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## SHADOWS OF EMPIRE: THE DISPLACED NEW WORLD OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

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SHADOWS OF EMPIRE: THE DISPLACED NEW WORLD  
OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

An Essay Submitted to the  
Office of Graduate Studies  
College of Arts & Sciences of  
John Carroll University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

By  
Christopher J. Kane  
2016

*Fortis imagination generat casum* ("Powerful imagination generates the event") -Montaigne, *Essais*

Perhaps more than any of Shakespeare's other works, *Antony and Cleopatra* defies singular readings. Within its massive sprawl, the play constitutes a tragedy, the third and most complex of the Bard's "Roman" plays, a gender-bending comedy, and an infinite number of studies on the subtopics lurking within its boundless lines. Some of these studies have paid a great deal of attention to the imperial and colonial subtext within this play, as the plot of the drama recounts the story of the Roman subjugation of the kingdom of Egypt, according to Plutarch. The relationship of conquest, moral dilemma and cultural interaction in this play invites multiple readings through this framework, especially in relation to contemporary English enterprises underway in Shakespeare's moment. In the Roman example, Shakespeare seems to have found a model for endeavors into the New World and elsewhere that the English could emulate and learn from, thereby reproducing the successful results of the Roman Empire at its height.

While *The Tempest* is often read as Shakespeare's quintessential "colonial" play, *Antony and Cleopatra* bears the seeds of the same kind of colonial discussion and examination of the settlement process. More specifically, like *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra* worries about the consequences of attempted but unsuccessful or incomplete colonization. Indeed, drawing from the insights of earlier writers like Spenser, the work investigates the developed notion that only a particular kind of man imbued with high moral character and immunity to the allures of the New World could succeed in a colonial context. These allures characterize Egypt in Shakespeare's play, imbuing the kingdom with characteristics akin to the romanticized view, and accompanying cultural dangers, presented by New World colonization, by which Egypt may serve as a proxy to

Virginia. On this point, readers may locate *Antony and Cleopatra* as an important text in developing colonial consciousness on the part of the English that reaches back into the sixteenth century. Shakespeare builds on a tradition of colonial literature in his adoption of the well-worn concept of an imagined empire. *Antony and Cleopatra* fleshes out this abstract concept with the historical, physical example of the Romans. In this version of the account of antiquity, however, Shakespeare shifts the focus to both the character and role of the colonizing Romans and the response and resistance of the colonized Egyptians, embodied by Cleopatra.

### **Antony and Cleopatra as a Colonial Text**

A colonial reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* does not come without its pitfalls. The play's expansive nature and ambiguities invite criticism to any framing of the work a scholar may take, since the play is characterized in both structure and content by what Drakakis best refers to as a "chaotic openness" (Drakakis 17). In discussing both Cleopatra and the play at large, M.W. McCallum wrote that "it is almost impossible to look at her steadily, or keep one's head to estimate her aright" (McCallum 413). Estimates on the play's original performance have ranged widely from February 1605 to February 1607, though evidence, such as Samuel Daniel's reissuing of his own *Tragedy of Cleopatra* (1594) in 1607, strongly suggests late 1606 as a probable date, with Daniel's reissue undertaken in response to the popularity of Shakespeare's play (Markels 177). These observations only begin to describe the difficulties presented by this play, let alone how to penetrate the text to the colonial subtext within its dense tapestry of themes. G. Wilson Knight's seminal reading of the play in the 1930s in *The Imperial Theme* illuminates this issue well; while his arguments on the imperial vision James Stuart has for England remain viable and important to understanding the colonial subtext of the play, this discussion comes with the consequence of elevating the colonizing Romans above the colonized

Egyptians, thus severing the dynamics of Antony and Cleopatra's crucial relationship. Recent critics, such as William Hamlin, tend to warn of the dangers of a colonial reading of any Shakespeare works, since such a framework tends to shoehorn the complicated interactions of the plays into categories developed only after the plays were completed. This can especially be the case when modern scholars employ concepts and vocabulary more familiar to a postcolonial moment and graft them onto an early modern play such as this one (Hamlin 102). This issue has been more pertinent to more recent readings of *The Tempest*, but many of the same mistakes can be made in relation to this play in attempts to tease out meaning, intention, and information that may not be in Shakespeare's text to begin with. One could argue the point that *Antony and Cleopatra* could not possibly be about colonization, given that in plain terms the result of the Battle of Actium is simply the conquest of one empire by another through warfare rather than anything that constitutes the type of colonization attempted by England in Virginia, Ireland, or elsewhere. Yet, in spite of these arguments, a colonial subtext *is* embedded within the play in response to the historical moment in which it was written, one in which the English appetite for empire was defined both by great ambition but also uncertainty. Shakespeare employs a technique of displacement common to the period in his reconstruction of Egypt in terms associative of contemporary cultural difference. In this way, he can locate a "New World" that while "Eastern" in the play, represents the "Western" colonial ambitions in America driving English expansion at this moment.

A study such as this one requires specificity and clarification of concepts in order to succeed. "Empire" and "colonization" are both large, broad terms with variant meanings and certainly possess different attributes dependent upon the period of history in which they are used. Indeed, English writers of the Jacobean period could not possibly view these terms in the same

way as Conrad in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or a modern writer today. Context is of crucial importance in discussing *Antony and Cleopatra* as a colonial play. England under James I aspired to expand across the Atlantic but as of the writing and performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* had been unable to do so, outside of a handful of brief temporary outposts. Earlier, during the Elizabethan era, internal problems proved a more pressing concern to the fate of the kingdom. However, out of the dozen or so exploratory missions sent out during this period, a handful proved influential in defining English attitudes about colonialism and empire that carried over to the Jacobean period. Humphrey Gilbert, who led multiple efforts to colonize Newfoundland in the 1580s, is said to have “planted” a statue of Elizabeth in the soil there, which offers an early clue as to English attitudes about physical claims to land (Elliot 31). The more famous explorer and privateer, Sir Walter Raleigh, attempted two early colonial settlements in the Carolinas, including the disastrous Roanoke colony of the late 1590s. Perhaps most pertinent to the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, however, were the writings and experiences of Richard Hakluyt.

