



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	KING LEAR	HAMLET	MACBETH	OTHELLO	ROMEO AND JULIET	JULIUS CAESAR	CORIOLANUS
CYMBELINE	TITUS ANDRONICUS	<u>TIMON OF ATHENS</u>	TROILUS AND CRESSIDA	ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA	KING JOHN		
HENRY IV, PART 1	HENRY IV, PART 2	HENRY V	HENRY VI, PART 1	HENRY VI, PART 2	HENRY VI, PART 3	RICHARD III	
HENRY VIII	ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL	AS YOU LIKE IT	THE COMEDY OF ERRORS	LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST			
MEASURE FOR MEASURE	THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR	A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM				
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE	THE TEMPEST	TWELFTH NIGHT	THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA			
THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN	THE WINTER'S TALE	LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON	THE HISTORY OF CARDENIO	A LOVER'S COMPLAINT			
THE RAPE OF LUCRECE	THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM	VENUS AND ADONIS	THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE	SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS			

[WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE](#)[Tragedies >](#)[WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE](#)

[COMEDIES](#)[A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM](#)

[ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL](#)[AS YOU LIKE IT](#)[LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST](#)[MEASURE FOR MEASURE](#)[MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING](#)[PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE](#)[THE COMEDY OF ERRORS](#)[THE MERCHANT OF VENICE](#)[THE MERCHANT OF VENICE](#)[THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR](#)[THE TAMING OF THE SHREW](#)[THE TEMPEST](#)[THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF
VERONA](#)[THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN](#)[THE WINTER'S TALE](#)[TWELFTH NIGHT](#)

HISTORIES

[HENRY IV, PART 1](#)[HENRY IV, PART 2](#)[HENRY V](#)[HENRY VI, PART 1](#)[HENRY VI, PART 2](#)[HENRY VI, PART 3](#)[HENRY VIII](#)[KING JOHN](#)[RICHARD II](#)

Timon of Athens

 [Subscribe to posts](#)

summary

posted Aug 3, 2013, 12:38 PM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 3, 2013, 12:38 PM**]

A Poet, Painter, and Jeweler come to Timon's house, hoping to sell him their wares, for Timon is a very generous man. Timon enters. He learns from a messenger that his friend Ventidius is in jail, so he sends money to pay for his freedom. He helps out several other citizens in need, and gladly accepts the works of the Poet and Painter and the jewels of the Jeweler. Apemantus comes to Timon's house, refuses a greeting, and scorns Timon's flatterers. Alcibiades arrives, and Timon greets him.

Timon throws a feast at his home, and all his friends are in attendance. Apemantus declares he has come merely to be an observer of the villainous flatterers who fill Timon's house. Timon speaks of his fondness for his friends and the pleasure he finds in giving them gifts, all without expectation of a return. Timon's servant Flavius worries that Timon will run out of money if he keeps being so generous. Most of Athens's citizens are amazed that Timon continues to be so generous, as it seems to them that Timon must have some magical power to possess such an unending bounty.

Three creditors, friends of Timon who lend him money, call their debts due, and send servants to Timon's door with bills in hand. Timon tries to dismiss them, but they won't be sent away. Timon asks Flavius why he has creditors at the door, and Flavius explains that Timon has no money and is in debt. Timon orders him to sell his land, but it is already mortgaged. Timon asks why Flavius never told him about the state of his affairs before, and Flavius insists that he had tried, but Timon always refused to listen. Flavius says that everyone loved Timon, but when his finances are gone, those who praised him will abandon him too. Timon doesn't

[RICHARD III](#)

HISTORIES

LOST PLAYS[LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON](#)[LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON](#)[THE HISTORY OF CARDENIO](#)

POEMS[A LOVER'S COMPLAINT](#)[SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS](#)[THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM](#)[THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE](#)[THE RAPE OF LUCRECE](#)[VENUS AND ADONIS](#)[VENUS AND ADONIS](#)

TRAGEDIES[ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA](#)[CORIOLANUS](#)[CYMBELINE](#)[HAMLET](#)[JULIUS CAESAR](#)[KING LEAR](#)[MACBETH](#)[OTHELLO](#)[ROMEO AND JULIET](#)[SITEMAP.XML](#)**TIMON OF ATHENS**[CHARACTERS](#)

believe him, and sends servants to ask his friends for loans, but Flavius says he has already tried that, and no one would lend him anything.

