In

Edel's film, Cleopatra is clearly considered as the w(/b)itch who spurred this dismal change within him.

The moment of Caesar's assassination in the Senate highlights the two dramas' diverging conceptions of the "Cleopatra" icon. In the 1999 *Cleopatra*, this sequence takes place halfway through the film, at the end of the first part, and is directed in a way to mark the transition from Caesar to Antony in Cleopatra's life. As Caesar lies in his blood after having been stabbed by the senators, Antony (Billy Zane) clutches him to his heart while screaming at the murderers in hate and pain. The camera backs from the scene in an emotional low-angle shot that presents this moment as fateful and heartbreaking. The next images bring us to Cleopatra's Roman villa under the storm, in which the Egyptian queen intuitively feels that horrible events are unfolding, connected as she is to Caesar's mind—but also to Antony's, in a proleptic sensation. The last images of the 1999 *Cleopatra*'s first part are thus in line with the presentation of an emotionally-involved Cleopatra who honestly cares for Caesar, while preparing us for the second part in which Cleopatra will fall for Antony in a very coherent, diegetically natural follow-up. Antony and Cleopatra are brought together through their tragic experience of Caesar's death. At the start of the second part, Cleopatra is lost in the crowd gathered in the Forum to listen to Antony's oration. As in Mankiewicz's film, she is seen as the unwanted immigrant, hiding her face and protecting her son under a shawl for fear of being recognized and lynched. This version merges the plot of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Cleopatra's life story since Antony's oration mainly serves to generate Cleopatra's admiration and desire for the man who is standing up for her former lover's honour. The plot of *Julius Caesar* is somehow consumed by the "Cleopatra" icon, which recycles all the historical episodes into events of her personal destiny. The oration scene is turned into a mere transition between her love for Caesar and her new devotion for Antony. As Antony shows the bloody marks on Caesar's toga, close-ups of Cleopatra's face insist on her tears and

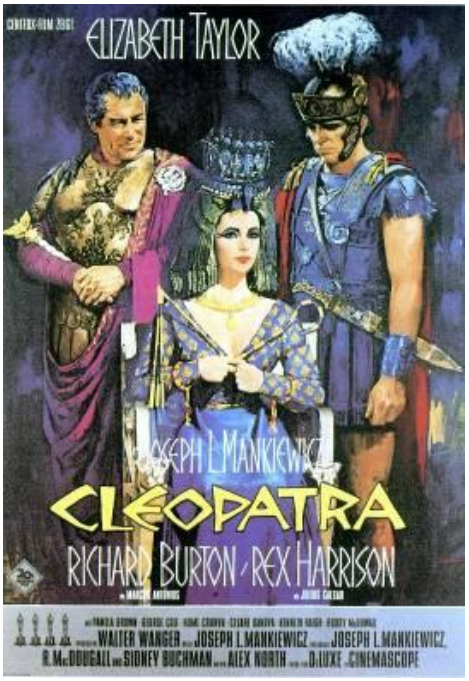
emotion at witnessing such braveness and rhetorical brillance. The audience is invited to understand that, during the famous Forum scene, Cleopatra is falling in love; the usually male-driven scene is turned into a sequence focusing on a woman.

In Uli Edel's 2003 *Julius Caesar*, the murder of Caesar is seen from a totally different perspective. Cleopatra is no longer filmed worrying under the storm. This time, Calphurnia—the legitimate wife who never ceased to love Caesar truly—is the one to run madly in the streets of Rome toward the Senate, convinced as she is that her husband is in great danger, particularly given her prophetic dream. When she reaches the Senate, Caesar is already dead but she takes his head in her lap, reproducing the image of the Pieta and restoring Caesar's image by showing him as a martyr. As the camera moves backwards for the closing, cathartic shot of the film, Calphurnia and Caesar are shown from above as the star-crossed lovers of the story, almost becoming proleptic doubles of Antony and Cleopatra. During the end credits, brief intertitles inform us of the destiny of each character after Caesar's death. Quite revealingly, Calpurnia is said to have never remarried. Her faithfulness beyond death is presented as the ultimate proof of her unflinching devotion and true love.

Whether Cleopatra is shown as a passionate, earnest lover (as in Roddam's *Cleopatra*) or as a manipulating whore (as in Edel's *Julius Caesar*), the films, however, concur in their political demonization of the Egyptian queen. As in DeMille's 1934 version, Roddam's and Edel's films both explain Brutus's and Cassius's motivation to kill Caesar by their disgust of his lustful attraction to a foreign woman. In Franc Roddam's *Cleopatra*, the conspirators are spurred by the discovery of a gold statue of Cleopatra erected by Caesar in the Senate. In Uli Edel's *Julius Caesar*, Brutus becomes ready to join Cassius's cause only when he gazes upon Caesar and "his whore" together in the Forum. In both cases, the killing of Caesar is presented as a purifying act that frees Rome from the threat of illegitimate and interracial love. By contrast, the 2005 TV series, *Rome*, follows the plot of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in that

the character of Cleopatra is absent from (or is not seen in) Rome at the time of Caesar's murder. The conspiracy is spurred only by political motives: Brutus, Cassius and several other senators, fear that Caesar has become a tyrant and resent his policy of wanting plebeians to be accepted as senators. In the series, Cleopatra appears only in Episode 8 of Season One, entitled "Caesarion," when Julius Caesar chases after Pompey in Egypt. Cleopatra is performed as an extremely thin, drug-addicted young woman. Though she is not seen as the outcast, foreign whore who is expelled from Rome because she appalls the patricians (leading them to conspire against Caesar), she is certainly depicted as a woman incapable of governing her country alone. She is also shown as dishonest since the series strongly implies that Caesarion is not the son of Caesar, but of a Roman soldier who was summoned to make love to her, thus guaranteeing that her seduction of the elderly Caesar would bear its fruit immediately.

In these various filmic contexts, the image of the mighty woman becomes blurred, as if power bestowed to women could only have disastrous consequences or, at least, could only be considered as a threat to harmony and purity. The pivotal place that Cleopatra acquired in the conflation of plots has been regularly undermined, to the point that one can wonder if Cleopatra's centrality is not, in effect, a position in which she is surrounded and framed by the patriarchal system. A poster for Mankiewicz's film underlines the paradox that imbues all the versions: Cleopatra, in the centre, seems to dominate; but she may also be seen as enclosed and tamed by Caesar and Antony who are keeping watch over her as if she were their prisoner.



A poster for Mankiewicz's film: is Cleopatra in power, or is she tamed by men?

The effects of the redistribution of the heroic role have thus had ambivalent consequences. Though it has become the focus of the narrative, Cleopatra's life is still presented as demarcated by the fates of men. Her life narrative has remained defined by the two male characters. The films choose to start with her meeting with Caesar and end with her death just after Antony's. Nothing is shown, for instance, of her childhood and adolescence. Her Otherness has been emphasized in reflexive Orientalist pageants. As an Egyptian, she is seen as a danger to purity and is cast away from Rome when she visits Caesar; as a woman, she is seen as the object one has to appropriate in order to reach supreme power, and her entire life story is framed by her encounter with Caesar and her suicide with Antony. One cannot conclude, however, that Cleopatra, as a threat to white patriarchy, has necessarily been contained by her representations or entrapped by the dominant discourse, as if white male power perpetuated itself through the strategic maneuver of showing a powerful oriental queen suffering defeat. The films have elevated her to the status of the unmovable star, while men gravitate around her before disappearing and being replaced. By constructing diptychs around

the Egyptian queen rather than around Antony, by repeating Cleopatra inside the diegesis itself (with Caesar, then with Antony), but also in the various "remade" films, cinema continually resurrects the idea of female power. Barbara Hodgdon has contended that "Overseen, overrepresented, and endlessly reinvented, Egypt's Queen dissolves into her discursive performances, each of which depends upon and cites a previous one, calling attention to how 'the real' is read through representation, and representation through the real."[356] This connection to "the real" posits that the challenge offered by Cleopatra may be viewed as more than performance and endless "metatextuality." Neither totally subversive nor totally containing, the *Cleopatra* films may be envisaged as renewed sites of cultural contest where the power allowed to women and foreigners is constantly re-negotiated according to the evolving contexts. From the films' obvious attempts to tame the Egyptian queen, it may even be inferred that the challenge brought up by Cleopatra was – and is still – strong and unsettling. Even if we conclude that the films generally provide a terrible image of the powerful woman, they were still "obliged" to show female power at work. "Even a text that aspires to contain a subordinate perspective must first bring it into visibility; even to misrepresent, one must present," Sinfield observes.[357] Moreover, one may never know for certain what the diverse audiences will eventually choose to retain from the films – if the closure of Cleopatra's punishment and death will be enough to make them forget the challenge she posed in the first place. The fact that the Cleopatra story has been re-told so often proves that it includes awkward issues that "continually need to be revisited, reworked, rediscovered, reaffirmed."[358] The last chapter of this study will examine the cinematic drive to endlessly repeat (and sometimes parody) Cleopatra's story, notably in the pattern of mimetic desire.

[356] Hodgdon, 74.
[357] Sinfield, 48.
[358] Sinfield, 74.

5. 'Carry on, Cleo!':

From Sequel, to Remake and Parody

Spectators and directors: Mimetic desire for Cleopatra

The trajectory that cinema operated from the character of Antony to that of Cleopatra may be linked to the narrative, but also aesthetic, drive of mimetic desire. By conflating the plots of Shaw's prequel and Shakespeare's two plays, the films have certainly worked on mimetic desire within the diegesis, showing how Antony came to replace Julius Caesar as Cleopatra's lover. But the film versions have also worked on mimetic desire through the identification to the main characters that they have contributed to generate in the spectators' mind. By alternating shots of action and shots of reaction, and by making the spectators' object of focus vary, cinema induces mechanisms of identification.[359] Cinematic experience may be likened to the mirror stage in which the infant learns to recognize its own image. The framed and limited surface of the screen is similar to a mirror in which the spectators, fascinated by the reflection, experience the wholeness of the body, even though the bodies seen on the mirror-screen are not their own.[360] Film theorist Christian Metz has identified a double identification in the cinema – primary cinematic identification and secondary cinematic identification. In primary cinematic identification, the spectators identify with the subject of their vision, with their own gaze. In other words, we experience ourselves as the privileged subject of the show.[361] In secondary cinematic identification, the spectators identify with the characters as figures of the self within the fiction, and as the focuses of emotional investment. As opposed to preconceived ideas, the spectators will not identify with a character because he/she is likeable, but because he/she is inserted in a certain situation or narrative

[359] See Sarah Hatchuel, *Shakespeare, from Stage to Screen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49-52.
[360] See Christian Metz, "The Imaginary Signifier," in *Film and Theory: an Anthology*, ed. Robert Stam and Toby Miller (Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2000), 411.
[361] *Ibid.*, 413.

structure which calls for identification. Identification is, in fact, less a psychological consequence than a structural one. According to the authors of *Esthétique du film*, "each *situation* that springs up in the course of the film redistributes the places, proposes a new network, a new positioning of the *intersubjective relations* within the fiction."[362] Consequently, secondary cinematic identification is not a stable phenomenon: its focus changes several times during the film—whenever a new situation arises.