Hakluyt’s participation in the 1585 Virginia enterprise marks arguably the first serious colonial venture for England and stands as a watermark for several reasons. In addition to preservation of a full report of the experience by Hakluyt, the effort also included the “main goals” for the enterprise. These were (in order of priority): 1) to plant Christian religion 2) to traffick 3) to conquer (or to do all three simultaneously). Hakluyt and company chose this order “for gentle, non-violent... non-occupation” (Read 28). Hakluyt’s numerous written works, along with Raleigh’s well-publicized adventures in the Americas, acted as a call to arms for Englishman to extend their empire, to go to the lands that already “belonged” to England and to reap the great bounties that awaited them there (Cormack 52). The publication of Hakluyt’s

*Principal Navigations* and the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the late 1580s suddenly rendered expansion and colonization topical and, with the proof that Spain could be beaten, much more plausible. Hakluyt introduces the concept of the fertile, feminine land of the New World in his description of the waiting “bride” Virginia, a concept Shakespeare would adopt for his own ends in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Knapp 150).

In spite of colonial enthusiasm, however, imperial expansion for the English consisted of little more than fantasy. Due to a variety of issues ranging from disease to starvation to the mysterious fate of the men of Raleigh’s Roanoke colony, none of England’s early settlements survived more than a year in the New World. Lesley Cormack goes as far as to attribute these failures explicitly to an absence of shared mission or clear understanding of “empire” on the part of the colonizers (Cormack 47). As a result, an English conception of “empire” in the early 1600s largely existed as pure abstraction. The only contemporary models of colonization and empire that existed in Shakespeare’s time were those of the Spanish and the Ottoman Turks. Any adherence to the model of the papist rivals of the English—with the growing infamy of *la leyenda negra* and a surge of anti-Catholic invective—was simply out of the question. As for the Ottomans, their empire remained large and economically and militarily successful, yet their methods and characteristic stereotypes as violent, decadent non-Christians eliminated the Turks as a viable model for England to emulate as well. The Ottomans still existed in the realm of the “other”, far too different from England to be an acute model of action for the ambitious *Britannia*, in spite of their many successes. Under these circumstances, Shakespeare had to utilize another model, and the original colonizers of Britain themselves, the Romans, were a logical choice for what an effective model of colonization might be like. Their success in this area, as many historians before Shakespeare had recognized, was tied not only to military

(especially naval) superiority but to their ability to replicate their social and political institutions away from Rome itself. This concept of transplanting Roman ideals and structures into new, foreign soil made for a precise match for the desired colonization of the New World. In Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Grecians and Romans*, then, Shakespeare encountered a framework within which colonization could be defined and emulated in the conquest of Egypt undertaken by the future Augustus Caesar.

Herein lies an important distinction perhaps not always explicit in colonial studies of *Antony and Cleopatra*. While England stood at the advent of true colonization in 1606— the year the play was probably first performed and the year the Virginia Company sent its first ships to Jamestown (the expedition left December 20, 1606)—they had no palpable sense that England might be on the path to forging a British Empire, having endured several colonial failures, including a recent misadventure by the Plymouth Company in early 1606. They did, however, have a monarch with the great ambition to do so. From his ascension to the English throne in 1604, James I sought to fashion himself after Augustus Caesar, a monumental figure and conqueror capable of unifying various peoples under one strong monarchical authority. James promoted himself as Augustus, including framing himself in an Augustan likeness donning a laurel wreath on his coronation medal, his reference to his “Imperial Crowne” in his coronation address, and hosting a triumphal-style coronation parade shortly after his ascension, which was called by the witness Ben Jonson the “lasting glory...of the Augustan state in royal procession” (Davis 128). But what exactly constituted an empire, and how England would arrive there, stood beyond anyone's comprehension at that time. James himself needed the Augustan allusion for practical reasons, as he was in many ways a foreign king coming from Scotland in need of aggrandizement and respect. The comparison also allowed him to draw a distinct connection to



Britain's cultural heritage as the "third Troy" and associate himself with favorable "Anglican" history, not unlike how Shakespeare inserts James's ancestry into the prophecies of *Macbeth*. James reached back to the popular legend of Brut, who had divided Britain in ancient times, but James had now come to reunify the isles (Davis 134). But James was no emperor; at least, not in 1606. Shakespeare seems to have recognized that, despite the fact that England was not imperial, the kingdom *could* be if it followed the Roman narrative. As a result, in laying the foundations of colonial discourse, Shakespeare chooses a very precise moment in Roman history: the Battle of Actium, in 31 BC. Only after the Roman victory over Antony and Cleopatra and the subjugation (or successful colonization) of Egypt can Octavius claim victory and sovereignty—and can the Roman Empire be born. This could not have been lost on Shakespeare, who would have read that Octavius did not become emperor, and Rome not an empire, until four years after Actium, in 27 BC. Thus, the story of Antony and Cleopatra is a *proto*-imperial one, and so the play should be taken as such. *Antony and Cleopatra* presents Rome as formidable and ambitious but not yet at the height of its powers, exactly the circumstances defining Jacobean England, as yet only aspiring to an imperial future. For England, as for Rome, an imperial identity could be possible but only after successful colonization; in other words, colonization, which we may define in this context as the process by which a kingdom's moral and cultural values are transplanted to a foreign soil by physical inhabitants of that kingdom, precedes empire, but is not independent of imperialism. These concepts conjoin in the process of expansion and as Meredith Anne Skura argues in her work on *The Tempest*, rationalizations for colonization and imperial expansion are often one and the same (Skura 66).

Through the Romans, the English could tap into an understanding of what colonization and empire meant, and what these ideas could potentially mean for them under James I. A

greater awareness of the example of antiquity also provided the corollary of realizing mistakes made by the Romans, as *Antony and Cleopatra* exemplifies. Discerning the “Roman-ness” of the ancient empire could then lead to a critical example of what to do and what *not* to do as England tried to expand. But if the “Roman-ness” represented by the soldiers and people sent out to colonize different parts of the ancient world served a crucial function in the success of Roman imperial expansion, what comprised “English-ness”—or, more appropriate to the moment of the play, “British-ness”? Writers had for decades sought out the primitive components of what constituted “Englishness” as opposed to their European neighbors. The tradition of national epic received a restoration in popularity during the Renaissance as republications and rewritings of oral legends and mythologies reached large reading audiences for the first time. English writers trod a well-worn path long before James Stuart looked to epic tradition for propaganda for his kingship. Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* stands out as the most well-known English text in this vein from the sixteenth century and Shakespeare himself, of course, was both an avid reader of, and participant in, the tradition of writing on English and British legend as *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline* testify. In most cases, these British legends center on heroic and chivalric virtues, values which repeatedly ground literary definitions of “English” and form an integral part of the Jacobean colonial picture. A common theme that emerges leading up to the ascension of James I is that only a man in possession of certain morals and virtues is capable of governance in locales far removed from court and the civil center. Shakespeare combines this concept with his own examinations of character in contact with the cultural “other” and the burgeoning sense of English nationalism and utilizes them to address the perceived need for a certain type of Englishman to not only govern, but to colonize as well (Callaghan 45). He takes up this exploration in all of its complexity in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

