

# **The symbolic significance of the life and death of Antony and Cleopatra in selected literary texts by Alice Cary and W.H. Lytle and their influence on Western thought<sup>(\*)</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Alice Cary's "Death of Cleopatra" (1850) and W. H. Lytle's "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858), share several characteristics that are distinctive of pre-colonial poetry. Their poems represent the Orientalists' view of the Orient as an exotic and magical place but, at the same time, the death and defeat of the goddess Queen signifies the end of the antique civilization. The studied poems are pre-colonial as they were written before the commencement of the British colonization of Egypt. Previous studies have mostly dealt with the image of the Orient during colonialism and after, post colonialism. However, examining pre-colonial works would lead to a wider understanding of the West and their justifications and reasons that paved the way for imperialism and colonialism. Thus, Alice Cary's "Death of Cleopatra" (1850) and W. H. Lytle's "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858) are studied in the current paper, focusing on the symbolic significance of the life and death of Antony and Cleopatra and their influence on Western thought. Alice Cary (1820-1871) was an American writer, whose work is well known and very well received around the world. She was characterized by her vivid imagery and lively woven themes. Like Cary, William Haines Lytle (1826-1863) was also an American writer. Lytle was a soldier all his life and was appointed as a major general of militias. His poetical work was widely distinguished and appraised. Both Cary and Lytle's poems are rich in magnificent archetypal images and motifs that describe both the land and its queen, in the most brilliant manner, thus portraying some of the most exquisite representations of the Queen of Egypt.

**Keywords :** Cary, Lytle, Egypt, pre-colonial, orientalism, post colonialism, Colonization, Cleopatra, archetypal images, motifs.

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## المخلص:

تتشارك "موت كليوباترا" لأليس كاري (١٨٥٠) و"أنتوني إلى كليوباترا" لدبليو إتش لينتل (١٨٥٨) عدة سمات مميزة للشعر قبل الاستعمار. تمثل قصائدهما رؤية المستشرقين للشرق كمكان غريب وساحر، ولكن في الوقت نفسه، فإن موت وهزيمة ملكة الإلهة يدل على نهاية الحضارة القديمة. تعتبر هذه القصائد المدروسة من حقبة ما قبل الاستعمار؛ حيث تمت كتابتها قبل بدء استعمار بريطانيا لمصر. تعاملت الدراسات السابقة في الغالب مع صورة الشرق خلال الاستعمار وبعده، ما بعد الاستعمار. ومع ذلك، فإن فحص الأعمال قبل الاستعمار يؤدي إلى فهم أوسع للغرب ومبرراته وأسبابه التي فتحت الطريق أمام المستعمر لاستعمار الشرق. ومن ثم، تدرس "موت كليوباترا" لأليس كاري (١٨٥٠) و"أنتوني إلى كليوباترا" لدبليو إتش لينتل (١٨٥٨) في الورقة الحالية، مع التركيز على الدلالة الرمزية لحياة وموت أنتوني وكليوباترا وتأثيرهما على الفكر الغربي. كانت أليس كاري (١٨٢٠-١٨٧١) كاتبة أمريكية، وعملها معروف ومشهود له حول العالم. اشتهرت بصورها الحية ومواضيعها المتناسكة. مثل كاري، كان ويليام هاينز لينتل (١٨٢٦-١٨٦٣) كاتبًا أمريكيًا أيضًا. كان لينتل جنديًا طوال حياته وتم تعيينه كواء في الميليشيات. تميزت أعماله الشعرية على نطاق واسع وحظيت بتقدير كبير. قصائد كاري ولينتل على حد سواء غنية بالصور الأسطورية الرائعة والرموز التي تصف كل من الأرض وملكتها بأبهى طريقة، مما يصور بعض أروع تمثيلات ملكة مصر

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** قبل الاستعمار – المستشرقين – الشرق – قصائد – الغرب – الدلالة الرمزية – كتاب امريكيين – كاري – لينتل – كليوباترا – استعمار – مصر.