Each of three of Timon's servants arrives at one of Timon's friend's houses to ask for a loan, but each man refuses. Servants ask the newly released Ventidius for a loan also, but he refuses. Creditors' servants swarm around Timon's house, though they note how strange it is that their masters wear gifts from Timon while they demand payment on loans he took out from them in order to buy them gifts. Timon is enraged to be trapped in his house by groups of creditors' servants, and plans a last dinner party.

Timon invites all his friends and other Lords. Timon says grace over the covered dishes, asking the gods to be sure to never give too much to mankind, always hold something back, and to never ask for anything back, for mankind will abandon them. Then he reveals stones and boiling water. Timon curses the flattery of his alleged friends, and leaves Athens.

Meanwhile Alcibiades argues with the Senators about the fate of one of his friends, sentenced to death for having killed a man in a rage. Alcibiades tries to save his friend, but ends up annoying the senate so much that they banish Alcibiades. Alcibiades leaves, planning to raise an army to attack Athens.

Timon sets off into the wilderness. His servants mourn his departure, sad that someone could fall so far from being so generous. Flavius shares out his last money and sets off to serve Timon in the wilderness. Timon searches for food in the forest, only to discover a hidden cache of gold. Struck by the irony of his discovery now that he no longer needs it, Timon buries the gold again, keeping some. Then he is visited by all manner of men in the woods, starting with Alcibiades. When he hears Alcibiades's intention to destroy Athens, he gives him a donation in gold and urges him to massacre everyone.

Apemantus comes to Timon's cave in the forest and scorns him, remarking that his fall came about from being so generous to a bunch of no-good flatterers. The two insult each other, then Timon remarks that he is so miserable to have fallen because he never knew suffering, but Apemantus has, though he has never known such a horror as base flattery--so why does he hate humanity? Timon is the one who really has reason for such a response. The two men discuss their desires to turn the world over to the beasts, but end in insults, and Apemantus departs.

Then Flavius arrives, offering Timon his last money and weeping. Impressed at this show of pity, Timon realizes Flavius was the one honest man he came in contact with in Athens, and he is the one man who is able to escape his enthusiastic cursing of humanity. Timon gives him

[CRITICAL ESSAY](#)[SUMMARY](#)[TITUS ANDRONICUS](#)[TROILUS AND CRESSIDA](#)

[RECENT SITE ACTIVITY](#)

gold and orders him to leave.

The Poet and Painter have heard Timon has gold, so they arrive to ingratiate themselves to him. Timon sends them off on a wild goose chase. Later Flavius returns with two senators who announce that the people have determined Timon's treatment was unfair, and they want him to return to Athens. Timon refuses. The senators believe Timon's presence in Athens will somehow halt Alcibiades's invasion, but they can't shift Timon.

Alcibiades arrives at the gates of Athens. The senators attempt to defend the city, explaining that not everyone in Athens insulted Alcibiades and Timon, and they ask that Alcibiades come into the city in peace, without killing everyone. Alcibiades agrees, and punishes only those who have slighted himself and Timon. Then a soldier arrives with news that Timon has died, and Alcibiades reads his epitaph. Though he died thinking everyone hated him, Alcibiades honors Timon, a man much more admired in Athens than he believed.

Critical Essay

posted Aug 3, 2013, 12:38 PM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 3, 2013, 12:38 PM**]

One of Shakespeare's least popular plays, *Timon of Athens* recounts the tale of Timon, a rich and benevolent nobleman of Athens in the fifth century b.c. After Timon's excessive generosity bankrupts him, he turns to his friends for help. When Timon's false friends refuse to return his generosity, he denounces humanity and leaves Athens. A misanthropic hermit for the rest of his life, he dies in misery at the end of the play. Although *Timon* is believed to have been written about 1607, there is no evidence that the play was performed during Shakespeare's lifetime; indeed, it is almost universally considered unfinished. Although considered a tragedy, *Timon of Athens* is often called a morality play and includes some comic elements as well. For centuries, commentators have overwhelmingly found *Timon* deeply flawed and have tried to excuse the play as merely a sketch, an experiment, only partially the work of Shakespeare, or ravaged by poor transmission. Contemporary critics, however, find the experimental and ambiguous nature of the play intriguing and worthy of study. Some areas of critical discussion include the play's sources, the character of Timon, and the themes of money and friendship. *Timon of Athens* continues to be unpopular on the stage and had few performances during the twentieth century.

