

ARTICLES AND TREATISES  
ARTYKUŁY I ROZPRAWY

PART II: CHANGING PARADIGMS AND STEREOTYPES

**Cleopatra — a Queen, a Lover, a Mother:  
Transformations of the Image**

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ABSTRACT

Transformations are not only conditioned by facts encompassing narrower or wider panoramas: from concentrating on death and one (political) role (the ode of Horace), through recalling Cleopatra's mature life and love (the drama of Shakespeare), to creating an image embracing the heroine's whole life with its numerous roles, but as a mother and a daughter in the first place, because even her lovers resemble a father and a child (the fictional biography of Karen Essex). Above all, they appear to be more connected with different attitudes towards universal references lying within human cognitive abilities. Horace's didactic opposition of contradictory patterns leads to the victory of one of them — and it is a linear pattern, as an equivalent of modern myth, which is accepted by the author himself. In Shakespeare, it takes a form of tragedy resulting from the fragmentary character of each pattern, one of which introduces change (archaic myth) and the other constancy (modern myth), and from a painful attempt to combine them. In Essex, the vision of the world in which archaic myth, strongly represented by a child, triumphs is utopian. Irrespective of the differences, all the works realize the essential role played by images developed by heroes, and especially by authors, in human cognition.

KEYWORDS

archetypes, Cleopatra VII, *coincidentia oppositorum*, Mircea Eliade, Karen Essex, Horace, image, imagology, mythical patterns, William Shakespeare, transformations

THE INITIAL STAGE: A CONFLICT OF MYTHICAL PATTERNS AND THE VICTORY OF MODERN MYTH

The ode *Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero* by Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 BC–8 BC), known in the English-speaking world as Horace, originated in Cleopatra VII's times, and is considered to show essential propaganda phrases used during the battle waged against her by Augustus, and to a larger extent against Mark Antony.<sup>1</sup> Created in this way, the image of an Egyptian queen enabled Octavian to attract the attention of the West. Not only does the image emphasize the spacial border dividing the West from the East but also the temporal one, which is the queen's death. The clear 'now', relating to her escape from Actium like a hare from a hunter or a pigeon from a hawk, is contrasted with the dark 'before', when Cleopatra posed a threat to Rome. Thus, when considered from the perspective of time, her death means stability and the great unity of the Empire. Additionally, with regard to the psychological dimension, mad and drunk with her intentions and representing anarchic passions and a sphere of the subconscious, the queen seems to be set against the cold Roman reason and conscious actions of the victor. And since Antony, a significant Roman and at the same time Octavian's political opponent, was not mentioned here deliberately, Cleopatra appears as a usurper-woman contrasted with the 'true and complete' man.

Not until they have won, can friends (the poet also includes himself in this 'true' or 'complete' masculine 'we') set tables, drink and dance, giving vent to cheerful lightheartedness that is sweet *pax romana*. This is also the time when they, who are still alive, start showing their respect for their dead opponent, interpreting her suicide as a gesture quite unknown to her sex and thus revealing her manlike courage and character. Descending from the Ptolemy family, if not from Alexander the Great himself, Cleopatra did not want to participate in the triumphal procession of the victor alive but humiliated. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the respect expressed by the poet needs to accept the fact that she exceeds the confines of a pattern typical of women, and her merits can be located only in the heritage considered by men as 'western', 'rational' and 'manlike'. It means that military and political victory were associated by Horace with the symbolic subjection of woman's value by the manlike myth.

And so, first and foremost, the protagonist, Cleopatra, becomes situated in European culture as an image. Created as propaganda and transformed in a poetic way, a *heteroimage* becomes a record of a spe-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. HORACY 1971: 54–56.

cifically oriented cognition and at the same time reveals an auto-image of the authors of that cultural construction, which can easily be converted into defined attitudes and actions of an ontological character. As Dyserinck (1977) suggests — and his followers support this — ideas or images appearing as myths, types, characters, motifs in *Stoffgeschichte* and images in imagology seem to join together to function as exponents of the human condition because they have the capacity (by negative or positive selection or by eliminating particular elements of reality from the field of vision) to steer/control human cognition by activating ‘selective perception’, as cognitive scientists define it (BELLER 2007: 7). However, we ought to point out that transitions between various stages of cognition and historical characters’ image transformations, which they undergo over a span of cultural time, appear to be more interesting than transitions between cognition and reality, which can be described as imagology, being a modern, constructivist (epistemology-oriented) version of *Stoffgeschichte*, or as thematology (WIŚNIEWSKA 2012).