The mechanisms which regulate identification in film are closely linked to editing, since this process offers the spectators a multiplicity of points of view in the course of one scene. It shapes space by alternating shots of action and reaction, notably with the shot/reverse-shot technique, which consists in showing first a given field, then a spatially-opposed one. This process seems to be at the very root of secondary identification in the cinema, as it constantly shifts the focus of emotional investment. Identification with a character requires a back-and-forth move between a shot and a reverse shot, between the focus on a character and the focus through the eyes of a character.[363] The spectators must see the character's appearance before they can interiorize the character's own gaze. They should be able to identify with themselves "as pure act of perception" (primary identification) and, therefore, see the characters, before being able to identify with them (secondary identification). Lorne Buchman persuasively considers that this action/reaction structure specific to film creates a space unknown in the theatre: the spectator is enabled not only to see through the eyes of the characters, but also to "travel the intimate space between those eyes."[364]

In the films that notably rewrite *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the aesthetic process of montage generates mimetic desire since the spectator is led to identify alternately with both the desiring subject and the desired object. For René Girard, *external* mediation

[362] Jacques Aumont, Alain Bergala, Michel Marie and Marc Vernet. *Esthétique du film* (Paris: Nathan, 1999), 192. My translation. Italics by the authors.
[363] See Francis Vanoye, *Cinéma et Récit 1: Récit écrit, récit filmique* (Paris: Nathan, 1989), 146.
[364] Lorne Buchman, *Still in Movement: Shakespeare on Screen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 25.

takes place when the spheres of the model and imitator are clearly distinct, so that they cannot reach for the same object.[365] The character on screen becomes this external role model which the spectator wants to imitate by desiring the same object. Cinema creates a triangular structure of desire in which we see Cleopatra through the doting eyes of Caesar and Antony and, therefore, desire her; and in which we see Caesar and Antony through the loving eyes of Cleopatra and desire each of them. Love affairs are thus ideal matters for a cinema that wishes to perpetuate the status of its actors as stars that constantly arouse desire. A scene in Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* metafilmically works on this strive to reach for the movie star. During the banquet scene aboard Cleopatra's barge in Tarsus, Antony, drunk with wine and music, is lured by a dancer who looks very much like the Egyptian queen, wearing the same silky, vapoury robe and the same black wig. The audience shares his blurred vision as he reaches for the body double of the woman he covets. First enraptured by the illusion, Antony dances with her, but finally decides to join the real queen in her room. His sight, just like the spectators', is first thwarted by the veil hanging from the bed, which hides a sleeping Cleopatra from our view. The veil stands as the double of the cinematic screen that separates the audience from the film star. Antony chooses to slash it with a knife in order to see and touch his desired object, an action which, according to Maria Wyke, "encourages spectators to believe that their desirous look, like that of Antony/Burton, will cut through to and finally take possession of the elusive star."[366] This desire for an inaccessible movie star is facilitated by the very aesthetics of film in which what is perceived is not the object itself but its shadow. The film unwinds from a distance (like a play on stage), but also in absence (unlike a play on stage). The cinema thus makes the actor both "hyper" present (particularly through the extreme intimacy of close-ups) and totally unavailable – a paradox that generates infinite desire for an object that can be grasped by the gaze but not by touch. By conflating the plots

[365] See Barbara Baines, "Girard's Doubles and *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Theory in Practice: Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), 15.
[366] Wyke, *The Roman Mistress*, 316.

and giving the heroic status to Cleopatra (instead of Antony) from the 1917 "Theda Bara" version onwards, the cinematic versions have been able to do what they can do best—focus on the love story rather than on the political intrigues and arouse the spectators' shifting and fluid desires toward each character in turn. The emphasis upon Cleopatra has guaranteed audiences' adherence to the narrative, capitalizing on identification, eroticism and exoticism to secure returns on investment.

The "Cleopatra" icon was then naturally exploited in several cinematic versions following the model of the "Theda Bara" film, produced by Fox in 1917, which made an enormous amount of money and encouraged, forty years later, the heads of Twentieth Century Fox to produce the 1963 film with Elizabeth Taylor in the title role. While a stage production of a classic play is called a *revival*, film vocabulary has created a specific term to define a film which is based on the same plot as a previous one, without generally using the same actors—the *remake*. Whereas the play remains identified almost solely by the original dramatic text, the "remade" film is less frequently an explicit homage or a revival than an attempt to outshine and replace its predecessor. Michael Druxman's 1975 taxonomy outlines three types of remake: the *disguised* remake – which does not seek to draw attention to its earlier version(s); the *direct* remake – which does not hide the fact that it is based upon an earlier version; and the *non*-remake – a new film using the same title but an entirely new plot.[367] Harvey Roy Greenberg, in his 1991 taxonomy, refines the category of the direct remake into two types: the *acknowledged, close* remake – the film is replicated with little or no change to the narrative; the *acknowledged, transformed* remake – which include significant changes in character, time and setting, but the original version is variably acknowledged, ranging from a small credit to strong emphasis during the promotion.[368] Remakes are thus *more or less* "presold" to their audience, since spectators are assumed to have some experience, or at least

[367] Michael B. Druxman, *Make It Again, Sam: A Survey of Movie Remakes* (Cranbury, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1975).
[368] Harvey Roy Greenberg, "Raiders of the Lost Ext: Remaking as Contested Homage in *Always*," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 18.4 (1991): 164-71.

knowledge, of the original story – its title, theme and/or characters – before engaging in its specific retelling. Constantine Verevis has notably observed how contemporary film remakes "generally enjoy a (more) symbiotic relationship with their originals, with publicity and reviews often drawing attention to earlier versions; […] official film websites will often draw attention to originals, seeing this as an opportunity to instantly invest new versions not only with a narrative image, but with aesthetic (and commercial) value. On these sites, film makers often enthuse about the 'timeless' attributes and 'classic' statutes of originals before going on to insist upon their own value-added transformations."[369] Even before the internet, the film studios could highlight the genealogy of the remake through publicity and advertising, in order to position it within the history of cinema, giving it a cultural aura while selling it as daringly new.

The indeterminacy of the "remake" boundaries has led Verevis to explore remaking at once as industrial category (in terms of production – including commerce, copyrights and authority), as textual category (in terms of genre, plots, structures), and as critical category (in terms of reception, audience knowledge, industry discourses, publicity, and reviewing). All these aspects contribute to the construction of what is called a "remake." Such an encompassing analysis is required to emphasize the fact that the notion of remaking is limited neither to authorial intended effects nor to the specific identification of a precise "quote". The intertextual relation between the remake and its earlier version(s) may be more general, though this does not imply that the process of remaking cannot be described with accuracy – in the same way as the process of sequelization, albeit highly intertextual, can still be identified as a relatively formal process, as the previous chapters have tried to show. Verevis also notes that a remake can be categorized according to whether its intertextual referent is *literary* or *cinematic*,[370] taking his cue from Thomas Leitch's argument that any "given

[369] See Constantine Verevis. *Film Remakes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 17
[370] *Ibid.*, 23.

remake can seek to define itself either with primary reference to the film it remakes or to the material on which both films are based."[371] Leitch identifies four categories of remakes adaptating literary works: the *readaptation* – which ignores the earlier cinematic adaptations to readapt the literary source more "faithfully;" the *update* – which frees itself from the source by openly revising it and adapting it to a new context; the *homage* – which pays tribute to a previous film version by renouncing any claim to be better; the *true remake* – which combines a focus on the cinematic original and an updating position. But Verevis qualifies Leitch's taxonomy by noticing that a remake can use, as a referent, a previous film which is *itself* the original property.[372]

The case of the *Cleopatra* films is complex since the intertextual elements are, at the same time, historical, literary, dramatic and cinematic, and are not always acknowledged to the same degree. When a literary referent (other than the screenplay) is credited, it is often a contemporary play or novel rather than Shakespeare's texts – Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau's French play in the case of J. Gordon Edwards' 1917 film;[373] or Margaret George's novel *The Memoirs of Cleopatra* in the case of Franc Roddam's 1999 series. In their search to readapt a legendary story by focusing on accurate historical details (Roddam) or to supersede the previous films by updating the narrative elements through the use of more advanced technologies (DeMille after Edwards; Mankiewicz after DeMille), the *Cleopatra* films oscillate between the *readaptation* and the *true remake*. Whether the preceding films are openly acknowledged has always been problematic in the Hollywood context, since, as Thomas Leitch has claimed, "the revisionary impulse [of the remake] is subordinated to the goal of increasing the audience by marginalizing the original film, reducing it to the status of

[371] Thomas M. Leitch, "Twice-Told Tales: The Rhetoric of the Remake," *Literature Film Quarterly* 18.3 (1990), 142.
[372] See Verevis, *Film Remakes*, 14.
[373] See <www.imdb.com/title/tt0007801/fullcredits>.

the unseen classic."[374] To remake a film involves the intuition that the spectators will be interested in "buying" the story in its new manifestation because the underlying, fundamental plot is still captivating, and because the former film was either unfaithful to its (literary or historical) sources or has simply become outdated. A remake, implying as it does a constant "interplay between the desires of artists and the desires of audiences,"[375] may be produced for economic reasons: considered as "presold property"[376] and easily recognisable by audiences, the remake operates to meet the demand that Hollywood deliver reliability (through the repetition of a successful formula) and novelty (through technological innovation and narrative update) in the same production.[377] But it can also be motivated by the desire to appropriate a specific narrative to new historical and cultural contexts of production and/or to an original artistic vision. Serge Chauvin has argued that Hollywood is not driven by money-making alone, but by the teleological vision that constantly attempts to reproduce an ideal, primitive story. This drive to reactivate a primary text may be linked to puritan heritage, which constructed America's history as fate and as the reproduction of a biblical episode. According to Chauvin, Hollywood cinema only believes in a limited number of stories to tell, but enjoys offering a variety of takes on them. In the promotion of its films, Hollywood always promises new spectacle or new technologies but rarely new narratives, relying as it does on the pleasure of similarity, recognition and familiarity with only slight variations.[378] Audiences are, in fact, responding to the paradoxical promise that the remake will be just like its original model (which was already so good as to be worthy of being repeated), and yet, better (otherwise, why bother and produce a remake?).