## **Cultural Degeneracy and Colonization**

In the wake of this new colonial enthusiasm, concerns about consequences of the settlement process arose. Doubt about English capability in extending authority and institutions of English society manifested in literary tracts; some writers, like the poet Samuel Daniel, worried about the moral fortitude of men who struck out to achieve fortune, and felt that bullion was a means of “opening a wider way to corruption” (Armitage 62). Even worse were the fears that settlers would be consumed by the effects of a foreign land and “go native”, ceasing to be Englishmen at all (Elliot 80). The Roanoke colony’s mysterious vanishing in 1598 drew a variety of contemporary theories, but the most popular attributed the failure to the colonists’ fall into moral corruption and the uncharacteristic murder and kidnapping of natives to accrue more labor and resources. The English may have desired to colonize as the Romans, but they lacked both the confidence and evidence that they could duplicate the Roman process, and thereby the Empire’s success. These concerns had already manifested themselves in a colonial venture much closer to home than Virginia in the continued attempts to subjugate Ireland during the last fifteen years of Elizabeth’s reign.

The plantation system utilized in the “internal colonization” of Ireland reveals two key points in the colonial development of England; that there was an understanding that successful “planting” was a necessary step to assimilating Ireland into the realm and that people of high exemplary “English” character were necessary to avoid succumbing to their surroundings and the “very Genius of the Irish soile” (Kupperman 278, McCabe 64). Ireland is characterized by much of the literature of the time as in possession of corruptive forces that disallow the “Anglicization”

that the English desired for the country (McCabe 64). Concerns ran rampant that Englishmen who spent too much time in Ireland could degenerate into Irish ways and barbarity. This concept of cultural contagion of sorts was nothing new in the 1580s, as degenerative concepts of “turning Turk” or “barbarian” had long existed in Europe, as had the methods by which the “civilized” European was taken in by alluring riches, finery, and—specifically in the case of the Turks— social advancement (Vitkus 37). The Irish proximity to England, however, made them a more pressing cultural concern than the Moors or Turks (Elliot 80). In fact, evidence suggests that some genuine worry existed that Ireland could ruin England if allowed to exist as it was (Hadfield xvii). Echoes of this idea of degeneracy permeate *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Antony’s degeneration while in Egypt is clear to the audience. Edmund Spenser shared concerns about culture’s corruptive influence and, as a resident official for the Crown in Munster, stood in a unique position to observe and comment on how England should go about “conquering” Ireland and its corruptive soil. David Read, in his expansive colonial study *Temperate Conquests*, suggests that Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* is Spenser’s chronicle of New World engagement through allegory and abstraction in lieu of concrete evidence (Read 34). While viewing the entire work through this lens might be debatable, as Spenser himself seemed more concerned with the faults of the church and the Matter of Britain, certain sections do illuminate Spenser’s view of colonization in Ireland and by extension the New World as well.

To be sure, Spenser engages the same issue facing colonial expeditions regarding behavior when an Englishman encounters the “other” in a foreign land. In the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser settles on a model character, Arthur, who embodies several key virtues of the English gentleman that comprise the six books of the poem. In terms of colonization, Spenser constructs the character of Sir Guyon, who here may be called the temperate gentleman, as temperance

emerges as the response to Spanish excesses in the New World in *The Faerie Queene* (Read 18). The trait of temperance that Spenser highlights proves to be a crucial aspect of the English colonist moving forward in colonial literature. Shakespeare seems to have agreed with Spenser to a degree, for it is the temperate Octavius who emerges victorious in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In Book II, Guyon, as the model of temperance, vanquishes the allegorical knights representing such vices as Braggadocio and Furor, a refined Englishman succeeding where the excessive Spanish influences of this section fail. At the climax of the book in Canto XII, Guyon must brave the temptations of Acrasia's "island" which include the "Gulfe of Greedinesse" (Spenser 2.12.22). Given a colonial context, readers recognize the New World allusions made here, the gulf of greediness implied referring to the Atlantic and the competitive trade and piracy networks at work on it. The New World also appears in the allegory of the Bower of Bliss in this section, which John Roe compares strongly to Cleopatra's court in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Roe 178). The temptations, decadence, and luxury present here perform a dark twist on the romantic views of the New World, one that Shakespeare hones more concretely for the Orientalization of Egypt in his play.

Yet, Spenser still develops his thoughts on colonization, the threat of degeneracy, and the high character with which to combat that degeneracy, all in the abstract. Spenser's struggle with colonization abroad stems from a clear lack of context. In the search for a "truth" about colonization, he, unlike Shakespeare, fails to find a suitable, "real" model to work with, hence his decision to perform the process through allegory. As a result, Spenser's prescriptions for colonization remain entirely theoretical, elusive and bound to an impossible imagined world of singular cultural dominance. David Read points out that "Raleigh's colony is no more tangible than Fairyland", as there are no present solutions to the problem of permanent colonization in his

time (Read 17). Whether or not the reading audience found Spenser's suggestions convincing, there is little doubt that *Antony and Cleopatra* owes a great deal to Spenser, particularly to Book II and the preceding proem, in which Spenser directly comments on the "fruitfullest Virginia" attempted to be settled by "witlesse men" (Spenser 203-4). From *The Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare inherits the idea of the temperate, steadfast colonizer as the supposed desired model for the English colonist, as well as an awareness of the problem of cultural integration, for which Spenser possessed no tangible solution, in Ireland or otherwise. Spenser's work in general also sheds light on fears of the results of degeneracy. Both the "old English" of Ireland, who had mixed with the Irish one or two generations before the 1590s, and the first colonists in contact with the "savages" of the New World, bear the results of "contamination", these English New World colonists degenerated into an amalgamation "more fearful than the Irish" (Golinelli 134). This appears to be the same fear Octavius has of Antony in Shakespeare's play.