This paper attempts to examine the symbolic significance of the life and death of Antony and Cleopatra in selected poems by Alice Cary and W.H. Lytle and their influence on the West. The study draws upon Edward Said's theory of Orientalism to analyze the texts. Pre-colonialism and colonialism will also be discussed as the poems were written before the British colonization of Egypt (1882. 1914). "Orientalism" is described by Edward Said as "the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice" (Said, Orientalism 73). Hence, it is the way the Orient is viewed

by the West, and how it is dissected, handled and represented. The fact that the Orient and its inhabitants were always regarded as inferior to the West, and were never given the chance to speak for themselves or their land, added more emphasis on how they were analyzed and depicted solely by the Western eye. It is worth noting that the studied poems are pre-colonial as they were written before the commencement of the British colonization of Egypt. Different studies have mostly dealt with the image of the Orient during colonialism and after; post colonialism. However, examining pre-colonial works would lead to a better understanding of the West and their justifications and reasons that paved the way for imperialism and colonialism. Thus, Alice Cary's "Death of Cleopatra" (1850) and W. H. Lytle's "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858) will be studied focusing on the symbolic significance of the life and death of Antony and Cleopatra and their influence on Western thought.

Cleopatra (69-30 B.C.E) has always been a fascinating figure for poets and writers. The epic love story of Antony and Cleopatra was the central theme for countless works of art. William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is considered a huge success ever since it was first performed in 1607. It also became an instant hit when it appeared in print at the beginning of 1623. Nevertheless, the interest in the figure of Cleopatra did not start with Shakespeare, it actually started with the Roman writers and has continued throughout the modern age, as the influence of this legendary figure has never ceased to inspire numerous generations. In her preface to *Cleopatra: A Sphinx Revisited* (2011), Margaret M. Miles explains the reason for Cleopatra's excessive popularity:

The Egyptian monuments in Rome and the reading of Roman authors kept alive interest in Cleopatra, and, together with Napoleon's adventures in Egypt, were responsible for persistent modern curiosity about Egypt. They inspired various periods of "Egypt mania" in early western art and eventually became the basis for Cleopatra's depiction... (as) charming and passionate, she had a personality so strong that she came to represent Egypt itself. The Roman view of Egypt and the Egyptianizing Monuments in Rome itself were used and reused through the centuries. (xii – 1)

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Thus, Cleopatra was not only considered a goddess by ancient Egyptians, but she has always been a symbol of power, beauty and infinite inspiration throughout the ages. Cleopatra is seen as an extraordinary heroic figure who defended her country against the threats of Rome as powerfully as she could but was eventually defeated by Caesar, preferring to put an end to her life rather than live in disgrace. Her intense love story with Antony, together with her premeditated death by the bite of an asp, is a constant reminder of the ephemerality of beauty, life, and power of the most powerful rulers in history and an everlasting inspiration that continues to inflame the public imagination and cast a spell on countless works of art. Antony and Cleopatra's life and death in Alice Cary and W.H. Lytle's selected poems manifest multiple symbolic references that reinforced the fixated image of the Orient and helped to shape and influence the Western thought prior to colonization. These poems and others were the fuel that led the way to the fanatic rush of the European world to possess and acquire those lands with all their magic and richness. It was as Said emphasizes:

The crucial fact was that Orientalism, in all its many tributaries, began to impose limits upon thought about the Orient. Even powerful imaginative writers were constrained in what they could either experience or say about the Orient. Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (West) and the strange (Orient). (Said, *Orientalism* 43)

Alice Cary's "Death of Cleopatra" (1850) and W. H. Lytle's "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858), share several characteristics that are distinctive of pre-colonial poetry, their poems represent the Orientalists' view of the Orient as an exotic and magical place but at the same time, the death and defeat of the goddess Queen signifies the end of the antique civilization. The theme of eternity, as opposed to the ephemerality of life and power, constitutes the main theme in the poems. In the poems, the ephemerality of the lives and power of the Pharaohs and Queens is followed by their inevitable downfall, giving the image of a rich land with a crumbling civilization devoid of its powerful rulers. Hence, the repetitive reference to the greatness of the Pharaohs and Queens and the depiction of the abundance and treasures of the land, is followed by the demise of the Pharaohs and the deterioration of the Orient, all this, send an insinuated tone of justification for the colonizing West.