Critical analyses of *Timon of Athens* have generally concentrated on the play's principal

character, Timon. Sandra K. Fischer (1994) considers *Timon* Shakespeare's most “economic” play, and examines Timon's character in light of his “economic faults.” Fischer finds Timon an unsatisfying hero whose failure lies in his inability to receive. The critic contends that Timon does not learn his economic lessons, and that “by the end of the play, Timon still fails to understand the true nature and right use of money.” Karen Newman (1996) examines Timon's use of language in the play, and contends that he is a “visionary poet engaged in a dialogue with the universe.” Newman claims that Timon's gifts are linguistic, and that in the second half of the play his words become “misanthropic poetic gifts.” W. H. Auden (2000) calls Timon a “pathological giver” whose giving is motivated by selfishness and a desire to feel superior to others. Auden contends that when Timon's power—his ability to give—is taken away, he falls into “a state of powerless hatred.” Robert B. Heilman (see Further Reading) maintains that Timon does not want to look within and that he harangues other men and the world in order to avoid self-reflection and acknowledging that his quid pro quo style of giving is not true charity.

There is no evidence that *Timon of Athens* was performed during Shakespeare's lifetime, and it was infrequently performed in the centuries that followed. *Timon* remains unpopular with present-day directors, not only because the play seems unfinished but also because its characters are somewhat superficial. While some directors attempt to alleviate the unremitting bleakness of the second half of the play, James Torrens (1994) contends that modern audiences are not put off by the “dark and scathing” side of Shakespeare. Torrens reviews Michael Langham's National Theatre production of *Timon of Athens*, claiming that “against all odds” it enthralled Broadway audiences. Ben Brantley (1996) reviews Brian Kullick's Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival production of the play. Kullick admires the inventiveness shown by both the director and the designers of this particularly imaginative production, but acknowledges a lack of connection between the characters and the audience. Stephen Wall (1999) offers a rather negative review of Gregory Doran's Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Timon of Athens*. Wall finds the use of Duke Ellington's music inappropriately pleasant, some of the stage effects “merely illustrative,” and Michael Pennington's Timon lacking in the required “full ferocity” of hate. Patrick Carnegy (1999) also reviews Gregory Doran's Royal Shakespeare Company production, but calls the production “a superb staging.” Carnegy praises Michael Pennington's Timon and approves of Duke Ellington's music in the first half of the play.

One of the central themes of *Timon of Athens* centers on money. Derek Cohen (1993) examines the theme of having and not having money, and explores how one's identity is determined by his or her wealth in the play. Cohen credits Shakespeare with rejecting the “naturalness” of the powerful class having great wealth and for delving into the political roots of greed. The critic contends that it is Timon's realization of the corrupting effect of money on society that leads to his misanthropy. Maria Teresa Michaela Prendergast (2000) notes the lack of female characters in the play and examines the work in terms of the misogynistic practices of early Jacobean culture. Prendergast contends that Timon represses women and displaces his desire for women with a desire for gold in order to establish “absolute male autonomy.” James C. Bulman, Jr.

(1976) examines Shakespeare's sources for *Timon*. Bulman notes that Shakespeare used Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* (1579) and Lucian's second-century work *Timon the Misanthrope* as sources for his play, but contends that Shakespeare's chief source was an English academic comedy known as *Timon*. Thomas Cartelli (1985) contends that critics have dismissed *Timon of Athens* because it does not fit into the mold of what prevailing critical consensus says a Shakespearean tragedy “is or should be, does or should do.” However, Cartelli contends that Shakespeare deliberately refused to accommodate the conventional expectations of tragedy, and calls the play a “radical experiment in the psychology of theatrical experience.”

characters

posted Aug 3, 2013, 12:36 PM by alaa hagag [updated Aug 3, 2013, 12:36 PM]

Timon

Timon of Athens is the title character in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. Beginning the play as a wealthy man, Timon enjoys giving gifts to his friends and sharing his wealth. He believes that friendship means giving to his friends, without expecting something in return. Timon's servants all await the day when Timon's bounty runs out, for Timon has spent all of his money and more without listening to their reports about the status of his accounts. When creditors show up asking for payment on his debts, Timon finally listens, and discovers that he is bankrupt. He sends servants to his friends to ask for loans, but all come back empty-handed. Convinced all humanity has turned against him, Timon declares his hatred for mankind and takes off for the forest, where, to his dismay, he becomes a sought-after guru-like figure, and he discovers a hidden stash of gold. People constantly want to contact him, though his only discourse consists of curses for flatterers and false friends. Timon ends his days filled with bile at mankind.

