

Chapter Three

Caesar's Wisdom

In this particular chapter, first of all the writer will try to analyze Julius Caesar's wisdom. She will try to do that by using characterization as also the theory of virtue and practical wisdom. The characterization will be the tool to compare and contrast the main character's idea and personality to the other character. Then, in order to prove the wisdom, the writer will try to find the virtue of the main character and then relates it to wisdom. The wise action and judgment of Julius Caesar will be found through his relation to Cleopatra.

In this analysis, the writer analyzes Caesar's wisdom in his relationship with Cleopatra. The writer uses characterization to know Cleopatra's personality and then show how Julius Caesar virtuously teaches Cleopatra his wisdom. Thus, Cleopatra undergoes a character development because of it.

Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen in Bernard Shaw's play is not a witty temptress queen as in William Shakespeare's (Hill, 68). Here, Shaw characterizes her as a child.

Belzanor. Command! A girl of sixteen! Not we. At Memphis ye deem her a Queen: here we know better. I will take her on the crupper of my horse. When we soldiers have carried her out of Caesar's reach, then the priests and the nurses and the rest of them can pretend she is a queen again, and put their command into her mouth (Alternative to the prologue, p. 19).

Through the comment of Belzanor, we know that Cleopatra at that time is just a sixteen years old girl. It is true that being young does not necessarily mean to be immature, but in this case we are being told that Cleopatra is just a doll queen. For her people, she is just a girl playing to

be queen. She is unable to rule as a queen and she only command based on what her priests and nurses say to her. The people only regard her as a queen because she is the daughter of the late Pharaoh. Yet, they do not treat her as a queen since she cannot act like one.

Since the Egyptians do not trust Cleopatra's ability as a queen, they do not respect her at all. Therefore, they do not hesitate to betray her for their own benefit.

Persian. Cleopatra's brother Ptolemy is at war with her. Let us sell her to him; ... Why, sell her secretly to Ptolemy, and then offer ourselves to Caesar as volunteers to fight for the overthrow of her brother and the rescue of our Queen, the Great Grand-daughter of the Nile (Alternative to the prologue, p. 19-20).

Judging from the quotation, it is clear that not only that they do not respect Cleopatra, they also regard Cleopatra as a fool. They are planning a devious plan to use Cleopatra for their benefit without being afraid if their scheme is exposed. They think that such a girl dressed as a queen will never think that she will be betrayed.

Besides characterizing her as an immature queen, Shaw also emphasizes Cleopatra's beauty.

Persian. Cleopatra is not yet a woman; neither is she wise. But she already troubles men's wisdom; He will listen to us if we come with her picture in our mouths. He will conquer and kill her brother, and reign in Egypt with Cleopatra for his Queen. And we shall be her guard (Alternative to the prologue, p. 20-21).

If the guards are so sure that they can influence Caesar by Cleopatra's look, then Cleopatra must be very beautiful. However, based on their opinion Cleopatra only has beauty but has neither intelligence nor wisdom.

Cleopatra can be considered as a round character. The writer sees that at the beginning of the play, she is only a frightened girl but later she emerges as a wicked queen as the play moves on. From this point, Cleopatra undergoes a character development and the one who is responsible for it is Caesar.

At first, Cleopatra is just a frightened girl. The writer sees that she is dominated by her chief nurse, Ftatateeta. Ftatateeta always treats her as a child. One

of the examples is that Ftatateeta whips her when she is disobedient. From the action, it is obvious that Cleopatra is afraid of her.

Ftatateeta (*suddenly coming from behind the throne*). Stop. (*The slave stops. She turns sternly to Cleopatra, who quails like a naughty child*). Who is this you have with you; and how dare you order the lamps to be lighted without my permission? (*Cleopatra is dumb with apprehension*)
(Act 1, p. 32).

Seeing from this quotation, it is clear that Cleopatra is powerless against Ftatateeta that she even does not have the right to light a lamp in her palace. Everything that she does must have approval from her chief nurse first. It shows that Cleopatra is just a child-queen who is steered by her chief nurse, Ftatateeta.

Cleopatra is also a coward and superstitious. When she learns that the Romans are coming to her country, she runs away from the palace to seek protection from the Sphinx, which she believe can save her.

Ftataeteeta. Cleopatra fears me; but she fears the Roman more. There is but one power greater in her eyes than the wrath of the Queen's nurse and the cruelty of Caesar; and that is the power of the Sphinx that sits in the desert watching the way to the sea (Alternative to the prologue, p. 23).

