

present

TIMON

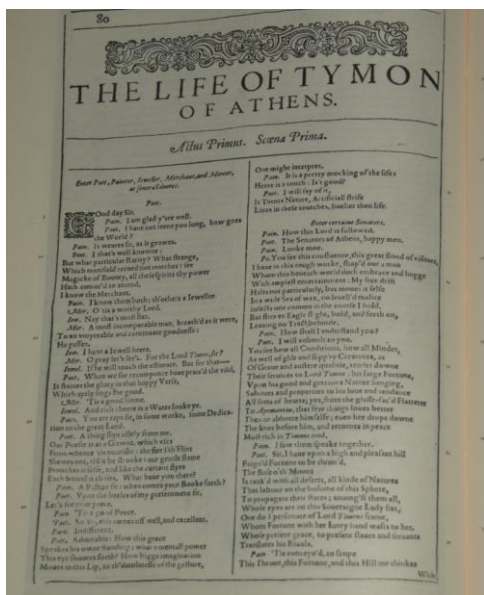
By William Shakespeare

... what happens when the money runs out?



A History of Timon of Athens

Timon has caused considerable debate among scholars. It is oddly constructed and is often described as unfinished, multi-authored, and/or experimental. No precise date of composition can be given and theories posited have ranged broadly from Shakespeare's first work to his last. It is usually grouped with the tragedies (as in the First Folio), though some scholars have placed it with the problem comedies, despite the death of its title character.



The play had not been published prior to its inclusion in the First Folio (1623).

Since the nineteenth century, suggestions have been made that Timon is the work of two writers, and it has been argued that the play's unusual features are the result of the play being co-authored by playwrights with very different mentalities; the most popular candidate, Thomas Middleton, was first suggested in 1920.

On Shakespeare, Money And Power

According to Marx, 'Shakespeare excellently depicts the real nature of money'. In the section on 'Money' in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx quotes extensively from Timon of Athens:

"Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold?

No, Gods, I am no idle votarist! ...

*Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,
Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.*

... Why, this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,

*Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed;*

And...

*"O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce
'Twi'xt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler
Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!
Thou ever young, fresh, loved and delicate wooer...*

Shakespeare, says Marx stresses especially two properties of money:

1. *It is the visible divinity — the transformation of all human and natural properties into their contraries, the universal confounding and distorting of things: impossibilities are soldered together by it.*
2. *It is the common whore, the common procurer of people and nations.*

The distorting and confounding of all human and natural qualities, the fraternisation of impossibilities — the *divine* power of money — lies in its *character* as men's estranged, alienating and self-disposing species-nature. Money is the alienated ability of mankind.

And just as Marx can use Shakespeare to analyse the power of money, so Marx can be used to sum up the essence of the world depicted in *Timon of Athens*.



The bourgeoisie, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has torn asunder the feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors” and has left remaining “no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest and “cash payment”. It has drowned the ecstasy of religious fervour, chivalrous enthusiasm and sentimentalism in the water of calculation.

Shakespeare's hostility to money is not confined to Timon. It is also the theme of *The Merchant of Venice*. This fact has largely been obscured by the

controversy about the play's alleged anti-Semitism, but whether or not Shylock is an anti-Semitic stereotype (I think not), he is a money lender and the judgment of Portia is not so much a condemnation of Shylock as of the logic of money lending, of usury.

If Shakespeare understands but despises the power of money, his distaste for power – political power - is even more intense and pervasive. *Richard III* is about a man who kills and kills again, including children, to gain and retain power, until he himself is killed. *Macbeth* is about a man (and a woman) who kills and kills again, including a child, to gain and retain power until he is 'on blood stepp'd in so far...returning were as tedious as go o'er'. *Hamlet* is about a man who fails to gain power and loses his life because he is not capable of murder. Prince Hal's transformation into the man of power, King Henry V, involves the repudiation of Falstaff. Above all, *Antony and Cleopatra* depicts the radical contradiction between the logic of power and the logic of love.

Shakespeare's heroes, including his tragic heroes, are people of passion – Lear, Othello, Coriolanus, Antony, Romeo – and often they are betrayed by their passions. His victors, those who end up holding the reigns of power – Malcolm, Fortinbras, Bolingbroke, Octavius – are not his heroes. They are secondary figures who pass quietly through the main action – like Stalin through the Russian Revolution - to pick up the crown amid the carnage. They are men of 'cold calculation' with ice in their veins. Psychologically they are closest to his outright villains like Iago, Goneril and Edmund.

The familiarity of all this is striking. It is impossible to contemplate Shakespeare's plots, characters and themes without thinking of Enron and Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs and Northern Rock, Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney, Blair, Brown and Mandelson.

