



## Intertextuality in William Shakespeare's Drama *Antony and Cleopatra*

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to reveal the intertextuality of *Antony and Cleopatra* play by William Shakespeare. To reach the goal, this research utilizes intertextuality theory from Julia Kristeva. This research is library research and descriptive qualitative research. The result of this study points out that Shakespeare's drama *Antony and Cleopatra* was written based on real events in Rome history. Intertextuality aspect of this drama is found in the resemblance between the character names and events in the drama with the history of Rome written by Plutarch *Lives of the Roman Empire and the Lives of Caesars*. Shakespeare got the inspiration from the history of Rome by Plutarch for the background of history, plot and intimate detail of the affair between Roman General Antony and Egypt Queen Cleopatra. In fact, the description of Cleopatra upon her vessel presented by the character Enobarbus in the play (Act II, Scene ii, 190-225) is nearly a word for word translation of a passage from Plutarch.

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## INTRODUCTION

The work of literature is a product of human's creation as a result of life process experienced by the author. An author lives and interacts with the society around him/her. The author then casts the result of his/her experiences and senses into a work of literature in the form of prose, poem or drama.

Since the beginning, literature grows following the conventions in the society in a particular era. The development of society and civilization brings along literature to its growth. Not only the definition of literature, but the genre of literature also develops.

William Shakespeare is a very popular English man of letters. His popularity even progressively extends after he passed away. His works were translated into many prominent languages in the world. Shakespeare is also a really productive man of letters in his era. It cannot be denied that it was due to the fact that in his era when Queen Elizabeth ruled in England, she always demanded a new work of literature. It encouraged men of letters to constantly produced new works of literature every time.

William Shakespeare is one of the great men of letters in his era who successfully produced great works of literature in huge numbers.

Considering William Shakespeare's great name, it is not surprising if many men of letters are inspired with his masterpieces. Other than that, William Shakespeare's masterpieces could not be detached from the other work and also events which inspired them. The relevance between one work with the other work of literature or event as the background in the world of literature is called as intertextuality. Among many works of William Shakespeare which were inspired from the incidents in the real world or history, there is a famous drama entitled Antony and Cleopatra. Antony and Cleopatra drama written by Shakespeare based on the history and the biographies of Greece and Roman figures arranged by Plutarch, *Parallel Lives* and *Lives of the Roman Empire* and the *Lives of Caesars*.

Antony and Cleopatra drama is one of Shakespeare's early works of literature that is written based on true story of Roman Empire. The objective of this research is to investigate the intertextuality in the drama of Antony and Cleopatra by William Shakespeare.

## **METHOD**

This study is a qualitative descriptive one, in accordance with the definition of qualitative research interposed by Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 1989: 3) that qualitative method is a procedure of observation which result is descriptive data such as written or oral words of people and observable behaviour. According to Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 1989: 3), this approach is directed to the setting and individual wholistically (whole). Therefore, in this case individual or organization may not be isolated into variable or hypothesis, but it needs to be seen as part of a whole.

Primary data source of this observation is all words, phrases, sentences and dialogues in William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra drama script. The total words of Antony and Cleopatra script in Complete Public Domain Text are 22.960 words. Meanwhile, secondary data source is taken from some drama theory and intertextual theory books and some internet sources supporting the theme in this observation. Data is collected based on the purposive sampling technique. The data is words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues in William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra drama script that represent intertextuality problem.

The collected data are then classified and analyzed based on the problem in this study that is the intertextuality problem. As the tool of analysis, the intertextuality theory from Julia Kristeva (1980) and drama theory from Christopher Reaske (1966) and Bakdi Soemanto (2001) are utilized. The result of data analysis is then written in a form of report and is arranged systematically.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### a. Intertextuality in Antony and Cleopatra

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) maybe the greatest man of letters in the world history, if it is seen from his older age than of popular drama writers. But the magnitudes key really lies in here. Theatre in his life time gave freedom to him and as the reward he gave to the theatre the best of him.

Shakespeare was born in 1564 far from the stage world in a small-town Stratford upon the Avon River, England. It is believed that he was born on 23rd April, but it is known for sure that he was baptized on Sunday, 26th April. Stratford was a clamorous small town, and Shakespeare's father was a successful and prosperous entrepreneur and had dedicated himself for some time as the mayor in that city. Shakespeare was raised in a cozy house on Henley Street with his brother and sister.

All boys in Stratford entered the same grammar school so they could read and write. All of them also studied Latin language. Education was not aimed on practical benefit at that moment. Shakespeare did not go to college. In the age of 18 years, he married Anne Hathaway who was 8 years older than him. In the next two years they had three children; a daughter named Susanna and the twins named Judith and Hamnet (a version of Hamlet).