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[374] *Ibid.*, 139.
[375] Leo Braudy, "Afterword: Rethinking Remakes," in *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, ed. by Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998), 332.
[376] Braudy, 328.
[377] Thomas Simonet, "Conglomerates and Content: Remakes, Sequels, and Series in the New Hollywood," in *Current Research in Film: Audiences, Economics and Law*, vol. 3, ed. Bruce A. Austin (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1987), 155.
[378] For these remarks, I am very grateful to Serge Chauvin who gave a lecture entitled "L'éternel retour de la fiction," at Jean-Loup Bourget and Jacqueline Nacache's seminar on Classical Hollywood Cinema, Ecole Normale Supérieure, 9 November 2006.

The "Cleopatra" icon has some affinities with the medium of film and the very cinematic concept of remake. While cinema fixes the character for ever on film, as a cross between an Egyptian mummy and an eternal goddess (or star), it also shows her "infinite variety" in the various remakes that tell and retell, construct and re-construct, her fascinating life story. Like the constructed story of Cleopatra, the remaking of films is governed by mimetic desire. Directors want to imitate the works of other directors (that they often admire) by remaking the films in a process of appropriation and transformation. When remakes do not acknowledge the fact that they stem from an original film, they act as if the story were told *for the first time*, thus denying the mimetic drive of their directors. This denial is in line with the belief that our desires are our own and that they are original and spontaneous. In Lacoue-Labarthe's words, "Desire wants difference and autonomy, properness and property, it is the very will to decision; the Same (identity, identification, indifferentiation) is its terror […]. Because desire's obsession is originality, desire wants its origin negated and its essence forgotten."[379] Part of the point of the classical Hollywood film system is not only that "remade" films share plot elements while striving to be different from each other as well, but that they can deny the previous filmic experiences that spurred the desire to produce and direct the remake. By repeating the same story but with a difference, the remake actually encourages audiences to enjoy the variations between the films on a conscious or unconscious level, playing as it does on a tension between the familiar and the new. But, contrary to the sequel, the remake has a more complicated task, as it does not continue the original film but competes with it and, therefore, must not recall the earlier film too ardently since it is telling the same story again instead of extending it.

Remakes and "film-fleuves": Repeating without seeming to repeat

[379] Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 12.

The various filmic *Cleopatra*s, through their conflation of the plots of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, blur the boundary between remake and sequel, since the films seem to integrate their own sequels within themselves, so that they sometimes become *films-fleuve*. For example, whereas film sequels may attract viewers with the promise of repeating a previous experience, Mankiewicz's four-hour film of *Cleopatra* offers to *extend* the cinematic experience. Moving from Julius Caesar to Mark Antony, Cleopatra seems to be going through it all, all over again, in the archetypical pattern of repetition in variation. According to Lynette Felber, the diptych construction is often related to "a movement from innocence to experience" or of "rise and fall," a structure which perfectly describes Mankiewicz's story.[380] In Mankiewicz's diptych film, Cleopatra moves from a young, barely experienced woman (as in Shaw's play) to a strong and passionate ruler, reaching her peak of power and glory before losing the battle for the control of the world and tragically committing suicide. Mankiewicz had initially wished to release two separate films, *Caesar and Cleopatra* (inspired by Shaw's play), followed by *Antony and Cleopatra* (inspired by Shakespeare's), which should have lasted three hours each. In the end, the studio chose to distribute one single film, edited from the two original projects, to create the four-hour version that we know today.[381] Instead of releasing one film followed by its sequel a year or two later, Mankiewicz was pressured by the producers to prolong the viewing time and expand the narrative in one, protracted, movie experience. Twentieth Century Fox was convinced that the spectators would not have paid to see the first film (featuring Rex Harrison as Caesar and Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra) and would instead have waited for the release of the sequel, driven as they were by the on-screen sight of the real-life couple formed by Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Since the studio needed an immediate return on

[380] Lynette Felber, "Trollope's Phineas Diptych as Sequel and Sequence Novel," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 119.
[381] The six-hour director's cut is now in the process of being restored, but many scenes that were shot but not included in the final version have yet to be found in the various archives around the world.

investment in order to avoid bankruptcy, Mankiewicz was ordered, to his despair, to cut his two films and turn them into one. In this reduction, the film *Caesar and Cleopatra* and its sequel *Antony and Cleopatra* have become *Cleopatra*,[382] a film whose two two-hour parts mirror each other and create several familiar echoes. The *film-fleuve* (like a sequel or a remake) eventually points in two directions. As it cannibalizes materials by repeating situations, it may distance the spectators and disclose the artificiality of the film, signalling the ideological discourse at work behind the narrative. However, the construction of the *film-fleuve* also helps to infuse the characters with psychologies that evolve with their ages and fates, leading to effects of realism. In sequels, remakes and *film-fleuves*, the political consequences of distanciation negotiate with the construction of psychological depth and consistency (by giving past histories and memories to the characters) either from one film to the next or within the same very long film.[383] But in the case of the *film-fleuve*, distanciation may be even harder to achieve, since the impression of repetitiousness is dimmed. According to Felber, the diptych work "is better able to satisfy [the] desire for repetition, *without actually repeating or seeming to repeat*."[384] Contrary to the sequel that explicitly extends or the remake that explicitly repeats, the great length of the *film-fleuve* allows for the possibility to vary the story and make it oscillate between the same and the other over a longer period of time, while permitting the viewers to "forget" between the repetitions.

Cleopatra with a twist: remakes or not-remakes?

[382] See, for instance, Clemens David Heymann, *Liz: An Intimate Biography of Elizabeth Taylor* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1995), 221; or David Brown, *Let Me Entertain You* (Beverly Hills, CA: New Millennium Entertainment, 2001), 74.
[383] For a development of this idea, see Lianne McLarty, "'I'll back': Hollywood, Sequelization, and History' in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, 201-3.
[384] Felber, 126.

For Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, "remakes constitute a particular territory existing somewhere between unabashed larceny and subtle originality. Remake, in fact, problematizes the very notion of originality."[385] In the case of the Cleopatra story, the notion of originality is problematized since the usual narrative (her affair with Caesar, then with Antony) has often been twisted, providing audiences with other versions of the story and history. The twists experienced by the Cleopatra story have generally involved European takes on the subject, challenging the American representations and consisting in *make-overs*, rather than remakes, in which the traditional narrative is rewritten, sometimes under the pretense of sequels or prequels. At times, the European films in the fifties and sixties challenged the "Cleopatra" icon as a US property so seriously that their American distribution was either delayed (Mario Mattoli's 1953 *Two Nights with Cleopatra* had to wait ten years before being released in the States) or totally canceled. This was the case of Piero Pierotti and Viktor Tourjansky's 1962 *A Queen for Caesar* which was bought by Twentieth Century Fox (but not released) to protect their own multi-million dollar *Cleopatra*.[386]

The Franco-Italian film *Una Regina per Cesare* (*A Queen for Caesar*) threatened Fox's financial interests because its narrative overlapped with Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*, but also because it presented the queen in an unusual light, clashing with Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal. The film ends abruptly when Cleopatra (Pascale Petit) has herself smuggled into the palace room occupied by Julius Caesar (played by Gordon Scott). Hidden in a carpet, she is rolled out at his feet… before the film prevents us from seeing the ensuing confrontation. The film's title *A Queen for Caesar* represents a promise, a goal to be reached, with every event leading to a historic meeting of which we will be denied any sight. The film thus focuses on the young queen's life before she meets either Antony or Caesar – a kind of prequel that has hardly been shown on stage or screen. The palace intrigue revolves around the power struggle between

[385] Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, "Introduction," in *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, 4.
[386] See Gary A. Smith, *Epic Films: Casts, Credits, and Commentary on over 250 historical spectacle movies* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 1991), 170.

Cleopatra and her immature and arrogant brother, Ptolemy. The queen is imprisoned, but the loyal lovestruck soldier Achillas (Giorgio Ardisson) risks his life to free her. Since the entire film takes place before Cleopatra's affairs with either Caesar or Antony, the film offers a competitive view of the Egyptian queen, one that is not framed by the two traditional male heroes. Revealingly the character of Julius Caesar only appears in the last third of the film, Gordon Scott receiving an appropriate "guest star" billing. If the film features Pompey's sons (Gnaeus and Sextus), it is to stress Cleopatra's tricks on them in order to get what she wants. French actress Pascale Petit, with a very thin and fragile silhouette, challenges the curvy, erotic representations of the queen, performing the queen as childishly playful, at the same time strong and vulnerable. In love with Achillas, a character that was never known as Cleopatra's lover, and fearing that, for survival, she might offer herself to a man that will not love her, this Cleopatra extends the boundaries of the narrative world that usually surrounds her, and questions the representations before (and after) her own. It is no wonder that Fox's producers prevented this film's release in 1962-3, to protect Elizabeth Taylor's own take on the role, whose coherence would have been undermined otherwise.

The Franco-Italian film *Il Sepolcro dei re*, literally *The King's Tomb*, was directed in 1960 by Fernando Cerchio and, contrary to *A Queen for Caesar*, released in the United States in 1963 under the title *Cleopatra's Daughter*, with the tagline "More beautiful and desirable than Cleopatra herself!" At first glance, however, this adventure/romance film seems hardly to be related to the usual Cleopatra narrative and could pose hardly any threat to Mankiewicz's film. It tells the story of Shila, the surviving daughter to Cleopatra and Antony, who, after her parents' death, was raised by the monarchs of Assyria. The film starts after Assyria has been conquered by the new tyrannical Pharaoh, Nemorat: Shila (Debra Paget) is brought as a slave to the Egyptian court and is forced to marry Nemorat (Corrado Pani) to

avoid the persecution of the Assyrian people. The only mention of Cleopatra and Antony together appears at the beginning, in a roll-up text read by a male voice:

> Cleopatra, after the civil war that followed the assassination of Caesar, met with Marc Antony in Assyria where they planned the defense of Egypt against the Romans. Before leaving, Cleopatra entrusted her young daughter, Shila, to the rulers of Assyria to be brought up as their own. After Marc Antony's defeat and Cleopatra's death, Egypt, for the next twenty years, was torn apart and ruled by a youthful Pharaoh, Nemorat, with his despot Queen Mother, Tegi, who desired to unite both kingdoms and strengthen her son's rule by conquering Assyria and making Shila, now a beautiful woman, his queen.