The paradox between the greatness of the Ancient Egyptian rulers and the demise of their civilization is an indication of a contradiction in how the Orientalists see Egypt. The ancient Egyptian rulers believed in the afterlife, they built huge tombs and a number of pyramids to preserve their bodies and belongings so they can come back to life and enjoy eternity. Hence, eternity was one of the main concerns of the ancient Egyptian civilization. It constituted a huge part in their beliefs and their religious practices. Egyptians considered their kings and Queens as their gods, and temples and monuments were built for them as a place of worship. Nevertheless, in spite of the decline of the ancient Egyptian civilization from the face of the earth, its eternal presence has survived through the remains and ruins of their civilization. However, these ruins result in a paradoxical image. On the one hand, Egyptian Kings and Queens are depicted as godlike rulers possessing eternal, invincible and tyrannical powers. On the other hand, they are mere humans who are vulnerable to love, defeat and death; indicating the death of a former civilization and paving the way to a new Western one that is more worthy of this rich land. Thus, while the Orientalists hold veneration for Egypt's glorious past that was meant to be eternal, they regard the present with contempt and derision, which exhibits a certain pattern characteristic of the Orientalists' vision of the East.

Alice Cary (1820-1871) was an American writer, whose work is well known and very well received around the world. She was a simple girl from the north of Cincinnati, just like Lytle. Born in a family farm cottage known as the Cary Cottage, she received limited education at the neighborhood district school and had access to equally limited cultural resources. However, she was fortunate enough to get her hands on a Universalist paper, the "Trumpet" with its Poet's corner, which was, according to Phoebe, Alice's sister, as accounted by Judith Fetterley in her article, "Alice Cary"(1984), the "food for Alice's fancy [that] served as the source of her inspiration" (Fetterley,1984, 1).

Her first poems were published when she was eighteen and her fame and talent were well established ever since. Thomas J. Watson (1858) described her poetry as, "inferior to none written in America, in pathos, beauty of imagery, exquisite sensibility, and grace of utterance...She writes with ease, expresses herself clearly and gracefully,

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always embodies some thought worthy of being treasured " (105). She was characterized by her vivid imagery and lively woven themes as well as what Ticknor and Fields (1855) referred to as, "an easy rhythm, graceful thought, and striking, though sometimes incongruous imagery" (399). It was this unprecedented talent and brilliant imagination that led her to write her poem "Death of Cleopatra" with such striking beauty. Cary was influenced by the growing interest in Egyptology; perhaps even fascinated by the story of the life and love of Cleopatra, the queen and goddess of ancient Egypt. For poets, Egypt was, as Said puts it, "wonderfully synonymous with the exotic, the mysterious, and the profound" (51). Cary's perception of the Orient was that of an exotic, romantic world. While Cary was deeply moved by the love story of Antony and Cleopatra, Lytle on the other hand, was an experienced legislator and soldier. He was fully aware of the conflicts of his divided country during the Civil War and of how crucial territory acquisition was to his country.

Like Cary, William Haines Lytle (1826-1863) was also an American writer. Lytle was a soldier all his life and was appointed as a major general of militias. His life is best described by Ezra Warner in his book, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (1964) as, "distinguished by his poetical writings upon which his principal claim to fame rests" (287). Lytle was also known to have studied and practiced law and he was elected twice as the legislator, until the beginning of the American Civil War in 1848. He was appointed captain and was fatally wounded in one of the battles and died in 1863.

William Haines Lytle's, "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858), is another important poem that shaped and influenced many Western British thinkers and poets. It was a direct influence and inspiration to many poets including Swinburne, Rawnsley and other influential British writers and leaders. His poem, together with others, had most certainly helped to inflame the desire of the British Empire to acquire more land as part of the colonial scheme, the richness of the land, together with the absence of the former greatness and the deteriorating present of the Orient constituted a solid justification of why the Orient should be seized by the West. With this in mind, Lytle's poem offers a different scope of splendid representations of Egypt and its Queen, with her inspiring eternal

love story and her abrupt downfall and demise. Similarly, Alice Cary's, "Death of Cleopatra" (1850), portrays the theme of the ephemerality of power, embodied in the tragic death of Queen Cleopatra. Cary's poem has the paradox of the godlike depiction of the Queen with all her pride and power, along with all the priceless treasures on the one hand, and her tragic death and the loss of her throne on the other. The transience of power is seen again along with the loss of everything indicating the greatness of the past as contrasted to the unfortunate present. "The Death of Cleopatra" is one of the most beautiful poems written about Cleopatra before the British occupation. It was definitely a huge inspiration for Swinburne and others in drawing the attention of the British Empire to this majestic Queen and to the land of the Pharaohs.