It is forty five years since the great Polish critic Jan Kott, identified the bard as 'Our Contemporary', Shakespeare was our contemporary then and is our contemporary now. It is worth reflecting on why this is the case. It is NOT because he offers 'timeless' insights into an unchanging human condition. The human condition is not unchanging and there are no insights out of time, but there are profound continuities and parallels between one historical period and another.

Shakespeare wrote amidst the birth pangs of capitalism – that is a society based on generalised commodity production and production for profit. The birth of capitalism was an international, not a national, process. Culturally it brought the Italian Renaissance, the Reformation and the Elizabethan and Dutch 'Golden Ages', as well the foundations of modern philosophy and science.

It was experienced by artists, and more widely, as a massive expansion of human freedom and development of the individual personality – compare Cimabue and Titian, Chaucer and Shakespeare – but it was also a time of bitter struggles and terrible defeats – for example the German Peasant War of 1525 or the sack of Rome in 1527.

Moreover it was a time in which the inhuman alienation inherent in capitalism could be grasped, if only intuitively, as a presentiment of the future. The supreme artists of the time – Michelangelo, Shakespeare and Rembrandt – each arise at and express different moments in this process, but each grapples in his own way with this profound contradiction.

As regards Shakespeare's understanding of, and hostility to, money, it is necessary to understand that money was then 'an issue' in the way that it has seldom been since. Although money as such had been around for millennia, the rule of money, its all pervasive domination of society, was something new, arriving hand in hand with the development of capitalism and commodification and therefore a matter of debate.



Luther, and others, made the corruption and especially the buying and selling of indulgences a key feature of their critique of the Church. At the same time John Calvin, the key 'ideologist' of the Dutch Revolution, wrote an article arguing that usury was NOT a sin. The Catholic Church's condemnation of usury was rooted in its feudal opposition to capitalism and the need to keep bankers, money lenders, and aspirant bourgeois in their place.

Regarding power this was a period of the most intense struggle, or rather struggles, for power right across Europe, ranging from the feuds of the Medici and the Pazzi in Florence, to the horrors, intrigues and vengeance of the Elizabethan court, and the fratricidal conflict of the English Civil War.

It is the age of Machiavelli, as much as the age of Erasmus. At bottom this was a class struggle between the rising Bourgeoisie and the old feudal aristocracy, but at the time none of the participants or observers could be conscious of this, or indeed achieve any rational understanding of the conflicts and this made the struggles, interpreted variously as wars of religion or purely personal ambition, seem all the more bitter and senseless.

Standing at the cusp of this historical turning point, Shakespeare looks back and forward. As part of the rising middle class he relishes the richness of the moment in his language, his imagery and his characters, but he also feels keenly the loss of 'Merrie' feudal England and has no love for men of power who, he suspects, will emerge victorious from the maelstrom.

'In my beginning is my end,' wrote T.S. Eliot. We live now in capitalism's end game but the contradictions that now are writ large across the globe, between use value and exchange value, production for need and production for profit, were there at the beginning and Shakespeare's intuitive grasp of them is the reason he is so relevant today.

John Molyneux, 21 August 2009

John Molyneux is an activist, writer and leading member of the Socialist Workers Party. He is a senior lecturer in Historical and Theoretical Studies at the School of Art, Design and Media, University of Portsmouth.





present

Timon of Athens

By William Shakespeare

Cast

Emma Carter	1 st Senator, Philotus, 2 nd Bandit, 3 rd Lady
Nick Downes	Flavius, Old Athenian, Guard 2
Phillipa Flynn	Painter, Hortensius, First Stranger, 4 th Lady
John Game	Jeweller, Lucullus, Guard 1, 1 st Bandit, Soldier 2
Kristian Jenkins	Alcibiades, Lucilius
Thomas Judd	Poet, Lucius, Lucius' Servant, Soldier 1 and Soldier 3
Rebecca Keane	Flaminius, Titus, Phyrnia, 2 nd Stranger
Charlotte Mafham	Merchant, Servilius, Timandra, Messenger
Steven Rodgers	Timon
Daniel Simpson	Apemantus, 3 rd Senator
Tom Skitt	2 nd Senator, Ventidius, Caphis

The performance lasts for approximately 150 minutes, including one interval of 20 minutes.

Production Team

Director

Matt Beresford

Lighting Design and Operation
Stage Manager and Sound

Luciana Liege
Maya Jani

Costume
Assistant Director

Emma Carter
Maya Jani

Acknowledgements

Ron Phillips and Christian Deal of Barons Court Theatre; St. Paul's School, Brentford; Mike Bartlett and the Kew Scout Group, Oliver James, Cynicus Economicus and John Molyneux.