Spenser's concern with the character of the colonist who encounters the cultural other has echoes elsewhere in contemporary literature Shakespeare would have been familiar with as well. Both Montaigne and Sir Francis Bacon on their own terms had already equated colonial success to superior moral character and culture, and that these absences were to blame for colonial misadventure. Bacon's *Essays*, published in 1597, makes this connection explicit. In his essay "On Empire", Bacon refers to the "Temper of Empire" needed for settlement of colonies (Bacon 59). Bacon also stressed the necessity of "naturalization" of strangers in order to make them "fit" for inclusion in an empire (Bacon 94). Since he refers to the "Plantation of Colonies" in this essay, we can assume with relative surety that Bacon refers to Ireland here, but his worry about cultural degeneracy if the colonist is not sufficiently armed to withstand such influences applies on a worldwide scale as well. Montaigne, whose own *Essais* directly inspired Bacon's

collection of essays, focuses on the Romans as the model of cultural achievement and inherent virtue, for their “ordinate conduct”, moderation and constancy (Montaigne 799). This latter virtue proves to be an important issue in *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially for Antony who in most ways lacks constancy, which is both corollary to and caused by his degeneration in Egypt. Also significant is Montaigne’s observation that the Romans were great for what they gave away, referring to that same high culture and virtue inherent in the Roman person (Montaigne 779).

Unlike Bacon, however, Montaigne rejected colonization of the New World on the grounds that people of his own time were incapable of replicating the “incomparable” Romans in their virtues and success (Montaigne 779). He in fact turns this argument against sixteenth century Europeans in “On Cannibals”, declaring that

These peoples, then seem to me to be barbarous only in that they have been hardly fashioned by the mind of man, still remaining close neighbours to their original state of nature. They are still governed by the laws of Nature and are only slightly bastardized by ours... (Montaigne 232)

Montaigne’s doubts about the European man’s idealized moral fortitude, if not the thinker’s opposition to colonization, are shared by Shakespeare and permeate the ending of *Antony and Cleopatra* quite significantly. Shakespeare picked up the strands of thought considered by these writers and chooses to weigh them in the Roman colonization of Egypt at the heart of his play.

### **Oriental Egypt and The New World**

But how can ancient Egypt, with its various peoples and old, long-developing culture, stand as a representation for primitive and relatively unknown Virginia in Shakespeare’s play? Egypt is characterized by a heavy reliance on the exotic and the “other”, a land of sensuality,

untold riches and plenty, age old myths and pagan gods. This Egypt, this “Afric” becomes embodied in the physical person and character of Cleopatra, but this observation only begins to unpack the complexity of that association. Egypt, after all, remained a formidable empire in the time of Julius Caesar, when the general first became acquainted with a young Cleopatra. Egypt developed a uniquely hybrid culture that was far from primitive, not least in having absorbed Hellenic influences; this kingdom had remained Ptolemaic Egypt since the campaigns of Alexander the Great and the establishment of the first and most famous of his many self-deifying cities of Alexandria. In other words, the Egypt of Plutarch appears far too advanced and not exclusively “Eastern” enough to represent the degree of difference between England and the native tribes of the New World to warrant consideration in a play that entertains the colonial dynamics that framed the New World at this time.

The Egypt of Shakespeare’s time, however, offers a far different portrait of that part of the world. Alexandria in 1600 had fallen into ruin, its status as a great city and place of higher learning and cultural exchange diminished by time and war. The Ottoman Turks held Egypt in the early 1600s and, as a result, accounts of Egypt during this period attribute many of the same Turkish characteristics found in other parts of the Ottoman Empire to this place; barbarity, degeneracy, all manner of exotic people and goods, and Islam. Present circumstances clashed with knowledge of what Egypt once was in the western world to create a mixed ambivalence among observers (Archer 4). This description contrasts with that of the Moors of northern Africa, considered by observers such as John Leo Africanus to be “kinder” and “cruder in the language” if more primitive than the Turks (Smith 175). Moors also were found over time to be “treacherous” and given to “unbridled” sexual excesses and sensuality (Smith 179). While Moors and Turks certainly possessed distinctive cultural and lingual differences from each other, these



two groups of people were at times lumped together categorically, especially in places such as Egypt where they both tended to live. Along with other outlier groups and stereotypes, like the “gypsy”, which encompassed both actual Egyptians and English vagabonds among a wide spectrum of peoples outside of European social categories, the characteristics of these groups tended to be conflated (Loomba 128). In such a fashion, Egypt at this time often became absorbed into the concept of the “Orient”, the lands of the near East defined by their exoticness and “otherness” from the western, Christian world. This Orient, and its defining traits, varied depending upon the writer and context. Certainly, the Orient in this context differs greatly from modern conceptions, which attribute the term with the peoples and lands of East and South Asia. The common theme of this Orient, however, is the presence of these near-Eastern exotic characteristics of decadence, excessive behavior, untold riches, and—perhaps most important to *Antony and Cleopatra*—degeneracy and effeminacy.

The Orient I speak of here largely resided in the popular imagination, inflamed by both the writers of antiquity and sixteenth century English travelogues on the region, and existed therefore in a realm of uncertainty. Egypt was sometimes part of the “orient” and sometimes held apart from it in writing. Edward Said, seminal critic of modern orientalism, defines the idea best when he describes the Orient as a “man-made” regional idea or “place” informed by observation and stereotype (Said 5). While the complex systems of Orientalizing familiar to postcolonial studies did not exist in 1607, Shakespeare would have had this general sense of the idea of the Orient and found its ungraspable nature useful in constructing an analogue for the New World. To better understand how Shakespeare might have viewed “Orient”, though, requires a less rigid definition than Said’s, whose theory of orientalism presumes unified imperial intentions and discourse, as Daniel Vitkus points out, which England did not have in 1606 (Vitkus 11). Jim

Egan, who writes on American Orientalism, clarifies this concept with the reminder that methods of mapping and geography remained fluid during Shakespeare's time. He points out that Greece was "both West and East" in geographic and cultural terms, while "Egypt" was at various times "East", "hither East" or "Orient" along these same terms (Egan 5-6). Shakespeare displaces Egypt in the play, shaping the exotic other of the unbounded Orient into a geographically obscure land of anyplace, where an empire may extend out to colonize. The geographical location and racial specifics of the people of this land matter less than the characteristics representative of the land to be colonized and the cultural consequences for the colonist who encounters them and becomes drawn in by those characteristics, as Antony is by the "Egypt" of the play.