Alice Cary starts her poem with an extremely significant motif of the "stars," signifying a feeling of hope which gives the poem a hopeful tone at the beginning. The star as a motif also "symbolizes the center of the universe," and "sets a principle of order against chaos"(Jung, 1969, 374-375). Thus, Cleopatra's rule of Egypt empowers both the Queen and the land, making Egypt and its queen the center of the universe, establishing order in the midst of chaos and providing the world with the light and warmth of the sun, as "the sun too is a star, a radiant cell in the ocean of the sky"(Jung, 1969, 374). Hence, Egypt and Cleopatra symbolize the Egyptian civilization and together they act like the light of the sun that covers the whole world and provides it with enlightenment and wisdom, an indication of the importance of the ancient Egyptian civilization to the world.

Cary carries on with her description of the "haughty crown" of Egypt, worn by Cleopatra. The adjective "haughty" is another significant description of the pride of the Queen who is totally confident of the eternity of her powerful rule, an irony that shows her complete ignorance of the ominous fate awaiting her. The "crown," on the other hand, is another important motif, which, according to Jung, represents "a circle consisting of glowing light...[as] the Egyptians customarily represent God, the Lord of the world, as sitting [at the center] thereby indicating the circular motion of the mind"(Jung, 1969, 326). This circle also represents "the motions of the heavens"(326), where God is at the center and all the other human beings revolve around him without ever

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entering the circle. The circle also indicates, "Wholeness, unity, God as infinite"(Guerin, 1966, 119), an implication of the divinity of Cleopatra as a Queen goddess who is highly superior to any other human being.

The stars of Egypt's haughty crown  
Were settled on the brow,  
And many a purple wave swept down  
From royal dust below.  
(Ryan 29)

Egypt is depicted as a glorious land and the crown of its queen is made of arrogant stars and placed on the "brow" of the beautiful queen. It is a crown fit for the godlike queen of Egypt, a metaphor indicating its eminence to the whole world. The queen encountered many challenges as she was trying to stop the greed of the Roman Empire that was continuously trying to defeat her and conquer Egypt. They came "as many a purple wave" trying to sweep her down. The choice of the word "purple" is significant, as it means imperial, showing that what was about to defeat Egypt, the great country was yet another royal and massive empire.

Moreover, the "wave" is another significant motif of nature indicating the full forceful power of the sea and conveying a feeling of agitation and uneasiness contrasted with the relaxed and luxurious setting of the first lines, thus preparing the reader for a coming tragedy. While the sea and the water as archetypes are elements that signify eternity, they work here on a double level. They are the providers of life, but at the same time, they symbolize the withdrawal of life, death and decay, thus foreshadowing the struggle within the poem and the downfall of the supposedly eternal goddess queen.

The pessimistic tone of the poem magnifies as Cary depicts Cleopatra's throne as fetters from which she cannot escape, a metaphor indicating helplessness. It is ironical that in spite of her infinite powers, she could not escape her fate. Cleopatra is "girt" or tied to "the realms that owned her power ", the empire which she served; Great Egypt.

Girt with the realms that owned her power,  
Enthroned in regal  
pride,  
With priceless kingdoms for a dower,  
Imperial beauty died.  
(Ryan 29)

Though she was full of "regal pride ", majestic, royal and

magnificent pride, desired and courted by many kings and having had her share of victories, she was doomed to die. As powerful and beautiful as she was, she could not escape death. The repetition of words like "haughty crown", "purple", "royal", "realms", "power", "enthroned", "regal pride", "kingdoms and Imperial", magnifies the presence of superior powers over Egypt and manifests an imperial thread of thought throughout the poem. It is what Edward Said describes as an "Orientalist discourse", that is a set of words or vocabulary used specifically to describe the Orient. Said explains,

[T]he vocabulary employed whenever the Orient is spoken or written about – is a set of representative figures or tropes. These figures are to the actual Orient as stylized costumes are to characters in a play ... They are all declarative and self-evident; the tense they employ is the timeless eternal; they convey an impression of repetition and strength; they are always symmetrical to, and yet, diametrically inferior to, a European equivalent, which is sometimes specified, sometimes not (71-72).

Alice Cary was evidently influenced by what she read about the Orient, and as most Orientalists, she always had the Western reader in mind, thus, addressing egoism, together with the dreams of power and imperialism in her Western world.