Historical time is compressed and reinvented, with a mixture of "real" and fictive characters. But from then on, the "real" historical characters will hardly be referred to again. Shila will never mention Antony or Cleopatra, and will only weep for the death of her surrogate Assyrian parents, murdered by Nemorat's forces. It is Tegi, Nemorat's mother, who pronounces the name "Cleopatra" twice at the start of the film, to convince his son that marrying Cleopatra's daughter would bring him more power and aura – just as it gives the film by including the name in its title. Although the plot of the film would have stood on its own without any link to Cleopatra, the screen writers and distributors felt the need to construct connections between Shila and Cleopatra, through the starting roll-up text, the US title and advertising tagline. It could easily be argued that the film used the "Cleopatra" icon to capitalize on the fame of the Egyptian queen, especially since it was released in the United States by Medallion Pictures just three months after the release of Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*.[387] The idea of Cleopatra's daughter renews the myth and extends it, with a younger version of Cleopatra promising greater beauty, more desire, more eroticism, more excitement and more affairs. But it is possible to interpret this Franco-Italian "make-over" as an attempt to rewrite the usual narrative through a different ideological prism that interrogates the former representations of Cleopatra in the United States, notably DeMille's 1934 *Cleopatra*.

[387] The Internet Movie Database gives september 1963 as a US release date for *Cleopatra's Daughter* and june 1963 for Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*.

Shila (as a Cleopatra surrogate) appears for the first time on screen as a slave, thus repeating the American vision of DeMille's film in which the queen is kidnapped, hooded and gagged by her brother. But contrary to DeMille's film, the rest of *Cleopatra's Daughter* strives to liberate the female character and assert that to choose one's lover does not mean death but life. Under the pretext of telling the story of Cleopatra's daughter, the film may be writing another version of Cleopatra's life, one that would not openly contradict "history" but that would definitely show an Egyptian queen overcome male tyranny and live happily ever after with the man she has chosen to be with.

The narrative of *Cleopatra's Daughter* oscillates between reminiscence of the "Cleopatra" icon and clear detachment from it. When Queen Shila rejects a pressing Nemorat one night, he becomes violent, beats her, but faints. He is then poisoned by the ambitious overseer Kefren (Erno Crisa) and his mistress. Shila is accused of the poisoning and is sentenced to be buried alive in Nemorat's new-built tomb. The film thus toys with the image of the Egyptian woman as a deceitful poisoner (an image which DeMille's film had reveled in) but explicitly shows that this representation is itself deceitful: the audience knows Shila to be innocent of this crime. Resi (Ettore Manni), who is Nemorat's physician and loves the queen (and is loved in return), imagines a plan to save Shila by having her take a potion, causing her to fall into a temporary coma, in a rewriting of *Romeo and Juliet* that prompts the audience to fear for the worst. Resi hopes to bribe the chief of the "house of death" so he can take Shila away, but the plot fails. Resi is stabbed in his attempt to save the queen, is rescued by his faithful servant, but does not recover before Shila is entombed in Nemorat's pyramid. Resi captures the royal architect who knows the way down the tomb to the secret chamber. With the help of tomb robbers, Resi breaks into the tomb. Just like a hero from a fairy tale attempting to deliver a captive princess, he goes through the various obstacles and traps devised to protect the Pharao's last rest, until he reaches the wall that separates him from his

beloved. As Resi uses a battering ram to penetrate the chamber, he conjures an image that was used in DeMille's film when Octavian's army tried to burst into Cleopatra's room while she was committing suicide, restoring the social order through the assertion of the phallic strength and the death of the powerful woman. In *Cleopatra's Daughter*, however, the male force takes part in freeing Shila from physical and moral enclosure. As she is rescued, she rides off with her lover, and we are led to believe that she will live freely and happily ever after. Meanwhile, the evil Kefren is killed by the palace guards when Nemorat's mother discovers that he was the real murderer of her son – a very moral ending in which everyone gets what he/she "deserves." With this film, a more innocent and purer version of the Egyptian queen is constructed – faithful to her lover, incapable of poisoning even her worst enemy, always displaying her true feelings. This absence of demonization goes hand in hand, nevertheless, with a renunciation to power. As she rides off, Shila abandons her position as queen to live a life of love. Less powerful and thus less threatening for the patriarchy, this new version of Cleopatra is also a regression back to the weak and whimpering princess crying for a male savior up her dungeon.

Released in the United States by Ultra Pictures a few months after *Cleopatra's Daughter*, but made a decade earlier (in 1953) by Italian film director Mario Mattoli, the comedy *Due Notti con Cleopatra* (*Two Nights with Cleopatra*) features Sophia Loren (still an eighteen-year-old unknown actress) as the Egyptian queen, and Alberto Sordi as Cesarino, a Roman soldier who falls in love with a Cleopatra look-alike. Loren plays, in fact, a dual role: she is both the queen of Egypt, and the slave girl Nisca who takes her place while she is away to see Mark Antony before he leaves for war. Nisca, still untouched and innocent, has been found in a tavern/brothel by Cleopatra's evil councilor Tortul (Paul Muller) who finds her resembling enough to replace the queen for one night so that her absence goes unnoticed

before the important celebrations of Isis. During that night, Nisca is wooed by the bodyguard Cesarino (Alberto Sordi) who mistakes her for the real monarch.

The opening credits, with their jolly, almost cartoonish, music, as well as their colorful paintings showing the luxurious interior and exterior designs of Cleopatra's palace, present the film as a comedy and a fairytale from the outset. A male voice opens the film by warning the viewers that "These facts have not been related in text books but we have thought it good to inform you of it in the name of historical truth."[388] This introduction, which ironically presents the film as restoring the "truth" but actually allows *Two Nights with Cleopatra* to move away from the "historical" epic, serves to play with the audiences' preconceptions of Cleopatra in order to offer alternatives. The word "two" in the title emphasizes ambivalence and doubleness. Given its plot, the film could perfectly have been entitled: "Nights with Two Cleopatras." Sophia Loren embodies two contradictory versions of the queen. The first one is in accordance with some former representations as a devilish poisoner who sexually preys on men: she appears despotic, sultry, carnal and cruel – taking a new bodyguard as her lover each night and having him poisoned in the morning. A dialogue with one of her attendants reveals her position in terms of fidelity:

> Cleopatra: What would you do if you were in my place?
> Attendant: If I had a husband like Marc Antony I would be faithful to him.
> Cleopatra: A dog is faithful, a woman never.

The second version corresponds to a rewriting of the character taking the complete opposite stance: pure, naïve, submissive and sensitive. Physically, the two women look very much alike except for two major differences: the "real" Cleopatra is tawny with black hair; Nisca's complexion is much whiter, with long blond hair, corresponding to a more European standard of beauty. The oriental physical appearance is thus demonized, but the Italian film constructs, once more, a competing version of Cleopatra that redeems her, while paradoxically setting out

[388] As I could only find a French-speaking copy of the film, all the quoted dialogues are my translation from French to English.

her devilish flaws. This paradox notably appears when Cleopatra discovers Nisca for the first time. She hears her councilor praise the resemblance before hushing him up with: "One should not mistake pure spring water with black swamp water." The audience is left to wonder whether the reference to pure water applies to Nisca as the young ingénue or to herself as the most valued being in the social hierarchy. It is as if the construction of an alternative vision of herself forced Cleopatra, in a very metadramatic way, to comment upon what she was (swamp water?) or could be.

The character of Cesarino, who falls in love with Nisca as Cleopatra, is used as a vehicle for Alberto Sordi. A famous post-war comic actor in Italy, Sordi embodied the stereotype of the "average" Italian man – a bit common and self-centered, but with a big heart and unrelenting optimism. It is through his character that the "Cleopatra" icon is demystified. Not knowing that he is, in fact, wooing Nisca and not the Egyptian queen, Cesarino removes her wig and exclaims in surprise, "But you are blond, Cleopatra!" The film plays at revealing another "truth" about the queen, as if another version of her was possible, in which Cleopatra would be a tamed and sweet, blond woman. This is particularly achieved through the crosscutting between two iutimate scenes: the meeting between Cleopatra and Antony, and that between Nisca and Cesarino, during the same night. The former takes place inside a tent before Antony leaves for Ephesus to fight against Octavius' army: it sends us back to the "conventional" scenes between Cleopatra and Antony, in which topics such as war, triumph and love are broached. The latter takes place in the relaxed mode of children's games, with Nisca and Cesarino clapping hands and running fingers on each other. The famous couple of Cleopatra and Antony is re-envisioned in a childish, almost desexualized way, generating comic defamiliarization and demystifying the historical figures in a filmic transforming mirror. When Cesarino eventually meets the real Cleopatra and believes her to be the nice girl he met the night before, he confronts her without any fear or awe, but with great familiarity,

patting her in the back or talking teasingly to her: "Ask me to forgive you, you naughty girl!" "You're going to tell me why you've decided to dye your hair black!" Cleopatra decides to take advantage of a situation she finds amusing, tells him that he will become her lover but will have to die the following morning. Realizing his mistake, Cesarino makes Cleopatra drink until she becomes tipsy, laughing stupidly and uncontrollably – another vision of Cleopatra that clashes with our expectations. As she asks if she can "call him Caesar," the film plays with our knowledge of Cleopatra's past loves, building intertextual bridges with other plays and films, but also debunking another historical figure through the diminutive "-ino" and the unfavorable comparision with Sordi's embodiment of the "average man."

Cesarino then tries to free Nisca, emprisoned by Cleopatra to prevent her from revealing the secret of the queen's absence. He calls the palace guards and tells them that Cleopatra has been put in jail by her evil councilor. The guards liberate Nisca but Cesarino has to prove her identity by explaining her surprising blondness: "OK, she is blond. So what? Everyone knows that fear can whiten hair. Black becomes blond; blond becomes white; and white… falls." As he justifies the "queen"'s European appearance, Cesarino is looking at the black jail keeper, and hesitates briefly on the word "white." Through "innocent" jokes, the film indirectly interrogates Cleopatra's racial identity and conveys its aspiration for a blond, less threatening heroine. It is as if this Italian comedy were disclosing, out in the open, the ambivalence of the US representations which have presented Cleopatra as the archetypal Oriental "other" woman, while denying her a dark skin and emphasizing her milky whiteness. *Two Nights with Cleopatra* reveals the paradoxical doubleness at work in the "traditional" *Cleopatra* films. In line with *Cleopatra's Daughter*, it questions the usual end of the narrative: the Cleopatra "look-alike" escapes the palace with a Cesarino who expresses his wish to "live happily together far away from worries and from the capital." The film again conveys the idea that the character of Cleopatra has to relinquish power if she wants to live and love happily. By

creating an alternative end in which Cleopatra (though a surrogate of her) flees with a lover and continues to live, the film exposes the agenda of historical and fictional constructions in which the sexually-active woman is not allowed to enjoy political power or has to die for it.