Music

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|
| 1 | <i>There, There (The Boney King of Nowhere)</i> ,
Radiohead, Hail to the Thief. | | |
| 2 | <i>Golden Bullet</i> , Count Basie, Jumpin' His
Legendary Tunes | 10 | <i>Black Swan</i> , Thom Yorke, The Eraser |
| 3 | <i>Gravy Train</i> , Lou Donaldson, Gravy Train | 11 | <i>Tomorrow Comes Today</i> , Gorillaz, Gorillaz
(UK). |
| 4 | <i>Gold Digger</i> , Kanye West, Late Registration | 12 | <i>And It Rained All Night</i> , Thom Yorke, The
Eraser. |
| 5 | <i>...Till the Cops come Knockin'</i> , Maxwell,
Maxwell's Urban Hang Suite | 13 | <i>The Gloaming (Softly Open Our Mouths In
The Cold)</i> , Radiohead, Hail to the Thief. |
| 6 | <i>Sugar Town</i> , Nancy Sinatra, Music To Watch
Girls By Volume 1 | 14 | <i>Broken Little Sister</i> , Death In Vegas, The
Contino Sessions |
| 7 | <i>All Good?</i> De La Soul, The Best of De La Soul | 15 | <i>The Clock</i> , Thom Yorke, The Eraser |
| 8 | <i>In The Red</i> , Abbey Lincoln, Straight Ahead | 16 | <i>Timon's Theme</i> , Duke Ellington, Timon of
Athens |
| 9 | <i>The Eraser</i> , Thom Yorke, The Eraser | 17 | <i>Mountains O' Things</i> , Tracy Chapman, Tracy
Chapman. |

INTERVAL

Scene Synopses

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Act 1, Scene 1 | A Hall In Timon's House | Act 3, Scene 7 | The Same, later. |
| Act 1, Scene 2 | A Banqueting Room in
Timon's House | Act 3, Scene 8 | Without the Walls of
Athens |
| Act 2, Scene 1 | A Senator's House | | |
| Act 2, Scene 2 | A Hall in Timon's House | | |
| Act 3, Scene 1 | A Room in Lucullus' House | Act 4, Scene 1 | Without the Walls of
Athens |
| Act 3, Scene 2 | A Public Place | Act 4, Scene 2 | The Ocean |
| Act 3, Scene 3 | A Public Place | Act 5, Scene 1 | The Ocean |
| Act 3, Scene 4 | A Hall in Timon's House | Act 5, Scene 2 | Before the Walls of Athens |
| Act 3, Scene 5 | The Senate House | Act 5, Scene 3 | The Same |
| Act 3, Scene 6 | A Banqueting Room in
Timon's House | Act 5, Scene 4 | The Ocean |

INTERVAL

Thoughts on Timon

Shakespeare gives us a play (possibly co-authored or un-finished) of many characters, linked, by money and power or their attitudes to them. No character has a 'back-story', none have family, love barely features. Only Timon's character 'develops' in the way modern actors and theatre-goers have come to expect from most drama. Athens is run on the principle of commerce and there is no place for loyalty, chivalry, or honour.

The shallowness of the characters, the lack of development and even the inconsistent naming of characters are undoubtedly problematic, but it may also be true that Shakespeare is making a comment on money's ability to render all other human values, history, character and relationships worthless. That seems to me far more dramatically satisfying and has formed the basis for this production; especially in terms of props, set and costume.

The existential crisis that Timon undergoes has been weighed against that of Lear and his discovery of the lack of substance behind social appearances has been compared to Hamlet's quest for the truth. The character of Timon may fail to measure up to such comparisons, but interestingly, in terms of modernity, he may surpass the two more famous models. Both Lear and Hamlet are great noble figures that achieve transcendence through their suffering. We watch their stories unfold with awe and wonder, but ultimately with a degree of distance and security. Timon of Athens strips away our safety net.

Timon may come from a good family, perhaps even a noble one, but he is clearly not the prince of Denmark or the King of England. His entire social status is derived from the size of his wallet and he emerges, perhaps, as our truest contemporary in the works of Shakespeare: a seemingly modern man devoid of spirituality, materialistic to the core, and desperate for recognition to justify the emptiness of his existence. We watch the fall of Timon in horror and fascination. We may not know a Lear or a Hamlet, but we all know a Timon.