Cary's second stanza conveys a lighter tone, where it becomes a lighter one as opposed to the previous one which ends with the word "death". She goes back to the description of Cleopatra's possessions and Egypt's treasures. In doing so, Cary uses different motifs recurrent in the representation of Egypt. The riches of the Queen and the treasures of Egypt are aptly described, it is a land full of potentials and treasures. Cleopatra's 'spoils of cities', treasures and riches were endless! Her 'broad dominion', was lined with 'pearls', an evocative metaphor of her affluence and power, as pearls are precious, rare and hard to find.

The spoils of cities overthrown  
Her broad dominion lined;  
With pearls her palaces were sown (Ryan 29)

Cary uses the pearl motif as pearls are known to be both precious and rare. They are very hard to get and consequently very hard to keep

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because of their rarity, implying the impossible state of keeping all these riches eternally.

Besides, other images are skillfully used to describe Cleopatra's possessions. Her ships are scattered, "as blossoms by the wind," the word "blossoms" is related to flowers where, "In Christian metaphor, Mary is the flower in which God lies hidden" (Jung, 1969, 329), an emphasis on the divinity of Cleopatra. The "wind" is a motif of nature referring to the soul or the spirit, (Guerin, 1966, 120); it signifies a natural force symbolizing Cleopatra's strength.

As blossoms by the wind.

Her merchant-ships on every sea  
The royal flag unrolled,  
Laden with spices heavily  
And fragrant oil and gold. (Ryan 29)

Another significant aspect of her richness is her huge number of 'merchant-ships', that sailed 'on every sea', loaded 'heavily', with the most expensive merchandise on earth, 'spices...Fragrant oil and gold'. In pointing out the treasures of the Queen and the country, Alice Cary is arousing the greed of the western ambition. In his *Orientalism* (1978), Said asserts the fact that to define Orientalism we should acknowledge the French, British and American cultural-enterprise as a project that includes the acquisition of lands, 'the spice trade, colonial armies and a long tradition of colonial administrators, a formidable scholarly corpus, innumerable Oriental 'experts' and 'hands'... splendor, cruelty, sensuality)' (21). Thus, the spice trade was one of the most important incentives, besides the land acquisition, that promoted colonialism, and Alice Cary seems to be aware of that fact by pointing out the abundance of these priceless goods in the land of Egypt.

On the other hand, one of the most common archetypal images is the ship, which symbolizes, "mankind's voyage through space and time," (Guerin, 1966, 120). It stands for Cleopatra's life journey which was supposed to be eternal as a goddess, but her reign ended abruptly. As in the previous stanza, the sea is also one of the most significant motifs of nature. It symbolizes immortality, but also signifies death and rebirth; a paradox which applies to the ephemerality of Cleopatra's life and power, a supposedly immortal goddess, living in eternal bliss. Moreover, Cary ends the second stanza with "gold," which "expresses sunlight, value, divinity" (Jung, 1969, 305), a parallel to the stars of the first line of the

poem, where Egypt and Cleopatra act as the sun to the whole world: another allusion to Cleopatra as a queen goddess.

In the last stanza of the poem, Cary resumes the gloomy mood of the poem, contemplating Cleopatra's death and reasserting the main theme which is the ephemerality of the life and power of the godlike queen, Cleopatra.

Earth lent her soul no power to stem  
Such stormy waves as were;  
And the sweet star of Bethlehem  
Had risen not for her.

(Ryan 30)

In spite of Cleopatra's powers as an invincible Queen and goddess, she could not survive the defeat in war. The 'stormy waves' of Rome were too mighty to endure and she had no choice but to embrace her death. She was so unfortunate in love and in war that even 'the sweet star of Bethlehem', did not rise to save her! In his *Orientalism* (1978), Said identifies places like Bethlehem as bearing some resemblance to 'real European civilization' (172), as Christ was born there, and he is the symbol of light and redemption. Thus, European civilization has the same effect on the world; it represents the source of enlightenment in the modern age, as opposed to the ancient Egyptian civilization which had declined and died, in a clear reference that Egypt's great wealth and civilization was doomed to end, just like its Queen, which insinuates the absence of a worthy ruler and promotes the idea that the West is the only eligible candidate to rule this glorious land.