Shakespeare conflates antiquated Egypt with the Turk-dominated Egypt of his time to create the Egypt of *Antony and Cleopatra*. His Egypt bears the mystique and wonder of ancient Egypt and also the decadence, threatening degeneracy, and sensuousness of Ottoman Egypt. He applies these exotic characteristics of contemporary Egypt's association as part of the abstract, romanticized notion of the "Orient" into sharp relief to create a place of the "Eastern imaginary" that both builds upon and steps outside the simple notions of "east-west" binaries (Egan 13). In doing so, Shakespeare follows a previously useful technique employed by Thomas More and Spenser, among others, of displacing England—and in this case, the New World as well—in order to explore contemporary issues outside the confinement of physical geographic spaces, creating a relative "empire of nowhere" (Knapp 7). Shakespeare himself had already recognized the usefulness of this concept of displacement in plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*—whose protagonist, Margreta de Grazia has argued, disengages himself from the "land-driven plot", much in the same fashion as Antony in this later play— as a means for ruminating on empire and

government on a temporal plane unfixed by time or location (De Grazia 4). Removed from a singular geographic or cultural definition, the “other” represented by Egypt in *Antony and Cleopatra* may be, in actuality, representative of anywhere. The characters of the play compound this lack of fixture in their hugeness; Antony and Cleopatra especially speak and act in a way that tends to “overflow geographical limits” (Gillies 68). Yet, given the historical moment in which the play is written, and the similar general worry of cultural degeneracy presented by inevitable contact with the other during colonization, I argue that the play has a specific target and special resonance for England’s immediate colonial aspirations: Virginia and the New World.

### **Antony and Octavius: Two Models of Colonist**

Shakespeare had considered colonialism earlier than *Antony and Cleopatra*, perhaps not as a primary concern, but as Gilberta Galinelli argues, he showed signs of colonial reflection as early as *Titus Andronicus* with the planting of Aaron in Rome at that play’s end (Golinelli 144). That play established not only Shakespeare’s penchant for substituting ancient Rome for contemporary London, but also the playwright’s concerns with permanent cultural consequences as a result of interaction with the “other”. By the time of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare had absorbed many of the disparate strands of writing on otherness, morality and culture, as well as English colonial experiences, which together comprised English colonial consciousness to 1606. With this basis in mind, the writer sought in his Orientalized version of Roman history a model by which the solution, or at least illumination, of the idea of colonization and how the planting of an English morally sound character might work in the New World.

*Antony and Cleopatra* was not the first play in early modern Europe to tell the tragedy of the romance between Marc Antony and the last pharaoh of Egypt. At least three other versions

survive from the sixteenth century: a 1540s version of the story by the Italian writer Cinthio, an author familiar to Shakespeare; a French “tragedy of Antony” written by Jodelle from 1553 that was later translated into English by Mary Sidney in 1590 (which Shakespeare probably knew of and may have borrowed some individual lines from); and a sequel of sorts to Jodelle’s play, *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, written and staged in 1594 by the poet Samuel Daniel, which Shakespeare was quite familiar with and used as a source for constructing Cleopatra’s death scene in Act V (Quint 208). Daniel’s play ultimately vilifies Antony and lays blame on his and Cleopatra’s decadence and sexual excesses, which have led to misgovernment and the disobedience of the Egyptian people, as the reason for their downfall and defeat by Octavius and his Roman forces (Parker 107). Shakespeare does not necessarily disagree with this assessment, but a colonial reading of his play reveals a greater complexity of the relationship dynamics of its three primary characters Antony, Cleopatra, and Octavius. In each of these three cases, Shakespeare invests in his character the totality of a race of people. From a colonial standpoint, this creates at first brush a triangulation between Octavius (the Roman ideal, conqueror, and ruler of state), Antony (Roman but affected by the actual colonization process he attempts) and Cleopatra (Egypt and Africa entire, the place and people colonized simultaneously) that forms a web of relationships and responses between these three which offer a tangible example of the colonization process. This process includes here, unlike in previous plays, the response of the colonized in the form of Cleopatra. For the sake of coherence and order, a colonial reading is best served by examining these interwoven relationships and viewpoints of each of these three characters as they progress and change (if at all) throughout the play.

*Antony and Cleopatra* opens with the introduction of Antony and Cleopatra in Egypt. Shakespeare offers the immediate first glimpse of the orientalism of Cleopatra’s court, rife with

luxury, decadence, splendor, sensuality, and appetite (Gillies 118). Alexandria encompasses the traits of the Orient but in its own removal from geographic boundaries becomes the colonial other and a potential analogue for the New World, with its romanticized promises of riches and plenty. Antony, as Philo reports in the first scene, has been removed from his usual martial heroic self and made a mere “strumpet’s fool” and “the bellows and the fan/To cool a gypsy’s lust” (*Antony and Cleopatra*, I.1. 9-10, 14). Shakespeare immediately offers the consequences feared for the colonist. Upon arrival in Egypt, Antony succumbs to its exotic pleasures and plenty, shirking his responsibilities and duties while losing sense of his Roman self. Rather, he feels content in this state of existence as Cleopatra’s lover, declaring to the messenger from Rome “Let Rome in the Tiber melt, and the wide arch/Of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space” (*AC* I.1.35-6). Shakespeare wastes no time in presenting the colonist gone native to the worst effect. The negative perception of this degeneracy into the Egyptian culture and lifestyle echoes throughout the first two acts of the play quite explicitly. Back in Rome, Octavius dismisses Antony as the “abstract of all faults/That all men follow” for his absence (*AC* I.4. 8-9). Pompey observes that Antony remains susceptible to Cleopatra’s “witchcraft” and hopes the inherent feasting and lounging of her court will lull him into a “Lethe’d dullness” (*AC* II.1.22, 27). In each instance, in Roman eyes Antony has fallen prey to the temptations of the exotic and the “fertile” Egypt embodied in Cleopatra. As a result, Antony has lost sight of his purpose as the Roman general and colonizer, his Roman ideals and culture traded in for a role as an “Egyptian” in Cleopatra’s New World.

Antony does return to Rome eventually and Shakespeare offers an interesting contrast of Antony in these scenes outside of Egypt. When confronted by Octavius in Rome, Antony’s nobility and eloquence—already attested to in *Julius Caesar*—return, as Antony the Roman snaps

back into place. Away from the cultural influences of the Orient colony, Antony appears the model Roman again, given to honor, duty, and moral reason. Antony makes amends with Octavius and, with Agrippa's assistance, strengthens the bond with his fellow triumvir in his marriage to Octavia. This Antony, described by Plutarch as: "noble...Herculean...friendly" and "honorable, not arrogant," is the Antony the Romans expect to see and who the audience is led to believe is the "true" Antony (Plutarch 321). This characterization of Antony comes off as oversimplified, however. For when Antony returns to Egypt, this time for good, he effortlessly slides back into the decadence and self-indulgence of the first two acts of the play. In spite of his marriage to Octavia and responsibilities to Rome, he always plans on a return to Cleopatra.

