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CHAPTER - IV

SHAKESPEARE’S ROMAN HISTORICAL PLAYS

4.1 Julius Caesar (1599)

4.1.0 Introduction

On the Elizabethan stage, the plays those dealt with the History of Rome were many in numbers. Shakespeare’s selection of Roman history as a subject of drama was mainly related with three plays i.e. 1) Julius Caesar (1599) 2) Antony and Cleopatra (1607) and 3) Coriolanus (1607), of course Roman group of plays and English group of plays of Shakespeare resemble and also differ in many ways. The patriotic enthusiasm and pride of the Nation was found in both groups. History delivered the material and prescribed the treatment in both groups. The Ancestry of Shakespeare’s Roman plays was with Plutarch (born about 45 or 50A.D) Amyot Jacques (born in October 1513), and sir Thomas North (born about 1535); All the Roman plays portrayed by the Shakespeare were became popular event in England and also in the whole world. Amongst them, Julius Caesar received universal recognition.

The play ‘Julius Caesar’ is an admirable example of author’s faculty of transforming Roman history into drama, prose into poetry, without changing the value of the story to with his audience was familiar. The poet Shakespeare has with wonderful fidelity adhered to the accounts which he found in Plutarch. Archbishop Trench (narrating on the subject of Shakespeare’s obligation to sir Thomas North) says:- “It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the whole play, Julius Caesar (and same starts good of Coriolanus no less) is to be found in Plutarch. Shakespeare has thrown a rich mantle of poetry over all, which is wholly his own, but of the incident, there is almost nothing which is wholly his own, but of the incident, there is almost nothing which he does not owe to Plutarch, even as continually he owes the very wording to sir Thomas North’.

Julius Caesar was not published during Author’s lifetime, it first appeared as the folio of 1623. The date of its composition is 1599 or 1600 [A certain Thomas plutter records that on 21-9-1599, he saw ‘the tragedy of the first emperor Julius ---- very well acted –probably, but not certainty, shakespeare’s play.]
Malone, the another researcher supposed the play of Caesar to have been written in the year 1607 and for this opinion, he has taken the help of the statements of Drake, Skottowe, ficay and Knight, of course Malone thought in probable that the three Roman plays—Julius Caesar, its sequel, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus—would be composed in same period i.e. in 1607 and 1608. This theory of Malone is to some extent born out by internal evidences.

Shakespeare, in his three plays on Roman subjects—Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus—has made use of Plutarch’s writings. Plutarch wrote his parallel lives of noble, Greeks and Roman’s in Greek about the end of 100 A.D. they were translated into French by Amyot in 1560 and from French version into English by Thomas North In 1579. North’s translation is one of the greatest monuments of Elizabethan prose and Shakespeare followed it verbally. For Julius Caesar, he used the lives of Caesar and of Brutus and to a slight degree; that of Antony. In other sources mention can be made of “Appian’s History of civil war, Garnier’s cornelię and ever Bellefore’s History of Hamlet for the speech of Brutus to the crowd. (III/i)

It has been objected that the title of the play is not appropriate one; It should have been ‘Brutus’ after the republican patriot who according to critics is the real hero of the play. Caesar only appears in the play upon 3 occasions only (I/ii, II/ii and III/i) and even in these scenes, he is not a very impressive figure. Upon these occasions, he does nothing worthy of himself, but utters a few pompous, thrasonical and grandiloquent words. objections can be over ruled in the following way-1) Although Caesar is not Hero, yet he is the moving spirit and subject of drama 2) although he is assassinated in III/I, yet his influence continues even after death and he controls the action of the play with more powerful than when alive 3) The play illustrates the triumph of Caesariam over republicanism. The republicans controlled the death of Caesar’s body, but they could not compass the annihilation of that spirit which in the fifth Act calls from Brutus the testimony ---‘O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet!’ (V/i/i line 94) we may say that, Julius Caesar is a play without a hero, because there is no character who dominates the whole play and on whose personality and fortunes, the interests of the audience are concentrated from start to end. But though, there is no hero, there are many heroic characters who more or less equally divide readers and listener’s attentions and interest.

The central idea of the play is based on two main points 1) It is a political play and 2) It is a tragedy of character.
The central idea of the play is the decay of republicanism in Rome and The rise of Caesarism. In Act I/ scene i, there is a monarchical spirit abroad of which the populous give unconscious evidence. Citizens cry out:-(III/ii/53) = “Let him be Caesar, Caesar’s better parts shall be crown’d in Brutus” The Nation is calling for a representative in whom it may put supreme and unlimited confidence. Roman imperialism began under Julius Caesar and assumed definite form in the absolute military monarchy of his nephew Augustus.

The another idea of the play is “Good cannot come out of Evil” Brutus is noble, wise, valiant and honest but he made shipwreck of his life by one great error. He committed crime to prevent, as he thought, a greater crime and by so doing, he brought upon himself and his country, greater evils than those he had sought to avert.


The major characters in this play are – 1) Julius Caesar (100B.C. to 15 March 44 B.C.) – Caesar enters Rome in triumph (January 26, 44B.C.) and at the Lupercalia (5February) rejects the crown; prepares to leave Rome for Parthian war. A conspiracy of 60 republicans results in murder of Caesar (15 March 44 B.C.) in pompey’s senate House, (20 March 44, Antony’s funeral speech over Caesar) 2) Octavius Caesar – Julius Caesar’s great nephew and heir at that time aged 19; Later the emperor Augustus who ruled Rome till A.D 14 3) Marcus Antonius (Antony) :- Triumvirs (3 men who shared) the chief power in the state- other two were – Octavius and M.Aemilius Lepidus 4) Cicero – famous orator; a republican and enemy of Antony 5) Marcus Brutus: a strong republican by his descent from Julius Brutus, who expelled the Tarqwuins; had therefore sided with Pompey; pardoned by Caesar 6) Cassius : Brother in law of Brutus, conspirator against Julius Caesar was also pardoned by Caesar.

The following characters and incidences can be studied from research point of view.

1) The character of Brutus- Eu, tu, Brute!- Then fall Caesar

2) Antony “The sportsman turned statesman”

3) Antony’s funeral speech- “Bloody treason flourished over us”

4) Brutus justification of Caesars murder – “Think him as a serpent’s egg”

4.1.1 The character of Brutus – Et tu, Brute! Then fall Caesar!
Et tu Brute ! Then fall, Caesar ! (III/i/77) : These are the last words of Caesar spoken by him as he falls dead stabbed by the Conspirators. When the conspirators begin stabbing him, he tries to defend, but when he finds his dearest friend, the noblest man among those stabbing him, he feels no desire to live, so he gives up resistance and with these words he falls down dead.

“Et tu Brute ?” You, too, Brutus (Latin) – do you also, Brutus, my best friend and the man with whom no ignoble thought or deed can be associated, wish my death and stale me? Then it is time for me to die, according to the version of the death of Caesar given by the Greek writer Suetonius, the last words of the dictator were: “ and thou, my son”. The origin of the expression Eu Tu Brute is not definitely known but might have borrowed by Shakespeare, from a Latin play “on Caesar acted at Oxford in 1582. Lastly “Then fall Caesar”- Caesar addresses to himself.

Shakespeare’s Brutus is undoubtedly the very noblest figure of typical and ideal republican in all the literature of the world, (Swinburne, 1880, A study of Shakespeare) Brutus was noble and patriotic sitting high in all the people’s heart, And yet his cause was a failure. Brutus was a philosopher rather than a man of action, a good theorist, but a bad conspirator. Bookish, not practical, he would come by Caesar’s spirit and not dismember Caesar.

