
DRYDEN'S *ALL FOR LOVE*, FULL-FLEDGED HEROIC DRAMA: PUBLIC FAME AND LITERARY CONTRIBUTION

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ABSTRACT: *All For Love*, a full-fledged heroic play written by John Dryden, has ever enjoyed literary merit and public acclaim since its first performance. Dryden's craftsmanship as a brilliant playwright and highly skilled poet is delicately latent in this play. Dryden's play is an acknowledged condensed adaptation of Shakespeare's masterpiece *Antony and Cleopatra*, yet it drove Shakespeare's play off stage for more than a century, and reaped great success. More crucially it exerted a tremendous influence on the upcoming genre, and became a prototype to Sentimental Tragedy of the 18th Century. This article is meant to illuminate the literary contribution and theory of Dryden as illustrated both in *All for Love*, *Preface* to his play, *Dedication*, and his critical article *Of Heroic Play*. Added to this, the article would highlight the factors standing behind the public success and popularity of *All for Love* during the 18th Century.

KEYWORDS: John Dryden, all for love, heroic drama, domestic drama, sentimental tragedy

INTRODUCTION

Drama was the literary center in the Restoration Age; it was the genre in which men of letters tried their mark. Heroic drama was the first to make its mark, and it took the restored theatre by storm. It flourished from 1664 to 1684, it was highly influenced by ideas of a number of literary figures who contributed greatly to the birth and prevalence of Heroic Drama. William Davenant, the most important link between the theatre prior to the closing in 1642 and the theatre of the Restoration drama, wrote *The Temple of Love*, a masque, in 1635 and *Salmacida Spolia* in 1640, the last masque performed at the English Court before the outbreak of the English Civil War. In additions, Davenant wrote *The Siege of Rhodes*, an opera, in 1656, which is always considered the immediate ancestor to the Heroic Plays. After the Restoration of the British Monarchy, King Charles had a hand in shaping the newly flourishing plays. Charles who loved the French Alexandrines, asked Roger Boyle, Earle of Orrery to write a play in rhymed pentameter heroic couplets. Classical epics, which were highly admired, became the ultimate source for Heroic Drama. From Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Heroic drama took the theme of honor and love. In the plays of Corneille and Racine, Heroic Drama had found numerous examples of great spirited men and women. Besides, French drama and romances like those of Madeleine de Scudery, helped in the emergence of heroic drama. Dryden, as well, acknowledges the contribution and influence of others on Heroic plays. Considering the plays produced during the late 18th Century, one may find Dryden's plays *The Conquest of Granada*, and *All for Love* as the best examples to illustrate the heroic tragedy. (See Stone 1975, Bevis 1988, Dobree 2007)

Of Heroic Plays

In his essay, *Of Heroic Plays*, Dryden sets forth the specifications for this type of genre. As commonly known, Dryden was largely an occasional critic whose most critical pronouncements mostly come in prologues and epilogues, and in his sole critical essay, *Of Heroic Plays*. This specific essay, written in defense of this new genre. This defense was one aspect of Dryden's attempt to create a species of heroic drama appropriate to his time by accommodating the epic form to the demands of the stage (Berry: 1990, 228). This essay is divided somewhat unevenly into two areas, first his discussion of the influences on heroic tragedy, especially on his plays, and second a defense of the genre, along with this comes his ideas of the ideal heroic play.

In his defense of heroic plays, he first expresses complaint against the language of contemporary heroic plays. As he recommends, the language must not be close to prose, but in highly refined verse. Serious plays, as he believes, need higher flown language to present exalted ideas, and accused those who attack the poetic language of heroic drama of not being able to write verse. A heroic drama should be modelled on the heroic poem which he considers as *the most noble, most pleasant, and the most instructive way of writing in verse, and withal the higher pattern of human life* (Of Heroic Plays). Beside higher-flown language, Dryden defends the inclusion of great spirited men and women in drama such as the characters he portrays in his heroic plays. The other portion of the essay deals with the idea of ideal play. In his elaboration, he looks first at the works of his predecessors, and launches harsh criticism on Davenant's plays in particular. Dryden thinks that Davenant's plays lack fullness of plot, variety of characters and beauty of style. In addition, he argues that Davenant brought heroic action down to the familiar, the common action of life. After he pinpointed the defects in the writing of predecessors, he throws in his theory for the ideal heroic play. To Dryden, the mediating factor should be romance, an idea he derived from his reading of French prose heroic romances, with some variation (Berry 1990). As he recommends, it should be an imitation of a heroic epic, its subjects should be of love and valor, it should introduce great and majestic characters, actions, and images; it should not be made to stick to what is true, and finally Dryden presents ideas that lead to his defense of epic machinery. All these ideas are carefully observed and put in effect in his heroic plays, particularly *All For Love*.