Next, the transformations raise the question of how the image is constructed. Considering the way in which Cleopatra is presented in Horace, we may distinguish two contradictory patterns in her and her opponents’ description, while time and space, typical of these patterns, will be demonstrated in a mythical way, showing their *a priori* character in culture. Alina Motycka speaks of the ‘adventitiousness’ typical of myths in different cultures and texts, and also of their irremovable apriority in all cultural processes (MOTYCKA 2004: 222). Presenting the issue in this way, we can reflect on how the mentioned above patterns are used and participate in transforming the images of reality in particular texts.

The first image is based on archaic myth with its rule of *coincidentia oppositorum* (responsible for constituting a spatial whole) and the circularity of time (responsible for the individuality of circular recurrences). The other image, however, is based on modern myth with its hierarchic structure (responsible for individuality in space, guaranteed by the rule of *principium individuationis* or *principium divisionis*) and on linear time that constitutes a whole (WIŚNIEWSKA 2009). As far as the first image is concerned, the creation of a set of elements based on inner restrictions is associated with variability while, in the other case, selection dependent on outer bounds shows a constant character.

The two most universal types of myth, regarded as carriers of dissimilar cognitive mechanisms, can be distinguished by referring to Eliade’s (ELIADE 1993; ELIADE 1998) descriptions and called the myths of God and Nature (WIŚNIEWSKA 2009). The figure of one personal God being above and outside the world, for example the version of the Old Testa-

ment God, but, to some degree, also the henotheistic Zeus, represent in this case the vision of constancy, strengthened by one law — both cosmic and moral, by hierarchy (various stages of spirituality standing above various stages of materiality) and by linear time (the beginning of creation *ex nihilo* or the birth and the end — the Final Judgment and the Apocalypse or death). Bogdan Kupis sees henotheism as ‘a primitive monotheism’ (KUPIS 1989: 13, 88; ZIMOŃ 2001). Jean-Pierre Vernant points out that Zeus, particularly Hesiod’s Zeus, taking among the gods the highest place as father and king, covers up his Indo-European origin because (according to the spirit of henotheism) he embodies in this way the highest authority in the hierarchy (VERNANT 1998: 38–45). Nature, by contrast, represents variability, metamorphosis and circular recurrence in time which results from the activity of many gods-powers (VERNANT 1998). They are often antinomic and pair up in opposition to one another, which creates instead of a hierarchy the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum* in space. Archaic myth shows, on one the hand, in different versions, the extremes of two divine figures, originating from one and the same source and having the same destiny: to unite in eschatological *illud tempus*; while, on the other hand, it reveals that *coincidentia oppositorum*, which creates the basis for a structure of divinity showing alternatively or simultaneously its face of goodness and horror, creation and destruction, the sun-like and snake-like, open and potential visage, etc. (ELIADE 1993: 402).

The figures of God and Nature — related to the most general images or representations, and also maximizing certain meanings such as stability and dynamic — are treated by myself as essential seed-plots of construction in culture. The categories of space and time, inseparably connected with these two figures, not only determine the two types of images characteristic of the sacral sphere, i.e. archaic and modern myths, but also specify the nature of their desacralized equivalents, for example desacralized myths — literary, historical and others, and paradigms: circular and linear. Such an idea of the mentioned images may be driven by the views of philosophers from Plato and Aristotle through Neoplatonism to Husserl, including his phenomenology. But as Manfred Beller persuades, this is also Kant’s idea of ‘the conformity of our representation’ (*Schematismus unseres Verstandes* which states “das Bild ist ein Produkt des empirischen Vermögens der produktiven Einbildungskraft” (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B181, 1787)) (BELLER 2007: 3). According to this view echoed by Beller an image is determined by time and space — the specific abilities of our imagination being the forms of sensibility that are *a priori* necessary conditions for any possible experience.

Thus, time and space broaden the *a priori* range in culture. This will become particularly significant if, apart from Kant's idea, we take into account Cassirer's expansion, which demands consideration of the images of time and space that emerged from the myth of God — hierarchy of space and linearity of time — and the state of consciousness 'after Einstein' as well (CASSIRER 1971: 397; CASSIRER 2005; CASSIRER 2006: 21). However, it seems that that opposition cannot be narrowed to the times 'after Einstein' as it is enough to mention Greek materialist philosophy. Therefore, it may be assumed that myths are not the only factors justifying the apriority of categories that constitute a basis for images created in culture. Forming the minimal whole of the image, the coexistence of comprehensive and individual perspectives, the myths of God and Nature still make essential connections between the two categories, which enables them to lay a basis for further constructions.