Brutus gentleness is seen in his intercome with everyone. Brutus was a philosopher. He belonged to the stoic school of philosophy, which held that pleasure and pain are independent of outward circumstances and are of no significance in themselves, that a life, virtually spent ensures perpetual happiness; that the wise man cannot really meet with misfortune, outward calamity being a divine instrument of training designed to teach indifference to external conditions; and that virtue is to be cultivated for its own sake.

Mark Antony, in his famous oration, modestly declares himself to be ‘no orator as Brutus is’ and the student of the play is hereby sometimes led to regard Brutus as the type of an excellent orator. But, such is not the fact. The speech of Brutus made no deep impression upon his audience (III/ii/12 to 49 and 58 to 64); the resistless eloquence of Antony took all ears captive (III/ii/75 to 200 and 211 to 232 and240 to 253). Antony effected his purpose; Brutus did not. Brevity and logical precision were the chief characteristics of the speech of Brutus’. Only when, under the influence of some strong emotion did he rise to eloquence, as when he forbade
the oath (II/i) or when he bade his fellow-conspirators stoop and bathe their hands in Caesar’s blood (III/i)

4.1.2 Antony – “The sportsman turned statesman”

“Shakespeare keeps Antony in ambush throughout the play. Antony is certainly in what we might fancy would be his own lingo – a dark horse. There can be no more typically English figure than the sportsman was turned statesman, but a sportsman still.” (Granville – Barker, preface, 1927)

“There is one element in Antony and that he is not selfish: His attachment to Caesar is genuine ------- one tender emotion of his heart is used by him as the convinient weapon on with which to fight his enemies and raise himself to power” (Mowlton- Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, 1885)

The most admirable of Antony’s qualities in his devotion to Caesar. It shows itself as much after as before Caesar’s death. Brutus describes him as a mere “limb of Caesar” (II/i/165); Cassius speaks of the “in grafted love he bears to Casear(II/ii/84) and of him as “So well beloved of Caesar (II/ii/156). Even in the presence of conspirator, Antony does not conceal his affection. In the message he sends through his servants, he mentions how he feared Caesar, Honoured him and loved him (III/i/129)

Antony was a man of great ability, but little fixity of purpose. He was resourceful and could yield to circumstances. At one time; he is cunning and persuasive, at another, outspoken and hold. Cassius understood him, and with reason dreaded his power –” you know not what you do; do not consent That Antony speak in his funeral (III/i/232)

Antony’s great speech in the forum is one of the finest specimens of eloquence to be found in English language. Of course! Shakespeare has exhibited the fully developed character and Mark Antony, adopting Plutarch’s opinion that the love of Cleopatra did Waken and Stir up many vices yet hidden in him and were never seen to any. In the play “Antony and Cleopatra”, he is shown clever, dashing, and reckless, a magnificent debauchee with flashes of greatness gives himself wholly up to voluptuousnees and entirely subjugates his reason to his passion. He loses the world and thinks himself repaid- by a kiss.
4.1.3 Antony's funeral speech:—“Bloody treason flourish'd over us”

“One may so analyse the speech throughout and find it a triumph of effective cleverness. The cheapening of the truth, the appeals to passion, the perfect carillon of flattery, Cajolery, mockery and pathos, swinging to a magnificent tune, all sene to make it a model of what popular oratory should be “(Granville- Barker, prefaces , 1927)

Perhaps no where else in History as we find the procedure of the demagogue of Genius set forth with such masterly insight . of course ! he is speaking under limitation and by permission before a hostile audience that will barely give him a hearing and his task is to turn them quite round and make them adore what they hated and hate what they adored.

He begins —“ For Brutur’s sake , I am beholding to you . He disclaims the intention of even praising the dead. He cites the charge of ambition and not to reply to it, but then, he insinuates arguements on the other side: Caesar’s faithfullness and justice in friendship . his pitifulness to the poor, his refusal of the crown . All these things were already known to the public . The Antony has managed to praise Caesar while not professing to do so, it he does not disprove what Brutus said. Yet in speaking what he does know, he managed to discredit Brutus authority.

He begins again “bloody treason flourished over us” (III/ii/195). He strikes now, the note of contrast between Caesars greatness yesterday and his impotence to-day; compassion, curiosity, selfishness are now enlisted on his side cries of “ The will ! The will ! arise” (III/ii/157) Now Antony is quick to take advantage of this response of the audience. He now refuses to his Caesar’s will , for they will rise in Mutiny. He steps down from the palpit, taking care to have a wide circle around him . He does not read the will immediatedly. Antony is not better orator than Brutus is and – with sublime effrontery- that was probably the reason he was permitted to address ----- “ Were I Brutus , and Brutus Antony, there were an Antony , would raffle up your spirits and put a tongue. In every wound of Caesar, that should more, The stones of Rome to rise and Mutiny” (III/ii/224-228)

Now, we have to note the last words- for though Antony feels entitled to indulge in this farcing and enjoys it thoroughly , he doesnot forget the serious business. He gives the hidden suggestion of mutiny and for mutiny, the citizens are now more than fully primed. All this, he
has achieved without even playing his trump card. He has of course, never answered Brutus charge on which he rested his own case that Caesar was ambitions. In sum, Antony, by his speech, could turn the audience to his side and citizen said –“ Most noble Caesar ! we’ll revenge his death (III/ii/243/)” we’ll burn his body , in the holy place, and with the brands fire, the trator’s houses (III/ii/255 and 256)

4.1.4 Brutus justification of Caesar’s murder – “Think him as a serpents egg”

Brutus is hatred of the very name of King and dread of tyranny were so firmly noted in his nature that the instigasion of Cassius were scarcely necessary to impel him to fein in the conspiracy against Caesar. He said, that Caesar was no tyrant by nature, but then there was a possibility that sovereignty might change his nature and therefore he said he must ----- “ think him as a serpent’s egg.” Which hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous; and kill him in the shell” (II/i/32) such was the erroneous arguments based upon a mere supposition of an assumed possibility and making no allouance for his own possible errors of judgement, by which Brutus arrived at the conclusion that Caesar must be killed.

Shakespeare has emphasized the virtues of Brutus, while keeping those of Caesar on the background. He has endeavoured to prove that his motives in killing king were not those of jealousy, ambition and revenge, but of unalloyed patriotism. To do this, he has shown Brutus as kind and gentle, sympathizing with all who suffer and unwillingly to inflict pain except for reason of strong moral necessity. He has portrayed him most sympathetically in his relation as master, friend and husband showing that only a high sense of public duty could have made him lift his hand against Caesar.

It is this conflict between his humanity and his keen hereditary love of liberty, threatened by Caesar’s despotism, that gives Brutus a grandeur of character which raised him above his associates and which drew the admiration of his contemporaries and of posterity. Even his bitterness enemy acknowledged his integrity and the goodness of his heart.

4.1.5 Conclusion

Julius Caesar is the immemorable creation of Shakespeare in his writings on Roman History. He has transformed history into drama, prose into poetry without changing the value of
the story. His poetic art is reflected in this play. He has made commendable use of Plutarch’s writing. Julius Caesar was published in 1623 but its composition is of the year 1599 or 1600. Of course, the play on the name of ‘The tragedy of the first emperor Julius was staged on 21-9-1599. The title of the play has received a major criticism; because Caesar appeared only in the first half of the play. Still it is said that “This play has no hero at all; and if there are heroes, they are more than one, the show of Caesar is observed completely from the beginning to the end of the play. The central idea of the play is based on political affairs and on the tragedy of characters. “Good cannot come out of Evil” is the central idea of this play. The major characters are 1) Julius Caesar 2) Octavius Caesar 3) Antony 4) Cicero and 5) Marcus Brutus.

