

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Both Shakespeare and Shaw have presented very different portrayals of Cleopatra in their plays. In Shakespeare's play, she is portrayed mostly as a positive character while in Shaw's she is portrayed as a negative one. The differences are related to the different purposes of the two authors.

In Shakespeare's play, Cleopatra is portrayed as an attractive woman that can make the Roman triumvir, Marc Antony, attracted by her beauty. She is passionate about her lover and she is also brave and loyal. She even dies as proof of her love for Antony. I believe the emphasis on Shakespeare's Cleopatra is more on her role as a partner and lover of Antony. And she excels in that role. The people who see Shakespeare's Cleopatra give sympathy to her.

On the other hand, George Bernard Shaw, who is a popular playwright in 20th Century, chooses a different way to portray Cleopatra. Shaw's Cleopatra is the opposite of Shakespeare's Cleopatra. Shaw decides to portray Cleopatra as a girl who has ambition to rule Egypt. Shaw's Cleopatra is portrayed as a persistent person who is manipulative and revengeful. Unlike Shakespeare, Shaw does not portray Cleopatra in her role as a partner or a lover but he emphasizes more on her role as the

leader of Egypt. While Shakespeare's Cleopatra is mostly motivated by love, Shaw's Cleopatra is obviously motivated by power.

Concerning the accuracy of Shakespeare's and Shaw's Cleopatra compared to the real historical figure, I find that Shakespeare uses less historical reference than Shaw. Shakespeare is not influenced by the historical facts of the real Cleopatra, who is known as a seductive queen who uses her body in order to use the two Roman triumvirs to get her power in the political life of Egypt. This kind of portrayal makes Shakespeare's Cleopatra is not accurate is a historical figure.

On the other hand, Shaw's portrayal of his Cleopatra is more accurate than Shakespeare's. Although Shaw manipulates the age of Cleopatra in his play, he does not change the image of the historical figure in his Cleopatra. Shaw creates his Cleopatra's principles in the political life are shown to be same as the historical facts that dominate the triumvir as her partner to reach her ambition to have power in Egypt and to fulfill her revenge on her own brother Ptolemy XII. The audience will get the same impression on Shaw's Cleopatra as the real historical figure.

Nevertheless, I believe Shakespeare's inaccurate portrayal actually has a specific purpose. Shakespeare wrote Antony and Cleopatra in 1605 – 1606. It is three years after the death of Queen Elizabeth I. The portrayal of Cleopatra in his play is related to his purpose of creating Cleopatra in his play. Cleopatra in Shakespeare's play is as a symbol of his nostalgia to his queen, Elizabeth I. Shakespeare wants to remind his audience of their queen who led them in England. Queen Elizabeth I is a woman that Shakespeare adores in his life since Queen Elizabeth I started to support his theater, Globe theatre. He takes the figure of Cleopatra because Cleopatra and

Elizabeth I's life are both leading women of a country. It is not the first time for Shakespeare to do this. It is well-known that most of Shakespeare's works are dedicated to honor Queen Elizabeth I and his Cleopatra is not exceptional in this case. His inaccurate portrayal of Cleopatra is the tool for him to show his dedication to the queen even though she has died.

Shaw decides to portray Cleopatra in a different way because of his point of view of the figure of Cleopatra that is related to his feminist spirit. The figure of Shaw's Cleopatra is to show his idealism about the equality of women and men. According to Shaw, women have the same capability and opportunity to lead and to dominate like men do. Shaw's Cleopatra as an ambitious and persistent woman is a kind of his visualization about emancipation.

As a reader, I find that the accuracy of the playwrights' portrayal of Cleopatra to the real figure is not as the essential thing to be considered for Shakespeare and Shaw. I feel that these two playwrights are more concerned about the audience's impression on their Cleopatra to be appropriate with their expectation. Cleopatra's loyalty in Shakespeare's play can give a new paradigm to the audience and readers on the figure of Cleopatra, and it can be also found in Cleopatra's ambitions in Shaw's play which astounds the readers and the audience.

If I had to choose which one of these plays should be more considered, I would choose Shaw's play because how he portrays Cleopatra is unique. He portrays her as a girl who has ambition, persistence and revenge and she can manipulate a great man. This makes me interested in her; moreover, his purpose which is related to his feminist spirit is a good influence for women's life in the future about the equality

of opportunity. However, there is still a standing ovation for Shakespeare of his bravery to make a new image of Cleopatra to show her in positive side in order to show his big dedication to the late Queen Elizabeth I. From analyzing these two dramas, I realize these two playwrights' greatness. Shakespeare and Shaw are popular playwrights in their era because they always consider the high value in creating the works which can have a good influence to the readers' and the audience's of thought.