ALL FOR LOVE

All for Love, or the World Well Lost, is a 1677 heroic drama which is now Dryden's best-known and most performed play. It was written in blank verse and is an attempt on Dryden's part to reinvigorate serious drama, by accommodating the epic form to the demands of the stage. The play is actually an acknowledged imitation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*; however, his adaptation is shorter and more condensed, in that it focuses only on the last hours of the life of its hero Mark Antony and heroine Cleopatra. Dryden's *All For Love*, described often as a high tragedy, and the best illustration of Dryden's views established in his essay *Of Heroic Play* (Dobree 2007, Stone 1975, Hughes 1970). To better gauge the literary merit of Dryden's play, one may resort to several approaches, to highlight its literary merit. It may be compared to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and to be examined in terms of its observance of Neo-

Classical rules. As well, it might be compared or contrasted to Dryden's other heroic plays. Further, this play can be viewed as a prototype to sentimental tragedy of the 18th Century.

Shakespeare/Dryden Antony and Cleopatra

All For Love is an acknowledged adaptation in the neo-classic manner of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare dramatizes the entire story of Antony and Cleopatra as told by Plutarch (See Philip 1985, Canfield 2000). The span of Antony and Cleopatra's tale is eleven years and has a transoceanic setting. By contrast, Dryden concentrates on the final events of the tale—the action after Antony's defeat at Actium. Moreover, Shakespeare's thirty-four characters are reduced to ten in *All For Love*. The transoceanic sweep of Shakespeare's settings becomes one single locale, the Temple of Isis in Alexandria, and the action focuses on the end of the doomed relationship of Antony and Cleopatra. The eleven-year span of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* becomes the twenty-four hours of *All For Love*. The result is not a narrow and stiff drama, but a wondrously theatrical triumph. Dryden's concentration upon the final days helps greatly in keeping the classical specifications on safe ground. He achieves unity of place by having all the action take place in the Temple of Isis; he too achieves the ideal 24-hour unity of time by carefully avoiding any mention of time. Added to this, Dryden achieves unity of action by carefully limiting it to a straightforward conflict between love and honor or duty. All the action revolves round Antony's love for Cleopatra and duty to his home country and family. At large, unity of action, unity of place, dignity of expression, and well-conceived characters mark his play as a great piece of dramatic literature (Dobree 2007).

Dryden's play proved more appealing to the audience than Shakespeare's especially in the 18th Century. It actually drove Shakespeare's play from the stage during the eighteenth Century (Stone 72). The course of the play's stage history attests to the fact that it is a more playable piece than Shakespeare. From 1677-1700, it was probably played five times, but it was revived in 1704, and performed 123 times between 1700-1800, and became the preferred version of the story. In comparison, Shakespeare's play did not reappear on the London stage until 1813 (Caldwell 2004).

Further analogies may be introduced here. On one hand, Dryden's Antony hardly slips into pompous rhetoric, though in possession of large and unsubtle feelings, which both make him a brave and great man, but can also undermine him; his unwarranted fluctuation between honor and love might undermine his greatness as a tragic hero. On the other hand, Dryden's Cleopatra never becomes the exciting personality of Shakespeare's Egyptian queen. While she wants to act in ethical and pure ways that reflect her commitment to Antony, she is easily swayed by the stratagem of her eunuch Alexas, and is not above manipulation.

Observance of Neo-Classical Rules

With no doubt, in *All For Love*, Dryden strictly observes the Neo-Classical rules, a reality that can be seen not only in Stone's remarks and others' (Stone 1975, p. 71; Caldwell 2004), but foremost in Dryden's *Preface*, in which he discusses a various aspects of Neo-classicism. He examines first the Aristotelian concept of the hero and seems striving to abide by. Dryden notes,

All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of a poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice, be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked because he could not then be pitied. (Preface in Stone 73)

According to Neo-Classicism, a tragic hero must be a man of middling virtue, neither entirely virtuous nor completely vicious, a man of great reputation and rank who is brought down to grief by a flaw he carries or by the schemes of fate. The portrayal of Mark Antony is meant to be Aristotle's finest illustration of a tragic hero. He is a great man whose excessive love, flaw, brought him down to grief. In the same connection, Dryden's remarks attest also to his conviction that the true notion of tragedy is a series of connected and well-fabricated incidents designed to arouse pity and fear followed by Catharsis as Aristotle recommends. Upon Antony's and Cleopatra's misfortune, the feelings of pity and fear would expectedly arise.