#### THE INDIRECT STATE, OR THE UNSTABLE BALANCE BETWEEN MYTHICAL PATTERNS

In the title of his tragedy, William Shakespeare (1564–1616) places the name of Antony before that of Cleopatra,<sup>2</sup> omitting completely the name of Octavian, though the latter plays an essential part and, similarly to Horace's conception, determines one of the two basic points of reference. In the name of his hierarchical superiority and leadership, Octavian heads towards stable order under his aegis, realizing a linear paradigm. He eliminates his followers who very quickly become his enemies, including Antony whose declarations are welcome but their tone is not accepted by Octavian. Neither does he trust the people whom he considers unstable and unpredictable like reeds rocked by the wind. He is similarly convinced that the other variability — that of woman — must also be brought into line.

Disregarded by Antony as immature, Octavian appears in the play as an asexual brother rather than a husband, which removes the carnal element from his personal characteristics. He treats his sister in an instrumental way, using Octavia for political aims as a hoop clasp his interests difficult to reconcile with the interests of her imposed husband. The word 'imposed' demonstrates pressure and violence because a hoop contrasts with a vision of a wedding ring bonding lovers. Octavia herself is a superb example of tamed femininity — virtue personified and the lack

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SHAKESPEARE 2004.

of temperament and — vigour. Therefore, she represents the linear paradigm and a hierarchic order, where stability supersedes the dynamic. Facing a conflict situation, she searches for support in the power and law of Jupiter whom her brother and his camp recall. Manly and superior in the hierarchic structure of gods, Jupiter, like Zeus, is not the only god but, through henotheism, he creates a platform for monotheism that is typical of the West represented by the author himself. Stephen Greenblatt refers many times to the significance of ‘the old faith’, i.e. Catholicism, for Shakespeare.<sup>3</sup>

Then again Cleopatra’s divine promoter, whom she addresses directly, is Isis, dominant strength of the Mediterranean world in the period of Hellenism. Making a triad with Osiris, her brother and husband, and their son Horus, she is the goddess of Nature called ‘Mother Nature’ by Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*, an image of the Great Matron, the mistress of the Earth, the sea and the world of the dead, identified with the Moon, represented as a cow with crescents of the Moon and the disc of the Sun or with a double crown, worshipped as the ideal wife and mother (KOPALIŃSKI 1985: 414). Isis receives her magic power while recovering her real name Re (LIPIŃSKA and MARCINIĄK 1977: 169) and she is also the goddess that wields magic responsible for transformation and metamorphosis, which is dynamic. Anchored in the pattern of the Great Matron, she is referred to as a model image of the archaic pattern that represents the East.

As far as the sphere of love is concerned, it is a perfect model. Contrary to those who would like to speak about her flabby lips, Cleopatra, being its personification, seems not to age, which denies time linearity and enters into circular time, typical of Nature, the Great Restorer (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, c. 1<sup>st</sup> AD).<sup>4</sup> All women can be found in her as well, and in her masquerades; she easily mixes both with people from the lower classes and with goddesses, and sometimes with manhood (Antony’s clothes). Thus, Cleopatra perfectly follows the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum*. Antony feels that ‘everything’ in her constitutes a whole, worth adoring. And a masterpiece as well.

However, the author reveals the lover’s lamentable blindness, showing that Cleopatra takes the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum* instrumentally: her spontaneous reactions are usually destructive, like the eruptions of a volcano, while her deliberate ones — always perversely oppose Antony’s opinions and actions. She seems to pretend, and Shakespeare,

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. GREENBLATT 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. OWIDIUSZ 1995.

although he does not deny her love, exhibits what could be a consequence of the image of the snake often attributed to her. This consequence, taken in the spirit of Biblical warning, is quite embedded in the author's consciousness. But a still more important accusation seems to deal with the fact that Cleopatra, though connected with the myth of Nature, disrespects the boundaries of the opposite myth. She is a woman but she states: "as a president of my kingdom, will / appear there for a man" (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 549). However, her escape from Actium discredits her ambitions to play the part of man.

Today historians are willing to admit that the rescue of the Egyptian fleet and Antony himself could have been a deliberate strategic aim, and not an escape (CHRZANOWSKI 1999). For Shakespeare, however, if that usurpation is so destructive, the changing of the roles by the man who behaves like a lover during the battle and not like a commander will be more destructive. Shakespeare points out that the defeat suffered by the two commanders results from their questioning the structure of a linear paradigm that requires clear divisions and contrasts, such as woman *versus* man, and as a result of this submitting body to spirit, passion to reason and woman to man. In the existing situation, the model based on the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum* prevails, which can be expressed by disturbing the balance, reflecting divine androgyny: Anton "is not more manlike / Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy / More womanly than he" (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 539).