Cast



Emma Carter

Trained: Arts Educational School, London

Theatre: The Laramie Project (Arts Ed), Macbeth (Arts Ed), Secret Rapture (Arts Ed), The Importance of Being Earnest, Three Sisters, Much Ado About Nothing, Bedful Of Foreigners (All New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth)

Film: Open Secrets (Short)

Nick Downes

Theatre: Waiting for Godot, National Tour; King Arthur, Oxfordshire Touring; King Lear; New Theatre Royal; Twelfth Night, Titchfield Festival.

Film: Lenny's Luck, Dylan Pank; Wizzbangs, Wipers and McConachie, SCAT Theatre.



Phillipa Flynn

Trained: Birmingham School of Speech and Drama

Theatre: Macbeth – National Theatre of Luxemburg, Othello – National Tour Melting Pot Theatre Company, Importance of Being Earnest – National Tour Troika Productions, Shakespeare for Breakfast – C- Theatre Edinburgh, Treasure Island – Gaiety Theatre Isle of Man, Katrina the Littlest Christmas Tree – National Tour Pandora's Box, Playhouse Creatures - Just Us theatre Much Ado About Nothing/Twelfth Night/Romeo and Juliet – Black Cat Theatre company

Film: Macbeth at the Globe – Internar Productions

Other: Phillipa is a regular assistant director in Holland for the Netherlands Shakespeare in Performance project and a work shop leader for Chicken Shed theatre's Shed at the Park



John Game

Trained: East 15

Theatre: To The Green Fields Beyond (East 15); Scenes From The Big Picture (East 15); Days of Significance (East 15); Jack and The Beanstalk(East 15); Measure for Measure (East 15); Commedia Delle Arte (East 15);

Film: Smile (East 15); Support the Minors (short film) - on location



Kristian Jenkins



Trained: Drama Centre

Theatre: The Out There Urge, Soho Theatre; Breathing Corpses, Soho Theatre; Foreskin's Lament, Hackney Empire/Pleasance Edinburgh; Romeo and Juliet, New Wimbledon Theatre; Macbeth, Sherman Theatre

Film: Stealing Elvis, Ragged Crow, Ed Edwards; Ash Can, Fried Films, Jamie Hewitt; Where's Alan?, Audrey Aquilina; Rock and Roll Stoll My Soul, Adam Simcox; Wake up Bollywood, Reshel Shah; Through the Eyes of Love, Piers Vernon-koll

Thomas Judd

Trained: Drama Studio London

Theatre: The Winter's Tale (DSL)The Comedy of Errors (DSL)The Country Wife (DSL)

Radio: BBC Carleton Hobbs Radio
Bursary nominee 2009



Rebecca Keane

Training: The Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre: *The Winters Tale* (Central), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Central), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Central), *As You Like It* (The Crypt on the Green, Farringdon), *St Trinian's- The Musical!* (The Pacific Playhouse), *Your Objects Move Us* (The Space, Isle of Dogs).

Film: *Y Sci Fi* (A Tad Too Far Productions), *The Vacancy* (Skillset/BBC), and the *Dove Freehugs* advertising campaign.



Charlotte Mafham

Trained: Arts Educational Schools, London

Theatre: The Laramie Project (Arts Ed); Hamlet (Arts Ed); Japes (Arts Ed)

Film: Cloud Nine (Short)





Daniel Simpson

Trained: East 15 & The Actor Works

Theatre: Romeo & Juliet, Brockley Jack Theatre; Loveplay, The Rag Factory; The Dearly Beloved, E15; Audience, The Sweetest Swing in Baseball; The Libertine (All TAW)

Film: I Sea, JAR Productions; Charlie Digs Deep, FleetFoot Films; Be Honest, Martin Gooch; Three's A Crowd, Drew Pautz

TV: Faces, David Crossman (Ravensbourne); A Strange Affair, David Crossman (Ravensbourne)

Radio: The Sea, David Blount; A Glitch in the System, David Blount

Other: Absent, Dreamthinkspeak at the Royal Opera House; Olympus Cameras Product Launch (with David Bailey)



Luciana Liege - lucianaliege@gmail.com

Trained: MA in Theatre – Light Designer; Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – Brazil) Light Designer and Operation: “John & June – What are you waiting for?”, Nightingale Theatre, Brighton, UK. “Antônio de Chica”; Teatro Cândido Mendes (Cândido Mendes Theatre – Brazil); “Quixote”, Sesc Niterói, Rio de Janeiro; Teatro Álvaro de Carvalho (Florianópolis - Brazil); Teatro Ziembinski (Rio de Janeiro – Brazil); Blumenau Theatre Festival (Blumenau – Brazil); Diversos Sesc’s do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Tour – Rio de Janeiro – Brazil); Resende Theatre Festival (Resende – Brazil); Guacuí National Festival (Best Light at the festival – Guacuí – Brazil); Campinas e Curitiba (Tour – Brazil); *For full CV please contact.*