What causes the characterization of Antony as the culturally seduced colonist to grow more complex is his lack of stability, or, to repeat Plutarch and Montaigne's phrase, "constancy". He vacillates between Roman colonizer and Egyptian within a matter of moments; his speech itself may falter into a muddle of contradictory attitudes and emotions (*AC* 4.2.24-33). Antony despairs multiple times during the Battle of Actium only to be rejuvenated within a few lines. He alternately offers arrogance that often gives way to foolishness (especially in his choice to fight Octavius at sea in Act IV), overweening pride, trust and distrust in Cleopatra, and touching generosity in his return of Enobarbus's spoils in spite of the soldier's betrayal, one of the few moments Antony blames himself for having "corrupted honest men" (*AC* 4.5.12-17). Antony's experience is often characterized as dissolution; the mixture of cultures within him from his colonial experience has ultimately undone him and his attempt at expansion fails as a result of his insufficient efforts to avoid the temptations of the "infinite variety" offered by Egypt (*AC* 2.2.43). Antony lacks the constancy attributed to superior Roman character, demonstrates a degeneration of character and duty, but possesses Roman qualities nonetheless. The scene of

feasting aboard Pompey's galley perhaps exemplifies this paradox best. Shakespeare never draws the contrast between Antony and Octavius more sharply than in this instance. Antony encourages the continuation of the "Bacchanals" aboard Pompey's vessel. The drunken revels demonstrate the propensity Antony has for wine and feasting; as Pompey declares that it is "not yet an Alexandrian feast" (AC 2.7.94) and Antony toasts Caesar and calls for further celebration, Octavius pulls away from the excess and abstains from drinking any more:

*Caesar:* I could well forbear't:  
It's monstrous labor when I wash my brain,  
An it grow fouler.  
*Antony:* Be a child o' the time.  
*Caesar:* Possess it, I'll make answer.  
But I had rather fast from all, four days,  
Than drink too much in one (AC 2.7.95-101).

Herein lays the constitutional difference between Antony and Octavius. They are both "Roman", but Antony often lacks Octavius's sound reason and judgment, as well as the temperance the future emperor demonstrates in refraining from the wild excesses of the further Bacchanals. His cosmopolitanism as both Roman and Egyptian in this scene and willful participation in excesses proves "unnatural" compared to Octavius's stoic behavior (Chernaik 149).

Yet, at the same time, Antony presents himself as the level-headed Roman expected of the occasion in the scene prior to this one, where the triumvirs treat with Pompey regarding his grievances. What we may regard as a "slippage" between two personas here appears more to be two sides of the same individual, an effortless and self-aware expression of a man shaped by two cultures simultaneously. This observation not only adds to the geographic displacement of the play's colonial aims, but also begs the question of whether or not Antony's failure to colonize and susceptibility to the cultural other is, like the early English colonists, entirely due to a lack of morals and virtues, or, as Shakespeare's play seems to suggest, if the process is more

complicated than that. An interesting window into this scene in particular is offered by H. Neville Davis's allusion to a true event close to this one that occurred shortly before Shakespeare's play was completed, where James Stuart was visited by his brother in law, King Christian I of Denmark. Christian was a notably refined monarch who some courtiers noticed possessed superior characteristics and a greater sense of duty than James, who often shirked administrative duties to host parties and hunt, and on one occasion became indulgently drunk at a feast on the Thames River where Christian showed greater temperance and moderation in his behavior (Davies 148). Perhaps the issue at hand then, ultimately, is that the English are prone to behave more like the indulgent Antony, though they—specifically James—aspire to be more like Octavius. Whether Shakespeare knew of this incident or not, the example adds to the level of concern with English character found in this play and its topicality for the time in English history.

Octavius by design contrasts with Antony. Certainly, there is little question about how Octavius views Antony throughout the course of the play. Octavius speaks of Antony with great disdain, explicitly accusing him of betrayal on multiple occasions in the play (*AC* 2.2.85-87). Upon Octavia's return to Rome in Act III, Octavius refers to Antony's arrogance and greed in his dispersion of lands to Cleopatra's children and his wish for Octavius to compensate him for ships he had lent to fight Pompey (*AC* 3.6.24-9). Octavius claims to have none of these moral issues; on the contrary, he holds the political and moral high ground for the entire play. However, audiences may not hold Octavius in such high regard by the end of the play. Though Caesar is presented initially as the moral, virtuous leader designed for colonial planting, Octavius ultimately appears to fall short despite his victory at Actium.



While it is difficult to discuss Octavius's character in relation to both Antony and Cleopatra outside the realm of politics—as all three characters are heads of state and Octavius's treatment of both relies heavily upon political maneuvering—many of the same traits Cleopatra attributes to him factor into an understanding of Octavius's colonizing abilities. Octavius is indeed temperate, rarely moved to outburst or emotion, and each of his moves and words appears carefully considered and diplomatic. His declaration after hearing of Antony's death concerning the written evidence of how he was “hardly drawn into this war” betrays the pains which he takes to preserve this steadfast figure of virtue and righteousness (*AC* 5.1.74-8). In reality, Octavius's perceived virtues are mainly political devices and he himself may be viewed as Machiavellian and less a person than a “cipher of the public world” (Markels 41). Octavius may embody, or at least practice, moral virtues theoretically fit for empire and extension into colonialism but these strengths come coupled with glaring weaknesses. Octavius's character, it can be argued, proves just as capable of corruption as Antony's. His participation in the world of rational politics forces him into a kind of greedy degeneracy as well, into political backstabbing and strong arming (Markels 36). His cold treatment of Lepidus and betrayal of Pompey exemplify a man concerned less with the older traditions of honor than a loyalty to the abstraction of Rome, or the state in general terms.