The character of Brutus is well pictured by the Author “Et, Tu, Brute! Then fall Caesar” is world known statement which is used today as an important phrase; The whole hearted friend when joins in conspiracy, this phrase is universally used. Brutus is painted as a noblest figure and of ideal republican. Brutus was noble and of patriotic and because of his respect to the Roman empire, he joins in conspiracy and kills Caesar. The another character is of Caesar’s friend, the Antony who is called as “The sportsman turned as statesman, He is always to the side of Caesar. Antony’s funeral speech is masterpiece and he turns the whole mob to the side of died Caesar with his popular oratory through he himself says that he is not good orator as compared to Brutus. Brutus justification of Caesar’s murder is out of his love towards his country. Being a patriotic of Rome, he said that Caesar is a serpents egg and hence kill him in the shell. Brutus character though looks like villain, is not real. He is portrayed perfectly by the Shakespeare.

In sum, Julius Caesar is one of the best Roman Historical play ever written by Shakespeare. For this, atleast, we have to salute Shakespeare for his best artistic work.

References:
1) woods and wood A.S (1965) Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, the Oxford and cambridge edn, ‘George Gill and son, London
5) Boas F.S (1947) = Shakespeare and his predecessors, 2nd edn, Rupa and company, Bombay
6) Coleridge,(1818) Lectures on Shakespeare.
4.2 Timon of Athens (1607)

4.2.0 Introduction:

There is a disputed critics about the authorship of Shakespeare for Timon of Athens. From the beginning, to an end of the play, there are passages whose magnificent phrasing bears the indubitable hallmark of the Shakespearean workshop. Critics refuses to accept Timon of Athens as a complete and jointed Shakespearean whole. There are impossibilities in it. Timon is always in a weak cell and less clearly motivated version of the disillusioned child of fortune. There are many structural incoherencies, which do not fit with Shakespeare's language. In the beginning of the play (Act I/Scene I line 10 to 11) Merchant says - "A most incomparable man is breathed as it were to an untirable and contiuate goodness."

The play most probably, did not come on the stage but the life of Timon of Athens might have written in the year 1607 and published in the year 1623.

Timon of Athens may be conveniently included in the Plutarch series of plays. It’s chief source is the passage in the biographer's life of Antony (Life of marcus Antonius), where he compares the trimbrs conduct after the battle of Actium to that of Timon - a citizen of Athens. In Plutarch's pages, Shakespeare found a brief account of Timon's self-banishment from his ungreatful friends, of his relations to Aleibiades and Apemantus and of his burial on seashore. There is no any mention of any performance of this play which remained unprinted till 1623. It may reasonably be regarded as having been produced by the Kings men about 1607. The scenes which cannot be accepted as finished work by Shakespeare are - 1) Act I, Sc, 2) Act III - Sc, 1,2,3,4,5, 3) Act IV Sc, 2,3, 4) Act V - Sc – I. As per E.K. Chambers (1908), Timon of Athens, the Red letter Shakespeare. The source of the play are to be found in Plutarch's life of Marcus Antonius as translated from the French of Jaques Amyot in Sir Tomas. North’s Parallel lives of the Noble Greek and Roman (1580), Lucian's dialogue of Timon or Misanthropos, and william Paynters palace of pleasure (156). Another play of Timon, edited by Dyce in 1842, is probably of academic origin and is not likely to have been known to Shakespeare.

The story of this play is simple. The rich man of Athens, the Timon spends his wealth and even everything on his friends and then becomes insolvent. Inspite of the repeated warnings by his servant, Flavius i.e. steward, he overlooks and lastly become poor, than he realises that friends were there only in the events of happiness and not in sorrows, nobody helps Timon when
he becomes insolvent and lastly Timon dies in his poorness on the sea shore. This is the simple story. The proverb is ‘A friend in need is a friend indeed’ and Timon is exception to it. No friend helps him and he dies in miserly and inpoverty.

The whole play is devided into 5 Acts with 17 scenes (Act-I-2 scenes, Act II-2 scenes, Act III - 6 scenes, Act IV - 3 scene and Act V - 4 scenes). The whole play is either shown to be performed in Athens and the forest (Athens - before Timon's House, senators House, Lucu's house, forest, Near Timon's tomb, walls of Athens etc.)

Amongst the different characters, the major are -
1) Timon of Athens, 2) Alcibiades - Athenian captain, 3) Flavius - Timons steward i.e. servant, 4) Apemantus - A Churlish Philosopher, 5) Lucius, Lucullus and Sempronius - three flattering Lords and friends of Timon. In this play, the female characters are not important Only 2 women, Phrwnia and Timandra do appear in Act No.3 alongwith Alcibiades and speak few sentences.

The rich lord, Timon, keeps his house open for all and Sundry and scatters his gifts with reckless prodigality. The meanest offering to him, as his associates soon discover, he regards as a challenge to his own generosity "If I want Gold! Steal but a beggar's dog, and give it to Timon, why the dog coins gold, if I would self my horse and buy twenty more. Better than he, why give my horse to Timon, Ask nothing, give it him. It fouls me straight and able horse”.

As Timon declares himself, he could deal Kingdoms to his friends and never be weary and this lavishness does not spring from ostentation, but from genuine good will towards all mankind.

But he could not maintain the balance in his income and expenditure. It is invain that his faithful stewards, Flavius warns his master, account book in hand, that bankruptcy stares him in the face and that when his wealth is flown, his trends will take flight too : (II/iii/170-175) “Who is not Timmons? what heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord Timons? Great Timon, nobel, worthy, royal Timmon! Ah! when the means are gone, that buy this praise, the breath is gone whereof this praise is made, Feast - won, fast-lost, one could of winters shower. These flies are couch'd!”

But Timon lives in a fool’s paradise and believes that he can whistle back riches to any extent because friendship establishes a community of goods. We are born to do benefits and what better or properor can we call our own than the riches of our friends.
The man who begins by taking all his fellowmen, without resource, to his bosom, is well high certain to end in the other extreme of a loathing for the whole of human kind. Thus it fares with Timon.

The following incidences from his richness to poorness, from his prosperity to poverty can be analysed form research point of view.

1) Timon’s views of friendship : “Deal Kingdom to my friends!”
2) Loss of wealth of Timon. "The breath is gone..."!
4) Flavius (stewards) warning : "fierce wretchedness through glory”
5) Timon’s frustration : "Sick of the false world"
6) Timon’s everlasting mansian - "Graves - the men's works" i.e. his death.

4.2.1 Timon’s views of friendship : "Deal Kingdom to my friends!"

i) (I/ii/102-109) Timon : "............. Why, I have often wished myself poorer, than I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort it is, to have so many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortune! O joy elen made away eret can be borne!"

ii) (I/ii/224-225) Timon ............. "............. I could deal Kingdoms to my friends, and neer be weary"

In Act I/ I, poet describes, The Timon’s Kindness’ richness and he is a proper Donor. The poet describes Timon’s behaviour and his heart ful of love and sympathy. He never sends the man with empty hand who comes to him with some demand. Even Timon further in Act I/ II says that, he loves friend and friends must be around him; everyone must be benefited from other’s wealth and prosperity. All friends are my brothers, my close relatives and they are the real partners in my fortune. I share their fortunes and they share mine. Timon always thinks wellbeing of his friends and even ready to distribute his Kingdom, his chattles and lands and pastures among his friends, so that, they can be more happy.

Here at the end (Act I/scene ii/ lines 245-248) the Apemantus gives him first warning to which Timon never considers seriously and ultimately whatever Apemantus said becomes true.