What was permissible while making love, the basic activity of the gods of archaic myth,<sup>5</sup> changes comedy into tragedy when this myth is transferred to the battlefield. It makes Antony replace the phrase 'charmer' with 'a witch' and instead of the earlier compliment that she is the essence of the virtues of her sex, he makes the accusation: "the greatest spot / Of all thy sex" (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 555). Also she herself tells Octavian with self-criticism: "I have / Been laden with like frailties which before / have often sham'd our sex" — (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 558), but in exemplifying such self-assessment, she disgraces herself as a ruler, who should be perceived in the spiritual perspective of modern myth.

Her presumed manful/manlike suicide, however, presents a challenge to Antony who awkwardly tries to face it, but it is enough for Cleopatra to consider him generous again and to declare herself as nothing more than a carnal woman. Contrary to Antony who shows her an easier way, she still knows that it is impossible to both enjoy honour and save her

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<sup>5</sup> Here we can mention mocking deities and tricksters. Cf. CALLOIS 1997: 119; MIELETYŃSKI 1981.

life. Thinking in this way, i.e. logically separating contrasts in accordance with the requirements of a linear paradigm, she can state that there is nothing feminine in her “and I have nothing / of woman in me” (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 559). And so once more, like in Horace’s image, she can gain respect not as a woman but by revealing manlike features.

These peculiar Shakespearean ‘sex equations’ make one thing clear: recovering her spirit through Antony changes Cleopatra into the body of a woman, but her suicide affects her body, thus making her a man as a representative of spirit. Her profile, however, is not only defined by the two opposite poles woman–man, revealing an ambivalence (perfect or destructive femininity; manlikeness gained through authority or usurpation) but by a whole spectrum of direct solutions as well, which make the situation extremely dynamic. Cleopatra’s sexual dynamism is interconnected with Antony’s dynamism of change. However, as regards Antony, Shakespeare’s ‘equations’ do not focus on sex but on identity.

In Shakespeare’s drama, unlike in the ode of Horace, Cleopatra’s madness does not discredit her, but her love-violated lover. Antony, because of her, stops being himself, that is a Roman commander and thus a representative of hierarchy (and modern myth); he reveals the real madness of the ‘western’ mind abdicating when confronted by ‘eastern’ senses. The pillar of the world changes into a clown, as it is formulated by his friend Philo, whose name resounds with noble love for rational wisdom (see: *fil(o)-sophia*). And being clownish, rejects the Roman hierarchy of values, including the constancy representing Roman virtue (*virtus*). It also seems to be right that eastern sensuality is distinctly opposed to the reason of both the Roman West and that of Christian West represented by Shakespeare himself. This is revealed when Antony, hearing about the fight between Fulvia and Octavian, which ended with the loss of her great spirit (manlike — again in a woman), and about crowds of Parthians, starts to think of a particular step, that is of *exodus* from Egyptian captivity, which, according to the author, shows Biblical features and breaks off the magic Egyptian chain of destructive love.

Stephen Greenblatt notes that apart from lost possession and title, the issue of identity is one of the basic motifs found in Shakespeare’s works (GREENBLATT 2007: 78). Also the same issue about identity should be considered one of the essential problems when perceiving the world in a modern way, in the perspective of ‘a great chain of entities’ and, consequently, of hierarchy, for the identity of an individual monad, according to Leibniz, born thirty years after the death of the Elizabethan writer, is related to its place within entity, to the degree where it fulfils its function (LOVEJOY 1999: 306–308). Leaving its level, the monad loses



its identity. Leibniz allows also another possibility — an evolutionary one, however, in Shakespeare's work the problem is seen in the light of the first definition, where archaic myth seems to play a significant role, even if he speaks about the Roman order and not the Christian one.

Although the Romans who accompany Antony feel that their commander once he has succumbed to the power of sex (and archaic myth) is not himself any more, Cleopatra is convinced that he is still the same as he used to be in the past, loving Fulvia, the one who is subject to the power of spirit. For the former, the present 'is not' and for the latter 'he was' poses a threat. Oppositions create here a threat to oppositions. However, that dangerous eternal ('always') existence of the past may become for Cleopatra her own protection: Antony has to be faithful to her also, regardless of the change that will be his departure (bringing back the identity of the previous Antony-commander for his friends), ending with marriage with Octavia. This issue will reappear at the end when the fact of Antony's desertion of his soldiers (the battle of Actium) in order to follow Cleopatra, will be interpreted in the spirit of Octavian's propaganda:

She once being loof'd,  
The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,  
Claps on his sea-wing, and, like a doting mallard,  
Leaving the flight in height, flies after her.  
I never saw on action of such shame:  
Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before  
Did violate so itself (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 549).