After the birth of the twins in the year 1585, there is no note about what Shakespeare did until the year 1592, he was named as a London actor. Acting was a difficult profession at that moment; it took some years for training and only the best actor in England who can get job in London. Thus, Shakespeare must have spent his spare time for seven years to occupy his profession, since he has become a successful actor in London in 28 years old.

In London, not Stratford, that Shakespeare got his education, studied not only theatre subtlety, but also all problems about it. In London too he got books that he read and people that he met, the entire life civilization in the late Renaissance. London is a port city with 200.000 residents and Shakespeare did not come to this place at a better moment.

There were many actors in this period who wore two hats as the playwright also. Shakespeare until 1593 had written several dramas. Those literary works were clearly young artist works, but he had pointed out his magnitude and his concern to entertain the audience. The greatest popular work which was successful is a series of three acts entitled Henry VI, one that gave a patriotic soul and similar view in the English war against French. It was nearly equal to the bleeding melodrama Titus Andronicus. And in a complete step change he also wrote a wild and ridiculous comedy drama Comedy of Errors and an elegant lyric comedy Love's Labour's Lost.

Shakespeare wrote for the audience and he consciously loved them as they loved him. Several actors got the chance to write some plays, even one of them wrote more than 200 plays. They were usually successful in doing those plays because they had gained control of the stage art and were

familiar with audience. But Shakespeare was an actor as well as a genius and the mix of both was a thing that need not necessarily be inviolated again.

Many plays he wrote for Lord Chamberlain's Men are the works about England histories, since anyone proudly lives in England. With the exception of early plays like King John, Shakespeare's history plays formed a single serial. He had written the story epilogue in Henry VI but for the melodramatic climax he wrote it in Richard III. He then returned to the beginning with sad and soft Richard II acts, and followed it with two parts of Henry IV and Henry V. He completed these three acts with all British people character type lively, but the most impressive character for the audience was Falstaff, a fat soldier who did not like to fight. London people found Falstaff so comic that Shakespeare finally gave it one comedy act in his own literary work *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Shakespeare's big attention on black humour reached its various shapes. He wrote a lively black humour act *The Taming of the Shrew* and four elegant and poetic comedy acts *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. He wrote *The Merchant of Venice* with the famous justice scene among Portia and Shylock in it. And he filled the stage with fairies and music in *A Midnight Summer Dream*.

Shakespeare also wrote three great tragedy acts for Lord Chamberlain's Men, the first is a beautiful lovesick story act *Romeo and Juliet*, the second is a great politics drama *Julius Caesar* and the third is a dark and frightening tragedy *Hamlet*. All these stories were known by London audience, since Shakespeare seldom or never concocted his own plot. This is what he did to his literary works that made them to be everlasting.

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and her cousin King James replaced the England thrones. Fortunately, just like the Queen he really loved Shakespeare's group acts show and from that moment on they had a new name recognized as King's Men.

King's Men opened the Christmas season with court scene by performing Shakespeare's act *Othello*, the tragedy of the Moor who killed his wife because he shockingly loved her. A few weeks later they featured Shakespeare's work *Measure for Measure*, which must had been successful on the London stage or maybe unheard-of before King James. This play includes in the – all well end well – plays group; *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*, one that some people considered as unpleasant. But all had their own benefits and so did the story about Roman *Coriolanus*.

In the term of King James, Shakespeare wrote his greatest three tragedy drama: *Macbeth*, a dark and bloody story about a spouse who did a murder to gain the throne of Scotland's monarchy; *Antony and Cleopatra*, a glamorous romance story of two persons who could take over half of the world but could not control themselves; then *King Lear* a grand and rocking masterpiece. There was nothing hard for Shakespeare to keep trying and trying. All brilliant actors around him gave a full and total comprehension needed in each of his plays.

Sometimes it is said that Shakespeare's plays reflected his life. Instead, he wrote a great tragedy upon his personal tranquillity and prosperity. Whereas he wrote only a light tragedy play at the time he

came to grief since his only son died in 1596. It means his personal life had no direct correlation with what he gave to the audience.

He quitted from the stage world around 1610, after he devoted to his group one latest comedy play series *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and a magical aesthetics in *The Tempest*. He wrote a history act *Henry VII* that was related to Queen Elizabeth's father. Shakespeare lived peacefully in his house in Stratford through his last years. In 1597 he bought an elegant grandiose house 'New Place' with an orchard, flowerbed, and ten hearths.