Steven Rodgers

Trained: Central School of Speech and Drama

Theatre: The Comedy of Errors, Brockwell Park; The Silents, The Hive @ The Brunswick; The Duchess of Malfi, Blue Elephant Theatre; The Nightingale Mystery, Rosemary Branch

Film: Super Swiss Saves London, London Metropolitan University; Two Rivers, College of North West London; Change / Pastel & Roses, London Film Academy



www.danielsimpsononline.com

Tom Skitt

Trained: ALRA

Theatre: The Life and Times of Lucifer Helmut Vaginis (Etcetera Theatre), A Shakespeare Summer Soirée (Broughton Castle), credits at ALRA include Childhood, The Gut Girls, Tales from Ovid, A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

Film: Rise (ALRA)

Five Minutes to Midnight

The real root of the economic crisis does not lie in the financial institutions, but in one of the greatest supply shocks in economic history...

The shock in question is an approximate doubling of the global labour force in a period of just ten years. The source of this massive supply of new labour is largely due to the entry of both China and India into the world economy.

While it might be argued that both countries entered world markets much earlier, in practical terms it is only in about the past ten years that their impact has really started to be felt. It has long been said that not everyone in the world could enjoy the same standard of living, with the consumption of raw materials that implies, that people in the West enjoy.

The supply of commodities cannot increase fast enough to satisfy everyone's rising aspirations. Producers are unable to expand output fast enough to meet demand, leading to huge spikes in commodity prices. This may go a long way to explaining the roots of the current economic crisis, but there were many other factors that intensified its impact.

The first factor is no secret – the opportunities to lower costs by transferring operations to countries in emerging markets. This created a major shift in manufacturing out of the UK and other developed economies. Meanwhile, the UK has moved towards a 'post-industrial' economy. We would provide the finance, design and marketing whilst those in emerging economies could get on with the lower-value parts – making the products.

Real sources of growth

Although services experienced growth and create output, internally consumed services are *redistributions* of wealth, rather than root sources of wealth like commodity extraction, export of services or manufacturing output. While there has been an explosion in debt, there has been little growth in these root sources. Indeed, the only explanation for GDP growth in the UK since the late 1990s lay in the growth of debt.

When considering this it is important to understand how borrowed money can affect an economy through the 'multiplier effect'. If a person spends £50 in a restaurant using borrowed money, some of that money will later be used to pay the staff, who will then use that money to buy other items, and that will promote more activity. The borrowed £50 will therefore generate considerable activity,

which can be measured as output. That output provides the measure of GDP. But GDP makes no allowance for the source of the activity; meaning that debt-fuelled activity is measured as production.

Who gets the credit?

The credit that fuelled this activity was rooted in the fundamental changes that have occurred in the world. One of the major sources of finance for borrowing has been China, which has managed to achieve huge trade surpluses. Meanwhile, the increase in commodity prices has boosted income for commodity-producing countries, providing another source of finance. Other sources, including the 'yen carry-trade', in which money fled Japan because growth and interest rates were so low, all contributed.

The wall of credit entering the UK could not find a profitable home in wealth-creating business and was increasingly channelled into consumer borrowing and consumption. This, in turn, drove the profitability of the service industries and thereby created the conditions for the growth of the 'post-industrial' service economy.

However, as more money enters the system, good opportunities become scarcer – but it must still 'go' somewhere. In such a situation, we can see the roots of the house-price boom – a classic asset-price bubble in which there was a massive increase in the supply of money, chasing an asset-base that could not expand as fast as the money chasing it. A virtuous cycle ensued: the boom encouraged more lending, which encouraged consumers to borrow and consume more, which in turn encouraged more lending.

The final question is why this money flooded into the UK. For this, I will turn to another analogy. That of an aristocrat, living a social whirl of balls and expensive entertainments. Everybody imagines that his lifestyle is an indication of his endless wealth, which has been in the family for generations.

However, while his family have a long history of wealth, he has been neglecting his estate and his income has been slowly falling – such that the income from his estate no longer covers his outgoings. In reality, he is ever more reliant on his creditors to keep him afloat, even to the point where he is borrowing to pay back previous borrowing. Despite this, his creditors believe he is good for the money – after all, his family has always been rich.

This is the current situation of the UK. The creditors are now starting to turn off the credit and an economy built upon a belief in the endless growth in the supply of credit is now confronted with its basic underlying size....

By *Cynicus Economicus*. He blogs at cynicuseconomicus.blogspot.com



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Wyndham Lewis, Design from the portfolio Timon of Athens, 1912, published 1913.