Apemantus

Apemantus is not one of Timon's friends, but he attends Timon's feasts anyway, looking for an opportunity to scorn Athenian citizens. He always scoffs at Timon's greetings, promising he will never be polite to Timon's friendly words. While Timon's other friends receive gifts, Timon withholds them from Apemantus until he should choose to be more sociable. Apemantus thinks Timon's friends are all flatterers and false money-grubbers. When Timon's luck changes, and he

leaves Athens, Apemantus is delighted, and follows Timon to the wilderness merely to remind him that his villainous friends refused to loan him money. The two insult each other heartily and seem to dislike each other, yet they form a curious bond. Apemantus's poor upbringing makes him used to suffering while Timon is new to it, says Timon. But they are finally in the same boat, hating mankind together. Yet Timon still shoos him away from his forest home.

Alcibiades

Alcibiades is an acquaintance of Timon, apparently a soldier. When one of his friends is sentenced to death by the Senators, Alcibiades protests and is banished. He promises to raise an army and conquer Athens. He encounters Timon in the woods after he has left Athens, and offers to help him after he sacks Athens. Timon enthusiastically supports the idea of destroying Athens, and gives Alcibiades a sum of gold to aid his army. So when Alcibiades stands outside the gates of Athens, he attempts to right both the wrongs done to him and those done to Timon, becoming his final champion after his death.

Flavius - One of Timon's servants, Flavius is terrified to talk to Timon about his finances because Timon refuses to listen to him. Timon has not only run out of money, but he has gone into debt in order to continue giving gifts to his friends, and all his land is mortgaged. Finally Flavius has to confront Timon with the facts. When Timon is unable to procure a loan from his friends, he leaves Athens, and Flavius and his other servants mourn the fall of such a good man, brought down by his own generosity. Flavius shares out his last cash among the remaining servants, and determines to continue to serve Timon, going into the wilderness after him. Upon finding Timon, he offers his last remaining gold and weeps at Timon's downfall. Astonished, Timon declares Flavius is the only honorable man he knew in Athens, the only man who escapes his cursings of mankind, and gives him a sum of gold as a reward.

Lucullus

One of Timon's friends, Lucullus accepts Timon's gifts but refuses to give him a loan when he runs out of cash.

Lucius

One of Timon's friends, Lucius accepts Timon's gifts but refuses to give him a loan when he runs out of cash.

Sempronius

One of Timon's friends, Lucius accepts Timon's gifts but refuses to give him a loan when he runs out of cash. Sempronius claims he is insulted to be asked after three other friends, and refuses Timon.

Ventidius

One of Timon's friends, Ventidius accepts Timon's gifts but refuses to give him a loan when he runs out of cash. Timon begins the play by paying for his release from prison, yet Ventidius quickly forgets that when Timon needs cash.

Lucilius

One of Timon's servants.

Flaminius

One of Timon's servants, sent to ask for a loan from Timon's friends.

Servilius

One of Timon's servants, sent to ask for a loan from Timon's friends.

Servant

One of Timon's servants, sent to ask for a loan from Timon's friends.

Caphis

A servant of a creditor, one of Timon's friends who loaned Timon money, sent to Timon's house to demand the payment of a loan.

Varro's servant

A servant of a creditor, one of Timon's friends who loaned Timon money, sent to Timon's house to demand the payment of a loan.

Isidore's servant

A servant of a creditor, one of Timon's friends who loaned Timon money, sent to Timon's house to demand the payment of a loan.

Poet

One of Timon's hangers-on, the Poet composes verses for pay when Timon is wealthy. The Poet goes to the wilderness to seek Timon after his fall, having heard Timon found gold and hoping to get into his good graces. Timon thinks he's a money-grubbing flatterer.

Painter

One of Timon's hangers-on, the Painter paints Timon's likeness for pay when Timon is wealthy. The Painter goes to the wilderness to seek Timon after his fall, having heard Timon found gold and hoping to get into his good graces. Timon thinks he's a money-grubbing flatterer.

Jeweler

One of Timon's hangers-on, the Jeweler provides the ostentatious jewelry that Timon gives as gifts to his friends.

Fool

The Fool appears with Apemantus outside Timon's house while servants of creditors wait for their payments. The Fool makes parallels between those who go to creditors and those who go to prostitutes. As is often the case in Shakespeare, the Fool appears to be unconsciously wiser

than most other characters.

Bandits

Timon encounters these thieves in the wilderness, and he offers them gold to cause destruction and mayhem in Athens. Timon speaks so enthusiastically of the damage he hopes they will cause that they are put off their own profession.

Senators

Members of the Athenian Senate, the Senators judge Alcibiades's friend, and later seek to bring Timon back to Athens. They try to defend Athens from Alcibiades, explaining that not everyone in the city is a bad person, only a few select characters, who can be singled out and punished.

Lords

Among Timon's many friends who attend his feasts and accept his gifts.

1-3 of 3