This discourse can still be found in the 1970 softcore wacky film, *The Notorious Cleopatra*. Produced by Harry Novak and directed by Peter Perry, *The Notorious Cleopatra* adopts an American fringe point of view on the Cleopatra story and Shakespeare. As part of the "sexploitation" films, it deliberately exploits the alleged sexiness of its (female) star, serving largely as a vehicle for showing graphic scenes of full frontal female nudity and overextending the sequences of sexual content. In this low-budget film that oscillates between comedy and tragedy, Julius Caesar (Jay Edwards) is portrayed as a fat, drunken and lazy man who would like to add the exotic Cleopatra (Sonora) to his carnal menu. He thus sends Mark Antony (Johnny Rocco) to Egypt to bring her back to Rome. But Antony is ordered to be a "spiritual messenger" in this, and to "keep [his] hands to [him]self." Antony's reply, "My lord, my hands would not dare touch that which mighty Caesar desires for himself," re-enacts the mimetic competition between the two men, while imitating the style of Shakespearean dialogue, at odds in such a "sexploited" context. The film then cuts to a shot of Mark Antony's hands… all over Cleopatra's breasts, while two Roman soldiers outside the tent mimich the start of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* by fearing that their lord will be "transformed into a strumpet's fool."

After spending wild nights with Cleopatra, attending the sacrifice of a virgin and orgies, Antony returns to Rome, ready to tell Caesar he cannot have Cleopatra. The Egyptian queen and her servant Charmian follow them and, in disguise, sneak into one of Caesar's orgies. Cleopatra feels love for Mark Antony but ambition gets the better of her, and she joins Caesar in bed, only to discover that he loves power and food more than women. Mark Antony finds out her treachery and initiates the plotting of Caesar's murder. Cassius, Lepidus and Brutus

help him kill the lazy tyrant, but he is used as a scapegoat by his former allies and has to flee. Discovering Cleopatra in the arms of Enobarbus, he stabs both of them in a jealous rage and commits suicide.

The Notorious Cleopatra is typical of the sexploitation films of the seventies in its mixture of progressive and regressive elements. David Andrews has argued that "classical sexploitation's shock-oriented, prefeminist consumerism alternated between corroding and reinforcing fixed ideas of gender and sexuality. Thus sexploiteers depicted women not only as feminized submissives but also as masculinized dominatrices."[389] This is how this Cleopatra is portrayed. As she is played by black actress Sonora, she stands as a rare example of an Afro-American lead in a sexploitation film, surfing the "Black is Beautiful" wave of the sixties. The film's tagline "The Soul Queen of the Nile Who Ruled the World... The Black and the White!" empowers a black woman, who also proclaims sexual freedom: "Isis is satisfied. You are all free to love," she says, inviting her people to an orgy. The film, however, may also be considered regressive in its position regarding race and gender. Just as in the previous Cleopatra films, the Egyptian queen is present in Rome at the time of Caesar's murder, and the assassination is once more presented as a way to reject the foreign woman. As Antony asks the senators whether they are all ready to liberate Rome from an immoral tyrant, Cassius looks at the camera and says, "Yes! And quickly, before he marries a grasping female and entrust the whole city to her." Later, just before stabbing Caesar, he asks: "Julius, what is this that I hear about you and that Egyptian uzzy?" The murder is again performed to avoid interracial marriage and keep the Egyptian woman out of the Roman sphere of power. Instead of rewriting DeMille's or Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* in a radical way, the film merely discloses their ideological stances more openly. Even in its sexual content, *The Notorious Cleopatra* shows Cleopatra as submissive and masochistic, strongly suggesting that force is a

[389] David Andrews, *Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 65.

means of satisfying female desire. Thoug featuring a powerful black heroine who wants to be "queen of the world," it includes three semiconsensual rapes, two involving Cleopatra herself. Cleopatra is first filmed encouraging Mark Antony's sexual threat ("I will take you like I take my enemies, leaving you torn, weak, and ravished… leaving you feeling as if you've been raped 100-fold") by exclaiming, "Oh rape me, rape me!" The film moderates the violence of the sequence by playing on the burlesque elements and a teasing "dirty talk," which, as Andrews contends, "muffles the impact of the rape discourse by implying consent."[390] The film soon offers a virgin's ritual sacrifice. But, instead of her life, the Isis priest ravishes her virginity. Just as the promise that "she will shed much blood" is actualized, Cleopatra's promise that "she will enjoy her sacrifice" comes true when the girl yields to sexual pleasure during the rape. Finally, at the end of the film, Enobarbus (Mason Bakman) rapes Cleopatra in her tub. Cleopatra fights, but starts to enjoy what is happening, soon asking for "more, more." The film thus implies that masochistic pleasure is a "natural" check on female ambition, and that any woman who says "no" will finally welcome the sexual act. When Mark Antony discovers Enobarbus and Cleopatra in the act, he stabs Enobarbus and is about to do the same to Cleopatra. She tries to save herself, claiming, "He raped me! I couldn't help it!" Indifferent to her defense, Mark Antony eventually stabs her but regrets his act and kills himself. The film thus ends on the ritual murder promised by the virgin's sacrifice earlier on. Just as the traditional *Cleopatra* films, *The Notorious Cleopatra* has the powerful woman punished for her sexual activity and her foreign status. But contrary to the "classical" versions, it displays its agenda more openly, without any mediation, revealing the political, racial and gender issues posed by the Egyptian queen in a more straightforward, though very unrefined, way.

Parodying Cleopatra: Defying the Hollywood codes

[390] *Ibid.*, 63.

Works of parody problematize originality in the ironic mode. Since the Cleopatra story has been so culturally central and endlessly told in a copious, overlapping, intertext of historical sources, plays and films, it was bound to be parodied in works that have explored the liminal area between artistic originality, plagiarism and parody. 1964 saw the release of Gerald Thomas's film *Carry On Cleo*, a British parody of Joseph Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* that had premiered in London in July 1963. *Carry On Cleo*, which was a major hit in Britain,[391] is part of the *Carry On* films, a long-running series of British low-budget comedies that mix parody, farce, British humour, slapstick and double entendres. Twenty-nine original films and one compilation work were made between 1958 and 1978 at Pinewood Studios, with an additional film made in 1992. The films relied on a repertoire of comedy actors which changed gradually over the years, and the humour was in the British comic tradition of the music hall and seaside postcards. *Carry On Cleo* explicitly imitated the notoriously extravagant Roman epic *Cleopatra*, with a poster so similar (Cleopatra on a couch, framed on each side by Caesar and Mark Antony – but with the funny faces of the *Carry On* crew) that Twentieth Century Fox sued the production for copyright infringement, as they felt it endangered their own advertising campaign for the general release of *Cleopatra* planned for 1965. The case was settled with the withdrawing of the *Cleo* poster, and the release of a new one.[392] *Carry On Cleo* may be perceived as a work of parody that enters Linda Hutcheon's definition of the notion as "a form of imitation […] characterized by ironic subversion not always at the expense of the parodied text."[393] *Cleo* is not a satire, nor does it make any clear negative statement about the 1963 *Cleopatra*. It self-consciously repeats Mankiewicz's film but with critical distance, interrogating the situations and aesthetics found in Mankiewicz's

[391] The film also did very well in Australia, especially since it addressed the cultural burden of British and American hegemony. See Gerald Thomas Collection: *Carry On Cleo*, D. J. Goodlatter (Associated British Cinemas Ltd.) to Peter Rogers, 3 February 1965, and Philip Jacobs (Overseas Manager, Anglo-Amalgamated) to Peter Rogers, 25 January 1966.
[392] The *Daily Express* (21 January 1965) called the case "the battle of the two Cleos." See also the *Evening Standard*, 15 January 1965, and the *Times*, Law Reports, 16 January 1965 and 21 January 1965.
[393] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 6.

film in a tongue-in-cheek manner. *Carry On Cleo* "trans-contextualizes" Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (to use Hutcheon's expression),[394] challenging the Romantic aesthetic that values genius, individuality and originality. It thus questions the very capitalist ethic that generally turns works of art into mere commodities that can be bought, sold or owned. Through "trans-contextualization," the parodic work registers its critical distance from the original by placing the latter in a different, unusual or inappropriate context. As an ironic form of *mise-en-abyme*, parody inverts, or at least *refracts*, the original work by relocating it in an unfamiliar setting: it is thus prone to revealing presumptions or ideological investments that might have remained hidden in the original. This "trans-contextualization" avoids the nostalgic reproduction of past models and instead marks an aesthetic and ideological confrontation, a new, demystifying encoding which establishes difference at the core of similarity.

Though Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* is openly targeted and ideologically challenged, it somehow continues to be seen in *Carry On Cleo*. The desire to lampoon this particular film was actually spurred, in part, by practical reasons. At the start of the 1963 *Cleopatra* production, Elizabeth Taylor had insisted that the film be shot in London. However, after enormous delays the production relocated to Italy, leaving behind many unused costumes, props and sets in storage at Pinewood Studios, home of the *Carry On* films.[395] The parodic film re-used the very means of production (sets and costumes) of the parodied film – with Sid James playing Mark Antony with Richard Burton's old armor – laying even more stress on the differences in similarities. Critical distance and continuity are thus both at work in the parodic film, creating not only an intertextual dialogue between the two works that keep mirroring each other, but also a dialogue between the viewer and his or her own memory of other films. This continuity, this co-presence of films within a single one, is at the core of the paradox that underlies any work of parody, since ironic challenge may be accompanied by a

[394] See Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 15.
[395] See the article on *Carry On Cleo* on the Screenonline (British Film Institute) website. Consulted on 31 March 31 2007 at <www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/466135/index.html>.

kind of reinforcement of the parodied aesthetic and ideology. According to Hutcheon, "Parody is fundamentally double and divided; its ambivalence stems from the dual drives of conservative and revolutionary forces that are inherent in its nature as authorized transgression."[396] As it partakes of both the codes of a specific film (*Cleopatra*) and of the generic code of parody, *Carry On Cleo*, in order to be recognized as a parodic film, needs its audience to share the codes of Roman epics it aims to challenge. This need is, for Roland Barthes, a mark of "complicity with high culture […] which is merely a deceptively off-hand way of showing a profound respect for classical values."[397] Parody, like carnival, may question the norms and reinforces them at the same time, as it presents the parodied film as a canonical work of art.