#### **b. Intertextuality in William Shakespeare's Drama *Antony and Cleopatra***

William Shakespeare never published any of his dramas and therefore there was no lasting original manuscript. His eighteen unofficial drama versions, however, were published during his lifetime in quarto edition by a licentious publisher (no copyright law protected Shakespeare and his works of literature in the era of Queen Elizabeth Governance). A collection of his literary works did not appear until 1623 (seven full years after Shakespeare's death on 23rd April 1616) when two of his fellow actors, John Hemmings and Henry Condell, posthumously recorded his literary work and published 36 of William's dramas in the *First Folio*. Several dates hence approaching any other date supported by historical events, performances records and the printing dates of these dramas.

The story of *Antony & Cleopatra* is one of the most legendary love story tragedy, written and played in various book versions, films, and dramas; love story that is not only romantic, but also historical, coloured by political intrigue, coup d'état, and culture clash. Antony was a top-notch general in Julius Caesar's heyday, one of the three Triumvirs, Roman supreme power holder, but his career and life were crumbled because of the influence of love and sensuality of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, Pharaoh of Egypt. Written around a decade after Julius Caesar, *Antony and Cleopatra* depicted stories and real characters in Roman history, but unlike Julius Caesar, this work inserted love story of the characters in the title. Their blind desires led them to their downfall and death. Its plot covers strong themes of ambition, power, love, comradeship, fraud and disaster.

Intertextual aspect in *Antony and Cleopatra* can be seen from the relevance between this drama with the real events in Roman ancient history. Shakespeare got the main inspiration for historical background, plot and visceral detail of the affair between Roman General Antony and Egypt Queen Cleopatra from Plutarch's writing, "Lives of the Roman Empire and The Lives of The Caesars" in *Parallel Lives*. In fact, the scene description of Cleopatra aboard her vessel portrayed by the character Enobarbus in this drama (Act II, Scene ii, 190-225), is nearly word-per-word translation of a part in Plutarch's book, the historian and ancient Roman biography maker. Meanwhile, the drama *Antony and Cleopatra* has also inspired other works, like the film *Cleopatra* starred by Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

In the characters of Antony, Cleopatra, and Augustus Caesar, Shakespeare described the influential figures, the three of them are the prominent figures who have the status of “planeter” as the rulers of the world who helped to render the world destiny. Antony and Cleopatra is a tragedy drama that mutually related, featuring a fast shift among Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria, Egypt, and Antony's homeland in Rome, stood up with two big battle series. This description is featured in thirteen acts in Act III and fifteen scenes in Act IV. While many critics in nineteenth century and early twentieth century complained about the peculiarity of this drama structure, current interpretation argues that extreme movement in the middle of this drama creates dramatic tension and strengthens global scope on what happen on stage. The setting is Alexandria in Egypt, and Rome & Misenum in Italy. The principal figures in this drama are Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

Drama Antony and Cleopatra is believed to be written and presented for the first time in 1606-1607. In the era of Queen Elizabeth Governance there was a great demand for new amusement and Antony and Cleopatra performed as soon as this drama was finished to be created. It is also believed that the script was printed for the first time in 1623 in First Folio. Since William Shakespeare clearly did not want his work published, therefore the detail of his drama was noted, and often was hijacked without his consent soon after it has finished to be performed.

Antony and Cleopatra is one of the most poetic drama works. This drama is noted with the word depictions that arouse memories and the living hyperboles. This drama is also regarded by many people as a drama of problem, portrayed life ambiguity and ambivalence as they are without giving a clear or agreeable answer. A lover couple featured in this drama could be the world leaders, but after all they were only human—had weaknesses and got old. Ordinary human share their transitoriness; people recognize the strong feeling of their jealousy, love, shame, and insecurity. Next to their historical magnitude and the way Shakespeare's sensitive depiction of them, Antony and Cleopatra is not more—and not less—extraordinary than ordinary human.

The popular citation of this drama includes Shakespeare's most well-known citation as, "My salad days, when I was green in judgment." - (Act I, Scene V). "There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd." (Act I, Scene I). "This grief is crowned with consolation" (Act I, Scene 2).

Drama Antony and Cleopatra is included to the neoclassic tragedy genre that is no longer tied-up by the Three Unities concept in Aristoteles' concept about Greek tragedy. Female role in this drama is also strongly felt through the characters of Cleopatra as well as Octavia. Cleopatra is by far one of the most well-known queens of all time in the ancient Egyptian epoch. Her love and death story is very popular; she commanded Egypt and made it very powerful at that time.