This makes Canidius call into question the identity of the commander who is not the one he used to be before. When Cleopatra carries on dubious talks with Taurus, Antony flies into a passion against presumed infidelity and he cries: "I am Antony yet" (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 551), again taking sides with the permanence of law that requires faithfulness from her, this time enforced by himself. But Antony, who loses heart, starts to be disliked by the Queen. Only when Antony sets out to fight, is she convinced that there is still hope. He again helps her to be herself:

That's my brave lord! [...] It is my birthday  
I had thought t'have held it poor; but since my lord  
Is Antony, I will be Cleopatra (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 552).

Her mythical pattern, paradoxically assumes the unchangeability of a linear paradigm, necessary to realize the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum*, and circular restoration after her defeats. On the other hand, being con-

vinced that the Egyptian fleet's surrender means the betrayal of Cleopatra, Antony intends to kill her before she makes an attempt on her life. Referring to the image of transforming clouds, he will tell Eros (whose name, in contradistinction to Philo, denotes not love for wisdom, but erotic love), that is his servant who accompanies him:

Here I am Antony;  
yet cannot hold this visible shape. My knave.  
I mode these wars for Egypt; and the queen (SHAKESPEARE 2004: 555).

Thus, he, who did everything for her, by becoming her opponent, would stop being himself, like a cloud that changed from a mountain into a dragon. When Antony receives the false message that she had died mentioning his name, his own suicide will become a needful gesture in order to regain an identity that jumps like a spark between two poles of mythical patterns of reality. He discredits the love of his own life that has no regard for any spiritual values to the same extent as he violates his physical form. By killing himself, Antony strengthens the autonomy of the spirit and the identity of being a commander, who this time does not command others but himself. What is more, by committing suicide because of Cleopatra, he confirms his identity as a lover, being thus included into her vision of the world as continuous metamorphosis. However, strengthening both anchors at the same time, he, like her, questions the sense of considering the patterns-bases as separate, thus agreeing with the Queen who can be herself when her lord is Antony (and *vice versa*). Antony's passing between the two extremes described by the values of honour (*virtus*) and love, both discrediting and maintaining double identity — static (related to modern myth) and, as Dobosz calls this kind of identity (DOBOSZ 2002), metamorphic (related to archaic myth), is carried on in time and characterized by the intermingling of opposites, similarly to Cleopatra's sexual identity — and *vice versa* (if sex is the reverse of identity and the body opposes the spirit).

The conflicts between the values of East and West, the woman and the man, passion and thought, love and war, delight and power — and consequently the conflicts between the rule of *coincidentia oppositorum* and hierarchy in space, and between circularity and linearity of time — will remain in a loose balance, as victory in one sphere may change into defeat in the other, or on the contrary. Therefore, if Octavian, who is said to follow virtue, wins the war, he will not take the whole victory, considering that Cleopatra's 'manlike' suicide ridicules his intentions of triumphantly leading her in chains — and it also undermines other shal-

low performances, in which the Queen's greatness might be trivialized by the squeaky voice of a boy-actor or Antony might be presented as an ordinary drunkard. Octavian's scenario, making him noble, must be only a counter-proposition to the one created by Cleopatra in Tarsus, in which she becomes like Venus visited by Dionysus/Antony. That is why he orders the preparation of a suitable funeral for the famous pair of lovers, perhaps less happy commanders, making it clear that they will be held in memory for as long as their glory lasts.

Thus, Octavian in Shakespeare's drama wins on the grounds of modern myth. By using his sister as an instrument in the political game, however, he discredits himself within the limits of archaic myth. On the other hand, Cleopatra wins in the field of love, which is typical of archaic myth, but all her attempts to be included into the opposite pattern are depreciated.

#### THE INVERSION OF THE INITIAL STATE, OR THE VICTORY OF ARCHAIC MYTH

Karen Essex depicts Cleopatra not only as a ruler, Caesar's lover and Antony's wife, but also — thus defining a reflexive constructive axis for the two parts of her fictional biography — as a daughter, on the one hand (later nestling into the arms of her lovers or carers like into her loving father's arms), and, on the other hand, as a mother of four children whose fathers were Romans playing significant political roles at that time (ESSEX 2001; ESSEX 2002); and, by the way, the first one sometimes resembles a father, and the second sometimes resembles a child. Since we are dealing with Hellenistic Egypt inheriting the tradition of the Pharaohs, the family perspective (inter- and intra-generational) tightly intermingles with the political one. Therefore, a juvenile relationship between Cleopatra and Archimedes, the only man whom Karen Essex, drawing on historical sources, introduces as her lover with no political impacts, will become only an incident in her life, deprived of perspectives, justified by superior *raison d'être*.