Here we may better understand the view of Rome taken by the other, in this case Cleopatra, who describes Rome in terms of barrenness, frigidity, and pomposity that contrast with the fertility, heat, and easy grandeur of Egypt (Smith 63). These are not traits that promote growth or easy translation into a colonial other. When Octavius laments that Antony (“arm of mine”) must be “lanced” from the body political, the view of Octavius as colonizer changes (*AC* 5.1.36-45). Rather than fighting or colonizing to promote and transplant the higher values and

morals of Rome, Octavius looks to glorify and expand Rome, which in this moment, with Antony gone, consists only of himself and the ragged support of the earlier dismissed polis and their “vagabond flag” (AC 1.4.45). Octavius’s actions then appear to be only motivated by self-advancement, riddled with the same greed and hubris he accuses Antony in the play (Gillies 68). Octavius in this light seems less apt for colonization, even with the right “temper” for empire, which helps explain the ambiguity of the ending of the play from a colonial standpoint. While Octavius defeats Antony, as colonizer he succumbs to a kind of degeneracy at the expense of his desire to possess Egypt and rule alone, a descent into greed possible for any English man of good character when presented with New World opportunities and riches. In fact, Octavius appears to be presented by Shakespeare as evidence that the high, moral colonist ideal is mere fiction, and that the reality of settlement must acknowledge the shortcomings of the men who colonize, regardless of culture or cherished values.

### **Cleopatra: The Colonized Unassimilated**

Little has been said of Cleopatra to this point, but over the course of the play, her character, seemingly omnipresent, transforms her own significance beyond that of any physical person or an object fit for display, as Octavius desires her to be in Act V. On a surface level, Cleopatra functions as the agent for much of the action of the play, elevating her to what is arguably the most important character in Shakespeare’s work. Her relationship and influence over Antony steer many of his decisions over the course of the play. This influence is mostly discussed in negative terms by characters of the play, including Antony himself when he fears betrayal from the “triple-turned whore” (AC 4.13.13). Yet if we recall that she inherits the mantle of “Egypt” and “Afric” entire within her person, Cleopatra takes on an entirely new significance. The feminization and sexualization of colonialism present in earlier English texts now becomes

manifest in an actual person; Cleopatra, rather than allegory or metaphor, embodies the unclaimed world waiting to be colonized. Oriented Egypt fully embodies and exudes “decadence, finery, and luxury”, the traits associated with both Plutarch’s seductress Cleopatra and the land which she inhabits in the play (Plutarch 320). No scene portrays this characterization more profoundly than Enobarbus’s account of Cleopatra’s procession down the Nile River:

The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne  
Burned on the water; the poop was beaten gold,  
Purple the sails, and perfumed that  
The winds were lovesick with them...  
For her own person  
It beggared all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion-cloth-of-gold tissue-  
O’er picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy out-work nature... (AC 2.2.198-212)

Cleopatra from the outset presents herself to Antony as Egypt itself, a sensuous land of luxury and finery. Flanked by “mermaids” and “Cupid boys”, Cleopatra undertakes the inversion of a Roman triumph—she defines the seductive exotic of the Orient in the same fashion that a Roman triumph, like the one Octavius plans for after Actium, celebrates masculine military achievement and superiority. Cleopatra reveals her unexpected power to disarm and emasculate men in this sense, Agrippa recalling how “She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed/He ploughed her and she cropped” (AC 2.2.35-6). This line stands out not only for her power to emasculate but acts almost as an example of *counter*-colonialism. Antony shares the same fate as his departed friend Julius Caesar, who was first seduced and emasculated by Cleopatra and Egypt. Taken in quite literally by the sensuality and fertility she offers in this scene, Julius Caesar may have engaged the other on the sexual level in an attempt to plant Roman-ness, but it is Cleopatra who benefitted from their tryst and remained an independent woman. Cleopatra embodies not just the

effeminate, exotic world of the “other” ripe for colonization, but a world with the power to emasculate, degenerate, and manipulate. She is at once an Oriented New World and a physical resistance to its colonization, one in which the resistance actively works on the colonial men. This colonized agency highlights advancement in English colonial thinking, and an important addition by Shakespeare.

Shakespeare pushes Cleopatra’s agency so far that at times her inherent effeminacy not only trumps reason or masculine dominance, but, to align with Peter Smith, completes a full “subversion of the sexual geography of the Renaissance” (Smith 87). The famous scene of cross-dressing where the drunk Antony wears Cleopatra’s mantles and she “his sword Philippan” spells out this power in plain terms (AC 2.5.21-3). In one stroke, Cleopatra both emasculates and appropriates the dominant role of the colonizer, offering a staunch resistance to Roman cultural influence and authority. We can agree with Loomba when she says that Cleopatra exemplifies the “otherness turned against Rome, unassimilated” (Loomba 129). Cleopatra may love Antony, but she never has designs to be less than Antony’s equal. In fact, there are clear moments when her influence over Antony becomes utterly clear. We notice for example Antony’s echo of Cleopatra’s jealous anger when she whips the messenger who brings news of Antony’s marriage to Octavia in Act II. Antony’s actions in whipping Octavius’s messenger later in the play for kissing Cleopatra’s hand by command unfolds in a virtually identical fashion (AC 3.13.94-109). Antony absorbs and personifies traits of Cleopatra’s Egypt and, in spite of Cleopatra’s statements to the contrary, it is Antony who calls Cleopatra his “conqueror” and bears the cultural consequences of colonization, rather than Cleopatra (AC 3.11.65).

The epitome of colonized push back on the colonizers may be located at the end of the play in Cleopatra’s death. When presented with Octavius’s terms of surrender, Cleopatra refuses

to negotiate with him, unimpressed by his diplomatic gestures. When she attempts suicide first with a dagger, Proculeius commands “O, temperance, lady!” to which Cleopatra counters “Sir, I will eat no meat; I’ll not drink sir/If idle talk will once be necessary, /I’ll not sleep either!” (AC 5.2.49-51) Even when confronted with defeat and subjugation, Cleopatra rejects definition and assimilation by the Roman colonizer. Rather than comply with the ideal action of the Roman, the exercise of temperance, Cleopatra remains steadfast in her “otherness”, apart from the sphere of Roman influence, and promises to veer to the extreme opposite of her typical self-indulgence rather than practice the temperance of the moralizing colonizer. She then compounds this defiance with an ironic move to “marble constant” in her decision to die a purely Egyptian death:

...Shall they hoist me up  
And show me to the shouting varletry  
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt  
Be gentle grave unto me! Rather on Nilus’ mud  
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies  
Blow me into abhorring! Rather make  
My country’s high pyramides my gibbet,  
And hang me up in chains! (AC, 5.2.55-62)

The imagery leaves no room for misinterpretation. Cleopatra will dictate her fate, which is to die while still connected to her essential being, her land Egypt. The colonized will not be parted from the land culture which belongs to her, no matter how thorough the victory of the colonizers may be. Here we may see the resistance of the colonized absent from earlier colonial works but Shakespeare recognizes as an integral part of understanding, and preparing for, colonization.