At the beginning of *Carry On Cleo*, the caption that follows the opening credits of the film reads "Based on an idea by William Shakespeare." The film introduces itself as stemming from Shakespeare, thus reinforcing the canonical position of the playwright. But it also uses the dramatist's name to debunk an epic film—the 1963 *Cleopatra*—that failed to include any mention of Shakespeare in its credits. It is as if Shakespeare came back revengefully to participate in the deflation and demolition of Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*, which forgot to acknowledge the use of his plays in the construction of its plot. As Nicholas J. Cull has remarked, it is also a way to "remind the lawyers at Twentieth Century Fox that *Cleo* was dealing with material in the public domain."[398] *Carry On Cleo* thus starts by asserting that Shakespeare is necessarily part of any script-writing process dealing with Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, however silly or distorted the story may be. The film actually quotes and distorts lines from the Shakespeare plays on many occasions, playing with the canonicity of the words

[396] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 26.
[397] Roland Barthes, *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 119.
[398] Nicholas J. Cull, "Infamy! Infamy! They've All Got It in for Me!" Carry On Cleo and the British Camp Comedies of Ancient Rome" in *Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture*, ed. Sandra R. Joshel, Margaret Malamud and Donald T. McGuire, Jr. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 171.

and challenging the British notion of high culture and school classics. Several times in *Cleo* does the character of Caesar begin a speech with "Friends, Romans…," only to be interrupted by a fellow nearby who completes the sentence with "countrymen." Caesar complains angrily, "I know."

In *Carry On Cleo*, Mark Antony (Sid James) chases after a scatty Cleopatra (Amanda Barrie) who manipulates him. To win her sexual favours, he agrees to organize the murder of Julius Caesar (Kenneth Williams), to become the sole ruler of the world with her. But all his attempts are thwarted by an unpolished, cowardly and clumsy Briton who, captured by the Romans, has become Caesar's personal bodyguard through a series of absurd coincidences. In 1964, the film thus stands as a British reaction to three empires: the imagined Roman empire, the newly absent British empire, and the newly dominant American empire producing film epics about the Roman world. The decline of the British empire was too recent to be addressed directly, but it could be safely broached in the comic mode through the reference to another (distant) empire which had risen, known glory and experienced fall.

Parodying an American epic was also a way to tackle the issue of the United States' cultural and geopolitical hegemony over Britain, since the epic, by 1964, stood for all the excesses of the Hollywood entertainment industry – a paragon of material and human consumption of costumes, sets and extras, as well as a model of moral guidance with American heroes bringing freedom and the Christian spirit to a Roman empire often connected to the Third Reich. If the film stories played at challenging imperialism and materialism, the gigantic means of production denied this challenge, with each shot asserting Hollywood's unique ability to offer such magnificent spectacle.

From *Cleopatra* to *Cleo*, what is first challenged is the representation of history. The film makes fun of Hollywood's claim to depict history with authenticity, notably through a God-like voice narrating events as if they were historically accurate. *Carry On Cleo*

appropriates and mocks this invisible narrator by using the voice of the wartime British newsreel commentator E. V. H. Emmett, thus twisting the Hollywood style through the parody of the Gaumont British news.[399] By rewriting history and deflating its supposedly great figures, the film implies that the past is constantly reconstructed and reassessed, with historical characters being actors in an endlessly re-played drama in which the relations between cause (in the past) and effect (in the present) can be revisited. For example, as a swordsman chops the arms off the Venus de Milo statue by accident, Mark Antony retorts, "Oh forget it! Nobody will ever know the difference," undermining the orthodoxy of historical narratives in text books or Hollywood films and offering alternative patterns of arbitrary and chaotic relations between past and present.

From *Cleopatra* to *Cleo*, what is also challenged is the representation of gender. On the second poster (that followed the copyright lawsuit), the Egyptian queen is still placed to the fore as the tempting object, with a myriad of men beneath her, in a merry-go-round, almost waiting for their turns in her arms.

[399] See Cull, 171.

This time, however, Cleopatra's queenly luxuries are no longer the privilege of the Egyptian female. The famous image of Cleopatra sensually enjoying a prolonged bath and playing with a beautiful toy-galley in the 1963 epic film is repeated and distorted in *Cleo*: instead of the lascivious Cleopatra, Calphurnia, Caesar's aged and grumpy wife played by Joan Sims, is seen having a bath in her Roman mansion, with a very anachronistic and quotidian meal tray comically replacing the graciously light toy-galley. In another scene, Seneca, Calphurnia's very queer father played by Charles Hawtrey, is seen in his bath, this time playing with plastic toy-ducks. The Roman male replaces the Egyptian female in one of the cult *Cleopatra* scenes, questioning the usual gaze on the naked woman and deflating Hollywood's highly constructed and coded eroticism.

When Cleo eventually appears on screen, it is in a foam bath wearing a silly bathing cap which amusingly supplants the traditional golden fineries of Taylor's Cleopatra. But the foam bath is also part of the film's strategy to play with the audience's desire to see a Cleopatra in the nude, while inevitably thwarting these expectations. As soon as Cleo comes out of her bath, the camera loses her body behind some piece of Egyptian furniture, comically (because openly) denying the spectators full sight of the naked queen. The film thus goes against Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*'s tendency to make a show out of Taylor's curvaceous looks, while deconstructing the Hollywood codes of censorship which plays on unfulfilled temptation. Amanda Barrie, who played Cleo, was also much skinnier than Taylor, thus creating a new type for the Egyptian queen, a mixture between the voluptuous *femme fatale* and the twiggy *femme enfant*, reminiscent of Pascale Petit's portrayal of the queen in the 1962 *A Queen for Caesar*. Contrary to the passionate and earnest Cleopatra portrayed by Taylor, Barrie plays a

manipulative, kittenish queen, insensitive to the charms of the powerful men that come to court her and taking advantage of them in the sole aim of becoming more powerful herself.

In *Carry On Cleo*, men like Mark Antony are denied any favours or attention and are even ridiculed, as in the scene in which Antony fails to kiss Cleo in her bath of milk and falls face first into the bath instead. Male power is debunked even further in the character of Julius Caesar, depicted as an eccentric, histrionic, effeminate man, who asks his bodyguard to comb him and, though supposed to be a womanizer, introduces himself by looking straight at the camera, commenting on the flu he just caught with "Ooooh, I do feel queer." Caesar comes to replace Mankiewicz's Cleopatra in his constant need to be attended and pampered, once more contributing to undermine the traditional representation of genders and the heterosexual hegemony. In such a "camp" aesthetic, the signs of sexual identity are repeated, as Cull argues, "with a twist, exaggerated until they are revealed not as facets of nature but as the constructs of culture."[400] Gender identity is thus disclosed as being performed. Reflecting the decline of Britain's empire, the film imbues masculinity with weakness and rejection. The "great" men of history are cut to size and demystified. Caesar's military campaigns are described as mere "business trips" and, as he reaches the entrance of Cleopatra's palace like a salesman, he introduces himself as "My name is Julius Caesar, I represent the Roman empire," before being sent away with a "No thanks, not today."

The ideas of castration and impotence are implicit in many jokes about eunuchs (they have gone on strike and are "protesting about the loss of assets") and is evoked in visual terms when swords are comically bent into harmless knots. The women are performed as castrating, harassing nags (such as Caesar's wife) or cunning manipulators (Cleopatra). Despite the massive presence of lightly dressed lady attendants and slave girls, the male protagonists hardly achieve any sexual satisfaction, being forced to remain frustrated passive onlookers,

[400] Cull, 164.

just as spectators in the cinema. They are even turned to slaves and sexual objects, as the British prisoners are displayed at an auction market for the Roman women to bid on them. As Cull cogently observes, this situation "was both a reversal of the British treatment of the subjects of their own empire and a metaphor for the new reality of living in America's world. The British male is now a colonized and feminized 'other' on sale beside Africans."[401] Even if the film starts with the British males dragging their wives by their hair and ends with the restoration of the status quo (with the British heroes winning back or satisfying their female partners), the social order has been questioned in drastic ways, although this questioning is always to be decyphered. Since the success of the *Carry On* films depended "on both innocence and repression,"[402] the jokes and double-entendre puns had to rely on codes. This kind of comedy thus generated a feeling of national community beyond class differences, over the capacity of catching the sexual jokes and the puns on the English language. British identity was thus re-defined at the expense of the American Roman epic.

As *Carry On Cleo* reproduces Ancient Rome's projected behaviors and the British norms of the sixties in "camp" mode, it reveals their ideological stances and their historical constructions, giving opportunities to re-imagined the present and its norms regarding class, gender and race. Cull contends that, through such a comedy, "all three empires, Roman, British, and American, were subverted."[403] But we may wonder if subversion, as literally meaning an overturning of the dominant ideology, is the right term to describe the manoeuvre performed by this representation. *Carry On Cleo* was certainly challenging at the time of its release (and still testing nowadays), but not directly subversive in its eventual effect on the dominant compehension of gender – for instance, on the way homosexuality was perceived. It can certainly be argued, however, that the "camp" view of Ancient Rome has deeply influenced the way audiences now see the sword-and-sandal films with "Tony Curtis in a

[401] *Ibid.*, 177.
[402] *Ibid.*, 181.
[403] *Ibid*., 165.

tunic or Charlton Heston chained to an oar,"[404] or envisage, for instance, Ben Hur's relation to his best friend (soon to become arch-enemy), Messala, as an homoerotic one in William Wyler's 1959 epic.

The boundaries of the social classes are also questioned in *Cleo* when Caesar, deserted by his slaves, must himself row to Egypt, a scene which parodies the galley sequences in Wyler's *Ben Hur*. Instead of showing the undressed, sweaty body of the Jewish slave played by Heston, *Carry On Cleo* offers the sight of the Roman general, fully dressed in his toga and laurel crown. From the gaze on a quasi-naked Heston – the heterosexual symbol – the parody moves to a denial of the gaze on the dressed queer body, problematically turned into a slave figure. Caesar's political power is, in fact, played down in all the scenes that feature him. The Senate scenes either use pure slapstick and show him falling in public, or perform the assassination as a farce, with Caesar overplaying his death and screaming "Infamy! Infamy! They've all got it in for me!"[405] But if the male tyrant is parodied and cut to size, one can also perceive in this take on the assassination scene the eradication of the queer man by the all-too masculine senators and their phallic swords.

The overturning of gender and class codes takes place amidst sequences that invert and rewrite famous dramatic and filmic situations. In *Carry On Cleo*, just as in Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*, the Egyptian queen is brought to Caesar hidden in a carpet. But in *Cleo*, the scene is performed twice – the first time when Caesar sees it in the prophetic flames of a magical fire and the second time "for real." In the vision, Cleopatra is rolled out gracefully like Elizabeth Taylor. Asked how she did it so expertly, she replies, "Practice," metadramatically emphasizing the number of times "Cleopatra" characters have been performing this scene on stage and on screen. On the second occasion, the carpet is opened too roughly, sending her rolling across the room to hit a table, which challenges the constructed elegance of the Liz

[404] *Ibid.*, 185.
[405] His death had been prophesized at the start of the film in the hilariously absurd message "Beware of the nuts in May!"