The story ranges around 40 B.C. and begins after the battles among Roman legion under Triumvir Mark Antony and Octavianus defied the troops of Brutus and Cassius in Philippi, a civil war triggered by the murder of Julius Caesar by Brutus and his friends. Marc Antony finally stepped forward as the hero of Philippi war defeated Brutus, while his compatriot Octavianus was imprinted as a coward person because he ran away from war.

After the civil war in Philippi, Roman was brought back to the rivalry of the next power holder, among the Triumvirs alone, Marc Antony, Octavianus, and Lepidus. After the war in Philippi, Antony went to Egypt and began a love story with Cleopatra. The messengers of Rome came to Cleopatra's palace and asked for Antony to immediately return to Rome to help in the battle against Sextus Pompeius and scolded him for his negligence in performing his task as a Triumvir. Antony argued that he was unneeded in Rome, but still he came back and married with Octavius's sister, Octavia. A meeting between Pompey (Sextus Pompeius) and the triumvirs resulted in an agreement. Pompey got Sicily and Sardinia islands as the reward to stop the attacks to Rome and the piracy in Messina Strait. Antony and Octavia then moved to Athena.

Each Triumvir was the lord over various regions: Octavianus in West covered Italian, Spain, Gaul and Germania; Marc Antony in East covered Greek, Macedonia, Anatolia, Syria, Judea to Egypt; while Lepidus got his shares in a part of North Africa. This division of power did not omit the jealousy of Antony to Octavianus, an inexperienced child who was pointed as Julius Caesar's heir.

Antony's disillusionment was so well-grounded. The assassination of Caesar was a tragedy for the Roman nation. Caesar was a Roman hero, unmitigated conqueror, a conqueror of European continent to Britain. His death was wailed by the nation so finally he was raised as a deity, Divus Julius. Before he got killed, Caesar apparently succeeded to make a will that the heir to his throne and to become the next Caesar was his cousin, Octavianus. A quite odd will considering Octavianus was still so young and he was not a military officer, while Julius Caesar still had the other cousin who was also his reliable General, Marc Antony.

Between the year 51 and 49 B.C., Egypt experienced a terrible harvest and drought effect famine that stopped indispensable Nile flow. Without considering that, she formed an army of Arabian tribe in the east of Pelusium. During this term, she and her sister Arsinoe moved to Syria. They returned passed through Ascalon that might become Cleopatra's temporary station.

In the meantime, Pompey was defeated in Pharsalus on August 48 B.C. He ran to Alexandria looking forward to find shelter from Ptolemy XIII, of whom Pompey was a guardian pointed by senate. Pompey was too late to realize just how much his reputation was destroyed by Pharsalus.

Cleopatra started to go to war with her brother. It happened after the death of Pompey, who had looked for shelter from Caesar to Egypt but he was stabbed to death while landed on Alexandria shore by Ptolemy's advisor. Caesar, who had followed Pompey, came in Alexandria 4 days later. Over there he claimed to be the ruler of Egypt with brought along three thousand two hundred troops and eight hundred cavalries. He also took twelve other soldiers who brought badge of Roman government by taking one band of logs with protruding axe and sabre. This was seen as a symbol of power that gave one clear signal of the intention. There were many commotions following in Alexandria. Ptolemy XIII went to Pelusium and Caesar then placed himself at royal palace and began giving instruction to make Ptolemy XIII came back.

With his cleverness, Cleopatra made herself come into Caesar's palace. By packaging herself in a rug roll she was delivered to Caesar and when the rug was opened, she appeared in front of Caesar. Seductively she tempted Caesar before the arrival of Ptolemy, who upon seeing they were in love cried out their treachery to all people of Alexandria.

Alexandria war began when Pothinus called Ptolemy XIII soldiers on November and surrounded Caesar in Alexandria with twenty thousands soldiers. During the war, several parts of Alexandrian library and some barns were burned. However, Caesar succeeded to take over Pharos Mercuar, one that kept his control to the port. Cleopatra's sister, Arsinoe, escaped from the palace to Achillas. She was proclaimed to be queen by Macedonia's people and army. In war, Caesar guillotined Pothinus and Achillas was killed by Ganymede. Ptolemy XIII was drowned in Nile while she was trying to escape. Alexandria gave up to Caesar, who caught Arsinoe and put Cleopatra back on throne.

Egyptian law did not allow a queen to govern without a king, so Cleopatra married her other brother, Ptolemy XIV, but she fell in love with Caesar. Caesar and Cleopatra spent the next few months traveling along the Nile, where Caesar saw how Egyptian worshipped Cleopatra. At that time Cleopatra had Caesar's son. She then bore a son, Ptolemy XV, who was called as Caesarion or "Little Caesar." Caesar returned to Rome in 46 B.C. with Cleopatra and their newborn son, Caesarion. Caesar then only had another child.