In his *Preface*, Dryden also insists on the strict observance of classical unities, unity of time, unity of place, and especially the unity of action. He argues in his Preface:

The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of it; and the unities of time, place, action, more exactly observed than, perhaps, the English theatre requires. Particularly, the action is so much one that it is only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every scene in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act concluding with a turn of it (Preface to *All For Love*)

In addition to the classical concept of the hero and observance of classical unities, Dryden recognizes decorum so necessary to Neoclassicism, and in turn to heroic plays. He defends the repartee between Cleopatra and Octavia, though the French poets would not approve repartees in tragedy. French prose heroic romances, with some variation (Berry 1990). He commends, on one hand, the French dramatists as being highly observant of decorum as clear in the following:

It is true some action, though natural, are not fit to be represented; and broad obscenities in words ought to good manners to be avoided; expression therefore are modest clothing of our thoughts, as breeches and petticoats are of our bodies. (Preface to *All For Love*)

On the other hand, it is true that Dryden was influenced by the French dramatists, but he expresses some reservation toward the approach of the French poets:

If I have kept myself within the bounds of modesty, all beyond it is but nicety and affection, which is no more but modesty depraved into a vice. They betray themselves, who are too quick of apprehension into such cases, and leave all the reasonable men to imagine worse of them, than of the poet. (Preface to *All For Love*)

He believes that the civility of the French hero makes him either *insipid, nonsensical* or a *fool*. Instead of the French models, Dryden calls for the study of the Greek models and accommodating the epic form to the demands of the stage, and claims his full observance of the Greek model in his play:

I have endeavored in this play to follow the practice of the ancients, who as Mr. Rymer had judiciously observed, are and ought to be our masters. Horace likewise gives it for a rule in his art of poetry—Study night and day, your Greek models. (Preface to All For Love)

In *All For Love*, the adherence to neoclassical specifications is quite clear. Dryden strictly abides by the Greek unities, and demonstrates also the Neo-classical love of order, organization, design, and logical progression of thought. This is particularly true in looking at Dryden's plot which is worked out with an almost mathematical precision:

Act I –Ventidius persuades Antony to leave Cleopatra to regain honor

Act II. Cleopatra whose love is noble madness persuades him to stay (Love)

Act III- Ventidius and Octavia together with Antony's children persuade Antony to make peace for honor (duty)

Act IV- Nobody wins

Act V- Love triumphs (Stone 71)

Dryden claims that *All For Love* shows the excellency of the moral, for the chief persons represented were famous patterns of unlawful love; and their end, accordingly, was unfortunate: *Sleep blest pair/ And fame to late posterity shall tell/ No lovers lived so great and died so well* (V. i. 514-519). Thus the fusion of love and honor prevents the deaths from being tragic but almost triumphant. Upon this, the play is not only progressive, but also balanced. Dobree commends the triumph that Antony and Cleopatra achieve through death:

Quite apart from the very definite and invariable emotive effects due to the development of character, and a subtler, surer, emotive progression.... Each act of All For Love, as Dryden claimed, concludes with a turn of the main design, not only of action, but of the emotions that leads to that action, which is to complete it. (Dobree, 75-76)

Furthermore, *All For Love* ends with the classical sense of tragedy in that the hero is brought low by a tragic flaw, though the idea of 'dying well' has not completely disappeared. This aspect of dying well which was one method of attaining a happy ending in the earlier Restoration drama, is not the only characteristic carried over from heroic drama. Eugene M. Waith in his article *All For Love*, believes that the play in fact continues very much in the heroic tradition. He notes *There can be no doubt there are differences from the Conquest of Granada, and Aureng-Zebe but the resemblances which bind All For Love to its predecessors, if less obvious, are very strong. (1966, p. 51)*

All for Love Versus Dryden's Previous Plays

The Hero:

The attributes given to the hero, Antony, are somewhat similar to those given to Dryden's earlier heroes. The hero is still a brave and noble one, as Almanzor and Morat. Ventidius shows the audience the heroic qualities of Antony not only in his speeches praising Antony but also in his devotion to him to the end. He addresses Antony as follows: *Methinks you breathe/ Another soul. Your looks more divine/ You speak a hero, and you move a god* (II. i. 435-438). Dryden's hero has strong passions and contemptuous disregard for society, though always wavering between love and duty: *Forgive me, soldier/ I 've been too passionate*, Antony admits to

Ventidius (II. i. 393-394). However, love seems to supersede on many occasions, *life, conquest, empire, all but honor* as Antony says (I. i. 119-123). The Gentleman of Antony, in his elaboration upon his master's state of mind, explains to Ventidius that *he defies the world, and but it passes;/ then he draws his mouth/ Into a scornful smile, and cries, 'Take all, / The World's not worth my care* (I. i. 119-123). Another affinity with Almanzor might be introduced here. Like Almanzor, Mark Antony has a vast soul which is the essence of heroic individuality. Ventidius too notices this trait in Antony: *Just, his nature/ Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow/For his vast soul* (I. i. 124-125).

The heroine is also given heroic proportions. It is her high-mindedness that makes her refuse a kingdom of Egypt and Syria from Caesar. Her loyalty to Antony remains unmoved. She disregards Caesar's temptation, and earnestly begs Antony not to leave her out of loyalty and love. Cleopatra, like Antony, puts herself or her love at least above and beyond law and norms of society. After the death of her sweetheart Antony, she vows

*And now I 'll not die less! Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead, my nobler fate
Shall knit our spousal with a tie too strong
For Roman laws to break. (V. i. 415-418)*

Like Almanzor, who has compared his heart to crystal brook, she is without deceit. She seems reluctant to Alexas' plan of flirting with Dolabella for the purpose of making Antony jealous:

*Alexas: ... the least kind word or a glance
You give this youth will kindle him with love:
Then like a burning vessel set a drif...
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.
Cleopatra: Can I do this? Ah, no, my love's so true
That I can neither hide it where it is,
... ..Nature meant me
A wife, a silly, harmless, household dove,
Fond without art and kind without deceit. (IV. i. 84-93)*

Even when she reluctantly forces herself to go by the stratagem of Alexas to use deceit and dissembling, she obviously fails to do so. Dolabella notes her plainness: *I find your breast fenced round from human reach. /Transparent as a rock of solid crystal, / Seen through, but never pierced* (IV. i. 202-204). On another occasion, Cleopatra here does not approve of Alexas' ruse of saying she is dead: *Unknown to me, Alexa Feigned my death:/ Which, when I knew, I hastened to prevent/ This fatal consequence* (V. i. 325-378).

Love Versus Honor or Duty

This aspect of heroic drama is portrayed largely through two additional characters, beside Antony of course. Through Ventidius and Octavia, Dryden shows the retention of the heroic conflict of passion (love) versus honor as he does in his other Heroic plays. In *All for Love*, the two characters are carefully portrayed to represent various forms of honor, Ventidius in a soldierly heroic sense, and Octavia in a sense of duty and responsibility. In many places in the play, these two characters are introduced as representatives of honor, struggling against the lord of love. Such a struggle is clearly felt in Ventidius' reproach to Alexas:

*I tell thee eunuch, she has quite unmanned him
Can any Roman see, and know him now,
Thus altered from the lord of half mankind
Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman's toy,
Shrank from the vast extent of all his honors
And cramped within a corner of the world? (I. i. 174-180)*

Further the struggle between the power of love and obligation to honor is unmistakably characteristic in Ventidius' words urging Antony to use the twelve legions stationed in Lower Syria to aid his commander, with one certain stipulation that these legions would not fight, but for the honor of their Emperor Antony, not Cleopatra:

*Up, up for honor's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief, by painful journeys
I led them, patient from the Parthian marches to the Nile
'T will do you good to see their sunburnt faces,
Their scarred checks, and chopped hands; there's virtue in them. (I. i. 337-342).*

Ventidius' soldierly loyalty and devotion to his master come off also while begging Antony not to take the ruby bracelet of bleeding heart for the sake of honor:

*Now my best lord, in honor's name, I ask you,
For manhood's sake, and for your own safety,
Touch not these poisoned gifts,
Infected by the sender; touch 'em not. (II. i. 201-204).*

As expected, his request proves ineffective. Ventidius grows desperate and confounded seeing his master unmoved by his plea and against all odds willingly submit to the lord of love overlook the lord of honor. Despite all request and polite warning, Antony passionately embraces Cleopatra. For this, Ventidius outrageously bursts, *what is this toy, / To balance with your fortune, honor, fame?* (II. i. 426-427). However, Antony doesn't budge.