The relationship between colonizer and colonized is boiled down to its essential conflict in the closing moments of the play. Octavius arrives to personally treat with Cleopatra, but his assurances still remain unheeded. In spite of the grace and mercy Octavius offers as the embodiment of Rome and her cultural and moral superiority, Cleopatra declines. She recognizes that “He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not/Be noble to my self...” (AC 5.2.191-2).

Octavius may offer a degree of leniency in allowing Cleopatra to live, but submission still hinges upon assimilation into Roman culture and values. Cleopatra finds this assimilation intolerable; for she rightly assumes she will be paraded as a prisoner in Rome before the people “in their thick breaths, /Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded/And forced to drink their vapour” (AC V.2.211-3). Here the colonized response to the colonizer speaks most vehemently; in a scenario that occurs many times in Early Modern England (and would continue to be repeated many times over the next few decades in London), the subjugated native will be displayed as a trophy before the conqueror’s people, only in this case the spectacle is vilified. The positive connotations we might associate with the more moral Rome compared to indulgent, decadent Egypt here do not matter; it is not the symbol and embodiment of these Roman attributes, Octavius, who is the main issue but the people of Rome who represent the *real* Rome in Cleopatra’s eyes. Rather than submit to them, Cleopatra chooses to die an ironic, Roman death with the Egyptian asp at her breast, the mother Egypt offering the greatest defiance of colonization she can muster in the face of adversity; turning her otherness against the Romans with the result a thorough failure to culturally subjugate and assimilate Egypt. Octavius wins his war but in the end is robbed of his greatest prize: true possession of Egypt and cultural assimilation of the colonized.

### **English Colonial Consciousness Advanced**

The ending’s ambiguity leaves readers in an awkward place. In pursuit of a solution to the colonial problem facing England, we find two versions of colonial failure without a tangible course of action. Antony fulfills the role of the actual, typical English colonizer, the well-intentioned servant of the state who upon arrival in a foreign land succumbs to the temptations offered, the sexual desire for these temptations made physical in Antony and Cleopatra’s relationship. This sexual desire for the feminine other emasculates, “wastes away the strength,

virtues, needed for war and male work” (Miola 139). Antony, then, loses his manhood and the ability to command or colonize, which he realizes in his moment of defeat when he declares “She has robbed me of my sword!” (AC 4.15.23). Antony lacks the virtues necessary to remain immune to the exotic other and so becomes culturally corrupted by Cleopatra’s Orientalized influence. Antony is left in an unstable space of neither here nor there, not wholly Roman or Egyptian and marked by unreasonable outbursts and “emptiness” as he approaches his tragic end (AC 3.13.36). According to Plutarch, his children with Cleopatra are resigned to either death or are brought back to Rome and raised by Octavia in a mild form of assimilation (Plutarch 333). Octavius embodies the temperance, pragmatism, constancy and level-headedness associated with the ideal English character and colonist. Yet, Octavius finds himself in morally questionable situations throughout the play, and his political machinations betray a rigidity, greed and coldness that Cleopatra recognizes and Shakespeare writes in such a way that is impossible to ignore. Ultimately, these flaws prevent his successful colonization of Egypt at the end of the play in spite of his military conquest.

What then, from a colonial standpoint, did Shakespeare’s accomplish with this play? While *Antony and Cleopatra* offers nothing as clear prescription for English colonial struggles, it does advance colonial discourse by reframing the situation into a complex model of cultural contact. The play also benefits from the example of actual colonizers, the Romans, and the subjugated Egyptians, as opposed to theory or allegory, for bearing out how this experience may look when the English would venture a similar attempt at settlement. An understanding that a colonist in possession of a set group of virtuous character traits might be just as insufficient for colonization as those lacking them emerges from this play. Shakespeare does not reject the notions of temperance and high moral character needed to spread English culture and influence

but he also recognizes that men will always be flawed and never be able to embody the ideals championed by previous writers. Instead, Shakespeare seems to promote a middle ground between the extremes of Antony and Octavius, who are both “Roman” in character but operate according to different sets of values based on their cultural experience, not unlike the different types of men who would undoubtedly be among those colonizing the New World (Markels 8). While dominance and assertion of civil virtues and morals play a role in successful colonization, some degree of assimilation between cultures must be conceded, as the colonized, embodied by Cleopatra in this play, possess the agency to not only retain their own culture but spread it to the colonist as well. A sense of the closing of Samuel Daniel’s *Tragedy of Cleopatra* perhaps manifests itself here less explicitly, as Octavius declares upon his arrival in Alexandria that the Romans must be aware of the “hearts and minds” of the Egyptian people (Daniel 2.2.1-9). While Daniel’s aims were likely more political, they apply no less to the realm of colonization. England cannot entirely follow a Roman example in the New World. Certainly, they cannot the same cultural singularity and dominance Spenser and others wanted. Nor can they avoid the influences of the new world entirely by working around them, as Octavius tried to do after Actium in his prohibition of Roman senators and heads of state from setting foot on Egyptian soil (Tacitus 2.59). While he may not offer clear instruction, Shakespeare advances the conversation of how to *better* colonize the New World by raising awareness of the role of the colonized in the process, and how their resistance to subjugation and cultural influence, as well as the potentially negative influence of the New World in general, matter just as much, if not more, in considering a colony’s planning and survival than the moral character of the men who plant themselves.

A study such as this one can only scratch the surface of Shakespeare’s views of colonization. *Antony and Cleopatra* stands as only one work in the complex array of texts from



this period that demonstrates the evolution of colonial consciousness. *The Tempest* has, of course, invited several studies of this kind over time, and may serve a useful purpose when set beside this play in gauging the similarities and differences of each play as compared with contemporary writings about Jamestown and Bermuda (among other influences), and how these comparisons might illuminate more clearly Shakespeare's beliefs on the topic of colonization and what aspects cause its failure or success. For Shakespeare, England in 1607 was entering into a new beginning as what James Stuart referred to as a "British Empire", and *Antony and Cleopatra* marks the critical moment of inception. What remained to be seen was if the English had the ability or whatever virtues it took to expand as the Romans did, or perhaps, if they could comprehend both Roman failures as well as successes, someday germinate into an even greater empire, truly becoming the "third Troy" of the national imagination.

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