Taylor move. What is also rewritten is Mankiewicz's own rewriting of his 1953 *Julius Caesar* in his 1963 *Cleopatra*. In Mankiewicz's film, Cleopatra sees the murder of Caesar through the flames fed by the magical powder of a sorceress. Mankiewicz's filming of the assassination in the 1953 *Julius Caesar* is reassessed and considered through the female viewpoint of Cleopatra. In *Carry On Cleo*, it is now Caesar who looks into the prophetic flames, curious as he is to know what will occur in his future meeting with Cleo, which he hopes to be an erotic one. In this *mise-en-abyme* of the filmic medium, Caesar's fantasies are put on display. Just as Cleopatra's visions in Mankiewicz's film had been surrounded by a halo of fire to signify not only the phantasmagorical nature of the images but also their status as the rewriting of a previous film, Caesar's reverie is encircled by visionary flames, this time signalling its parodic quality. After being the subject of the gaze in the Mankiewicz sequence, the Egyptian queen is turned into the object of the vision, once more playing with the spectators' desire to see more of her but being denied further sight when the vision suddenly vanishes. *Carry On Cleo*, following the previous cinematic *Cleopatra*s, combines three usual plots—Caesar's affair with Cleopatra, the assassination in the Senate and the Antony/Cleopatra story—but manages to destabilize all of them. Caesar's affair remains a mere fancy, the murder scene is turned into broad comedy and Antony's hope for intercourse is forever postponed. The very title of *Carry On Cleo* reflects both the unrelenting remaking of the films on the Egyptian queen and the permanence of Cleopatra as a pivotal character, unmovable and eternal while the men around her prove replaceable.

Georgio Agamben has argued that the cinema's main feature is the technique of montage, which is reflected in endless repetitions and stops.[406] But, for him, the notion of repetition does not imply the return of the identical; rather, it makes everything possible again. It is a promise of novelty and hope. The *Cleopatra* remakes and parodies both

[406] See Georgio Agamben, "Le cinema de Guy Debord," in *Image et mémoire* (Paris: Editions Hoëbeke, 1978), 68-9.

implicitly pay tribute to pre-existing texts (the large intertext of plays on Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, as well as the first film that conflated the plots in 1917), but also call them into question, reviving the cultural issues at stake. In her 2005 essay "Shakespeare's Anamorphic Drama," Sara Munson Deats cites other contemporary variations on the Cleopatra story, such as F. Gary Gray's 1996 film *Set It Off* (in which "Cleo," played by Queen Latifah, is a black lesbian bank robber), Alain Chabat's 2002 French farce *Astérix et Obelix: Mission Cléopâtre* (inspired by Goscinny and Uderzo's 1965 comic book *Astérix et Cléopâtre*, in which Cléopatra wants to build a lavish palace in a very short time to impress Julius Caesar with Egypt's skills), the futuristic 2000-1 TV series *Cleopatra 2525* or the 1989-91 three-part Japanese anime series *Cleopatra D.C.* Sarah Munson Deats notes that "[a]lthough most of these modern metamorphoses also retain an Antony personal, the Cleopatra figure remains dominant." Contrary to what happens when Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is performed in the theater as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel, the focus is and remains on the female character, and not on the male hero. Even if these figures of Cleopatra in popular culture are sometimes far from Shakespeare's own creation of the Egyptian queen, they all celebrate "the glamourous, empowered female achieving agency in a male-dominated society."[407] This celebration, however, should be always envisaged as a negotiation with the dominant discourse that strives to punish the powerful, foreign woman. To use Sinfield's words, the Cleopatra story appears as one of those "faultlines stories […] that require most assiduous and continuous reworking" because it addresses the "awkward, unresolved issues, the ones in which the conditions of plausibility are in dispute."[408] If the Cleopatra story still distresses the current conditions of plausibility, thus calling for constant repetition until resolution, it may be because equality among genders and among races should be able to thrive, not just in

[407] Sara Munson Deats, "Shakespeare's Anamorphic Drama: A Survey of Antony and Cleopatra in Criticism, on Stage, and on Screen," in *Antony and Cleopatra: New Critical Essays*, ed. Sara Munson Deats (New York: Routledge, 2005), 77.
[408] Sinfield, 47.

fiction but in the reality of our societies. Just as Sinfield notes that the "question of the arranged- versus the love-match died out in fiction in the later nineteenth century because then, for most people in Britain, it was resolved in favor of children's preferences, and therefore became uninteresting," [409] the Cleopatra story will be played out until neither gender nor race determine the power structures of our societies. To quote Leo Braudy, "A remake is thus always concerned with what its makers and (they hope) its audiences consider to be unfinished cultural business, unrefinable and perhaps finally unassimilable material that remains part of the cultural dialogue—not until it is finally given definitive form, but until it is no longer compelling or interesting."[410] As a sexually attractive foreign woman in power, Cleopatra still has much to say through the repetition of her representation. To be continued?

[409] *Ibid.*, 46.
[410] Braudy, 331.

Conclusion:

"To be *and* not to be" a sequel?

Shakespeare wrote the different parts of a continuous story in the form of the two historical tetralogies (*Henry VI* Part One, *Henry VI* Part Two, *Henry VI* Part Three, *Richard III*; *Richard II*, *Henry IV* Part One, *Henry IV* Part Two, *Henry V*), but can *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* be considered in a similar way? In his notes for the program of the 2008 joint presentation by the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington D.C., Paul A. Cantor seems to believe so: "[The two plays] do share several characters (Antony, Octavius and Lepidus), the action of the second is roughly continuous with that of the first, and there are many references to *Julius Caesar* in *Antony and Cleopatra*."[411] But the problem lies in this "roughly." *Antony and Cleopatra* is known for having been written some seven or eight years after *Julius Caesar*, and there is no record of the two plays having been performed together in Shakespeare's time. Nevertheless, there has been a propensity among directors, actors and scholars to construct the two texts as interrelated and to justify this construction especially through character studies. Cantor, for instance, validates the idea of a sequel through the exploration of Antony's personality. To the question "Which is the real Antony—the Master of the West or the Playboy of the Eastern World?" Cantor answers that "seeing the two plays together allows us to grasp the deeper continuities in the hero" and that "[a]lready in *Julius Caesar*, Antony appears as something of a playboy, foreshadowing his role in the later play." From clues gathered in the two plays, Cantor creates a subtext which brings psychological consistency to Antony, noting how often *Julius Caesar* already refers to an Antony who loves plays, music and reveling, and how it is actually "the politically effective

[411] *Ibid.*

Antony of *Julius Caesar* who is 'out of character.'" According to Cantor, the murder of Caesar has given Antony a cause worth fighting for – and even worth dying for – but once vengeance has been achieved, Antony desperately looks for another cause as worthy as Caesar to which to devote his life, and believes to have found it in Cleopatra. Aware of the vanity of the political game and disillusioned with the new imperial system, Antony is caught back by his hedonistic inclination and "becomes again the playboy that people in Rome always thought him to be," wishing to turn pleasure into a noble philosophy. Cleopatra becomes his reason for existing and, paradoxically, a new cause worth dying for. In Cantor's subtextual construction, Shakespeare's two Antonys become one single character – complex and evolving, but coherent enough to justify the staging of *Antony* as *Caesar*'s logical sequel. But this theory of a single Antony seems to rely heavily on wishful thinking, as if the desire to see the story continued, especially with a focus on the male hero, encouraged scholars, actors and directors alike to find common details resonating throughout the two plays to validate sequelization; as if all the dissonant facts about the protagonists shared by the two plays could be dismissed as "out of character" ; as if the erection of a psychologically coherent returning hero was enough to erase the narrative discrepancies between the two plays; as if a narrative series had to imply stability and psychological consistency.

On a textual and dramatic level, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra is* and *is not* a logical sequel to *Julius Caesar*: if some elements certainly prolong the story, others radically question what we saw in the first play, as if marking a pause in the narrative progression in order to revisit and rewrite the earlier text. But this rewriting and reassessment of the previous events does not turn *Antony and Cleopatra* into a full remake of *Julius Caesar* either. The play operates simultaneously on the narrative and metanarrative levels, at the same time temporally extending the storyline and regularly returning to the past to challenge it, thus interrogating the very construction of history. This tension reflects itself in the titles of the

two plays. Between the first and the second Shakespearean play, Antony and Octavius Caesar are the returning characters, but their names do not appear in the title of the earlier work. The sequel is thus far from being heralded from the start. Yet, *Antony and Cleopatra* could have been entitled *Caesar, Part II*, playing as it does on the ambiguity of the "Caesar" signifier: Octavius marks the return of the "Caesar" name, but only to stress that the character is not the same the second time around.

Antony and Cleopatra contains in itself the material to be a logical extension of *Julius Caesar*, but also the material to undermine the very notion of natural continuity. In performance, the two plays can work together in diverging ways. Directors may emphasize a "natural" narrative extension, notably by casting the same actors in the same parts and/or cut the passages in which *Antony* rewrites and unsettles *Caesar*; or they may conversely stress discrepancies and discontinuities through dissimilar casting and the use of the full text. Most of the time, directors have chosen to insist on natural continuity, for reasons that, I believe, are closely linked to the existence of a large intertext of plays on the same topic, to the influence of other forms of serial narration and to the ideological assumptions we live. The intertext of non-Shakespearean plays based on the "Antony/Cleopatra" or the "Caesar/Cleopatra" plot have made the issue of the sequel problematic. The different dramatic works written on a similar subject, with their overlapping plots, somehow create parallel spaces of textuality, offering various takes on the same events, each time inventing new situations and fresh dialogues for characters that remain the same. This kaleidoscopic textual world simultaneously makes each play the remake, the sequel and the prequel of another. But the existence of this intertextual network has had an ideologically ambivalent consequence on the reading and staging of the Shakespearean plays. On the one hand, this abundant intertext has destabilized the "already-given" orders of history, chronology and causality, the apparently commonsensical and natural relation of original to sequel, past to present, primary

to secondary, before to after; a text like George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* can work a transformative effect upon its precursor, making Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* appear derivative and secondary instead of originary. On the other hand, the intertext of plays has contributed to generate "natural" links between Shakespeare's *Caesar* and *Antony*. By extensively developing Shakespeare's cryptic allusions to Cleopatra's former affair with Julius Caesar, by emphasizing the pattern of mimetic desire that remained implicit in Shakespeare's plays, the dramatic intertext has led to the virtual construction of an Ur-narrative at the root of both Shakespearean plays, thus connecting them through a common narrative ground. These constructed links between *Caesar* and *Antony* have encouraged theater directors to stage the plays together in chronological sequence—a sign of a teleological representation of history and of a hierarchical view of texts. On screen, film directors have combined all the intertextual plots, engendering a long narrative based on mimetic desire, in which Cleopatra is first conquered by Caesar and then by Antony (who strives to be another Caesar). As a consequence, the potential dissending aspects of the intertext have been brought into line through the construction of a love saga that gives the heroic status to Cleopatra.