Octavia, Antony's wife, represents a sense of duty and responsibility and is used to further accommodate the theme of honor. She is actually Dryden's unhistorical introduction into the play and is most daring innovation. This innovation is a fortunate one, for it allows, as mentioned above, for a further variation on the theme of love versus honor. Waith notes,

Though the issue remains Antony's choice of love or his responsibilities in the world, the stage presents as the dramatic symbols of these alternatives, two women Cleopatra and Octavia, and the choice at the center of play becomes between love and marriage. The turn of the third Act which determines Antony for the second time to leave Cleopatra is not as it was first Act, the responsibility to fight Caesar in order to show the world who is master, but duty to a wife, through whom he may reach a peaceful understanding with Caesar (Waith, 58-59).

Octavia's honorable attitude toward her defeated husband is clearly illustrated in her attempt to attain a reconciliation with him in spite of his desertion and indifference and her feeling of indignation:

<p><i>'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness, prompts me not to seek what you should offer; wife's virtue still surmounts that pride; as my own; to show nay beg, your kindness; and I will have it. (III. i. 261-266).</i></p>	<p><i>And But a I claim you My duty first; to ask, Your hand, my lord, tis mine,</i></p>
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Further, she expresses concern for her husband's honor even in the conditions she brings with her prior to their reconciliation assuring Antony's freedom:

*But with conditions I have brought are such
You need not blush to take: I love your honor,
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said,
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave
Sir, you are free- (III. i. 291-295)*

Their honorable deal would soon collide with love. Octavia's mission would soon be pronounced a failure, and she would return to Rome. Nevertheless, Antony's words to Octavia mark a serious struggle between love and duty: *I can never be conquered but by love;/ And you do all for duty (III. i. 315-316)*. Octavia does not give in, though. She tries another means to abate Antony's unreasonable determination not to yield to her wish. She introduces the two *Miss Duties* - Agrippa and Antonia, his own daughters, *to hang upon his arms and clap about his waist*, the weight of which turns the tide once again, making Antony cry: *I am vanquished; take me Octavia, take me children; share me all (III. i. 364-365)*. Her final parting again echoes with duty, showing that it is the major aspect of her love for Antony. She assures, *Yes, I will go; but never to return... for [you] injured me, / though my just sense of wrongs forbids my stay/ my duty shall be yours (IV. i. 414-423)*.

Even after, Ventidius and Octavia do not lose hope yet to keep striving to turn the table against the lord of love. They even debase themselves in hope to fire Antony's jealousy and defeat the lord of love that takes full control of him. Unwittingly, after they secretly overhear the conversation between Dolabella and Cleopatra, Ventidius reports to Antony what they wishfully assume to be Cleopatra's apparent interest in young Dolabella; and Octavia hurriedly confirms Ventidius' report. Antony's passionate reaction to their report convinces Octavia that her mission is a failure, and nothing left, but to return to the Roman Camp. Clearly the table turns and love rather than honor or duty appears uppermost.

Antony, on his part, has the lion's share of debate over love and honor. He keeps fluctuating between the two. Once he ponders, *I will leave her; though Heaven knows, I love, / Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honor;/ But I will leave her (II. i. 422-424)*. But against all odds, Antony soon switches sides to love, putting it above any other concern: *Faith, honor, virtue, all*

good things forbid/ That I should go from her, who set my love/ Above the price of Kingdoms (III. i. 440-443), and honor to him becomes his commitment to Cleopatra, neither to family nor to country. He patently admits before Octavia his inability to resist the charm of love, *For I can never be conquered but by love* (III. i. 316). In his conversation with Cleopatra, Antony complains of the strains that honor burdens him with, *I must not hear you/ I have a fool within me takes your part;/ But honor stops my ears* (IV. i. 560-563). Like Antony, Cleopatra confronts too the same question of honor. Her statement to Octavia is pregnant with earnest strife: *I have lost my honor, lost my fame, /And stained the glory of my royal house, / And all to hear the branded name of mistress* (III. i. 463-465). Not only the main characters show high strain of compassion, even some minor characters experience the same feelings. Dolabella abhors the idea of being sent to tell Cleopatra of Antony's decision to part with her. His pondering over the mission he is assigned to perform renders earnest feelings of high strain:

*Nature has cast me in such a soft mold,
That but to hear a story feigned for pleasure
Of some sad lover's death, moistens his eyes,
And rob me of my manhood.* (IV. i. 12-16)

Some scholars take the question of love-honor to a different perspective. For instance, Waith notes that in *All For love*, the Herculean hero's quest for unbounded power *is replaced by a quest of unbounded love*, and any attempt of modifying or redirecting influence has failed. Instead of reconciling heroic energies with the laws of society, the unreasonable love of Antony and Cleopatra soars beyond legality and thus leads the two to defiance of the world and a final self-assertion end in suicide. Waith explains,

In the Conquest of Granada, a noble love modifies the masculine drive for power, redirecting toward a goal acceptable to society. In A. Z [Aureng Zebe] Indamora tries to exert a similar modifying and redirecting influence... In both of these plays, the final emphasis is on a reconciliation of heroic energies with the laws of society... In All For Love, the effort to tame or to redirect the hero's energies is totally unsuccessful. ... In All For Love, it is not merely that the world is well lost for such love, but that Dryden, largely through his treatment of Cleopatra, has elevated the love and made its truth and strength unquestionable, though to attain it, the world must be defied. (Waith 59-61).

Simile

Simile as another vestige of heroic drama is heavily used in *All For Love*. The play, like other heroic plays, is filled with various examples of elaborate simile. Ventidius compares Antony to a scorpion, *whipped by others first/ To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge* (I. i. 314-315). Cleopatra describes her unsettled state to a boat, *pushed to a sea, to prove, / at my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back* (V. i. 34-35). Alexas, Cleopatra's eunuch, picks on her simile and compares himself to a *shipwrecked seaman near the shore, / Dropping and fain* (V. i. 39-40). Antony too uses a moving mixed simile at the moment he feels betrayed by both Dolabella and Cleopatra. Delicately, he compares himself to an unfortunate merchant seeing his vessel sinking

deep with all his wealth, and Cleopatra as the *swallow summer* enjoying his kindly beams, yet when his *winter comes*, she leaves him seeking the *spring of Caesar* (V. i. 206-213).

Use of Rhyme, Music, Dance, Repartee, and Bombast

The use of rhyme, as Dryden notes both in his *Preface*, and *Prologue*, is dropped, but couplets are still used to rhyme actor off the stage at the end of acts, a practice often used by Elizabethan playwrights and practiced frequently in *All For Love*. Music is still employed. Soft music accompanies Antony's speech (I. i. 200). The entrance of both Antony and Cleopatra in the very beginning of Act III, *prepared by music*. The trumpet first sounds on Antony's part, then answered by timbrels on Cleopatra's arrival. Like music, Egyptian dance adjoins the crowning of Antony in the same Act. Repartee is another vestige of heroic drama also employed in *All For Love*, such as the one between Cleopatra and Octavia (III. i. 417-466). Unlike these vestiges, bombast, which is dominant in heroic drama, is auspiciously missing in *All For Love*. Dryden himself notes this in the *Prologue* and seems to laugh at the poets who still employ this vestige in his Epilogue.

All for Love and Sentimental Tragedy

All For Love can be seen as a prototype of sentimental tragedy. It is worth noting that the second decade of the Restoration theatre saw an increasingly high regard for pity and interest in domestic and sentimental situations (Hume 1976). In 1679 in his *Preface to Troilus and Cressida*, Dryden describes pity as *the noblest and most godlike of moral virtues*. And it is this virtue that he tends to incorporate into *All For Love*. Many examples in the play have an air of pity and commiseration. Alexas claims that while Antony is *an emperor in mighty arms, he is a god, in a soft pity to the oppressed* (II. i. 150). Antony himself does pity both Octavia and Cleopatra, as Ventidius notes, *See how he winks! How he dries up a tear. / That fain would fall* (III. i. 311-312). Dolabella claims pity prevailed when he delivers Antony's farewell to Cleopatra: *I could not hear her sighs, and see her tears, / But pity must prevail: and so, perhaps, / it may again with you* (IV. i. 461-465). Cleopatra asks Antony, *For pity hear me*, begging him to stay as he decides to leave her for Octavia. Moved by her supplication, Antony pathetically asks himself, *must I weep?* (IV. i. 586).

In addition to pity, weeping, which would become dominant in Sentimental Tragedy of the 18th Century, is also found adding to the moist vapor of sentimentalism. Dryden's *Prologue* notes that his hero *weeps much* (line 14). Like the compassionate heroes or heroines of the later sentimental plays, Antony joins others in tears. When he sees his loyal soldier, Ventidius, weeps, Antony does the same: *Sure there's Contagion in the tears of friends/ See, I have caught it too. Believe me 'ts not/ For my own grief, but thine*, says Antony (I. i. 271-273). Furthermore, Charmion, Cleopatra's lady, reports to Cleopatra Antony's weeping, noting he *made a show as he rubbed his eyes, / Disguised and blotted out of a falling tear*" (II. i. 68-69). Ventidius, who has not wept for forty years, does weep over Antony's dilemma, yet he tries to hide sentimentality, claiming, *My mother comes into my eyes;/ I cannot help softness* (I. i 264-265).

Beside pity and weeping, sentiments abounds in *All For Love*. It is noted that the scene of Octavia, the deserted wife, with her two beautiful young daughters before a reluctant father,

reeks with sentiments. This scene of course deals with domestic situation, the prominent aspect of sentimentalism. With no doubt, the children scene is purely domestic. In the same manner, Cleopatra's image of herself as *silly, harmless, household dove*, conjures up domesticity (IV. i. 91). Added to this, the play has innumerable purely sentimental speeches. In Act I, Antony, a ruined man, at last coming out of his seclusion, curses his fate and laments the day that he was born in, using the most sentimental, pitiful words. He ponders

Give me some music; look that it be sad:

*I will soothe my melancholy, till I swell,
And burst myself with sighing
'Tis somewhat to my humor. (I. i. 228-231)*

Furthermore, Antony's vision, uttered with soft music in the background, is purely sentimental too:

*Stay I fancy
I am now turned wild a commoner of nature,
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all;
Live in a shady forest's Sylvan scene;
Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy hark,
And look just a piece as I grew from it:
My uncombed locks, matted like mistletoe
Hang over my hoary face, a murmuring brook
Runs at my foot. (I. i. 231-239).*

In Act II, Scene One, Antony's reflection upon the last ten years of his passionate love to Cleopatra, is remarkably sentimental and full of pathos and eventually designed to invoking pity. He reflects upon the very first time he beheld Cleopatra's face in Egypt, and the rivalry with his invincible lord Caesar who *Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red*, and the costly price he paid to win her heart, putting aside his honor and duty to family (II. I. 262-275). All words Antony utters reek with sentiment.

CONCLUSION

All For Love is a full-fledged Heroic play and prototype to Sentimental Tragedy. Dryden's craftsmanship as a brilliant playwright and a highly skillful poet is delicately latent in his play. It is true that Dryden's play is a condensed adaptation of Shakespeare's masterpiece *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is also true that Dryden's play drove Shakespeare's play off stage for more than a century, and reaped great success especially in the 18th Century. The popularity of Dryden's play during the 18th Century can be understood. More possibly, the expression of sentiments, pity, weeping, frankness and transparency, the vestiges invested in *All For Love*, might explain the popularity of Dryden's *Antony and Cleopatra* at the expense of Shakespeare's play in the 18th century the time in which the arousal of pity and fear, and the purging of emotion, and a desire to elicit a sense of pathos and pity for major characters became the center of magnitude to theatre

goers. Aspects of sentimentalism such as Dryden's sentiment-abound play thrived particularly after the tide moved to the side of sentimentalism, tears and emotionalism. No doubt, Dryden's theory of heroic play exerted a tremendous influence on the domestic tragedies of 18th Century, such as Rowe's *Jane Shore*, Addison's *Cato*, Otway's *Venice Preserved*, and Lillo's *The London Merchant*. These plays lean heavily on heroic drama, a genre molded and invigorated by John Dryden.

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- Hinnant, Charles. "All for Love and the Heroic Ideal," *Genre* 16, no. 1 (1983): 57. Arthur Kirsch (for example) also comments that "the heroism of All for Love is subverted at every turn by sentimental effects which emphasize not the heroic glory of love, but its domesticity and compassion"(quoted in Yots, "Dryden's AllforLove on the Restoration Stage,"4).
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