Cowardly Cleopatra runs away leaving her people alone to deal with the Romans. If she, as a queen, feels responsible for her people, she should never leave her people behind. Moreover, she does not seek for help to any person who might be able to help her rather she seeks protection in a thing. It proves her to be superstitious and not a sensible person.

When Caesar becomes acquainted with the young queen, he knows that the queen is afraid of the Romans especially of him. The good conqueror feels sympathy towards the young queen. He then with the goodness of his heart, teaches Cleopatra how to become a real queen.

Caesar. Cleopatra: shall I teach you a way to prevent Caesar from eating you? ... Your gods are afraid of the Romans: you see the Sphinx dare not bite me, nor prevent me carrying you off to

Julius Caesar... Caesar never eats women. But he eats girls and cats. Now you are a silly little girl; and you are descended from the black kitten. You are both a girl and a cat.

Cleopatra. And will he eat me?

Caesar. Yes; unless you make him believe that you are a woman. You must stand face to face with Caesar in the palace of your fathers. You must confront him as a brave woman and a great queen; and you must feel no fear. If your hand shakes: if your voice quavers; then night and death! (Act 1, p. 30-31).

Caesar knows that Cleopatra is childish. Therefore, he teaches her like he is teaching a child. He uses her fears of the Romans to force her to be brave. He tells Cleopatra that she should act like a queen and be brave if she wants to be safe from the Romans.

From this action, the writer can identify Caesar's virtue. Actually Caesar does not need to be kind to her. She is no importance to him. Besides, he has no obligation to teach her at all. In fact, he can even benefit from her incompetence. However, rather than taking advantage of the situation, he takes the trouble of tutoring her. This also

shows that more than having virtue, Caesar also has what Beauchamp regards as the uncommon morality, morality for a person who does praiseworthy actions beyond duty. As a person who has uncommon morality, he does more than he obliges to do.

Besides of virtue, the writer also can acknowledge , Caesar's wisdom towards Cleopatra. The writer can see from the play that actually Caesar is attracted by Cleopatra's beauty.

Caesar. But if he thinks you worthy to rule, he will set you on the throne by his side and make you the real ruler of Egypt (Act 1, p. 31).

From the quotation, we can see that Caesar is planning to make her his queen of Egypt. Moreover, Caesar's appreciation for beauty can be seen in his own confession commenting on himself.

Caesar (rather mournfully). He is easily deceived by women. Their eyes dazzle him; and he sees them not as they are, but as he wishes them to appear to him (Act 1, p. 31).

Caesar's comment on himself reveals Caesar's weakness, that is woman's beauty. Cleopatra is also a beautiful woman, so Caesar is also attracted to her. However, Caesar realizes that Cleopatra only considers him as an old gentleman. She is interested in him no more than as her protector. From the play, the writer can see that he feels a little bit disappointed to know that Cleopatra prefers Mark Anthony. Knowing that she is greatly influenced by Anthony's physical beauty rather than his kindness, Caesar does not dwell on his disappointment. With his common sense Caesar realizes that Cleopatra is more suitable to be regarded as his daughter than as his lover because of their huge age difference. He accepts this and even promises her to send Anthony to Egypt later. This proves his wisdom as a person. He fits the conditions of being a wise person. First, he can control his emotion not to force his love over her and second, he is able to resist his own desire and remains sensible for Cleopatra's happiness. He can accept his failure in love without resentment.

Caesar's wisdom also can be seen in the way he accepts Cleopatra's betrayal towards him. Later in the play, when Caesar finds out that Cleopatra is just using him for her benefit, Caesar forgives her. He does not have grudge in him. He is forgiving and can accept Cleopatra's limitation

as a person. Although he feels disappointed because he fails to teach her wisdom, he is aware that as a person Cleopatra has a personality that is difficult to change.

Based on her analysis in this chapter, the writer can conclude that Caesar is wise because he has special traits in him. First trait that he has is kindness. He is kind enough to even bother to teach Cleopatra how to become a real queen. His second trait is his clemency. Caesar is forgiving. The third trait that he has is his ability to accept reality. Those traits conform to Carlylean concept of hero and Nietzsche's philosophy of a superman. For Carlylean hero, Caesar has a good understanding on human behavior as proved in his understanding towards Cleopatra. Caesar is also fits the Nietzsche's superman since he does not take seriously an enemy, misfortune, or misdeeds.