Anyway, in the first part of this fictional biography, as a daughter of the ruler Auletes, Cleopatra dreams about being a successor to Alexander the Great, and in the second, she commits a suicide not as a defeated queen (as in the ode of Horace) or a despairing lover (as in Shakespeare's drama) but as a mother, who solves the ana simple equation that the rest of her children will be killed similarly to Caesarion and Antylus if she stays alive. The specific rhythm of events in the first part is set by the age of the girl growing up and other young people from her circle, all ap-

proaching the mysterious threshold to assuming power. The cadence of the other part is determined by the successive years of her reign (during which Cleopatra is first accompanied by Caesar and then by Antony) and successes that spread her power and conflict with the defeats of her final years, which invalidate the process of preparing her children to take over authority.

In the first part of her fictional biography, Essex outlines the most distinctive opposition to Auletes's servile politics through Cleopatra's sister, Berenice (illegally rising to rule), and her tutor Meleager who is descended from a leading family. As a boy of seventeen, he proved his virility in the Cave of the Great Matron during mysteries in Cybele's honour. He reveals his conviction that his tutee, who disrespects both the minds and the bodies of the men from her family, ought to be in power, and he therefore encourages her pride, arrogance and confidence in the unusual strength of women. During the ceremonies prepared by Auletes, Berenice appears motionless like a statue, surrounded by dozens of maidens in warlike dresses, with a sun-reflecting shield, in the fighting gear of Pallas Athena — the Warrior Maiden, the goddess of justified war and peace and wisdom, born from Zeus's head in return for Metis, the goddess of wisdom, swallowed by that god, whose male attributes she took. As Jerzy Łanowski (1999: 15) remarks, Heziod's Zeus shows primitive features, Strength and Violence are his companions, he deals absolutely and mercilessly with his enemies, anticipates Typhon in his rising to power, absorbs Metis into his stomach in a cannibalistic way, thus taking over her power, and only he, in the whole *Theogonia*, sets the world in a hierarchic order. But in this case the woman's static image is completed by majesty, severity and standoffishness. On the other hand, impulsiveness and the charm of a wild animal associate her with another goddess who arouses her interest, Artemis, a twin-sister to Apollo, who changed from the goddess of fertility into a virgin, demanding virginity from her female companions, too. In this case, the chase, associating Berenice with Artemis, in which two Bactrians accompany her, reveals her erotic relationship with them (discovered by Cleopatra by accident). This lesbian accent is of particular significance when we consider that Berenice refers to the natural order before it was damaged by Theseus, and which made Greek queens elect a new king, sacrificing the old one to the goddess of fertility.

Preferred by Meleager, the cult of Matron Goddess is found particularly expressive: the two goddesses that Berenice refers to are virgins, which eliminates men from their surroundings, or at least makes them instrumental by offering them for the sake of fertility, that is for prolong-

ing life by women who bear and cultivate. Both goddesses appear to be superior: one as a huntress and not as game, the other as intellect used also as a weapon, which means she acts by using spiritual and physical strength. Finally, which is worth emphasizing, both take their manly connections literally: the twin Artemis sides with Apollo — not Dionysus as opposed to Apollo (NIETZSCHE 1907) — and Athena becomes a feminine image of Zeus's manly mind. So both hierarchical and linear structures are preferred, showing still feminine and not manlike characters. When women realize the pattern in western culture attributed to men, it makes them marginal figures instead of women.

Neither does it simply represent the mythical orientation of Rome. On the journey that takes Cleopatra and her father to Rome, Rhodes appears with the statue of Helios destroyed during the earthquake and lying at the sea bottom. Before the journey is continued, offerings are made to appease Poseidon, the god of the sea, who can restrain Triton. But when Mohama, the princess's companion, is poisoned instead of her, Auletes believes that Dionysus interfered, making her get to Hades. Thus strictly male gods appear, but we may consider whether or not they are as strong as the Earth that struck Helios. So the thunder-bolt that strikes the statue of Jove, a symbol of the greatness of the Empire, makes the Senate consider help for Auletes. Instead, Isis's influence is visible in Rome. Despite this, Cleopatra realizes that Romans, building their wealth by robbing others, believe the gods secure them a hierarchical position and dominance over the world, which is symbolized by Jove.

The mythical place where the Roman Caesar is situated is described in a very specific way. In Venus's sanctuary, he builds a golden statue dressed like a goddess and with a queen's diadem for his Egyptian lover. He also confesses that during epileptic attacks Venus comes to him as Aeneas's mother. Aeneas's first son, Ascanius Julius, born of Creuse, initiated the Julian family. Only Cleopatra can be informed by him about it for she understands well the unity between gods and mortals. As time passes, Caesar experiences the presence of the goddess and starts thinking of her more often as the (ideal) woman of his life. He follows her, the personification of the beauty of a woman's body, throughout the battlefield, but when he tries to catch her, she disappears like smoke and he is found unconscious on the ground. Dying stabbed by a dagger, he sees the woman who bestowed a great fortune on him, and is now ready to unite in an eternal relationship which the soul is heading for, looking back at the discarded body. It is worth noticing that soon Augustus will express his conviction that Caesar, now a god, is pleased with him, even though the nephew has no mercy for his enemies.