O Thou, who daily givest its beams,  
Be the dark sins forgiven  
Of her whose wild and mystic dreams  
Were all she knew of  
Heaven. (Ryan 30)

Cary starts these lines addressing Cleopatra who shines on the world daily as the sun with her "beams". This is a motif of light, and warmth which is about to end with her death. On the other hand, "dark," is an extremely significant image of death implying the absurdity of the belief in the queen's eternity, and the inevitability of her death. Cary's image, "mystic dreams," is very significant as according to Guerin, the mystical motif represents the theme of man's immortality, (Guerin, 1966, 121). Thus, Cary emphasizes Cleopatra's dream of immortality as a godlike figure, which proved to be unattainable. Dreams, on the other

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hand are another important archetypal image, which according to Jung, "exhibit rebirth symbolism... [an] inner transformation and rebirth into another being"(Jung, 1969, 131). This transformation is what Cleopatra aspired for, which is immortality, but her life and powers were ephemeral and were doomed to annihilation.

In a way similar to Alice Cary's "The Death of Cleopatra", William Haines Lytle adopts the same theme. His poem "Antony to Cleopatra" (1858), is another significant work expressing the same idea but from a different perspective. Lytle's poem is mainly about Antony, Cleopatra's lover, who meets his death while praying for the immortality of his beloved, the godlike Queen Cleopatra. Antony's mortality is contrasted to the immortal nature of his Queen. As a noble Roman soldier and a lover of the Queen of Egypt, Antony shared with her the supreme, supposedly eternal power. However, his brave and sudden death was the last straw to their tragic love story, which was supposed to be as eternal as the Queen goddess. Their love story and its tragic end is another manifestation of the ephemerality of life and power.

There can be no doubt that Lytle's poem influenced many British works. It was a direct influence and inspiration for many of them, including Swinburne, Rawnsley and other influential British writers and leaders. His poem is rich in magnificent archetypal images and motifs that describe both the land and its queen, in the most brilliant manner, thus portraying some of the most exquisite representations of the Queen of Egypt.

Lytle starts his poem with a very significant motif of the color "crimson". Colors symbolize many things. This deep red color symbolizes, "blood, sacrifice; violent passion; disorder"(Guerin. 1966, 119). Thus, the "crimson" color mentioned in the second line of the first stanza symbolizes the tragedy of the poem; Antony's death. It also signifies his overwhelming passion for Cleopatra and anticipates the chaos that is going to take place as a result of his death which will consequently lead to the death of the Queen of Egypt.

I am dying, Egypt, dying! Ebbs the crimson life- tide fast,  
And the dark Plutonian shadows Gather on the evening blast;  
(Ryan 31)

Lytle describes Antony's quick death by using significant motifs like the "tide," which retreats signifying despair and death. This conforms with the motifs of "darkness" and "shadows" in the following line. The "dark," symbolizes death and despair, while the element of water implied by the "tide," produces a dramatic interplay and depicts a gloomy effect that prevails in the poem, while the "shadows" motif creates an even more somber effect emphasizing and anticipating the chaos and evil that would dominate the land after his death.

In this first stanza Antony cries for help. He is calling Egypt to his rescue, believing that it is his only savior! This could be viewed as an insinuation of how the Orient and Egypt would save the West from all the chaos they are living in. Lytle further explains that the years fly by very fast and that the shadow of Pluto, the Greek god of hell, is hovering over him, another indication of the dark times the West is living in. The darkness of the American Civil War and the destruction and division of the country are threatening to engulf its people. Lytle's poem envisions an eternal love story in an exotic land that is filled with ancient treasures and economic possibilities that is fit to be ruled and exploited by the West.

Antony goes on in his cry for help addressing Cleopatra, the Egyptian Queen and goddess, asking her to hold him tight in her arms, showing a need for protection and security; a feeling probably lacked by the American soldiers! Antony asks Cleopatra to stop her tears from flowing and to 'listen to the great heart secrets', to his enormous love for her that she, and only she should 'hear'!

Let thine arms, O Queen, enfold me, Hush thy sobs and bow thine ear, Listen to the great heart secrets, (Ryan 31)

"Sobs" or tears are another significant motif in literature, providing an outlet to suppressed sadness and overwhelming emotions. Furthermore, water has a purifying effect that helps in the purgation of the soul which is necessary for the renewal and rebirth process in archetypal concepts (Guerin, 1966, 118). Thus, tears would help Cleopatra get over her sadness for Antony and contribute to her resurrection as a goddess.

In the second stanza, Antony describes his defeat by Octavian

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army in the battle of Actium (31 BC). He contemplates how his 'legions' have lost their glory and pride and his soldiers or "eagles" cannot win battles anymore. He also laments the fact that his "galleys", or warfare ships are 'wrecked ', broken and 'scattered' in defeat on the shores of the fatal battle which brought his death.