Caesar was really popular with Roman; they call him a dictator, whereas Cleopatra was less popular with Roman people. She had called herself a "New Isis." There were many discontented Roman people when Caesar married with an expatriate.

On 15th March 44 B.C., a group of conspirators besieged Caesars on one senate meeting and stabbed him to death. Knowing that she was also in danger, Cleopatra quickly left Rome. Then her brother died and Cleopatra made her four years old son as a king. She found that Egypt experienced an epidemic and famine. Nile canals were neglected during her departure that caused bad harvest and low watering. Bad crops continued from 43 to 41 BC.

Rome was in dispute after Caesar's murder. Several armies fought over power. Two greatest armies are Mark Antony's and Octavianus' army. Octavianus was an adopted son of Julius Caesar, but Mark Antony was believed to lead a greater army. When Antony asked Cleopatra to meet him, Cleopatra decided that she had another chance to regain the power in Egypt as well as in Rome.

Another episode of Cleopatra's love story is revealed in her story with Mark Anthony. Their story is begun when Mark Antony asked Cleopatra to come and meet him in Turkey. Cleopatra knew that Mark Antony could be easily carried away by her charm and her arrival that was designed considerably bewitching.

Mark Antony immediately fell in love, an affair which caused the birth of his twin children, Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios. Four years later, Mark Antony revisited Cleopatra. In 37 BC, on his way to invade Parthia, Antony returned in Cleopatra's hand. Then he lived in Alexandria in her house.



Cleopatra then bored another son; Ptolemy Philadelphus. Mark Anthony gave him a lot of very significant lands for Egypt. He gave Cleopatra Cyprus, Cilician's beach, Phoenicia, Coele Syria, Judea and Arabia. This enabled Egypt to build ships of Cilician's beaches indigenous wood. Egypt then built one huge fleet. Antony had plotted a campaign against Parthians (Persian colony in Iran). He obviously required Cleopatra's support for this and in 36 B.C., he was defeated. She became more indebted to Cleopatra than before.

Cleopatra was really extraordinary; she had intelligence and a very high devotion to the country. She was a handy woman who fluently spoke in nine languages, nevertheless, Latin language was not one of them. She was a mathematician and a pretty good woman entrepreneur who fought for her country. She had a charismatic personality, were born as an ambitious leader and nobility who deserved to get something better than killing herself.

Shakespeare's dramas were tightly structured and conventional tragedies were usually ended by catharsis. It can also be seen in Anthony and Cleopatra. Mark Anthony's death because of suicide had touched Octavius Caesar's heart so that he offered Cleopatra to ask for anything from him. But apparently Cleopatra preferred to end up her life than asking for pity from Octavius Caesar. She only asked Caesar to give Egypt monarchy which was ruled by Cleopatra to Cleopatra's children..

## CONCLUSION

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) perhaps is an English poet laureate and playwright whose works of literature have been most frequently read widely in the world. His dramas and poems have been translated into every prominent language, and his fame, nearly 400 years after his death, even it is greater at present than in his life time. But very little does people know about his personal and professional life. He was born at Stratford, Avon, a rural city in Warwickshire, England. His precise birth date is unknown, but he was baptized in Holy Trinity Church on 26th April 1564 and may be born at the same moment. He is popular with his attractive writing skill. He had an amazing talent by enticing reader in a word web that was built tactfully. Reading his book alone is an amazing experience. How the story runs through scenes is really captivating.

The result of this study points out that Antony and Cleopatra drama written by Shakespeare based on real events happening in Rome history. The intertextual aspect of this drama is found in the similarity happens to the characters' names and the events happening in drama with Roman history written by Plutarch in his work Lives of the Roman Empire and the Lives of the Caesars. Shakespeare got his inspiration from the work of Roman ancient historian Plutarch for the history background, plot and in-depth detail of the relation among the Roman General Antony and the Egypt Queen Cleopatra. In fact, Cleopatra's description aboard her vessel presented by Enobarbus character in the drama (Act II, Scene ii, 190 - 225) is nearly a word-per-word translation of a part in Plutarch's book.

Antony and Cleopatra are one of the early three Shakespeare's Roman history drama next to Coriolanus and Julius Caesar. Those three works of literature are dramatization of true events.

Shakespeare took the main source of his drama plot and characters from Lives of Caesar, Brutus, and Mark Antony in Parallel Lives by Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus, a biography maker and ancient historian. Plutarch's most famous work, Parallel Lives, is a series of biography of popular Greek and Roman people, arranged in couple to clarify the similarity of their good and bad characteristics.

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