If male gods could serve Berenice in creating the twin-world of the goddess, justifying women's superiority, the Roman world, so much permeated by the goddess, paradoxically suggests the possibility that Caesars are established as male gods on Earth. Thus, the two cases show the transition between the poles of male and female divinity in the opposite direction and with the opposite result, as regards practical consequences, which are revealed in the men or women aspiring to wield power.

Finally, the third option is represented by Cleopatra. As in Horace and Shakespeare, she is accompanied by two opposite images: that of the New Isis, a living embodiment of the Goddess, and that of the Pharaoh of Both Egyptian Lands, but she also touches the propaganda image created by Augustus, showing her as a shrew (Omphale's echo) who humiliates Hercules (Anton) as a symbol of work (typical of modern myth in contrast to the game and play distinctive of archaic myth). It is obvious that the relation with archaic myth makes her dangerous for the myth typical of Romans aspiring to the position of gods.

Her birth, by her mother who begs the gods for a child, is connected with Hathor, personifying Great the Matron, sometimes considered the world's creator and the one who is also to feed Pharaoh as 'living Horuses' (KOPALIŃSKI 1985: 361). Cleopatra also prefers to refer to Isis, the Great Matron of Gods, an equivalent of Cybele, the Phrygian goddess of spring, fertility and crops, sometimes identified with Rea or Demeter. Apart from the two goddesses, important to her, it is necessary to add her father's favourite god as well as Mark Antony deified by the people of Ephesus, whom she calls New Dionysus (aside from that, the Saviour of Humanity and the Joy Giver, as Antony, in contrast to the impassive Caesar, loves the world's attractions). Dionysus is the god of the fertile strength of nature and the orgiastic cult ascribed to him, related to grape harvest, the snake, the egg and — rebirth. During Dionysian mysteries presented as the essence of life, the thirteen-year-old Cleopatra, according to the author, experiences sexual initiation converging with social and political initiation.

All these divine figures can be reduced to a common denominator because the majority of flora gods (e.g. Attis, Adonis, Dionysus), just as the great matrons, like Cybele, are androgynous (ELIADE 1993: 404). They exemplify the space rule *coincidentia oppositorum* in a perfect way, not to mention circular time (the rebirth of Dionysus, Osiris etc). Cleopatra realizes their necessary 'bisexuality' (both literally and with figurative consequences, for example, androgyny) when, visiting the temple in Waset (Thebes) in a goddess dress and taking part in religious ceremonies, she is named as Isis and Re's daughter, the ruler of Alexandria and the Two

Egyptian Lands, and meditates on the possibility of wielding power by women such as Hatshepsut or Nefertiti — considered to be kings and not queens.

Her idea of combining the opposites also includes the further possibility that her subjects should receive Roman citizenship, allowing for uniting and integrating the nations. While speaking in Rome about her idea of connecting the world's oldest civilizations, she feels that she follows Alexander the Great, who attempted to integrate the conquered nations, and she believes that Caesar can follow his example. Later, however, it is Antony who, due to his Dionysian connections, seems to her to be particularly predisposed to do this.

However, the farthest reaching consequences of accepting the above cognitive idea included into the myths of androgynous gods are found in Cleopatra's children. During her first pregnancy while travelling up the Nile with Caesar, she exhibits the statues of Aphrodite with a small Eros and of Isis with Horus — apart from the statues of Apollo that may reflect the image of 'indifferent' Caesar, who represents Nietzsche's order (NIETZSCHE 1907), presumably known by Essex and contrasted with Dionysian madness. Then a thought comes into her mind that a boy child, could perfectly bridge the gap between Greece, Egypt and Rome, and, in the first place, between the East and the West. The blood of Isis and Dionysus would run in his veins after his mother, and that of Venus after his father — in any case: the blood of gods related to archaic myth. And more such children, representatives of a new human race, would be enough to rule over many countries, not by war but in peace and harmony.