Apemantus .......... "Thou givest so long, Timon, I fear me thou will give away thyself in paper shortly. What needs these fears, pomps and vain - glories."
Timon ............" ..................” I am sworn, not to give regard to you.”

4.2.2 Loss of wealth of Timons –“The breath is gone”

(II/ii/142 to 150 and 170 to 177)

Flavius : “When, for some trifling present, you have bid me. Return so much, I have shook my head and wept; yea,’ gainst the authority of manners, prayed you, to hold your hand more close. I did endure not seldom nor so slight checks, when I have prompted you, the ebb of your estate, and your great flow of debts, my loved lord, though you hear now - too late - yet now’s a time, the greatest of your having lacks a half, To pay your present debts.”

Flavius ............. "Heavens, have I said the bounty of this lord! How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasant. This might englutted! Who is not Timon's? What heart, head, sword, farce, means, but is Lord Timons? Great Timon noble worthy, royal Timon! Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise, The breath is gone whereof this praise is made, feast - won, fast-lost one cloud of winter showers, these flies are couched”

Many times, Favius (steward) warned Timon about his expenditure and thereby becoming insolvent, but Timon did not listen to him. He told many times that his debts and interest on it is increasing fastly, he should control in spending unnecessarily on luxury like feast and pomps and vain glories. Now it is too late, as you have only half the estate remaining while loan is double, than that; Now there is the beginning of 'winter' Now nothing can be repaired but......... Timon again trust on his friends and mentions flavius not to speak more - "come, sermon, me no further!"

4.2.3 Timon's last Feast – “of smoke and Luke warm water”: 

To teach last lesson to his friends, Timon invites them for the feast and tries to convince them that they should help him. He serves only Luke - warm water, the scene is nicely portrayed by Shakespeare in Act III scene VI lines 69-109.

Timon : "Each man to his stool, with that spur as he would to the lip of his mistress, your diet shall be in all places alike ...... make not a city feast of it ..... you great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness....... the rest of your fees, o gods....... the senators of Athens, together with the common lag of people......

............ uncover, dogs and lap.

............ May you a better feast never behold, you knot of mouth - friends! smoke and Luke - warm water. This is Timon’s last........ washes is off and sprinkles in your faces.
........ hence forth hated be of Timon man and all humanity!"

Timon gives now advise that you should reserve something for yourselves, do not give everything to others, Lend to each man so little that one need not lend to another. Then Timon calls the friends near the tables and serves them only Luck-warm water and drives all his friends out of his house. Timon has now understood the ungratefulness of his friends but now the time has already gone. He is how bankrupt and insolvent and there is no any other option before Timon than to go in caves on the seashore.

4.2.4 Flavius (stewards) warnings “fierce wretchedness through glory"

brings us, who would not wish to be from wealth exempt, since riches point to misery and comfort? and who would be so mocked with glory, or to live, But in a dream of friendship? To have his pomp and all what stale compounds..........

Even after stewards warning, Timon spends whole money and lastly becomes insolvent and decides to leave Athens, Here his faithful manager give estate i.e. his stewards (Flavius) wish to accompany him in his last span of life. He has all sort of sympathy towards his master. He knows that his poor honest master brought this stage of his Life by his own misdeeds. His misdeeds are due to his goodness and thinks that a man does the good deeds when his sin comes up. His master's fortune turned him poor and in this stage of life, being his loyal servant, Flavius wish to accompany his master - "I will ever serve his mind with my best will" This is the real spirit and loyalty of servant towards his master, the Timon.

4.2.5 Timon's frustration - "Sick of the false World" :

(iv/iii/374-379) Timon : “I am sick of this false world, and will love naught, But even the mere necessities upon it. Then,Timon, presently prepare thy grave; Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat, thy grave-stone daily; make thine epitaph, that death in me at others lives may laugh.

When Timon came to know that friends are only to his rescue if he is rich and in the state of poverty, they run away. He is fed up of the whole selfish world. Timon calls 'Selfish world' as 'false world' and he does not wish to love such selfish world and wish to die, for that, he wish to prepare his own grave on the coast of the sea and wish to die i.e. to take his last breath in that grave and wish to put the stone, the epitaph, that while, reading by others, they will laugh at due to Timon's tragedy because he has spend all his wealth on such friends who are unkind to him.
The total speech of the Timon in this passage is nothing but his frustration towards his life and more specially towards the selfish world.

**4.2.6 Timon's everlasting mansion - "Graves the men's works" i.e. his death**:

(Vi/ii/216-225) Timon - "Come not to me again but say to Athens, Timon hath made his everlasting mansion, upon the beached verge of the salt flood, who once a day with his embossed froth, The turbulent surge shall cover; thither come and let my grave - stone by your oracle. Lips, let sour words go by, and language end, what is amiss, plague and infection mend! Graves only be men's works, and death their gain! Sun hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign."

Timon on the sea coast dies and he, before death, constructs his own grave his everlasting mansion - the men's works, his death is last beautiful mansion ever he constructed. He, in sheer frustration, lastly utters that what man lastly gets? his own death - Every man's last gain is his own death. Death is the valuable gift of every man and the beautiful graves are his best architects and construction. It is perfectly the universal truth that death and the only death is the last gift every man gets from the God. Shakespeare has put this universal truth in the mouth of Timon.

**4.2.7 Conclusion**:

Timon of Athens is the ordinary play written by Shakespeare in 1607, the language of the play does not show many similarities with the work of the Shakespeare's in other plays. The play is written on the basis of Plutarch series. The chief source is the ‘biographers life’ of Antony. From plutarch's pages, Shakespeare found a brief account of Timons self banishment from his ungrateful friends. The story of play is very simple. The rich man's of Athens, the Timon spends his wealth on the feasts and parties given to his friends, then he becomes insolvent; friends do not help him in his poverty and lastly he dies on the sea shore. Flavius (steward) is the estate manager of Timon's who has given the warnings to Timon about his insolvency but due to trust on friends, he ignores and dies. Timon was even ready to sell or distribute his kingdom amongst friends. Afterwards he is sick of the false world and Timon himself builds his own grave, the everlasting mansion on the sea coast. Shakespeare has warned through this play, that everybody should protest his own wealth for everybody's old age and should not spend it unwisely.

The play did not get much popularity among the Elizabethan theatre, Though the story is from Athens, hence the play is included in the series of Roman history but has no any substantial value in the Shakespeare's whole literature. Eventhough this play is called as tragedy. This tragedy is not circumstantial but brought by the Hero himself, because of his unwisenss and
foolish thinking. In sum, Timon of Athens is most ordinary play, ever written by the Shakespeare.

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3) Apte V.S.() Timon of Athens in Marathi in Sampurna Shakespeare.
4) Sir Thomas North (1580), Parallel Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans.
4.3 Antony and Cleopatra (1607)

4.3.0 Introduction:-

The Antony and Cleopatra, the world famous love story was written by the Shakespeare either in the early part of 1607 or in the later part of 1606. “Antony and Cleopatra seem such great lovers, that they are inseparably destined for each other but each is at the same time, the most dangerous mate to each other. No one could have accomplished him better than each did for the other. Possibly this fact may have existed in history, at any rate, Shakespeare has made the most of it and emphasized their mutually destructive powers to the utmost”____N. Wessland.

While writing Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare, as usual, derived his material from various sources. The outlines of this play are based, in the main, on ‘Life of Antonius in Plutarch’s lives. But it is quite possible, that Shakespeare may have consulted Daniel’s play called Cleopatra, and countess of Pembroke’s translation of a French play known as “Tragedie of Antonie”, Which was published in 1592. But though the flowers may be culled from different gardens, their blending is all Shakespeare’s own. He transformed the dull existing prosaic material into a beautiful play by his great dramatic genius. He brings in characters lavishly and flings Plutarch into dialogue.