Though my scarred and veteran legions  
Bear their eagles high no more,  
And my wrecked and scattered galleys  
Strew dark Actium's fatal shore;  
Though no glittering guards surround me,  
Prompt to do their master's  
will,

I must perish like a Roman,  
Die the great Triumvir still. (Ryan 31)

Lytle introduces the eagle image as "birds as aerial beings" are well-known spirit symbols which represent the transformation of the spiritual image into a more earthy version" (Jung, 1969, 253). Thus, by the defeat of the eagles in their mission in protecting their grounds, Lytle indicates the failure of the transformation of Cleopatra into an immortal goddess, where she is left in her mortal state as a normal human being who is destined to die just like Antony. The "galleys" which are the ships, represent an image that is used by Lytle to symbolize man's journey on earth, implying Antony's role in life and the impact of his death on Cleopatra's destiny; the trips of the ships from one port to another carrying riches and goods resemble the human journey from the beginning to the end. Antony's life brought happiness and love to Cleopatra's life, but when his journey ended by his death, Cleopatra's desire to live ceased to exist and she chose to end her life, just like an empty vessel that reached its final destination and would never sail again.

Antony tells Cleopatra that he has lost all his guards and power, yet he must die like a noble Roman, 'the great Triumvir', leader that he is. Lytle repeats the word "dark" in the second stanza as opposed to the word "glittering". As "dark" and "fatal" refer to death, "glittering" on the other hand, has a merry implication. But since it is preceded by "no" in "no glittering," the gloomy mood is summoned back to wrap up the scene.

Lytle also uses war expressions like 'scarred', 'legions', 'fatal', 'guards', and 'perish'. Having a military background, Lytle is able to depict a vivid picture of war and defeat woven through the love story of Antony and Cleopatra. He presents a contrast between a war zone image

of destruction and defeat and the welcoming and soothing arms of Cleopatra and Egypt. In *The Poetry of the American Civil War* (2012), Lee Steinmetz explains that:

Civil War poets frequently use the war as a convenient sounding-board for their ideas... a considerable number strove to capture something of the immediacy of war and its impact on soldiers and their families [they] employed a highly colored diction in describing the war scene... The clash of arms provided one of the most popular subjects. Some poets poetically described specific battles which had captured their imagination. (1)

As a Civil War poet, Lytle is passionately depicting the war. In the following lines, Antony keeps describing how he was defeated in detail so as to get Cleopatra's and Egypt's emotional support. At the same time, Lytle is trying to direct the attention of the whole world to the importance of Egypt. These lines bear witness to Ziad Elmarsafy's *Debating Orientalism* (2013), where Nicolas Harrison explains that literary works such as 'Novel writing and lyric poetry come to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world'(223). Thus, writers and poets helped to create an alluring picture of Egypt that encouraged the West to conquer the Orient, believing that it had the magical solution to all its problems.

In the third stanza Antony addresses Cleopatra as the 'star-eyed Egyptian', a motif that was used by Cary in her poem. It symbolizes hope, indicating a change of mood in this stanza.

He also describes her as the 'glorious sorceress of the Nile!' with her amazing beauty and appraises her charm and power as a magnificent enchantress of the Nile:

Cleopatra's divine powers.

As for thee, star-eyed Egyptian- Glorious sorceress of the Nile!  
Light the path to Stygian horrors, With the splendor of thy smile;  
(Ryan 32)

The "sorceress," or the witch is another motif that is synonymous with a goddess for men of ancient civilizations (Jung, 1969, 34). Thus, Antony here acknowledges her divinity and power as a

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goddess of Egypt and of the Nile River. The river is an extremely important motif. It symbolizes "death and rebirth, the flowing of time into eternity; transitional phases of the life cycle; incarnations of deities"(Guerin, 1966, 119). Accordingly, the Nile represents another manifestation of Cleopatra's divine power.

The depth of Antony's love for Cleopatra is seen throughout these lines. He believes that even after his death, she can 'light ' his 'path' and save him with her love, beauty and power from the 'horrors' of 'Stygian', the river Styx which, as Donald P. Ryan explains in his book, *A Shattered Visage Lies* (2007), surrounds the underworld, as believed in Greek mythology (32). The power of the 'Egyptian' Queen is mirrored through the power of Egypt as a haven and a savior in both life and death.