Cleopatra realizes this intention from the moment of her staged meeting as Venus with Antony as Dionysus in Tarsus. Later, the victory in Armenia, making up for a serious defeat in Parthia, enables Antony's triumph in Alexandria and not in Rome, which is of key importance in her plans. When, as a result of the triumph, he assigns power to her, and appoints Caesar's and his own children to rule over various parts of the conquered lands, so that not only the lost parts return to the Ptolemy Empire but also large areas of the former Seleucid Empire are controlled, she may reasonably feel that in allying herself with Rome, she acts for Egypt's sake. Therefore, Cleopatra, Alexander the Great's spiritual daughter, could continue his work of unifying the world into a great whole thanks to her children. So the world's future is situated in the woman's womb. However, we should add that if Cleopatra transfers some of her ambitions onto her child, as mothers often do, then the author herself undoubtedly forges her utopia of a common peace and harmony into the

vision of mothers' world when considering the battle of Actium, where she suspects that Cleopatra, as a mother, cannot be indifferent to dying and killing. However, her vision will finally suffer defeat. Soon, when Octavian delights in the golden crown of Egypt, she will be given Caesaron's and Antylus's tokens of death — a moonstone and a medallion with an image of Horus. However, at the last moment Cleopatra hears Antony's uncontrollable laughter and the clinking of goblets raised in a toast to victory.

This ending to Essex's *Pharaoh* is surprising: there are not many reasons for a victory toast from beyond the grave. Unless the reasons are the facts mentioned by the author in her accompanying notes where she adds: Octavian married Cleopatra VII's daughter, Cleopatra Selene, by the educated Numidian King Juba, to whom she bore at least one son. Also her two brothers, Alexander Helios and Ptolemy Philadelphos belonged to her court. Antony's Roman children entered the Roman polity, so there were Caesars among his descendants. Considering the above, Antony could raise that goblet of victory. However, looking wider, the idea that Cleopatra outlined can be found in the Byzantine Empire. And still wider, who knows, perhaps the author perceives its echoes in the foundations of the United States or in the younger implementation, the European one. But whether they are mother's worlds — it cannot be stated. In spite of everything, the myth patronized by Dionysus returns to favour, overcoming the burden of modern myth, which may be accepted as a reason for raising a Dionysian toast.

### THREE DIMENSIONS OF TRANSFORMATION

Although the three examples seem to be arranged in a progressive sequence, they may rather become a model solution for revealing the methods of mythical patterns as they are applied to creating images of the world and man. Undoubtedly, both historical time and place determine how they are used.

Horace, a Roman, immediately after the events that led to Cleopatra's death, describes her in terms of a politician. Sketching her psychological portrait, he does not mention how the Romans related to her, thus putting her personal life in the shade, although it is hardly possible to detach it from the public dimension. William Shakespeare, an Englishman, a creator of the Elizabethan period, depicts the heroine as Antony's lover alluding only to Caesar and the children. On the other hand, he shows Octavian and his sister. Antony seems to balance between these



two extremes. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Karen Essex, an American, describes an Egyptian queen not only in the mentioned roles but as a daughter and a mother in the first place, even Roman lovers have here something of the father or child. The author shows how Cleopatra, descended from a family conflicted by struggles for power, aims to make an agreement between her children who are to inherit power over various areas of a vast country.

The transformations, however, are not only conditioned by facts encompassing narrower or wider panorama: from concentrating on death and one proper role (Horace), through recalling the mature part of Cleopatra's life and love (Shakespeare), to creating an image embracing the heroine's whole life with its numerous roles (Karen Essex). They appear to be more connected with a different attitude towards universal references lying within human cognitive abilities.

Horace deals with optimistic and didactic moralizing. The opposition of the contradictory patterns leads to the victory of one of them — and it is a linear pattern (as an equivalent of modern myth), which is accepted by the author himself. If he is willing and generous in showing respect for the queen, it is only when she is dead, and only by including her into his own pattern (manly, manlike). In Shakespeare's drama, it takes a form of tragedy resulting from the fragmentary character of each pattern, one of which introduces change (archaic myth) and the other constancy (modern myth), and from an attempt to combine them. The latter demonstrates that it is impossible for a woman to realize a manlike role and not to die in the process, and it is impossible for a man to surrender to passion without wasting his role in history. In Essex's fictional biography, the vision of the world in which archaic myth, strongly represented by a child, triumphs is utopian. Even if Cleopatra's children, protected by her suicide, do not wield power in order to implement an idea of the world without violence, it is possible to expect the myth to be fulfilled in other versions — and this is what Dionysus-Antony drinks to when raising his triumphal goblet.

Irrespective of differences, all the works realize the essential role played by images of heroes, and especially as they are developed by authors, for human cognition. They are the images that impose specific ways of interpreting reality, whether it be a perfect and promising divine putting on airs, a performance prepared by Cleopatra in Tarsus, or Octavian's propaganda that warns against hostile destruction, thus building its own image.

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