Though the drama is historical play, it contains some local colouring. There is the Elizabethan colouring. The play deals with the period of B.C. 40 to B.C.30 yet it has certain references that make it Elizabethan affair. References to ‘ tailor of the Earth’, is something exclusively Elizabethan, since the tailor was in great demand during that time. The reference of Elizabethan aged games i.e. ‘ football, billards and fast and loose” were not their in those years of which the time of the Act is pictured.

Take out love from any literature and it is sure to fall to pieces. Even since the dawn of poetry, love has been its dominant theme. It was love that made the composition of Kalidas, Meghdoot possible at all. It is love that makes the world go around. Not only in poetry, but the dramas and novels are full of love. There is much of love in Shakespeare, Sidney, Spencer, Herrick, Caren, Shelley, Byron, Keats, Tennyson, Browning and many other poets of England. Love was force that inspired Dante to write his Divine comedy, Goethe, his sorrows of
werther. Love is the theme of endless tales, short stories & novels. Take out love from the world of sir Walter Scott and you are left with dust and ashes.

Shakespeare himself is one of the greatest love poets of England. In Antony and Cleopatra, he deals with the abnormal aspects of love – a love that is ardent and sensual, tender and sentimental, Joyous and frivolous, Witty and Cynical.

The love presented in this drama is a love of mature human beings: Antony must have gone to bed with many women before Cleopatra and Cleopatra herself is far from being chaste. It is the love that seizes the elderly man of the world; The trained mistress of arts and does this to cojole and destroy them both. It is the love, that destroys the world rather than the love that helps it go on more smoothly. It disturbs the harmony of things. It is both seductive and destructive.

In Antony and Cleopatra, a woman who is neither chaste nor even beautiful, ruins a valiant soldier who is one of those that rule a big empire, makes him false to his responsibilities, false to his own trusted followers and at last, lures him into a clumsy death, with kingdom crashing into wars over her worthlessness. Cleopatra’s love is not the love of Beatrice that made Dante write his Divine Comedy. It is not the love of Elizabeth Barret, that made Robert Browning an optimist. It is the the love of Lucrezia that almost destroyed and virtually killed Andrea del Sarto, the artist. In Cleopatra’s love, there is Sadism. It is a love that seek only itself to please and has no care of other partner, making his or her life hell. It is love unguided by reason or by finer instincts of life; it has no divine elements about it. According to A. C. Bradley “It is plain that the love of Antony and Cleopatra is destructive; that in some way, it clashes with the nature of things that while they are sitting in their paradise like Gods; ‘it’s walls move inward and crush them at last to death.”

The following facts and characters can be analysed from research Point of view:-

1) Shakespeare’s Elizabethan colouring of Antony and Cleopatra.

2) Cleopatra –“ the serpent of old Nile”

3) “Self – indulgence and achievement are incompatible the proclamation with a thousand tongues – Goeth’s utterance,

4.3.1 Shakespeare’s Elizabethan colouring of Antony and Cleopatra.

Shakespeare, while writing the drama on Mark Antony, The military General and Queen Cleopatra, the Egyptian Gypsy, has used Elizabethan colouring. Here, the Author is faithful to the fact. The fascination excited by Cleopatra and Antony and handly less by Antony over Cleopatra is not so much that of the sense as of serious imagination. They have left youth behind, there is deeper intoxicative of middle age, when death has become a reality, when the world is limited and positive, when life is urged to yield up quickly its atmost treasures of delight. What may they not achieve of joy who have power, beauty and pomp of their own? How shall they fill every minute of their time with the quintessence of enjoyment of glory.

(I/i/33-40) Antony :–“Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide Arch, of the rang’d empire fall! Here is my space, Kingdom are clay: our dungy earth alike, feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life, is to do thus; when such a mutual pair, and such a twain can’ do’t, in which I bind, On pain of punishment, the world to weet, we stand up peerless”. Only one thing both had not allowed for – that over and above power and beauty and pleasure and pump, there is certain inevitable fact - a law which can not be evaded pleasure sits enthroned as Queen, there is a revel and the lords of the Earth crowned with roses, dance before her to the sound and lascivious flutes. But presently the scene changes; the hall of revel is transformed into an arena, the dancers are armed gladiators and as they advance to combat the pay the last hourge to their queen with the words ‘Morituri te salutant’.

Antony challenges to a combat with swords his clear sighted and unimpassioned rival into whose hands the empire of the world is about to fall. He abandons himself to a senseless exasperation – “I will be treble – sine w’d, breathed and fight maliciously ------- And send to darkness all that stop me.”
Antony’s struggle after bristerous mirth proves a piteous mockery. The banquet is a valediction; the great leaders follower are transformed to women; Enobarbus turns away “osion-eyed”. Antony make one rude effort to lift himself up above the damps and depression which have fallen on his spirit one effort to fling aside the consciousness of the failure of his life, which yet clings to him.

4.3.2 Cleopatra – “The Serpent of Old Nile”

Shakespeare’s greatest achievement is the creation of the character of Cleopatra and perhaps even Shakespeare has no more marvellous creation that she, or one in which the nature that inspires and the genius that reveals are so fused in the ideal truth.

Campbell described Shakespeare’s Cleopatra as – “He paints her as if the gipsy herself had cast her spell over him, and given her own witchcraft to his pencil. Cleopatra is the incarnate poetry of life without duty, glorified by beauty and grace, of impulse without principle, ennobled by culture and intellect. Cleopatra as described by Antony is ‘the serpent of old Nile’ (I / V / line 14)

Cleopatra is introduced to us as a beauty of a somewhat dusky African type in the full maturity or perhaps a little past the maturity, of her bloom. Tennyson, in the dream of fair women tells how, She summons him :- I, turning, saw throned on a flowery rise, one sitting on a crimson scarf unroll’d. A queen with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes, brow – bound with burning gold.

Hawthorne in his transformation describing, story’s statue of Cleopatra which here he attributes to kenyon goes further...for Cleopatra’s beauty shone out richer, warmer, more triumphantly beyond comparison than if, shrieking timidly from the truth he had chosen the tame Grecian type. Shakespeare had refered Cleopatra’s racial peculiarities. Philo talks of her (I / i / 6 ) “tawny front and both he and Antony call her a gipsy (I/i/10 – To cool a gipsy’s lust) with reference not merely to the wily and vagabond character with which these landlopers in Shakespeare’s day were stigmatised but swely to the darkness of her complexion as well.

Cleopatra said that I was a Monarch’s mistress and great Pompey loved me so much that he would stand and share in my face, fixedly.
Shakespeare has magnified the glories of her old lovers i.e. Pompey the great; who had been her lover of the old. But now in her middle age, the first freshness has gone, the intoxication of fragrance, the flavour and lusciousness are enhanced. Still she is making preparation to meet Antony and asking the ink and paper (I/v/63). Plutarch, originally stated as – “Gessing by the former access and credit she had with Julius Caesar and Cneus Pompey (The sonne of Pompey the Great) only for her beawtie; she began to have good hope that she might more easily win Antonius. For Caesar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing and knew not them what the world meant; but now she went to Antonius, at the age when a woman beawtie is at the prime and she also of best judgement. Here the reference of Plutarch ‘at the prime’ might be of twenty eight years of age. But Shakespeare gives the impression that she is more older than twenty eight because Pompey talks of her contumtously as “Egypt’s widow and prays; “All the charms of love, salt Cleopatra soften thy waned lip (II/i/20)

Cleopatra herself ironically describes her as “wrinkled deep in time” (I/v/28) and exclaims- “Though age from folly could not give me freedom, It does from childishness (I/iii/57) [may be that age has not enabled me to get rid of my levity, but it has certainly help me to get out of my childishness.]