Strictly in terms of creation and storyline, and if one were to focus on the character of Cleopatra, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* may be envisaged as the follow-up of Fletcher and Massinger's "prequel" *The False One*, or of a "Julius Caesar" play that has yet to be written, in which Cleopatra would be seen in Rome at the time of the assassination. On the other hand, from Antony's viewpoint, *Antony and Cleopatra* works as the *postmodern* sequel described by Michael Zeitlin, i.e a "narrative which extends, revises, or redoubles the already-written,"[412] undermining narrative continuity and the chain of causality, as it sheds numerous doubts on the events involving Antony which happened in *Julius Caesar*. But as *Antony and*

[412] Zeitlin, 161.

Cleopatra is an *early modern* play, a term needs to be coined to account for its narrative action, which prolongs as much as it revisits. Thomas Leitch has suggested the term "metasequel" to describe a "sequel that not only continues but also comments explicitly on a specific predecessor."[413] This term offers an interesting option to consider this specific case through the angle of creation, though it does not explicitly convey the idea that the comments on the predecessor actually undermine and rewrite it.

Filmic vocabulary has very recently welcomed a new addition – that of the term "requel," a remake containing such new material that it can almost double as a sequel:[414] the subject matter is similar as in the earlier film, but it neither is an exact repetition nor does it continue the plot line of that film. In *Roger Ebert's Movie Yearbook 2009*, the "requel" is commented on as a "practice common among long-running film series" which copies "plots of previous films in the series while maintaining those films as part of the series continuity." The book gives the example of the James Bond films which have almost all been "requeled" at least once.[415] So far, the "requel" term has, therefore, been used more to describe an episode in a standardized series, a remake that may function as a sequel, than a sequel that unsettles the already-shown. I believe, however, that the new trend of constructing sequels out of dramatic or literary works which were not initially written to be sequels calls for the use of the "requel" phrase in such sense. The more "enforced" sequelizations will take place (for aesthetic, ideological and/or economic reasons), the more we shall witness the rise of hybrid, instable forms of narrative prolongments, that seem to extend the story, but actually question and distort it as well. Whether these distortions are noticed, and the degree to which they are acknowledge, will depend on our cultures' future capacity and wish to confront instability, indecidability and ambivalence.

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[413] Thomas Leitch, "Sequel-Ready Fiction: After Austen's Happily Ever After," in *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, ed. Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 49.
[414] See the entry in the *Urban Dictionary*, <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=requel>; in *Word Spy*, < http://www.wordspy.com/words/requel.asp>.
[415] *Roger Ebert's Movie Yearbook 2009* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2008), 888.

In terms of reception, *Antony and Cleopatra* has been envisaged as *Julius Caesar*'s sequel in many readings of actors, interpretations of directors and reviews by journalists and scholars. Even this book, by recognizing the sequelization as a cultural phenomenon, takes part in the representation of the two plays as interrelated. The fact that *Caesar* and *Antony* have been sequelized more or less steadily throughout the twentieth century, on stage or on film, with an acceleration of the phenomenon at the beginning of the twentieth first century say more about the cultural environments in which the sequelizations took place than about the two plays themselves. The trend of presenting the two plays in repertory, either on separate days or as a continuous show, which is now taking such momentum, may have been spurred by the development of the television series, which has created new expectations in terms of narrative complexity and story length among audiences. Recent TV series have created a more sophisticated relationship with their audiences and introduced "narrative experimentations" into "the mass medium of commercial network television."[416] Series such as *24* (2001-) or *Lost* (2004-10) regularly disclose narrative information that "makes us rethink the plots of previous episodes and revise our ongoing assumptions, [reveling] in such plot twists [and] revealing characters to be duplicitous at the end of a season, forcing viewers to rethink everything presented throughout the series."[417] Those series are based on "continuing storylines […] with an ongoing diegesis that demands viewers to construct a storyworld using information gathered from their full history of viewing,"[418] but the idea of continuity is constantly mixed with, and qualified by, revision and doubt. *Lost*, for instance, is renowned for its creation of a complex temporal system calling for viewers' active attention, playing with narrative time through flashbacks, fashforwards and time travel, but also – and this is more original – "flash-sideways," i.e. glimpses of a parallel dimension generated by the characters having been able to change the past and open an alternative time line. In time line

[416] Mittel, 265.
[417] *Ibid*., 220.
[418] *Ibid*., 230.

A, the protagonists have suffered a plane crash on a desert island; but in time line B, the crash never happened and the heroes land safely in Los Angeles: the past is rewritten before our eyes, while the regular shift between the two dimensions generates a postmodern awareness of the very act of rewriting and revising.

The sequelization of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, if it is to continue as I believe it will, may benefit from these new viewing contracts, in which unsettling narrative elements are not only allowed – they are expected, and even wished for, so that everything is made possible again, in line with Georgio Agamben's view of repetition. This desire, in all media, to see a story continued, with its conclusion forever postponed but also forever announced, this ambivalent wish to reach the end but to prolong the diegesis, may be part of our need to process personal, social and cultural issues through the identification/distance of fiction. The regular remaking of sequelized stories, whether on stage, on screen or on television, is an even clearer mark of the need to hark on unfinished cultural matters. Every time the Caesar/Cleopatra/Antony story is remade or even parodied, it seems to be over; but every time, it is in fact over and over and over again on stage, on screen and in our minds.

Some films based on the figures of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Mark Antony

Antony and Cleopatra (1908). Dir. J. Stuart Blackton and Charles Kent. With Maurice Costello, Florence Lawrence, William V. Ranous. Silent. B&W.

Antony and Cleopatra (1972). Dir. Charlton Heston. With Charlton Heston, Hildegarde Neil. 160 minutes. Color.

Antony and Cleopatra (1974). Dir. John Scoffield. With Richard Johnson, Janet Suzman. 161 minutes. Color.

Antony and Cleopatra (1981, BBC). Dir. Jonathan Miller. With Colin Blakely, Jane Lapotaire. 161 minutes. Color.

Antony and Cleopatra (1983). Dir. Lawrence Carra. With Timothy Dalton, Lynn Redgrave. 179 minutes. Color.

Astérix & Obélix: Mission Cléopâtre (*Asterix and Obelix Meet Cleopatra*, 2002). Dir. Alain Chabat. With Monica Belluci, Gérard Depardieu, Christian Clavier. 107 minutes. Color.

Caesar and Cleopatra (1946, George Bernard Shaw's script). Dir. Gabriel Pascal. With Claude Rains, Vivien Leigh, Stewart Granger. 138 minutes. Color.

Cajus Julius Caesar (1914). Dir. Enrico Guazzoni. With Amleto Novelli, Ignazio Lupi, Bruto Castellani. Silent. B&W.

Carry On Cleo (1964). Dir. Gerald Thomas. With Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Amanda Barrie. 92 minutes. Color.

Cleopatra (1912, Victorien Sardou's script). Dir. Charles L. Gaskill. With Helen Gardner, Charles Sindelar, Mr Howard. 88 minutes. Silent. B&W.

Cleopatra (1917). Dir. J. Gordon Edwards. With Theda Bara, Fritz Leiber, Thurston Hall. 125 minutes. Silent. B&W.

Cleopatra (1934). Dir. Cecil B. DeMille. With Claudette Colbert, Warren William, Henry Wilcoxon. 100 minutes. B&W.

Cleopatra (1963). Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz. With Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Rex Harrison. 246 minutes. Color.

Cleopatra (1999). Dir. Franc Roddam. With Billy Zane, Timothy Dalton, Leonor Varela. 177 minutes. Released also as a mini-series of 3 episodes. Color.

Cléopâtre (1910). Dir. Henri Andréani and Ferdinand Zecca. With Madeleine Roch. Silent. B&W.

Due Notti con Cleopatra (1953). Dir. Mario Mattoli. With Sophia Loren, Alberto Sordi, Ettore Manni. 78 minutes. Color.

Il Sepolcro dei re (*Cleopatra's Daughter*, 1960). Dir. Fernando Cerchio. With Debra Paget, Ettore Manni, Erno Crisa. 109 minutes. Color.

Julius Caesar (1908). Dir. J. Stuart Blackton and William V. Ranous. With Charles Kent, Maurice Costello, William V. Ranous. Silent. B&W.

Julius Caesar (1911). Dir. Frank Benson. With Frank Benson, Guy Rathbone, Murray Carrington. Silent. B&W.

Julius Caesar (1950). Dir. David Bradley. With David Bradley, Charlton Heston, Harold Tasker. 106 minutes. B&W.

Julius Caesar (1953). Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz. With Marlon Brando, James Mason, John Gielgud, Louis Calhern, Greer Garson, Deborah Kerr. 120 minutes. B&W.

Julius Caesar (1970). Dir. Stuart Burge. With Charlton Heston, Jason Robards, John Gielgud, Robert Vaughn, Richard Chamberlain, Diana Rigg, Jill Bennet, Christopher Lee. 117 minutes. Color.

Julius Caesar (1979, BBC). Dir. Herbert Wise. With Richard Pasco, Charles Gray, Keith Michell, David Collings, Virginia McKenna, Elizabeth Spriggs. 161 minutes. Color.

Julius Caesar (2003). Dir. Uli Edel. With Jeremy Sisto, Richard Harris, Christopher Walken, Valeria Golino, Chris Noth. 270 minutes. Color.

Marcantonio e Cleopatra (1913). Dir. Enrico Guazzoni. With Gianna Terribili-Gonzalez, Amleto Novelli, Ignazio Lupi. Silent. B&W.

Notorious Cleopatra, The (1970). Dir. Peter Perry Jr. With Sonora, Johnny Rocco, Jay Edwards. 88 minutes. Color.

Rome (2005-7). Created by Bruno Heller, William J. MacDonald, John Milius. With Kevin McKidd, Ray Stevenson, James Purefoy, Ciarán Hinds, Lyndsey Marshal. Color. First season: 12 episodes of 52 minutes. Second season: 10 episodes of 52 minutes.

Serpent of the Nile (1953). Dir. William Castle. With Rhonda Fleming, Raymond Burr, Michael Fox. 81 minutes. Color.

Spread of the Eagle, The (1963). Dir. Peter Dews. With Barry Jones, Keith Michell, Mary Morris. 9 episodes of 50 minutes. B&W.

Due Notti con Cleopatra (*Two Nights with Cleopatra*, 1953). Dir. Mario Mattoli. With Sophia Loren, Alberto Sordi. 78 minutes. Color.

Una Regina per Cesare (*A Queen for Caesar*, 1962). Dir. Piero Pierotti and Viktor Tourjansky. With Pascale Petit, Giorgio Ardisson, Gordon Scott, Nando Angelini. 90 minutes. Color.

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