Moreover, Antony further describes the 'splendor' and magnificence of Cleopatra's 'smile'. He can 'scorn' his defeaters by 'Triumphing ' in a love like hers. **In *The poetry of the American Civil War* (2012)**, Steinmetz states that, 'Most Civil War poetry [was] inclined toward the sentimental or melodramatic. Poets... interpreted the war as a colorful, dramatic, emotional spectacle, as a pageant designed to bring to the surface hitherto submerged heroics'(85). Thus, though Antony is defeated in the battle, he is determined to die and be remembered as a hero.

Give the Caesar crowns and arches, Let his brow the laurel  
twine:

I can scorn the senate's triumphs, Triumphing in love like thine.  
(Ryan 32)

Lytle uses another recurrent motif that was used by Cary which is the "crowns". The "crown" as explained by Jung, is "a circle consisting of glowing light" (1969, 249) where God resides at the center, emphasizing again the divinity of Cleopatra and how she can bestow her goddess powers on others.

The gloomy mood of the poem is obvious in the same famous, desperate cry, 'I am dying, Egypt, dying!' The repetition of the name 'Egypt', reinforces the idea that Egypt is the only savior from all the confusion in the other nations:

I am dying, Egypt, dying!

Hark! The insulting foeman's cry; They are coming – quick, my falchion!

Let me front them ere I die.(Ryan 32)

Antony's last moments in battle are passionately described. He addresses his 'falchion', sword and urges it to put him in front of his enemies before he dies!

Shall my heart exulting swell; Isis and Osiris guard thee-  
Cleopatra- Rome – farewell! (Ryan 32)

Finally, Antony dies a hero and ends his words with a prayer for Egypt and Cleopatra, 'Isis and Osiris guard thee'. In *Dancing with Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt Graves* (2010), Carolyn Brown states that, 'The Egyptians believed in the revival of the self in some form, after death... the deceased needs to become male Osiris to reach the afterlife, but once the journey is complete, a woman may become fully feminine again' (125). Thus, Antony dies praying for the immortality which he could not achieve. His death is contrasted to the supposed immortality of his beloved, the queen and goddess of Egypt. Antony prays for the Egyptian god and goddess Isis and Osiris for protection and bids Cleopatra and Rome farewell! He longs for rebirth after death; for his queen to grant him life again as Osiris did with his beloved Isis when she collected back his body parts and resurrected him giving him eternal life. Antony longed for that revival for himself and for his sick and torn nation. In Lytle's poem Cleopatra's eternity is contrasted with the ephemerality of Antony's life which was too heroic but nevertheless, too short.

While Alice Cary's poem has Cleopatra's death as its main theme, W.H. Lytle's poem focuses on Antony's death and the immortality of his Queen. Both poets were preoccupied with the demise of Cleopatra's power and the abrupt ending of her rule, which was also a subtle warning for tyrannical rulers of a similar fate. In his book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said highlights the role of the Orientalists in presenting this picture to the world. He explains that "The Orient needed first to be known, then invaded and possessed, then recreated by scholars,

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soldiers, and judges who disinterred forgotten languages, histories, races and cultures in order to posit them" (92). Thus, in writing about Egypt and its land, treasures, monuments and ancient civilization, poets helped in introducing Egypt to the world, and hence, making it known and desired by the greatest empires of the time.

In conclusion, the two poems written prior to colonization are preoccupied not only with the symbolic significance of the life and death of Queen Cleopatra and her glorious past which was filled with priceless treasures but also with portraying one of the most important themes that has prevailed since antiquity: eternity as opposed to the transience of life and power. Cleopatra is the godlike queen who was doomed to her end, leaving behind all her priceless possessions, glory and power, highlighting again the ephemerality of power and the discrepancy in the West's perspective between Egypt's past and present. Poets like Cary and Lytle were aware of the American imperial ambitions in the Middle East. The magical solution to all the destruction and conflicts of America's Civil War would be in the astounding Orient, the faraway East, and Egypt. They were voices amongst many others who were advocating the Orient as their sole redeemer; a place where they could find riches and peace, as well as submissive subjects. Their literary works, including their poems helped to shape the public opinion both in America and in Europe and to establish Egypt as the perfect candidate for British colonization, Britain being the strongest

Empire at the time. With this in mind, Cary's and Lytle's poems would gain more significance to them than meets the eye.

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