But like Helen and Gudrun and the ladies of romance or like nitron de Lendos, in actual life, Cleopatra never grows old, Even cynical Enobarbus proclaims –“Age cannot wither her” Even when she has taken poison and because of which she had died, her beauty even after her death is so charming that she may again kill some other Antony (V/i/345 to347) Caesar.”—“but she looks like sleep, As she would catch another Antony, In her strong toil of grace”

She has only gained skill and experience in the use and embellishment of her physical charms and with these, the added charms of grace, culture, expressiveness, she knows how to set off her attractions with all the aids of Art, wealth and effect and her mobility and address, her wit, her surprises her range of interest do the rest. Shakespeare has taken the help of Plutarch’s writing i.e. “Now her beawite (as it is reported) was not so passing, as unmatchable of other woman (The scene is –“Her beauty was not so surpassing as to be beyond comparison with other women’s), nor yet suche as upon present view did enamor men with her, but so sweate was her companie and conversacion, that a man could not possiblie but be taken, And besides her beawite, the good grace she had to talke and discourse, her courteous nature that tempered her
words and dedes was a spurre that pricked to the quick furthermore, besides all these, her voice and words were marvelous pleasant, for her tongue was an instrument of musicke to divers sports and pastimes the which she easily turned to any language that pleased her”.

Here Shakespeare made some different comments than that of Plutarch. Shakespeare bestows on her surpassing and unmatchable beauty so that she transcends the artists ideal as much as that transcends mortal womanhood

Enobarbus – (II/ii/207) O’er – picturing that Venus where we see, The fancy out work nature (Plutarch in the related passage merely says that she was “apparelled and attired like the godesse Venus commonly drawen in picture”)

It is not possible to measure her beauty by any fixed standard. Her versatility of intellect, her variety of mood are inexhaustible and she can pass from gravity to gaiety. From fondness to banter with a suddenness that baffles conjecture.

At Cleopatra’s very first entrance (in Act I scene I), the languishing gives place in a moment to the exasperating vein.

Cleopatra (I/i/14) :- “If it to be loved indeed, tell me how much [If indeed you love me, just tell me what the extent of your love for me is]

Cleopatra (I/i/20 to22):-“Fulvia perchance is angry, or who knows. Of the scare – bearded Caesar have not sent, His powerful madate to you”.[…. May be fluvia is angry, or the boy Caesar may have sent you his comments, Do this or do that]

Enobarbus pays glowing tribute to the character of Cleopatra when he says, age cannot destroy her beauty, nor custom state her infinitely variable charms. The more she satisfies a desire, the more vidently does it begin to burn – Things that are otherwise vile become charming in her. Even the priests find no faults with her when she is Wanton and tather bless her.

4.3.3 “Self indulgenceand achievement are incompatible – the proclamation with a thousand tongues – Goethe’s utterance
Goethe was critic of Germany and deeply interested in Shakespeare’s literature and poetry. His remark provides a deep insight into the character and nature of this play. He says that in this play, it is proclaimed with thousand tongues that self indulgence and achievements are incompatible. Antony fails to achieve success and he fails to justify the trust that Romans have in him.

In scene I/i/33 to 40 (above quote in para No. 4.3.1): -

“Let Rome in Tiber melt------ we stand up peerless”.

Plutarch explain that love of heroine did awaken many vices, yet hidden in the character of Antony. Of course! there is some element of self indulgence in character of Antony. He submits to Cleopatra almost as a slave: “O’er my spirit, The full supremacy there know’st and that. They beek might from the bidding of the gods communal me”.

Antony suffers from certain weaknesses those are responsible for his down fall, Through these remarks, Goethe, is trying possibly to hit at the paradox involved in hedonistic philosophy of life.

“The vauling ambition which overlops itself And falls on the other” Oscar wilde declared that the best way to avoid temptation is to yield to it and that is what Antony seems to be doing.

In spite of his sensualistic and hedonistic approach to life, Antony is a great man who is capable of performing great acts and supreme sacrifices. In fact, Goethe was himself a great moralist and that he does not seem to take very kindly to the type of character which Antony is. Inspite of the fact that the Hero of Goeth’s sorrow’s of werther is himself something of a hedonist, Goethe criticizes and takes to task Antony.

There might be another approach to the entire problem and we might argue that what is meant by achievement is it not an achievement on the part of Antony to have best his world and gained his love.

“It is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all”

When we put the worldly gains of Octavius, under the shadow of the tragic death of this immortal love, we feel that achievement possibly has no meaning. he was after all, a great lover
and he performs his duties as a lover with a greatness, which might seem to be rather rare in the modern world.

### 4.3.4 Conclusion

Antony and Cleopatra, the Shakespeare’s wonderful contribution in the series of Roman tragedies is a outcome of 1607. Antony and Cleopatra are great lovers destined for each other. No one could have accomplished ruin better than each did for the other. Shakespeare while writing this love story used many sources such as “Plutarch’s live and Tragdie of Antonie”. of course! he has added his own poetism in such a way that this play become the famous love story of the world. Take out love from any Literature and it is sure to fall into pieces. Kalidas, Shakespeare, Sidney, Spencer, Herrick, Caren, Shelley Byron, Keats, Tennyson, Browning and many other poets of the world have used ‘love’, the powerful theme for their poetry. Love is the theme of endless tales, short stories and novels.

In this drama, the love of both is of mature human being; but their love according to A.C. Bradley is destructive love, it clashes with the nature of things, its walls move inward and crush them at last to death.

Shakespeare has given Elizabethan colouring to this play. The author is faithful to the facts and to the Roman History as well. Shakespeare has added much poetry with beautiful words to the Plutarch’s history of Rome. It is said that Shakespeare’s greatest achievement is the creation of the character of Cleopatra, an Egyptian Queen, often designated by Antony as “The serpent of old Nile”. Author paints her as a Gypsy, she is the incarnate poetry of life without duty, glorified by beauty and grace; of impulse without principle. She is dusky African type of beauty. Shakespeare has referred Cleopatra’s racial peculiarities. Philo talks of her “towny front and … to cool a gipsy’s lust. Even Cleopatra refers her as “phoabu’s amorous pinches black. While glorifying her matured, middle aged beauty there are slight deviation in Plutarch’s real writing history and Shakespeare’s poetic touch to magnify her real beauty. Even after her death, she looks to be smiling towards other man who is same as that of Antony. Thus, she was very charming. Even through, it is so, her death is wretched and there is the tragic end of the love story of Antony and Cleopatra.
The Goethe is a well reputed critic of Germany, who was deeply interested in poetry of Shakespeare, said that “self indulgence and achievement are incompatible” and this the proclamation with a thousand tongue. Antony fails to achieve success and he fails to justify the trust that Roman have in him because of what his associates call dotage.

One of the best contribution to the Roman Histories by Shakespeare is his play, Antony and Cleopatra. This love story has achieved the best response from young generation from all corners of the world. We have to salute Shakespeare for such an immorable work.

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4.4 Coriolanus (1609)

4.4.0. Introduction

The play, Coriolanus, belongs to the group of Shakespeare’s Roman plays. Shakespeare might here written it towards the end of 1608 or near the beginning of 1609. but Coriolanus was not published during its author’s lifetime. Its first folio was published seven years after the author’s date i.e. in 1623. The text of the play is difficult, containing many corruptions and errors and has consequently undergone many amendments before arriving at its present state. The tragedy of Coriolanus is entered on the register of the stationers company for 8-11-1623.as one of the sixteen plays which had not been “formerly entered to other men”.

The source from which Shakespeare derived the materials for the play of Coriolanus is Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s lives [2nd edn, 1595]. Plutarch, a Greek prose writer great is of 1 century A.D. His popularity is founded mainly on his Parallels lives, written in his later years. The lives are works of great learning and research and testify to his great diligence as a historian. The play is an admirable example of Shakespeare’s method of transforming history into drama and prose into poetry without changing the story in any important degree. “The main outlines of the man’s character and also the principal actions ascribed to him, me copied faithfully from the historian, while those business are filled up and finished with a wealth of invention and a depth of judgment which the poet has perhaps nowhere surpassed.

The original play consists of 5 Acts and 28 scenes and the distribution is as follows:- (Act I-10 scenes, Act II-3, Act III-3, Act IV-6, and Act V-6) The plays scenarium includes the House of Coriolanus and the forum at Rome, the house amfidius at Antium, the volscian camp hear Rome, the Council Hall at Antium and in addition to these and indeterminate spot where Coriolanus soliloquies after his expulsion.

Coriolanus, as hero of the play, is an ideal of self centered power. Coriolanus is the victim of inordinate pride, which causes the ruin of his life. The play opens with a strife between the Patricians (Rich people) and the plebeians (common poor people) at Rome. Then Coriolanus proves his worth as a great soldier in the fight against the Volscies. He would not accept a part of the spoils all that he wants is a wreath of honour in recognition of his services. He is a Latician and as such, is justly superior to common people, such is his contention, the
plebeians are ‘a common cry of curs’, whose breath Coriolanus hates. Pride lead to his exile and finally turns him a traitor, to his own country. When he marches upon Rome, with the Volscies to avenge the wrong done to him, But his mother advise him to make a treaty to his motherland, he does so, but volscies treat him as vow breaker and in the revenge, the conspirator’s and even Anfidius kill him and the drama ends.

The major characters in the play are:- 1) Caius Marcius (afterwards designated as Coriolanus------(II
182-186) Her “Know,Rome,that all alone Marcius did fight, within Corioli gates: Where he hath won , with fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these in honour follows Coriolanus, welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!” -- Coriolanus means, the victory over Corioli ) 2)Tullus Aufidius – General of the Volscians, 3) Titus Lartius , cominius , - general against the Volscians 4) Menenains Agrippa – friends of Coriolanus 5) Volumnia – Mother of Coriolanus 6) Virgilia – wife of Coriolanus and 7) Valeria – friend of Virgilion (Scene – Rome and its neighbourhood , Corioli and its neighbourhood and Antium)

From the research point of view following characters and incidences can be analysed :

I) Hunger broke stonewalls: ‘A tale of rebel’ against belly’.

II) Volumnia : the patrician lady, the Roman Matron : “Twelve die nobly for their country.”

III) Caius Marcius, Coriolanus , the patrician : “Mixture of pride and egoism”

IV) Mother’s Diplomacy : “ Be blest for making up this peace!”

4.4.1 Hunger broke stonewalls :-“A tale of rebel’ against belly”

In the streets of Rome , citizens armed with staves and clubs are angrily threatening the patricians. This is nothing but a clash between rich & poor, ruler & ruled, have & have not’s, nobles & commons aristocrats and democrated, patricians & plebeians. The common people of the Rome think about rateable distribution of wealth which is concentrated in the hands of nobles, the patricians.
To support the side of rich patricians, The Agrippa, the friend of Coriolanus narrates the story of rebel of all body organs against stomach (belly); Originally, Plutarch’s account about this ‘tale’ is as follows:

“On a time, all the members of man’s bodie, dyd rebel against the bellie, complaining of it, that it, only remained in the middest of the bodie, without doing anything, neither dyd beare any labour to the main tenauace of the rest, whereas can all other parts and members dyd labour paynefully & was very careful to satisfie, the apetites and desires of the body and so the bellie, all this notwithstanding, launghed at their follie and sayed “it is true, I first receyve all meats that norishe mans bodie, but afterwards I send it againe to the nourishment of other partes of the same. Even so (quoth he) O, you, my masters and citizens of Rome, the reason is a like between the senate and you for matters being well digested and their counsells throughly examined, touching the benefit of the comman wealth; unto every one of you.”

In the reply, from the side of senators Menenuis Agrippa said—(I/i/135to140)” The senators of Rome are this good belly, and the mutinous members: for examine. Their counsels and their cares. Digest things righly, Touching the weal of the common. You shall find. No public benefit which you receive But it proceeds or comes from them to you “—

This is not agreeable to plebeians and they revolted in the following words :-

(I/i/193to196.)— they sigh’d forth proverbs - that hunger broke stonewalls—that the gods sent not corn for the rice men only and the common citizens announced the revolt against senators.

4.4.2 Volumnia – “The Patrician lady, the Roman Matron”

Twelve die nobly for their country.

Coriolanus is the hero of the play; he is indeed almost the play itself but since the “son is the mother in a man”, we must know the mother first. A mother’s influence for outweiges all others in the early steps to the formation of a boy’s character and when mother is a widow and the boy is an only son, her influence upon from the future man is almost incalculable.
Volumnia, “the life of Rome” typifies all that was best, and noblest in the Roman Matron during the heroic period of Rome’s History. She is a woman of the kind to which a nation owes more than to its armies, who possessing lofty ideas of patriotism, a towering spirit & perennial flow of energy, will, if she beget a family, create heroes. Volimnia, the great hearted mother, the patrician lady implies the devotion to his son rather than to her dead husband has kept her from forming new ties. (V/iii/160 to 163) “Thou hast never in thy life, show’d thy dear mother any courtesy when she, poor hen, fond of no second brood, Has duckkld thee to the wars and safely home, Loaden with honour” [you have never in your life shown your mother any gentleness, whereas she, being desirous of no other children, has sent you forth to the wars and welcomes you, when you had returned home, covered with honour.]

Marcius is thus the only son of his mother and she is widow; but these reminiscences show how strictly the tenderness and still more the indulgence, usual in such circumstances, have been banished from that home. Actually in Plutarch work, the boy seeks a military career from his irresistible natural bent, But in the play, Shakespeare has given credit to his mother and shown that, it is she who first despatches him to the field. This she herself expressly states in her admonition to Virgilia (Her daughter in law) (I/iii/lines 1 to 20) I tell you honestly that if I had a dozen sons, each equally loved none less loved than your husband and my son, Marcius, I would wish that eleven of them had died for their country rather than one had rusted in pleasure and idleness at home. -“Oh! what a great mother is she!”

Marcius is the object of her love because he is to be the ideal which she adores. She has to the full, the sentiment of noblesse oblige, she is full of the virtues and prejudices of her class. Volumnias dream has been that Marcius shall be consce to establish once more power of the patrician, when he enters in his great triumph from corioli (after getting the honourable designation viz, ‘Coriolanus,’) she exclaims in expectation of that result: (II/i/218 to 221) Voluminia-“–I have lived to see inherited my very wishes and the buildings of my fancy. only there’s one thing wanting, which I doubt not but our Rome will cast upon thee”

[There is one thing wanting, and I do not doubt that Rome will bestow it upon you] see what is her expectation!

Shakespeare needs to be saluted for writing such a marvelous sentence.
She has one dire feeling and that is devotion to her country. This is the first and last and noblest thing in her. She wishes him to serve the motherland. It is the mainspring of her patrician partisanship. She honestly believes that the, nobles alone are fit to steer Rome to safety and honour. And to it, she is willing to sacrifice the two other grand interest of her life. When the call comes, she is ready for Rome to persuade her son to the step that will certainly imperil and probably destroy him. It is the public spirit of extraordinary kind that makes such a mature disregard and dearest ties of family and caste, and all personal motives of love and vengeance to intercede for the city as a whole. Such a woman is made to be the mother of heroes. It is no wonder that she has bred that colossal uber-mensch, her son.

4.4.3 Caius Marcius–Coriolanus, the patrician -“Mixture of pride and egoism”

Caius Marcius, the Coriolanus, the hero of the play is a patrician and is proud of being member of the aristocratic class. It is this pride which is the source of his unique valour and courage. He is patrician on the battlefield and in the city of Rome as well. Coriolanus possesses a valour which will be the way and despair even of the bravest soldiers. He is born soldier, a great soldier, a fighter to whom fear is wholly unknown. But his courage is rooted in the sense of his class superiority. Courage is the most lovable quality in him. He was first sent by his mother at war. “When yet he was but tender-bodied—when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way.” And even at such tender age, he returned from the war with “his brows bound with Oak.” Since then he has been thrice awarded with garland of victory and thereby been acknowledged as “the greatest soldier of the Roman Army”.

But if pride inspires him to do heroic acts, his narrow mindedness endangered him with class prejudice. He regards himself as superior to the plebeians. He hates plebeians. He calls them “dirty curs” with “stinking breath”, and treats them as subhuman creatures.

Pride and egoism forbid Coriolanus to seek the votes of the plebeian. How can he, a member of upper class, stoop so low as to ask common for their votes? He requests patrician to remove such such insulting custom to demand votes from lower class. Then he disapproves of the Roman constitution which allows the lower class people an equal share with the patricians in the state administration (II/iii/100-104)
(“Coriolanus –“—Better it is to die, better to stave, than crave the hire which first we do deserve why in this wolsvish toge should I stand here, To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear, Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to’t, what custom wills,”….)

“The pride of Coriolanus “, says Dowden,” is however not that comes from self surrender to and union with some power higher than oneself. It is two fold, a passionate self esteem which is, no doubt egoistic and secondly a passionate prejudice of class. His sympathies are deep, warm and generous but they are within the aristocratic lines His has all respect, love veneration for his mother, wife, son, Comenius, Monenius and wife’s friend too, but all of them belong to privileged class, they are patricians, for him the plebs are common cry of crits, who breath Coriolanus hates.

Coriolanus renders the highest service to the Rome and proves to be a great patriot, but after his exile, the same Coriolanus turns a traitor to his country and leads an army of the Volscies against Rome. This is because of his injured pride. Again, he cannot control him anger and though he is endowed with eloquence, he uses this gift only to bring about his own ruin. His proud, intractable, explosive spirit chfes against the compromises, the practical give and take of normal life. He is one sided character, he cannot ‘ other than one thing, or drop in peace time the ‘austerity and garb’ of war’.

4.4.4 Mother’s Diplomacy: “Be blest for making up this peace”!

The scene in which (V/III) Volumniua, the mother diplomatically persuades her son to withdraw his army of volscies from the gates of Rome is a masterpiece written by Shakespear in this play. The speech of the mother (V/III/Lines 131 to 182) be studied critically. Mother’s unselfish devotion to her country’s sovereignty is perfectly picturised. Her whole-hearted patriotism is beautifully reflected.

She brings to bear all the forces of a powerful will and rich imagination in the compassing of her end, and finally abjones her motherhood if he will not yield to her entreaties and be again, as ones he was, at one in heart and soul with her.

Volumnia –(V/III/118-123) ----- thy mother’s woumb, that brought thee to this world (you will tread on a womb of hour mother, who brought you in this world. Of course, she wins the
victory for her country. Coriolanus returns to his obedience and Rome is saved – but Coriolanus is being stabbed lastly by the volsces.

Mother has not succeeded very easily in convincing his son, she made diplomatic appeal in her marathone speech, which given in Act no (V\iii\131to182) These are instances both of the degree and manner in which volumnia’s forceful character influences her son.

Come, Let us go, this fellow had a volscian to his mother:- His wife is in corioli and his child, like him by chance. Yet given us our despatche lam hush’d until our city be-a-fire and then I’ll speak a little”…

This splendid scene (v/iii) shows us the power of motherhood and the strength of the bond that existed between mother and son. When Coriolanus melts and is ‘not of stronger earth than other, ther is he greatest. Selfwill, false pride salfishness vanish and leave him but a man. He has failed and he must needs suffer for the wrongs he has done.

Mother said to the son to put an end to the hostilities between the Roman and the volsces, then both sides will say “may you be blest for making this peace. This peace treaty is not between Volumina as representative of Rome and his son, the representative of volsces. This is a treaty between mother and her beloved son and hence it is having its footing on emotion.

“what a story does the life of this mother and this son, with their reciprocal action & influence as set forth in the play, tell us of the old Roman domestic system & of the religions awe of motherhood which tounedlarge and vouelaal an dement in the social constitution of that wonderful people! what a comment too does all this, taken together with the history of that nation read upon the divine Honour thy father and thy mother that thy day’s may be long in the land which the lord thy God giveth thee! For reverence of children to there parent is the principal that binds together successive generation in one continuos life”-- Hudson

4.4.5 Conclusion

Coriolanus is the Roman play written by Shakespeare in 1608 or in 1609. The text of the play is complicated and hence went under many amendments before arriving at the present state. The source of play’s material is Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s paralls lives. Coriolanus is the hero of this play having a mixture of pride, egoism and great bravery as a
soldier. There is strife between Patrician and plebeians. Coriolanus hates Plebeians as he is rich noble. Pride lead to his exile and finally he turns as traitor and his mother advise him to make a peace treaty to save Rome from foreign invasion. Lastly, the hero is killed by Volsces. A tale of rebel’ against belly (The Huger broke stonewalls) is the satire and explains the clash between rich and poor, haves and have nots, nobles and commons. Plutarch through this scene, tried to show the unequal distribution of wealth amongst rich and poor.

Volumnia, the Hero’s mother is the patrician Lady, the Roman Matron, Cowden Clarke, while describing this lady, wrote that “from the Roman Matron, she rises into an incarnation of the goddess Bellona. If she would have twelve sons, she would have given all of them for the country’s service. “Twelve die nobly for their country“ is the great patriotism Volumnia is having. She is a woman of the kind to which a nation owes more than to its armies. She has one dire feeling & that is devotion to Rome, such a woman is made to be the mother of heroes.

Caius Marcius is the patrician who is contrasting mixture of pride and egoism. At the sometime, he is from a class of patrician and hates the poor, common people. He is a born soldier; but his love to his mother turns him back from Volsces side to his country i.e. Rome. His egoism mainly is the obstacle in his future career. Lastly, he is killed by the Volsces.

Mother’s diplomacy- “Be blest for making up this peace”, is the masterpiece scene in this play. The mother persuades her son to withdraw his army of Volsces from the gates of Rome and she diplomatically convinces her son. This splendid scene (V/iii) show us the power of motherhood and the strength of the bond that existed between mother and son. Honour thy father and thy mother is the divine Roman percept which comes out through old Roman domestic system.

The play, Coriolanus is having a story of delicious and lovable bond between mother and son, still the play is not as popular as the other great tragedies of the author. Besides, Hero and his mother, other characters are not more impressive. In spite of some lacunas, the play depicts the Roman history as it is, and hence if somebody willing to study Roman history through poetic way, he has to read Shakespeare’s real historical Roman play the Coriolanus.

References:


5. Sir Thomas North (1580) : Parallel Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans.